THE CAPE IN LATIN AND LATIN IN THE CAPE IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

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Different authors work in different ways. Bert van Stekelenburg would usually choose a new topic that interested him, do initial, sometimes fairly cursory, research on the subject, give one or more public lectures and/or read a fairly brief scholarly paper and then spend some years refining the topic by means of extensive research in both local and overseas libraries, carefully building up a scholarly argument in the manner of a sculptor in clay, whose work in the end would be cast in bronze — the scholarly publication that followed. This paper started as a public lecture to the Western Cape branch of the Classical Association of South Africa in March 2002. It had flowed from previous research done on an interesting Latinist who lived at the Cape, Jan Willem ("Johannes Guilielmus") Van Grevenbroek, on whose life Bert had been working since 1997. After a lecture series was initiated by a paper read at Avila in Spain in 1997, several more popular lectures followed. This research culminated in a scholarly publication, "Een intellectueel in de vroege Kaapkolonie. De nalatenschap van Jan Willem van Grevenbroek (1644-1726)" Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans 8, 2001, 3-34. Bert was working on this present article just before he left for his last, fateful ornithological expedition, using the computers of various friends, including that of his present editor, but after his death we have been unable to find the diskette on which he had kept this article, which had seemed to be almost completed. Also, no printouts have been found. This version is the editor's attempt to make sense of the body of Bert's talk (of which several versions in his handwriting exist) as well as the copious scholarly notes in English, Afrikaans and Dutch (which he had been in the process of incorporating) and the texts of various poems and other citations that he had used at the March 2002 lecture. Every attempt has been made to keep to the author's style and contents as he envisaged them and not to allow the editor's personal opinion to intrude into the paper (Editor).

Latin arrived at the Cape of Good Hope together with Jan van Riebeeck. In his "Journal" Van Riebeeck gives the day of his landing as the 6th day "*Aprilis anno*" 1652).[1] This journal was, of course, written in Dutch, but in those days even scribes with only a modicum of learning succumbed to the allurements of a little Latin as a sign of erudition. Van Riebeeck's own Latin will not have amounted to much, he being a surgeon ("chirurgijn") without an academic training, having learned his trade from his father, as was common then. It was probably limited to the treatments and medicines he was qualified to deal with.[2] Without running the risk of being accused of pursuing trivia, we can say that Van Riebeeck's two sons, Lambertus and Abraham, were to improve vastly on their father's knowledge of Latin. Both gained their doctorates in law — on the same day, 25 March 1673 — at the University of Leyden on a disputation of Latin theses, "de nuptiis" ("on marriage" in Lambertus' case, and "de usufructu" ("on usufruct") in Abraham's. As Abraham van Riebeeck was only the second

1. *Journal*. The first pages of Van Riebeeck's Journal ("Daghregister") were probably written by himself (Thom 1952:xxxvii). (*Unmarked footnotes are by the author. Hereafter notes inserted by the editor will be marked "Ed."*).
2. Van Riebeeck must have received a solid basic schooling, since he spent a large part of his childhood in the household of his maternal grandfather, who was mayor of Culembourg (Thom 1952:xviii—xix).

European child born at the Cape,[3] we might say that his Latin thesis was the first Latin text produced by a born South African.

A little Latin came naturally with even a slight education (during the Renaissance) and fluency in reading and writing Latin was a *conditio sine qua non* for academic study. The men who took the daring step of enlisting in the VOC's[4] service to travel to the Cape of Good Hope — a three months' journey with a good chance of not arriving alive — and then, on to Asia (another three months), came, in general, not from the most sophisticated backgrounds. In fact even the higher ranks of the VOC overseas originated from the middle and lower ranks of the burgher class (Boxer 1965:50-53), and visited the Cape and the Asian posts mainly on inspection voyages as VOC Commissars. As the VOC's posts grew, however, they inevitably became in need of the kind of persons needed in a settled community: teachers, ministers of the Church, a fiscal, a medical doctor. Towards 1700 it became clear that the Atlantic trade with the Americas offered limited chances of success for the Netherlands, and that they should concentrate on the Oriental trade. From the end of the 17th century onward the Cape prospered in step with its growing importance within the VOC trade. In 1691 the office of Commander was elevated to that of Governor, and the Cape became a colony.

By the latter half of the 17th century the colonial discourse which had started with the log books and letters of Christopher Columbus and the works of Peter Heerstyn, Amerigo Vespucci and others, was already over 150 years old. These early writers had not been able to shake off their medieval inheritance of concepts and categories, which in their turn leaned heavily on Classical sources. Ultimately it was Herodotus who was "the chief source of the medieval anthropological traditions . . . transmitted under the names of Pliny, Pomponius Mela, Solinus, Isidore, Vincent, Bartholomew, Sir John Mandeville, and a host of lesser borrowers" (Hodgen 1934:20). In Herodotus we find already the basic constituents of culture categorised: language, religions, burial practices, dress, food habits, dwellings, marriage customs, "their superficial decencies of life", warfare (Hodgen 1934:22-23). Early descriptions of the inhabitants of the Cape region (which included lions and leopards) primarily featured the native people of this Southernmost part of Africa, whom the Dutch named Hottentots (or Hottentoos) because of the click consonants which form part of their language. [5]

When Van Riebeeck landed in 1652, Table Bay had already for one and a half century been frequented by Portuguese, English and Dutch ships on their way to and from India. The Portuguese trail blazer of the route to India, Bartholomew Diaz, had originally missed the

3. Abraham was born at the Cape on October 17 or 18, 1653. Lambertus had been born in Amsterdam. The first European child born in the Cape was the son of the sick comforter Barents Wylant (June 6, 1652) (Engelbrecht 1952:12). Abraham was later to follow a distinguished career with the VOC (Böeseken 1974:233) (extrapolated from Van Stekelenburg's notes by the Ed.).
4. The acronym "VOC" for "Vereenigde Oost-Indieschen Compagnie" or Dutch East India Company is used by Van Stekelenburg throughout his papers, and will be retained (Ed.).
5. Although the name "Hottentot" for the Khoikhoi people is in some circles considered an opprobrious term, in the historical context of this article, the term will be employed where appropriate and without further qualification (Ed.). The Khoikhoi together with the Bushmen (San) form the Khoisan group of people. They are not directly related to the black nations of Africa who are, or at least were until recently, foreign to the southern and western regions of what is now South Africa. The Dutch settlers in South Africa would come into contact with black tribes only much later, at the end of the 18th century when they moved eastwards from the Cape. The European name "Hottentot" is either derived from the peculiar click consonants of their language, or from a word "hautitou" which was repeated in their traditional greeting, Schreyer 1931:19; Boonzaier a.o. 1996:1.

Cape and only saw it on his return voyage in 1488. On a next trip in 1500 he perished in one of the storms that gave the Cape its original name of "Cape of Storms" (*Cabo Tormentoso*) before it was changed to "Cape of Good Hope" (*Cabo de Boa Esperanca*) by King John (the Navigator) of Portugal. The first reputed landing by Europeans in Table Bay had been undertaken in 1503 by a Portuguese grandee, Antonio de Saldanha, who used the opportunity to climb Table Mountain and to name the Bay after himself. A series of misunderstandings has led to another bay, 100 km north of the Cape, ultimately being named after him.

De Saldanha's endeavour to barter a cow and two sheep for mirrors, glass beads and rattles did not end well and he had to retreat with a wounded arm. His experience was repeated by a number of other Portuguese and, after 1590, also English and Dutch visitors. For this reason it took until 1652 before a decision was taken by the Dutch and a permanent European settlement was established at the Cape. It was of great importance to maintain good relations with the Hottentots since they were to be the suppliers of meat and had proven to be a dangerous nation when provoked. No attempts were therefore made to force any of them into slavery. Slaves were brought in from outside, especially from the Dutch possessions in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Malakka. Hottentots were employed as free labourers. Van Riebeeck and his immediate successors went out of their way to establish and maintain good relations with the Hottentot chiefs (called Kapteins) and to prevent Dutch settlers from maltreating the natives, though not always with success.

