



# Framing the Frame: Frans Post's *View of Olinda, Brazil* (1662)

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The painter Frans Post (1612-1680) of Haarlem was employed in the retinue of Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, the Governor General of the Dutch West India Company, and accompanied him to Brazil from 1637 to 1644. Commissioned by Johan Maurits, the artist recorded in drawings and paintings the territory as it was being cultivated by the Dutch during that period. On his return, Post created about 155 oil paintings in which he had captured the flora and fauna, the fertile land, the settlements, ruins, chapels and people of different origins and social status – locals, enslaved Africans, European clerics, planters – he had seen in Brazil.<sup>1</sup>

The painting *View of Olinda, Brazil* was signed and dated in 1662 (figs. 1, 2). It was made during a period when the artist created a number of significant works. The catalogue raisonné of Post's works describes this painting as 'a cornerstone of his artistic production during the 1660s'.<sup>2</sup> And there is more: the elaborately designed frame for this painting was listed by Pieter J.J. van Thiel in *Framing the Golden Age*, a standard reference work in the field, as one of the hundred most notable frames made in Holland during the seventeenth century, mostly by anonymous framemakers.<sup>3</sup>

The ensemble of outstanding painting and special frame that this contri-

< Fig. 1  
Detail of fig. 2.

>> pp. 102-03  
Fig. 2  
FRANS POST,  
*View of Olinda,  
Brazil*, 1662,  
in its original  
frame, with details  
showing animals,  
fruit and plants.  
Oil on canvas,  
107.5 x 172.5 cm  
(canvas),  
102.4 x 167.3 cm  
(sight size),  
120.5 x 184.8 cm  
(outside dimensions  
of the frame).  
Amsterdam, Rijks-  
museum, inv. nos.  
SK-A-742 (painting),  
SK-L-5113 (frame).  
Digital imaging:  
Jantijn van den  
Heuvel.

bution addresses is unique in the extant works of Post. So far, research has paid only scant attention to the painting and its frame together, recognizing them merely as an ensemble of 'high aesthetic decorative value'.<sup>4</sup> The Brazilian landscapes Post painted are, however, highly political and anything but merely decorative.<sup>5</sup> What is to be remembered, what earmarked for oblivion? What is shown in Post's paintings, and for what reason? This question is closely related to the image Dutch colonizers and Post's local customers had of themselves. We will therefore set out from the frame – its structure and the identification of the flora and animal motifs carved into it – and the painting in order to cast a wider look at the historical context and the kind of collection that may have provided a home to this 'artist's frame'.

## The Frame: A Closer Look

The frame is richly decorated with naturalistic motifs. There is no doubt that this was the original version especially made for this work of art. It is an extremely rare example of an attributive frame for a landscape painting. We can assume that the seventeenth-century frames featuring motifs from nature that we are aware of today constitute a mere fraction of those that had originally been produced. Altogether, many of them were lost over the course of time for practical





reasons – for example, having been renewed following insect infestations. Some were replaced so that the paintings in a collection could all be given frames of a single style for purposes of presentation on the same wall or in the same room. Others, considered to be ornaments, were redesigned in order to match a particular interior. It is therefore not certain whether the frame for *View of Olinda, Brazil* was the only attributive version to have been made for a landscape painting by Post. The rectangular frame has a torus with fairly pronounced concave sight sides to provide the ground for the sculpturally designed motifs (fig. 3). The underlying structure includes narrow, elliptical leaves, the contours

of which are clearly visible in several places. We originally assumed that these underlying ornaments represented the structure of a Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) trunk and therefore constitute an exotic motif as the ground for the overlying design. A comparison with laurel foliage, however, reveals that that frame is in fact covered in a layer of carved laurel leaves. The striking vein at the centre and pointed end of each leaf clearly differentiates this foliage from the structure of the trunk of a Canary Island date palm. The foliage was originally erroneously interpreted by Van Thiel as being ‘composed of tropical plants found in Brazil’.<sup>6</sup> The four identical foliage leaves that point diagonally to the outside from the corners of the frame to take the position of the commonplace acanthus leaf were vaguely described as ‘an unidentified tropical plant’.<sup>7</sup> In fact, however, the shape of the carved foliate motifs was inspired by the deciduous foliage of acanthus (*Acanthus mollis*). This is a plant with both decorative and medicinal uses; it originates from the Mediterranean region and is not native to Brazil.