The earliest extant descriptions of the Cape after the founding of the Colony were those of Olfert Dapper, (1668) and Johann Schreyer, (1679), but as these were respectively in Dutch and German, we shall pass them over in favour of the first extensive disquisition on the new Colony that was written in Latin.

1. *Wilhelm ten Rhyne*

William (Willem in Dutch) ten Rhyne (1647 – 1700) was a medical doctor in the service of the VOC. He was at the Cape for less than 4 weeks, on his way to Java (Oct. 15 – Nov. 10, 1673), but having an inquisitive mind, he used his time there to gather as much information as possible about everything, and especially the native population. The final two-thirds of Ten Rhyne's *Schediasma de Promontorio Bonae Spei* (Short account of the Cape of Good Hope, 1686) is devoted to the *Hottentotti*; the first third begins with his arrival at the Cape, followed by a description of the Cape and of its animals and plants.

Ten Rhyne was a person with a scientific bent. Before entering the service of the VOC he had already published five works, all on medical and botanical subjects (see British Museum catalogues).[6] Botany seems to have had his special interest and he started collecting plants immediately when setting foot on African soil for the first time at Saldanha Bay: *divertissima plantarum gratia praedivites Semiramidis Alcinoive hortos, aut Elysios in ipso deserto*

6. (1) *Meditationes in magni Hippocratis textum XXIV de veteri medicina,* Lugd. Bat. 1672; (2) *Excerpta ex observationibus suis Iaponicis etc. de frutice thee,* Gedani 1678; (3) *Dissertatio de arthritide: mantissa schematica de acupunctura: et orationes tres, I De chymiae botaniae antiquitate & dignitate. II De physiognomia. III De monstris,* 1683; (4) *Schediasma de Promontorio Bonae Spei, ejusve tractus incolis Hottentotis etc.* Scafusii 1586; (5) *In: Michaelis Bernhardi Valentini India literata; seu Dissertationes epistolicae De plantis, arboribus, gemmis aliisque rarionibus…ab Europaeis curiosis et eruditis, Cleyero, Rumphio, Herberto de Jager, Ten Rhyne, Kaempfero aliisque* . . . 1716; (6) Description of Ten Rhyne's plant collections made at Saldanha Bay and the Cape in 1673 in: Breyn, *Plantarum Exoticarium Centuria Prima,* Danzig, 1678.

campus aemulari videbatur: ubi cumulatissimem earundem ilico conquisivi sarcinam, ut viva exemplaria botanosophis Musis imposterum offerem ("The varied charm of many plants seemed to rival the rich gardens of Semiramis or Alcinous, as to present a vision of the Elysian Fields in the midst of a wilderness. Of these plants I forthwith collected a generous supply that I might afterwards make offering of the actual specimens to the Botanical Muses", 88). He did actually send these specimens, and those he collected in the Cape (95, 106) to the botanist Breyn in Danzig, who published their descriptions in 1678 (*Plantarum exoticarium Centuria prima, Appendix*).

It is probable that Ten Rhyne never returned to Europe, and the publication of his *Schediasma* was left to others. It appeared in Scheffhausen in 1685, the manuscript having been sent there from Deventer in the Netherlands, Ten Rhyne's birthplace, by a fellow-physician of his, as the dedication of the book makes clear (84). On the title-page Ten Rhyne is named as a medical doctor in the VOC and as a member of the Council of Justice, a post which he held in Batavia, where he died in 1700 (*SABW* III:803).

Ten Rhyne's inquisitiveness appears immediately on the first page. Though the navigation was none of his business, he records depths encountered near the coast (86, 88), wind directions (86, 88, 90) and distances. He is the only passenger to accompany the captain and the sailors to shore at Saldanha Bay (86) and immediately starts collecting plants (88). On the last stretch to Table Bay he describes Dassen Island (Daxinsula, 88) and the activities there (sheep farming and seal hunting), and Robben Island, though he does not mention its name. It is used as a prison, he says, where the convicts gather shells to be burned for lime for the new fort (*concremendas pro novo fortalitio calci conchylia*; 90). The new fort is of course the present Castle which would be finished a year later.

The day after their arrival in the Bay, the ship's notables, Ten Rhyne included, were guests at the table of the then Governor, Isbrand Goske, "an incomparable man" (*vir sine pari*, 90). Then Ten Rhyne was free to exploit the Cape. The first thing he did was to climb Table Mountain (*a mensa vocatus mons*), doubtless via Platteklip Gorge "and certain it is that it was after a very stiff climb and the loss of much sweat that I succeeded in scaling it" (*ad illud saltem arduo valde ascensu sudans perveni;* 94). They saw many plants and met a terrifying troop of yelling baboons (*densa ac horrendorum vociferans arctopithecorum cohors*; 94).

The next day Ten Rhyne visited the Company's Garden, the abundant source of fresh supplies to visiting ships (*novam adventantibus navigiis annonam copiosissime suppeditantens;* 96). From there he observed the famous white body which he considers the source of the South Easter: "for when the summit of the mountains in the vicinity are covered with a deep bank of cloud gradually creeping down, then comes the stormy South-Easter . . . this cloud I have quite often seen with the naked eye descending from Table Mountain (*cum enim propinquorum juga montium alta, sensimque declinante vestiuntur nube, adsunt procellosi praeludio Vulturni….quem saepius ad oculum de mensali decidere monte vidi;* 96). Ten Rhyne then propounds his theory that mountains play an important role in the origin of winds, though he admits that there are many other unknown factors playing a role. He then gives a swipe against Descartes' hypotheses on ebb and flow.

These were busy weeks for Ten Rhyne, especially in his pursuit of plants. He made excursions along the beach (102, 106), the mountains (104, 106), the hills (106) and the flats (100). His overall opinion of the Cape and its surroundings is not very positive: "a fitter habitation for wild beasts than for men" (*feris brutis, quam hominibus aptior habitatio est,* 100). In consequence the native Khoi, in Ten Rhyne's eyes, are little more than animals, their character and habits formed and adapted to their harsh surroundings (130). The force of

nature keeps them subject to their squalid ways (*naturae vi suis sordibus addicti jacent,* 122). They practice only those habits to which a blind impulse of nature irresistibly impels them (*haec tantum, in quae caecus naturae impetus eos unice impellit, incitantur,* 126). Their sexual encounters are "after the fashion of beasts" (*bestiarum more,* 126). Indeed, the unfriendliness and harshness of the region is matched by the character of its inhabitants (*incolarum ingeniis congenera sunt,* 130), as their fierceness in battle is correlated to the flinty mountains and harsh vegetation of their surroundings (134).[7]

2. *Van Grevenbroek*[8]

Among the documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth century which are kept in the State Archives in Cape Town, South Africa, there are a number that relate directly to the personal lives of the first European settlers at the Cape of Good Hope at the Southern tip of Africa. They are the wills and testaments of employees of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), who administered the region, and of freeburghers, often farmers of mainly Dutch and French Huguenot stock. Apart from these testaments there are also in many cases the auction lists drawn up at the time of sale of the deceaseds' effects. Reading these lists is like entering these people's homes and looking into their rooms and kitchens, their cupboards and drawers. One reads about the number of frocks, bedspreads, spittoons, combs, plates and pots they had owned at the end of their lives, as well as about items necessary for self-protection at that time and place: fencing-swords, pistols and muskets. And sometimes there are books, often only one, a Bible of course, with or without a mounting of gold or silver, an important factor in the price they fetched. Few people had much more than that, but there were exceptions (Biewinga 1996:116).

One such exception was the Dutchman Jan Willem van Grevenbroek, or Johannes Guilihelmus De Grevenbrouk. He had been a well-known personality in the Cape, serving Simon van der Stel as secretary of the Council of Policy for ten years (1684-1694). He had arrived at the Cape in 1684 at the age of forty, when the settlement of the VOC had not even reached that age. Van Grevenbroek arrived as a clerk in the service of the VOC, but was immediately promoted to the office of Secretary of the Council of Policy. Many official documents of the following years which have survived are written in his hand. There were at the time only three European settlements: around the Castle at the Cape, and two farming communities, at nearby Stellenbosch and Drakenstein. A few exploratory expeditions had taken place along both coasts to the North and the East, but these had not resulted in other settlements.

Van Grevenbroek served for only ten years and retired in 1694. He went, then or afterwards, to live in the farming community of Stellenbosch, approximately 50 kilometres inland. Around 1705 his name occurs among those of the elders of the Church of Stellenbosch and he is also mentioned several times in the diary of a leading farmer at that time, Adam Tas, with whom he became friendly. From 1712 onwards he seems to have lived

7. Van Stekelenburg then begins a paragraph with "Ten Rhyne's Latin . . ." but here his MS breaks off. One may surmise that his comment would have been something in the order of ". . . is elegant enough to bear witness to a good Classical grounding" and perhaps something on Ten Rhyne's use of periodic sentences and participial phrases (Ed.).

8. Passages from this part of the article started as a paper read at a conference on Neo-Latin, at Avila in Spain in 1997. Van Stekelenburg incorporated parts of it into his public lecture on Latin at the Cape and was clearly intending to incorporate some of it into the published version (Ed.).

on the farm Welmoed some five kilometres outside Stellenbosch. His will, dated 3 February 1714, was signed there,[9] and in it he leaves an amount of money to the owner of that place (Jacobus van der Heyde) "in appreciation for all the good enjoyed at his residence on Welmoed since the 13th of August of the year 1712 when I arrived with my slave Isaak". He lived to a ripe old age, an octogenarian when he died in approximately 1725. He never married and his remaining effects were sold at an auction on 10 February 1729.[10] First to be sold were his books, a impressive total for that time of 370, not specified, and most of them sold in lots of 10 or 20. The total price fetched for the books was 36 Rijksdaalders and 7 schellings, or less than one schelling per book on average. For comparison: at the same sale two small glass bottles went for 20 schellings and three combs for 14 schellings.[11] A few years earlier the books of Van Grevenbroek's friend Adam Tas had fetched a total of 52 Rijksdaalders (and 6 schellings), which is 16 Rijksdaalders more. Adam Tas was a farmer, though an educated one, born in Amsterdam. From what is left of his extremely interesting diary we know that he used to buy books and periodicals. But he was not a scholar like Van Grevenbroek, who describes himself as "devoted to study, wrapped up in books, a friend of the gentle Muses" (296).

The reason for the relatively low price Van Grevenbroek's books fetched may well have been that they did not suit the taste of most of his contemporaries at the Cape. Many of those books must have been Greek and Latin texts, because Van Grevenbroek was an ardent classicist and as such must have been rather an odd fish among the early settlers at Stellenbosch. The extent of his classicism becomes clear when we read the only remnant of his literary output, a Latin letter about the area around the Cape of Good Hope, and especially its native Khoi population.[12] More of that below.

Ninety-one of Van Grevenbroek's books landed up in the Von Dessin collection, the oldest book collection in the SA National Library in Cape Town, the one from which the National Library originated.[13] His signature in these books reads "JG De Grevenbrouk". Almost all are of a highly intellectual character (24), 81 of them in Latin, while 30% consists of law texts (24). Van Grevenbroek had studied law and his first Latin schooling he probably had received from his father, who was the rector of a Latin school in Nimwegen (5-6). More than a third of the books are of classical authors and classical thesauri. There are also books in French, Italian, Spanish and English, because Van Grevenbroek was a polyglot, a talent that was put to use when he was secretary whenever foreigners called at the Cape. They were apparently always dealt with by Van Grevenbroek (9, 31 n.7). According to Peter Kolbe, Van Grevenbroek had acquired his knowledge of languages when he was employed as secretary of several ambassadors before he joined the VOC (Kolbe 1927:1.421).

Scholars who have dealt in the history of the Cape of the late 17th and early 18th centuries could not escape noticing Van Grevenbroek and paying attention to him. After all, he was the person who, as secretary of the Council of Policy between 1684 and 1694, wrote and signed the "Dagregister" and "Resolusies" of the Council of Policy, as well as the "Uitgaande

9. State Archives, Cape Town: MOOC 7/1/4 No. 14.
10. State Archives, Cape Town: 1/STB 19/176.
11. Van Grevenbroek's hand-written testament, and the list of his possessions auctioned after his death, are to be found in the Cape Archives.
12. Van Grevenbroek in 1695 wrote the letter in Latin to a friend in Holland. This letter, which contains very personal remarks, is still extant in a later copy, which is also in the possession of the National Library.
13. It was formed by the German Joachim Nikolaus von Dessin after 1729, the year of his arrival at the Cape. Van Grevenbroek had died about 3 years before Van Dessin's arrival at the Cape.

Briewe". He also occurs several times in what remains of Adam Tas' "Dagregister", and is mentioned by Peter Kolbe and Francois Valentyn in their descriptions of the Cape (respectively in 1719 and 1726) and by other visitors at the Cape in their travel reports.

Strangely enough, however, it had to wait until recently that someone — the author of this article — took the trouble of collecting, studying and evaluating all the available information about Van Grevenbroek in order to try to gain the fullest possible insight into his personality and his place in the early colonial communities of the Cape and Stellenbosch. What arose, was a picture of one of the most fascinating personalities in the early colonial history of the Cape. In this article we shall try to delve deeper into Van Grevenbroek's personality, his opinions on the world around him and this world's opinions about him and his frustrations, which embittered the later tenor of his life. The facts collected in the earlier careful study of Van Grevenbroek cannot always be repeated here, but will, of course, be referred to whenever necessary.

The tradition of Van Grevenbroek's letter is tenuous. The manuscript by which it is known is not the original, but a copy which was bought in 1882 at the sale of the Sunderland Library in England by a South African collector of Africana (Schapera 1933, 161). It is a small quarto volume of 120 pages bound in vellum and is now also in the South African Public library in Cape Town. The letter was published in 1933 with an English translation by B. Farrington with an introduction and a few notes by I. Schapera. It had previously been translated into Dutch by J W G. van Oordt in 1886, four years after it had been brought to Cape Town. The letter was addressed to a clergyman in Van Grevenbroek's country of origin with whom, it seems, Van Grevenbroek exchanged letters on a regular basis. The long letter was written at the recipient's request, as Van Grevenbroek states at the end (290). The name of this recipient has, however, been omitted by the copyist, who only identifies him as a *Reverendus Non Nominandus*. I think, however, that there is a good possibility that we find this friend of Van Grevenbroek's mentioned in his will. There he commissions a legatee to have silver cups made for two clergymen, a certain Christianus van der Waijfort and a Johannes Lievens, both ministers of the Church in the Netherlands. The cups were meant to be "in remembrance of our friendship". I think it is possible that one or the other of these gentlemen was the recipient of this letter of Van Grevenbroek's.

The subject of the letter is the native population of the Cape, the Hottentots. Van Grevenbroek, however, also describes animal life, climate, fertility, and other aspects. As the date of composition the year 1695 is given, one year after Van Grevenbroek's retirement and possibly his move to Stellenbosch. It had not been necessary for him to collect the factual material for his letter afresh, because, as he states at the close of his letter, he had already "at the request of the Commander in charge of the Cape put in writing much that it is worth knowing regarding the life, habits, and conditions of the natives" (298). Van Grevenbroek was at that time therefore already a recognised authority on the subject. His letter to his clergyman friend, he says, had been "thrown together from my note-books and odd pages of writing". It might seem that Van Grevenbroek doubted at this stage his ability to write a publishable account, because he ends his letter by expressing the hope that "another of more powerful eloquence will soon undertake this task". Such a display of modesty was, of course, in vogue at the time, and we know that Van Grevenbroek did write another, much lengthier, account—also in Latin—on the Hottentots.