A variegated flora of shoots, leaves, fruit and flowers of various sizes, shapes and origins was applied to or worked into the underlying structure of laurel and acanthus in the corners (fig. 4). A section of the left side shows carved foliage and the flower motif of a passion vine (fig. 5). Stylus and stamen form a distinctive circle protruding from the flower. In four places, the frame features shooting tendrils with additional twisting twines that provide support to the creeping passion vine. A spherical fruit is visible on one tendril. The variegated design of the foliage implies that there are different species of passion vine being shown. The leaves are trilobate in one place, five-lobed in another and without any lobes at all elsewhere (fig. 6). These passion vine flowers, foliage and fruit are found on the frame, while passion vines with

Fig. 3  
Detail of the frame.





^ Fig. 4  
Details of the frame  
showing various flora;  
fruit in red borders.



< Fig. 5  
Unique floral structure  
of passion vine and  
unlobed leaves.

Fig. 6  
Unlobed, trilobate and  
five-lobed leaves of  
different passion vines.





Fig. 7

MANUFACTURE  
ROYALE DES  
GOBELINS, Paris,  
*Les deux taureaux*  
and *Les pêcheurs*,  
1689-90, from the  
series *Tenture des  
Indes*, after cartoons  
designed by Albert  
Eckhout, c. 1644-52.  
Wool and silk,  
470 x 740 cm.  
Paris, Collection du  
Mobilier National,  
inv. no. GMTT 190/1.  
Photograph:  
Lawrence Perquis.

white blossoms (*Passiflora spec.*) are shown in the painting. Interestingly, the tapestry *Les deux taureaux* (the two bulls) from the series *Tenture des Indes* (Old Indies) features a motif of a trilobate passion vine that is similar to the depiction on this frame (fig. 7).<sup>8</sup> Those tapestries showing scenes from Brazil were created at the suggestion of Johan Maurits. The Dutch painter Albert Eckhout had made the cartoons for the *Tenture des Indes* on his return from the colony, using the existing drawings of Dutch Brazil created by him and other artists – the *Libri Picturati*.<sup>9</sup> A collection of seven volumes, with shelf numbers *Libri Picturati* A 32-A 38, is devoted to the animal and plant

world of Dutch Brazil. The books are held in the Biblioteka Jagiellonska at the University of Kraków and contain 762 illustrated sheets, arranged around 1660-62 by Christian Mentzel, private physician to the Prussian Frederick-William, Elector of Brandenburg.<sup>10</sup>

Our frame features larger carved leaves that can be identified as foliage of the rooster flower (*Aristolochia brasiliensis*) with the aid of a plant shown in the painting itself and a motif in the tapestry *Le cheval rayé* (the striped horse), 1689/90 (figs. 8, 9).<sup>11</sup> In two places, the foliage can easily be identified as belonging to the watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), as the feathered leaves are well translated



Fig. 8

Leaves of the rooster  
flower *Aristolochia  
brasiliensis*.



^ Fig. 9  
MANUFACTURE  
ROYALE DES  
GOBELINS, Paris,  
*Le cheval rayé*  
and *Le chasseur  
indien*, 1687-88,  
from the series  
*Tenture des Indes*,

after cartoons  
designed by Albert  
Eckhout, c. 1644-52.  
Wool and silk,  
430 x 725 cm.  
Córdoba, Museo  
Palacio de Viana,  
Fundación CajaSur.



< Fig. 10  
Leaves of the  
watermelon  
*Citrullus lanatus*.

v Fig. 11  
Leaves and fruit of  
the common ivy  
*Hedera helix*.



into the carving (fig. 10). Both the painting *View of Olinda, Brazil* and the tapestry *Les deux taureaux* present matching examples.<sup>12</sup> Four areas of the frame feature branches with foliage that is likely to belong to the common ivy (*Hedera helix*). The carved bundle of stemmed berries represents this decorative garden plant's seed head (fig. 11).

Unlike the foliage, the fruits carved into the wood are much more difficult to identify with certainty. Among others, there are recognizable members of the bean family (*Fabaceae*). As these are a staple food in South America,





Fig. 12  
Details of the frame  
showing animals.

we can confidently assume that what is depicted are the husks of beans (*Phaseolus spec.*) or peas (*Pisum spec.*). Female hop fruit can be found on the frame in five places;<sup>13</sup> the cultivation of hops was of utmost importance to Europeans. As the female hop plant is also featured as a motif on the tapestry *Le cheval pommelé* (the dappled horse) in the series *Tenture des Indes*,<sup>14</sup> the cultivation of hops was probably also important to the Europeans in the colony of Dutch Brazil.