A clergyman in the VOC's service, Francois Valentyn, who later, in 1726, published a Dutch treatise on the Cape, remarks when speaking of the Hottentots: "I have seen a Latin treatise by Mr. Secretary Van Grevenbroek who had taken the trouble to write an elaborate

and able account not only of their manners and customs, but also of their language; this treatise he allowed me to read in Stellenbosch in 1705" (p.106). He then gives a small Latin-Hottentot-Dutch vocabulary which he says was part of Van Grevenbroek's treatise (Valentyn 1726:106). Some years later another visitor turned up at Van Grevenbroek's residence in Stellenbosch, in the person of the German Peter Kolbe, who spent the years 1710-1712 there as secretary at the Magistrate's office. Back in Germany he published in 1719 *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum*, the most detailed work on the early Cape Hottentots. Despite its Latin title it was written in German and soon afterwards also translated into Dutch and English. It is a voluminous work of which to date no modern edition exists. Kolbe mentions Van Grevenbroek only once, in connection with the reverence in which the Hottentots held the Praying Mantis, in South Africa today still called "Hottentot's God". After mentioning his initial uncertainty about the classification of this insect, Kolbe says: "At last Mr Johann Wilhelm de Grevenbroek, a man of remarkable industry, understanding and knowledge . . . taught me from the notes which he had likewise made concerning the Hottentots during his residence here, that this insect was really a sort of beetle" (which — by the way — it is not) (Kolbe 1719:416). The elaborate account which Valentyn and Kolbe were allowed to read in Stellenbosch has disappeared. That it cannot be identical to our letter of 1695 is proved by the fact that the Hottentot vocabulary which Valentyn derived from it is much more extensive than the one that occurs in the letter (280-282) (Schapera 1933:165).

What happened to Van Grevenbroek's treatise we have no way of finding out. Later 18th century authors (Abbe de la Caille and Otto Frederik Mentzel) would accuse Kolbe of having shamelessly plagiarized Van Grevenbroek's work. We know that Van Grevenbroek gave liberal access to his notes to whomsoever was interested. Comparison between Van Grevenbroek's letter and Kolbe's work does indeed show several identical statements on Hottentot custom and belief. It therefore seems certain that Kolbe's dependence on Van Grevenbroek as a source of information was greater than his one single reference suggests. It has been proposed (Schapera 1933:165) that Van Grevenbroek saw in Kolbe the "other of more powerful eloquence" and handed him the manuscript when Kolbe returned to Germany in 1712. Van Grevenbroek had at that time reached the age of 68. Some years earlier his friend Adam Tas had already described him as "old and grey."[14] Though Van Grevenbroek himself states in his testament two years later that he was "gaande en staande" (able to walk and stand), the signatures of the witnesses are preceded by the additional remark that he was "swak van lichaam" (physically weak). Nevertheless he continued to live for at least another ten years, but it may well be possible that at the age of 68 he decided that the best thing he could do with his manuscript was to hand it over to a younger person who had the same interests and who was able and eager to use it in the public interest.

The letter is therefore all that remains of Van Grevenbroek's literary activity, the later treatise having disappeared and to an indeterminable degree been absorbed into the works of later writers. Previous to the letter, Van Grevenbroek had, however, as we have mentioned already, composed an account of the Hottentots for the Commander of the Dutch colony at the Cape. This account had probably been written in Dutch. But that was not all. As Van Grevenbroek says on the first page, he wants to recant in this letter his earlier description of the Hottentots as people who "scarcely deserve the name of man". The hexameter "*quamvis sint homines, hominis vix nomine digni*" ("Although they are people, they are scarcely worthy of the name of man") is an allusion to a line in Ovid's *Tristia* (5.7.45): *vix sunt homines hoc*

14. Adam Tas, Diary 1705-1706: 23 Dec. 1705. (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1970, 130).

nomine digni ("They are men scarcely worthy of this name"). The context of that line is Ovid's lament on the brutish nature of the Getic and Sarmatian nations among whom he is forced to spend his exile: "Mankind here is hardly worthy of that name, having more savage ferocity than wolves. They regard not laws, but right yields to might, and justice, overcome, lies prostrate under the warlike sword" (45- 48). Van Grevenbroek's earlier impression of the Hottentots, which he had conveyed to his countrymen in Holland, had therefore been equally as negative as Ovid's opinion of the Getae and the Sarmatians. It is not clear what earlier piece of writing Van Grevenbroek is referring to. Was it indeed a poem in imitation of Ovid's *carmen triste* and is this one line a quotation from it? Or does it refer to another piece of prose or to a previous letter, the choice of words (*Musa cecinit, palinodiam cano*),[15] and the hexameter created for the sake of poetic effect? We shall probably never know.

Van Grevenbroek's letter mainly concerns the Hottentots. In the early days information about the black tribes on the East coast came mainly from sailors who had survived shipwrecks and had been forced to spend some time among these natives, who generally treated them well. The information they brought when they eventually managed to find their way to the Cape was eagerly collected by the Commanders. The official records contain an interview with such survivors of the ship Stavenisse which went aground on the Transkei coast in the land of the Xhosas in 1686. The notes were taken by Van Grevenbroek in his capacity as secretary and in his letter he made extensive use of these notes or his recollection of them. As was usual at that time Van Grevenbroek does not differentiate between Hottentots and other Africans, obviously believing the Hottentots to be light-skinned Africans. He actually uses the name "Hottentot" only twice (178, 282), otherwise referring to them as *Afri nostri* or *barbari nostri*, and to the others as *Magosi* (for Xhosa) or *extimae gentes* ("our Africans" or "our barbarians" or "the uttermost nations"). Differentiation between the two groups would only come at the end of the eighteenth century.[16]

The Hottentots had been known to the Europeans for a century and a half before the Dutch VOC sent Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 to develop a permanent half-way station on the route to India at the Cape of Good Hope. The belligerent nature of the Hottentots was one of the main reasons why this initiative had not been taken earlier by the Portuguese or the English. The first European to land, as far as we know, Antonio de Saldanha, as we noted, had to retreat with a wounded arm. That was in 1503 and worse experiences befell others after him. Therefore Van Riebeeck's priority was the building of a fort, which was some years later replaced by the present one, known as the Castle. His second assignment was the laying out of a garden to supply fresh fruit and vegetables to the Company's ships. A stream provided fresh water. The Hottentots were to play an important role as providers of meat from their sheep and cattle. Maintaining good relations with them was therefore, for the time being, of the utmost importance.

The present letter is therefore not written by someone who had only a superficial interest in the native population of the Cape, but by one who was already at that time a recognised authority on the subject and remained so after his death. Lack of space precludes the relation of most of Van Grevenbroek's descriptions of Hottentot life and customs, interesting though they are. In the main Van Grevenbroek remains true to the sympathetic attitude towards them which appears on the first page of his letter. Without adopting the cultural relativism of a Montaigne, he describes the natives in a way that differs sharply from that of contemporary

15. "My Muse sang this, I sing its recantation"(Ed.)
16. See above, n.3 (Ed.).

authors who inserted them into a secondary human category in the chain of being. Almost all early authors translated the otherness of the Hottentots into negations of civilized behaviour and Christian virtues. Schreyer for instance describes them as "*an Gemûthe falsch, unbeständig, rachgierig, diebisch, faul und träg zur Arbeit . . .*" (20). In this opinion he is supported by Ten Rhyne: "Their native barbarism and idle desert life, together with a wretched ignorance of all virtues, imposes upon their minds every form of vicious pleasure. In faithlessness, inconstancy, lying, cheating, treachery, and infamous concern with every kind of lust they exercise their villainy" (122).[17] This seems to have been Van Grevenbroek's earlier opinion too, as we have seen, and we note that he still ascribes very much the same litany of negative characteristics to them, but now blames these on the bad influence of the European settlers. The Hottentots had certain customs that must have been unacceptable to even the most open-minded European of that time. They liked rubbing animal fat and bile all over their bodies, and considered intestines ripped from the still warm bodies of slaughtered animals as a delicacy. They even draped these around their necks, probably for apotropaic purposes. Van Grevenbroek relates all this but distances himself from any personal negative comment, mentioning the noisome stench resulting from this practice not as his own experience but as something "our people (*nostrates*) accuse them of" (262). The Hottentots had their sensitivities shocked too. As Van Grevenbroek says, they expressed their disgust openly and sharply about the Europeans' habit of belching and farting in public (206). Where other authors describe the Hottentot language as "noise, not speech" (*stridor, non vox,* Ten Rhyne, 152) or said that they seemed "rather to cackle like hens or turkies (*sic*), than speak like men, thus placing the natives into a secondary human category, close to animals",[18] Van Grevenbroek is "of the opinion that the language of the natives has something in common with Hebrew, for it seems to consist of gutturals, labials, dentals, linguals and other sounds that fall with difficulty from the lips and are hard for us to pronounce" (280).

Van Grevenbroek's account of the Hottentots follows the canon of the *ars apodemica* only to a degree. The vehicle, a letter, was of course not suitable for a strict schematic treatment of the material. His contemporaries Ten Rhyne, Schreyer and Dapper all follow the established tradition, which arose at the end of the 16th century, of compartmentalizing the subject matter under fixed headings for the sake of enlightening their countrymen about native populations in far away countries. [19] Ten Rhyne gives short chapters with titles such as "*De corporis habitu*", "*De Vestimentis*", "*De modo vivendi*", "*De modo bellandi*", "*De matrimonio*",[20] etc.

17. Ten Rhyne in Schapera 1933, 80-157.
18. Beeckman (1714) in Pinkerton 1812, XI, 152-153.
19. About a century earlier a German, Albrecht Meier, had published a little book, not much more than a pamphlet, which was soon after translated into English under the title, "Certain briefe, and speciall instructions for gentlemen, merchants, students, souldiers, mariners, etc., listing what should be observed and recorded when visiting foreign nations" (Hodgen 1934:187). Its material purpose, the commercial benefits to be derived from visiting foreign countries, is obvious from such instructions as to record "the annuall fayres and markets, where they are kept, and how often, and what commodities do there principally abound, with the prices of each good commoditie". But because an understanding of the character and customs of foreign nations was just as important for establishing and monitoring good political and commercial relations, Meier's guide also emphasises the need for enquiry into "the industrie, studies, manners, honestie, humanitie, hospitalitie, love, and other morall vertues of the Inhabitantes, and wherein they chiefly excell" and in "the manners, rites, and ceremonies of Espousals, marriages, feasts and bankets" and "the varietie and manners of their exercises for pastime and recreation" (Hodgen 1934:186).
20. "About their physical appearance, about their dress, about their mode of living, about the manner in which they wage war, about their marriage customs", and so on (Ed.).

Schreyer likewise divides his account into chapters: "Von der Hottentoten Streit", "Von der Hottentoten ihrer Verheyratung (*sic*)", etc., and so does Dapper.[21] Van Grevenbroek is clearly familiar with this categorising arrangement. That he was a reader of literature on exploration is clear from his mentioning (236) works by a contemporary geographer, the Englishman Heyleyn, and a traveller, the Frenchman Tavernier.

Van Grevenbroek treats the same subjects as his contemporaries, and there is an obvious attempt on his part to establish a certain sequence. His account begins with a description of the Khoi-San's physical features, morality, their diet, their dwellings, means of subsistence, weapons and war tactics, their religion, wedding, burial and other customs, medical practices, musical instruments, and so on. In doing so he adheres to the by then already established canon for the description of foreign cultures. But he often wanders off or interrupts his narrative, so that, compared to the others, his method leaves the impression of being rather haphazard. For instance, having started, as was usual, with the physical features of the Hottentots, he then goes on to their diet (including their taboo foods), but inexplicably interrupts his story to relate that it was customary among the Hottentots to kill one of twins, or the child of a woman who had died in giving birth to it, adding anecdotes describing how such children were sometimes rescued by Europeans (180-182).[22]

Van Grevenbroek does not hesitate to describe such practices as cruel, but he does not use them to stress and condemn the barbarity of the natives. Whenever he moralises, it is his fellow Europeans who are at the receiving end. It was they who, as we have seen already, were a corrupting influence on the natives and had taught them "*ignota quondam . . . facinora*" ("formerly unknown vices" 172). The state of innocence of the savage, his living in harmony with nature (*ad naturae legem viventem*; 172) were, of course, topical elements in much of the discourse on primitive people in the 16th and 17th century, already to be found in Christopher Columbus' Journals and letters. So was the tendency to offset this primitive innocence against what was seen as the degeneration and corruption of contemporary European society. At the end of the long list of vices with which the natives had been corrupted by the Europeans, Van Grevenbroek pictures a hereafter where the Hottentots will be executing the punishments against the "glorious priests of the Christian mysteries", a strange remark in a letter addressed to a clergyman, but probably referring to the Ministers of the Church in the Cape who indeed did not always seem to have been of the best quality at that time.

Van Grevenbroek's letter teems with denouncements of his fellow colonists. "In whiteness of soul", he says "the Hottentots are superior to many of our countrymen" (174). The natives should be told "not to put too much trust in colour. The white blossoms fall, the black berries are gathered" (290). He gives many examples of the natives' honesty and hospitality and their eagerness to share with others, while he raves against his compatriots, accusing them of being "false Christians" and comparing them unfavourably to the "savages" (e.g. 222-224), at one time adding that personally he had experienced more compassion from savages than from his fellow Europeans (224).

From the context of these passages it is obvious that Van Grevenbroek is speaking of his colleagues in the VOC. He actually goes so far as to name the only six exceptions by name (284). Towards the end of his letter he says: "I have traversed many regions, and now live in

21. Olfert Dapper (1668) in Schapera 1933:1-77.
22. It is such incidences, based on personal experience, that made Van Grevenbroek's letter readable, despite its many flaws. He clearly was honestly interested in the native populations of the Colony.

a corner of the globe that lies beneath your feet; I ask no more than an undistinguished grave, and I hope this shore will be friendly to me and that when I am dead it will lie lightly on my bones. I have not been a burden to it (Martial); to every man at every time, to my colleagues who came here with me, to the natives I found here, to the strangers who have since come, I have ever offered my confidence freely. I have done this whenever occasion offered or need required, though, alas, there is no place where confidence is more misplaced than here, and I have been vilely treated, and unjustly requited" (296).

The confidence in which Van Grevenbroek had been disappointed may well have been of a financial nature. In his will he inveighs against "those miscreants here in Africa (*Afrikanse gedrogtens—sic*) who have robbed me of almost all I possessed". Almost a third of the money he leaves (amongst others for poor-relief in the Cape and in Stellenbosch) was in fact money owed to him — some of it for twenty years already, he complains.[23] His obsession with money is obvious in his letter and comes often disguised as attacks on the lust for money he observes in contemporaries. In the list of vices with which the Hottentots have been infected by the Europeans, lust for gold ranks highest. The letter contains several outbursts against the search for wealth. One tirade is about the life-threatening dangers sailors and merchants are prepared to risk (234). Another accuses all his ex-colleagues in the VOC, with the exception of the six that he names, of lacking in "piety, honesty, courage, innocence and other virtues . . . Instead they rush on heedless, caring nothing for the authority, commands, and decrees of the Council of our Company, ruthlessly sweeping all the money they can into their drag-net, despising virtue in comparison with cash" (284). We cannot ascertain whether Van Grevenbroek's indignation was honest, or was also maybe to a degree inspired by a feeling of having lost out both in opportunities and financially.[24] It may therefore well be that Van Grevenbroek's sympathetic attitude towards the Hottentots and the many anecdotes he tells about their honesty and hospitality found their origin at least partly in his disappointment with his fellow Europeans.

About the Latinity of Van Grevenbroek's letter, I can do no better than begin with quoting the person who has been most exposed to it, his translator Farrington: ". . . the Latin of Van Grevenbroek is not a satisfactory medium. It is dictionary Latin, laboriously compiled by a man of poor taste and inaccurate though very likely wide scholarship. It is full of tags from Vergil, Horace, Lucretius and others. The alleged elegance of the Latinity consists largely of curiosities of diction culled from Plautus, Cato, the Natural History of Pliny, Varro . . .and any other available storehouse of archaic and unfamiliar words. A peculiarly distressing feature of the style is the accumulation of masses of synonyms which add nothing to the narrative but confusion. Furthermore the sentences are often shapeless and endless,

23. Van Grevenbroek seems to have been a gullible source for lending money. In his testament he bequeaths almost 1400 (1377.9) Rijksdaalders to the Relief fund for the poor at the Cape and Stellenbosch and to friends in the Cape and Europe. Almost one third (521.3) is, however, money owed to him, which the beneficiaries will now have to wrest from the debtors.