The animal motifs are arranged across the frame in such a way that there are two animal motifs each at the top and on the sides, while there are seven animal motifs to be found between the corners of the bottom section (fig. 12). Snakes are featured in five places on the frame, and there are two instances of lizards. The other motifs show invertebrates, including scorpion, centipede, praying mantis, grasshopper, tarantula and stick insect.<sup>15</sup>

Some of these motifs repay closer inspection. A praying mantis sits on an acanthus leaf at the bottom left corner of the frame. The insect's body has raptorial legs and posterior legs that are clearly recognizable in the carving. A small piece of the carving – the head – has been lost. A small scorpion sits on the acanthus leaf in the lower right corner of the frame. The centre of the left moulding features a foliate tendril on which sits a stick insect. This carved insect motif appears to us to be following a pictorial model from a wood carving featured in a Piso publication dating from 1658. The first edition of this richly illustrated work, *Historia naturalis Brasiliae* (1648), is an inventory of the flora and fauna of Brazil with texts by the German natural scientist Georg Markgraf and the Dutch physician and naturalist Willem Piso. The contributors to this stock of flora and fauna drawings from Dutch Brazil had probably included Markgraf and certainly Eckhout.

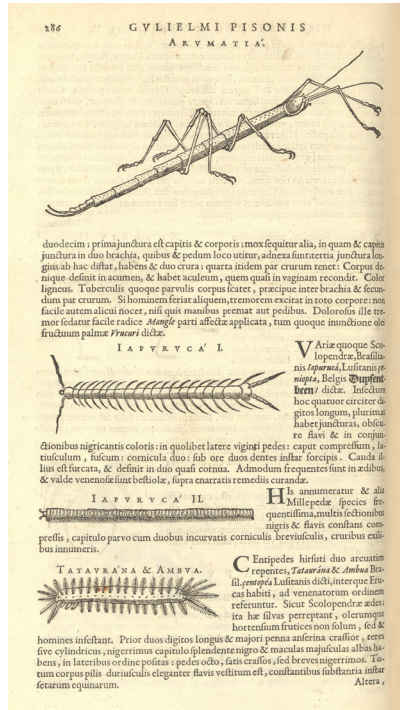


Fig. 13

Left: details of the frame showing a stick insect and a centipede.

Right: illustrations of the same animals in Willem Piso, *De Indiae utriusque re naturali et medica*, Amsterdam 1658, p. 286. Photograph: Wellcome Collection, London.

It is unlikely that Post was involved in the sketches.<sup>16</sup> Van Thiel was justifiably unable to establish a connection to *Historia naturalis Brasiliae*.<sup>17</sup> A decade later, however, Piso published a second, extended edition titled *De Indiae utriusque re naturali et medica* (1658). It was this edition that featured a woodcut showing a stick insect in the same view as seen here (fig. 13), as well as the woodcut of a centipede that is also found as a motif on the frame.<sup>18</sup> The carved motif of a grasshopper on the lower moulding of the frame resembles a grasshopper

motif found in the painting *Landscape in Brazil* by Post from 1652 (fig. 14). It may be a giant violet-winged grasshopper (*Tropidacris collaris*).

At its bottom right, the frame features the depiction of a lizard with a split tail. There is a model for this among the drawings found by Alexander de Bruin, head curator of the Topographic-Historical Atlas Department of the Noord-Hollands Archief in Haarlem, and convincingly attributed to Frans Post by virtue of numerous references to the artist's paintings (fig. 15).<sup>19</sup>



Fig. 14

Left: detail of the frame showing a giant violet-winged grasshopper, *Tropidacris collaris*. Right: detail of *Landscape in Brazil* (fig. 27), with the same grasshopper.



Fig. 15  
Above: FRANS POST,  
*Lizard*, c. 1637-44.  
Watercolour and  
gouache, with pen  
and black ink  
over graphite,  
160 x 210 mm.  
Haarlem, Noord-  
Hollands Archief,  
inv. no. NL-HlMnHA\_  
53004671.  
The drawing  
represents a Spix's  
whiptail (male)  
*Ameivula ocellifera*  
with two tails.  
Below: the detail of  
the frame showing a  
lizard with two tails.