24. He was in any case not the only one to grumble about the behaviour of the officials of the VOC. The farming community of Stellenbosch, where Van Grevenbroek had settled, had serious grievances. Their raison d'être was to provide the ships with fresh produce and to produce wine for export. Now the VOC's officials, and the Governor himself, took up farming and only when they were not able to fill the quotas, the farmers were able to sell their harvest, and at the lowest price. In 1705 the Stellenbosch farmers under Adam Tas drew up a petition and sent it to the Company's headquarters. When the governor, Willem Adriaan van der Stel, son and successor of Simon van der Stel, founder of Stellenbosch, heard of this, he arrested Tas and some others and also confiscated Tas' diary and had it partly copied in an attempt to prove a conspiracy against him. Thanks to this, it has partly survived.

lumbering along from clause to clause till they seem to drop from sheer exhaustion rather than to reach any intended goal" (169). Anybody who tries to struggle through even a small portion of the letter will readily agree with this verdict. To illustrate Van Grevenbroek's fondness for strings of synonyms made up of obscure words, the following instances will suffice. Despite the fact that the coast of South Africa harbours only one species of lobster, Van Grevenbroek uses four Latin names in succession to describe it: *cammarus, astacus, pagurus* and *carabus* (184). The bag Hottentot women used to carry when going out foraging is named "*manticam, bulgam, ascoperamve*" (196) and the knife wielded by the person performing a circumcision is called "the sacrificial blade or lancet or operating knife" (*secespita, clunaculus, aut excisorium scalpellum,* 208). Even in the context of the taste of the time, this aspect of his style can only be called pedantic. Less irritating, but nevertheless often sounding forced, is his extreme fondness for classical terminology and references. There is of course nothing unusual in his use of concepts like *Fama* and *Musa*, while the word *Superi* for God would have only the pietists of his time frown. One feels, however, the bounds of aptness strain when he refers to the protestant clergy of his day as "*Christianarum vittarum Mystas*" (172-174). Such an elaborate paraphrase or definition would not be out of place in a poem, but it does jar in prose, certainly in Van Grevenbroek's kind of prose. His terminology also often clashes with the subject matter, for instance when he, in describing a Hottentot marriage, refers to the local witchdoctor as *sacerdos, haruspex* and *flamen* ("priest", "prophet" and "one who sacrifices"), to the instructions given by elderly women to brides-to-be as "*Junonis officia"* teaching "*veneria tyrocinia"*, to the friends of the groom as "*paranymphi"*, to the newly-wed couple as the "*confarreati neogami*", and to the house of the groom's father as the "*lares paterni"* (202). This latter expression may not be such a bad find, the great antiquity of the "*lares"* (Roman household gods) evoking images of primitivity not very inconsistent with those of an African hut. Indeed, sometimes Van Grevenbroek strikes a successful note. For instance, in the description of a scene where a shipwrecked Englishman is leaving the natives with whom he has been living for more than a year and the woman by whom he has fathered a baby son, unmoved by her pleas remained standing like a Dido in the underworld: *Barbara, profiscientem Anglum quendam, sexum egressa in litus usque lachrymans lugubri ejulatu prosquitur . . . dum Britannus tanquam Marpesia cautes firmus, institutum iter presequitur. ("*As one of the Englishmen left, a native woman, defying the restrictions of her sex, followed him right down to the shore with piteous tears and lamentations . . . [while] all the time the Englishman held upon his adopted course, firm as a Marpesian rock", 228, 29, transl. Farrington).[25]

Van Grevenbroek is only slightly more successful in his other classical allusions. The equation between himself and Ovid in exile in his hexameter based on a line from the *Tristia* is not a bad find, but the one from Martial referred to above is rather trite, while the adaptation of a line of Propertius at the end of page 1 (*haec est venturi prima favilla mali,* "This is the first spark — lit. "glowing ash" — of evil to come", *El*. 1.9.18) is slightly contrived. In sum, there is therefore no reason to disagree with his translator's verdict that this letter was written "by a man of poor taste . . . though very likely wide scholarship". It would be difficult to maintain that Van Grevenbroek's use of Classical vocabulary, allusions

25. Verg. *Aen.* 6.471: *quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cautes,* "[so that] she stood there, as if made of hard flint or Marpesian rock". The other Latin words in this paragraph are rather obscure technical terms relating to the various topics addressed by Van Grevenbroek or familiar Roman nuptual terminology, and as such will not be translated here (Ed.).

and metaphors was meant to convey an unfamiliar reality by means of familiar concepts. If that was his motivation, he certainly was not successful, because the majority is too contrived to do anything more than confuse. Instead of facilitating, they inhibit comprehension of African conditions

Nevertheless, Van Grevenbroek's letter deserves our interest, not least because it is the only Latin piece about the Cape of Good Hope and its inhabitants of the 17th century of which we can be sure that it was actually written there, at 34 degrees below the Equator, but also for the wealth of information he provides. He seems to have been known as quite a character by the other villagers. He was probably then living on the farm Welmoed some five kilometres outside Stellenbosch, and he was an elder of the Church. He was respected for his intellect, it seems, and had a calming influence during crises of the church council. His friend Adam Tas describes him as already old and grey (23 December 1705), tells in his diary how they had a good laugh with "old Grevenbroek" (23 Jan. 1706) and how he once slept for two nights on pillows in the church to keep an eye on the building during a severe storm (26 Dec. 1705). "A crazy thing to do", friend Tas says. These are little things but, together with what we can glean from Van Grevenbroek's will and the auction list of his personal effects, they enable us to bring this very minor 17th century Latin author closer to us. [26]

3. *Gijsbert Hemmy*

Another Latin description of the Cape was produced by a young scholar in Hamburg in 1767. He was Gijsbert Hemmy, son of the VOC's Acting Fiscal at the Cape at that time. Though his father was German, Gijsbert considered himself very much an African, defining himself as *Afer* on the title page of the *Oratio Latina de Promontorio Bonae Spei* ("*patria mea"* p.1) which he delivered in April 1767 at the Johanneum Academy in Hamburg where he had been sent some years earlier by his father for study. He probably was in his final year then, being 21 years old, and would be leaving shortly for the Netherlands to study law at he University of Leyden. There he would obtain his doctor's degree in law three years later, in 1770, on a thesis, also in Latin, as was required then. In this thesis, *De Testimoniis*, he also deals with the country of his birth, calling himself a *Promontorio Bonae Spei Batavus* (a Dutchman from the Cape of Good Hope) on the title page and referring to the Cape as his *patria* (p. 67).

To begin with the *Oratio:* The occasion for which it was composed was undoubtedly the compulsory public *declamatio* in which pupils of Latin schools in their final years gave proof of their skills in rhetoric and Latin. Such declamations were public affairs (hence Hemmy's opening address to his "*auditores omnium ordinum* (of all ranks)", and were often published at the parents' expense (Spies 1999:80). There is therefore no need to suggest that the young Hemmy aimed at informing trade (as does Varley 1959:iv). There is nothing in the *Oratio* to

26. The passage on Van Grevenbroek from the Avila paper ends on a suitably conversational note: "For someone like me (A V Van Stekelenburg), who lives in the same little town where he spent the last 30 years of his life — though it had 20 houses then, and now has 70,000 inhabitants — Van Grevenbroek's person elicits of course more interest than one may expect he would with others. I sometimes buy my stock of wine at the farm Welmoed where he lived at least for some years and maybe till his death. In that case he lies buried there, because in his will he had stipulated that he did not want to be buried in a church or in a churchyard but in the garden of the house where he would die." The twentieth century Hollander seems to have felt a great affinity for his seventeenth century counterpart, and shortly before his death instituted a prize for senior Latin students at the University of Stellenbosch, which he named after this Dutch-Latinist predecessor. It has been continued in a bequest and will henceforth serve as memorial to both men (Ed.).

suggest this and it is difficult to see how the VOC would welcome the involvement of Hamburg merchants in the East India Trade. Hemmy just wanted to pass his test, and he had an interesting and exotic subject of which he made the best, referring to himself as *Afer (*Afrikaan) and to the Cape as *"Patria mea"*. The title page shows the Cape of Good Hope (*Promontorium Bonae Spei*) with a line from Horace (*Carm.* 2.6.14) *Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes angulus ridet* ("This little corner of the world smiles at me beyond all others"). Hemmy's *Oratio* contains little that Germans interested in the Cape could not have learned already from long-established sources, such as Peter Kolbe's immensely popular *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum*, which was, as we have noted, written in German. Also, many Germans had personal experience with the VOC. In fact, at that particular time, more than half of the Company's men consisted of Germans (Hewett 1998:xiii), Hemmy's father being one of them.

When did Gijsbert learn his Latin, we may ask? He spent only four years at the Latin school in Hamburg, arriving there at the age of 17, and would thus have missed out on the first two years of the six these schools generally lasted, during which the rudiments of Latin were taught. The Latin of his *Oratio* is uncomplicated and confident. Of course we do not know how much help he received in composing it, but it is consistent with the Latin of his doctoral thesis of 1770. It is likely that he started with Latin at the Cape already, and his teacher may have been his own father who, as a Fiscal, must have had a legal background, and therefore had studied Latin (though his office as Fiscal did not require an extensive legal study). He would have known enough Latin to help his son with the rudiments of Latin. Parents did teach their own children. There was no Latin school in the Cape at that time. There had been one from 1714 to 1728, whose rector had been Ds. Slicken, who qualified because "*(hij) ook in de wetenschappen ervaren is . . . als daarbijn de wijsbegeerte, kennis van talen en outheden, zo den Latijnen en Grieken, als der Hebreën"* (Du Toit 1937:102).[27] After the school's collapse in 1728 it was not till 1793 that a new Latin school opened its doors in the Cape (Du Toit 1937:217-226). In the meantime parents who wanted to prepare their children for academic study overseas, had to take care of that themselves, or appoint private teachers. Though we are informed about the use of the latter, no reference to Latin as a subject is available. Some of these private teachers were educated men, perfectly capable of teaching Latin. One such was Otto Friedrich Mentzel, who studied at the Joachimsthal Gymnasium in Berlin. He arrived at the Cape in 1733 and taught successively the children of a wealthy farmer, Paul Keyser, the son of the ex-Governor Jan de la Fontaine and the children of Luitenant Rudolph Siegfried Alleman (Hoge 1934:13). Another such teacher was the later famous Swedish botanist Andreas Sparrman, a student of Carl Linnaeus, though he taught, for only half a year, the children of J F Kirsten, Resident of False Bay, and the subjects mentioned do not include Latin (SABW I.796, Hewett 1998:xiv), but Geography, Mathematics, and French. There must, at that time, however, have been others. A minister of the Church comes to mind as the most logical candidate, beside Hemmy's father.

The *Oratio* is a short piece and it would not have taken the young Hemmy much more than half an hour to *declaim* (not to *read*). The peroration is "pompously Ciceronian" as Hemmy's translator K D White puts it (ix) and describes the riches of India, their ancient fame suggested by a quotation from Vergil (*G.*1.65-57) and reference to Thrace and Silius Italicus. But this abundance would have been to little avail to Europe, Hemmy says, *"nisi*

27. Van Stekelenburg quotes Du Toit (1937:17) who states that there had been a Latin school in Batavia during 1642 to 1656, and again from 1666 to 1670.

Lusitani et Batavi rectum cursum juxta promontorium bonae spei & totam Africam detexissent" (if the Portuguese and the Dutch had not discovered a direct route round the Cape of Good Hope and the whole of Africa). This, he says, is good enough reason to offer his "*spectatissimi auditores*" a short description of this same Cape: *"patria(m) mea(m)*" (7).

He sets off with a rather lengthy discussion of the original inhabitants of the Cape: *antiquae incolae erant Hottentottae* (the original inhabitants were the Hottentots). Hemmy's description and evaluation of the Khoi differs sharply from that of Ten Rhyne almost a century earlier, and is closer to that of Van Grevenbroek. Hemmy cannot have had much personal experience of the Khoi during the 17 years he had spent in the Cape, because few natives were still living there in the traditional fashion. Imported diseases had decimated their numbers in the 18th century. We can also not expect him as a boy to have been really interested in the natives still present. Almost everything he says, therefore, comes from written sources which he could consult in Hamburg, especially Kolbe's work and a compilation named "Sammlung aller Reisebeschreibungen" (translated from an English work by Astley and Prévost). He is honest enough to mention these sources. His treatment of the natives is overall positive, and here he also follows Kolbe. *Nec adeo stupidi sunt, nec a cultu religioso plane alieni. Leges quidem scriptas ignorant, sed tamen perfidiem, adulterium, incestum, et caedem exosi naturalem legem in opsecrum corde scriptum esse testatus. Beneficentis et hospitalitate in cives suos et peregrinos multis Christianis antecellunt* (Nor are they so very stupid, nor totally unfamiliar with religious practice. Of course they are ignorant of written laws, but the fact that clearly treachery, adultery, incest and murder are abhorred by them is an indication that natural law is inscribed in their hearts. In kindness and hospitality towards their own tribe and towards strangers they are superior to many Christians) (9). This is a far cry from Ter Rhyne's *nativa barbaries* (native barbarism), *miserabilis virtutum inscitia* (unrelieved ignorance of any virtues), *inconstantia, mendacia fraus, perfidia*, etc. (122).

After his discussion of the natives (7-11) Hemmy describes the major physical aspects of the Cape (11-16), including the city (*oppidum*), followed by a short history of the Cape Colony (16-21). There is nothing in these descriptions that his audience could not have found in *maiore extenso* in published works, but hearing these commonplace facts from a young native of this far-away, exotic place, will have added considerably to their interest. Hemmy makes the most of this, referring to the Cape as *patria mea* (7), though Hamburg is his *altera patria* (22), to his beloved family, from whom he is so long and far separated (*dilectissima familiae meae tanto temporis ac locorum spatio a me disjunctae,* 22), his good standing with the present Cape Governor, Ryk Tulbagh (*mei amantissimus,* 22). All in all his declamation probably provoked more interest than the average one which, it seems, more often than not dealt with moral and theological topics (Spies 1999:83-88).

To illustrate Hemmy's plain, unadorned Latin, here follows his description of the mountains and gardens of the Cape: *Inter montes partim montes tigrium, qui non a tigribus, quarum receptaculum olim fuisse dicuntur, sed a maculis viridibus nomen habent; partim mons tabulatus, qui in vertice tabulae planae similis &, quod signum imminentis aquilonis haberi solet, nonnumquam candida nube tectus est; partim mons leonum, qui exigua depressione faxorum a monte tabulato disjunctus est. Hic autem non solum a leonibus olim hic saepe commoratibus, sed etiam a specie sua, humi jacentem & exserto capite raptum aucupantem leonem oculis subjiciente, nomen ducit, & a quo adventus navium ex specula observatus, exploso tormento sublatoque vexillo incolis indicatur* . . . (12-13) Then follows a description of the Company's gardens and its products, which continues with: *Alter [hortus]*

vulgo <u>*das runde Buschlein*</u> *(*Rondebosch*) dictus & in regione, quae nunc terra nova apppellatur, obvius, non minus procreandis arboribus & plantis foecundus est. Non longe ab eo villa celebratissima Constantia a Gubernatore Steelio constituta abest, ubi ex vitibus rhenanis mirabili quadam mutatione generosissimum vinum producitur* (13-14).[28]

About the Castle he says (14): *Oppidum ipsum…conqueri potest* (the town itself can be taken). This last remark must be a deliberate defensive one, because the Cape was notorious for the inflated prices their inhabitants exacted from visitors for goods and services provided (Mentzel 1785:53, 75, 80-82).

After his studies at the Johanneum Latin School in Hamburg, Gijsbert Hemmy went to Leiden to study law. Three years later this study culminated in a doctoral thesis *De Testimoniis Aethiopum, Chinensium alorumque paganorum in India Orientalis (The Testimony of Indians, Chinese and other pagans in the East Indies).*[29] It deals with the question whether the natives in the region where the VOC held sway, were allowed to testify in a court of law. Nowadays such a question would seem strange, but the Roman-Dutch law of that time deemed a large number of individuals and groups as unworthy of testifying, or limited their capacity as such. Hemmy names slaves (18-19), lunatics (20) deaf and dumb persons (21) *infames* (i.a. convicted criminals, adulterers, prostitutes, pimps, 25), Jews and other heretics, Jesuits and Bishops (30). As to women, young Hemmy doubts the wisdom of the practice of his time to allow them to testify because he seems to have been an old-fashioned believer in their innate *levitas et inconstantia . . . iudicii infirmitas . . . animi inconstantia, irae impotentia atque intemperantia libidinis* ("their frivolity and inconsistency . . . weakness of judgment, inconsistency of purpose, uncontrolled anger and immoderate desires"; 29)[30] One might be tempted to suppose some amorous disappointments lying at the roots of Hemmy's medieval attitude.

In the fourth chapter (45-58) Hemmy then sets out to answer the question *An, quando et quatenus valeant testimonia Aethiopum, Chinesium aliorumque paganorum in India Orientali in causis civilibus et criminalibus?* ("Whether, when and in how far the testimony of Indians, Chinese and other pagans in the East Indies is effective (valid?) in civil and criminal cases"). In the *praefatio* of his printed dissertation he had explained that this topic had been urged upon him by his father (*optimus et indulgentissimus parens).* As Hemmy senior was then

28. K D White (1959:30-31) translates the passages as follows (adapted by Ed.): "The mountains include the Tiger Mountains, which derive their name not from tigers which are said to have had their lairs there long ago, but from the bright green spots on their slopes, and Table Mountain, the summit of which resembles a flat table, and which is often covered with a white cloud, usually regarded as the sign of approaching storm. They also include the Mount of Lions, divided from Table Mountain by a narrow neck of rock. This mountain takes its name both from the lions which often inhabited the area in olden days, and from its appearance, which presents to the eye the shape of a a lion reclining on the ground and lying in wait for its prey with outstretched head. From this peak, the arrival of ships is observed from a look-out point, and communicated to the inhabitants by the firing of a gun and the raising of a flag . . . The other garden, commonly known as Rondebosch, and situated in the district now called Newlands, is just as fertile for the propagation of trees and plants. Not far from here lies the famous Constantia estate established by Governor van der Stel, where from a remarkable transplanting of vine stocks from the Rhineland a truly noble wine is produced."
29. Cf. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens 1996:355-363 on the doubtful value of degrees, including doctorates. More important were often length of study (residence), family relations.
30. One of *Akroterion's* readers suggests that this is perhaps more evidenceof Hemmy's classical education, noting that Tacitus often uses the word "*impotentia*" in connection with women. She cites Rutland "Women as makers of kings . . .", *Classical World* 172 (1978) p. 17 (Ed.).

Acting Fiscal in the Cape, this request seems to have stemmed from a practical need among the VOC servants who dealt with legal matters which often involved the native people.

Hemmy's conclusion is a foregone one, dictated by the practical necessities of trade with the local inhabitants: *Commercium cum his populis utilitas* (53). How would it be possible, he says, to be accepted in a trading relationship with other people , "If they feel they are not only suspected of bad faith by us but also regarded as *infames* and *intestabiles*? (54). Many of them are "*Integrae famae, probatae Virtutis et spectatae fidei* ("of upright repute, proven virtue and patent integrity" 51) and can therefore not be considered *infames.* Though heathen, they should not be put on a par with heretics who "willingly and knowingly spurn the remedy of salvation." "They are not unbelievers through their own fault." (49). Therefore they should not be held *intestabiles.*

In fact the Statutes of the East Indies already provided in this matter, on condition that the judge took care to enquire into the character of the native witnesses, and obtained supportive information to corroborate their testimony, especially when the case was between Christian and non-Christians (54-59).

Van Stekelenburg's article ends here rather precipitately, but on the handout he prepared for his lecture on the subject, three poems are quoted, with which he ended his talk. In his copious bibliographical notes we find excerpts from Engelbrecht (1952), Kolbe (sic) (1719) and Valentyn who seem to have been his sources for these poems and their translations. His brief notes will have to suffice to place these in perspective. Ed.

Kolbe (1719:639) quotes the Latin poem by Daniel Heinsius, the Commissioner or "Raad Ordinarius" of the VOC who visited the Cape in 1699 which was inscribed above the door of the local hospital in 1700:

Excipit hospitio fractos morbisque viisque
haec domus, et medicam larga[31] *ministrat opem.*
Belga tuum nomen populis fatale domandis
horreat et leges Africa terra tuas.

This was translated by one Raven-Hart, and is quoted in Valentyn I.97:

This house, built for the sick, restores the weak.
Oh Africa, tremble at the name of Holland
Able courageously to beat the nations down
And to attach obedience to her fame.

Another poem was composed by Petrus Kalden, the first minister to preach in the church, and inscribed above the N-W entrance of the original "Groote Kerk" (inaugurated in 1704). This poem was also quoted by Kolbe (1719:644), who deplores having lost his copy of its companion piece, that would have appeared above the other door of the church:

Aegrotis solamen ego, festisque levamen
fonsque; salutiferos suppeditans fluvios;
Si modo laete hos rivos afflictus adibit,
non tantum incolumis, sed satiatus erit.

31. *"Larga" — sic —* should be read in its secondary meaning as "bountiful", agreeing with *domus.* A more literal translation of the first two lines (significantly condensed to leave another line for greater praise of his country by the Dutch translator) would be "This house takes up for lodging those broken by illness or travel and bountifully administers medical aid" (Ed.) .

This poem, too, was translated by Raven-Hart (in Valentyn I.93), who notes (I.92) that it was inscribed "voor", that is, "in front of" (on the outside of) the door in the N-W, "towards the hospital" ("na de kant van 't ziekenhuis"):

I am the comfort of all the sick and suffering
The Fountain of Salvation if ye but go to this Heavenly Bath;
If ashamed of your deeds ye hasten hither
Ye shall be saved by the possession of this treasure.

Fortunately Kolbe's loss is compensated by Valentyn, who quotes (I.94) the other poem by Reverend Kalden from the S-E entrance:

Mystica sponsa Poli, quae sancta palatia lustras,
menteque divina sollicitas Dominum.
Accipe quae placidae hic panduntur foedera vitae,
oblatumque bonum suscipe corde pio.
Spectator, quicumque venis, transisque viator,
atria, crede, notant, quae sit ad astra via.

The author's notes quote a part of Valentyn's Dutch translation, but then again quote Raven-Hart ("in the modern edition" of Valentyn I.95) - Ed:

O geestelijke bruid! Die de Heilige paleizen
Bezoekt, en met veel ernst de Heer bid om gena;
Ontvang de Panden des Verbonds . . . *etc*

O mystic Bride that frequents the heavenly palaces
and with great fervour begs mercy from the Lord;
Receive the pledge of unity here shown to thee
And take them with an ever-zealous heart.
Onlooker, whoever you be that is accustomed to pass here
Here you see clearly stand before you the way to Heaven.

The rest is silence. This article is perhaps some small proof that Latin continued to be studied at the Cape by learned Dutchmen, not least of these being Albert Victor Van Stekelenburg (1940-2003), scholar, world traveller, ornithologist and friend. Latin at the Cape is the poorer for his passing (Editor). [32]

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32. The editor acknowledges with gratitude the help of Dr M. Schneider in checking sources, and the careful scrutiny by two readers for *Akroterion*, whose perspicacity saved her from several misreadings of Van Stekelenburg's sometimes almost indecipherable manuscripts, and from other errors, wholly her own.

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33. Note by Van Stekelenburg: "Op titelblad Jacobus van der Heiden en Adam Tas *niet* als auteurs genoemd maar als "De twee gemachtigden van eenigen der Kaapsche Inwoonderen" die "de origineele of authenicque Copyen in handen hebben" van "veele authenticque en gerecolleerde Bewysstukken". Zij onderteken de "Opdracht" aan de Heeren XVII ook als "de twee Gemagtigden", Jacob van der Heyden, Adam Tas (16 April 1711).

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