De Bruin already made note of the connections between the drawings and the motif in the frame carving.<sup>20</sup> The reptile has five toes on each of its limbs at the front and back. The watercolour drawing reveals the body to be coloured green, with black spots on the back and blue scales on the side. It is therefore a male of the species Spix's whiptail (*Ameivula ocellifera*), which is found in Brazil. The frame also features some other animal motifs that Post himself had drawn while in Northeastern Brazil: that of the stick insect, for which we have no drawing by the artist, but a woodcut following a drawing; and the grasshopper that is also found in the 1652 painting (figs. 14, 27)<sup>21</sup> and for which Post certainly had a model he had drawn himself.

The original dimensions of this frame were not altered.<sup>22</sup> However, it is no

longer in its original condition, as the original layers of paint are missing. These coats were stripped to the wood, so that the frame as we know it fails to give a full impression of its original appearance. Van Thiel supposed that the limewood frame was originally merely gilded, like other frames in this wood were – might that really have been the case?<sup>23</sup> Is it not more likely that it was painted in colour? A 2016 technological analysis led Huub Baija to the insight that the frame of Dutch lime (*Tilia x europea*) bears only minor traces of an undercoat and 'no indications of further finishes were found'.<sup>24</sup> The material findings provided by the frame itself can therefore offer no insight into the original colour design. We can, however, hypothesize with some reasonable ground. Various scenarios



*Figs. 16, 17*  
Rendered images  
of the possible  
original finish  
of the frame by  
Huub Baija and  
Robert Erdmann,  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
variant 1 and 2.



*Fig. 18*  
Detail of variant 2  
(fig. 17).

are possible. The frame may have been not only gilded, but also given a polychrome finish or silver coating (figs. 16-18).<sup>25</sup> It is also possible that gold and silver were combined with a colour design on the motifs; this is much more likely than gilding alone. The reflections in the glossy precious metal would have made it difficult to recognize the lively motifs, some of which are deeply recessed into the wood. A polychrome treatment of the motifs picking out the colourful flora and fauna, by contrast, would facilitate the 'legibility' of the foliage, fruit and animals. Such a finish is also found on other Dutch attributive frames, known as trophy frames, from that period (figs. 21, 22).<sup>26</sup> And, as we will discuss in greater detail later, this treatment would also create a connection between the painting and the space where it may have been presented in a collection with other paintings and objects, such as those taken from the study of nature.

The underlying structure of the frame with laurel and acanthus follows what was at the time the usual design in Classicist style. The frame derives its unusual appearance from those additional depictions of plants and animals based on what Post and other artists had seen in Brazil. At least some of these can now be accounted for. Non-European and European motifs are combined seamlessly. Dutch contemporaries may have interpreted these as a symbol of the foreign continent's thriving cultivation and the successful subjugation of nature taking place in Dutch Brazil. This provides us with a meaning for the laurel element in the frame's underlying pattern: the ground that holds the other motifs. The laurel, which is also found in the Dutch-Brazilian coat of arms,<sup>27</sup> tended to be read by Post's contemporaries as a symbol of the victory achieved by the conquerors: the Dutch colonizers and the planters and operators of sugar mills, as well as the botanists and collectors

who were assembling *exotica* from the colonies in their cabinets of natural wonders and curiosities throughout Europe.

### The Painting

The complex interplay between the perception of that which is foreign and a conception of the self is also revealed in the painting, which was obviously created before the frame. The painting is more strongly engaged with the exotic in its representation of the fauna, but once again we see cultivated plants that are native to Brazil side by side with those that have been imported from Europe and Africa.

As we have seen, Post had been commissioned by the governor of the Dutch West India Company (WIC), Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, to record the colony of Dutch Brazil in paintings and sketches.<sup>28</sup> The United Provinces of the Netherlands had entrusted the WIC with this colony in 1630 to safeguard it by military means, to administer it and to cultivate it. Prior to that, the Dutch had gained their victory over the Spanish-Portuguese colonizers, achieving a dominant position in an area of the sugar trade that had previously been in Iberian hands. The area stretched from São Francisco via Pernambuco in the South and further via Ceará, eventually reaching Maranhão in the North.<sup>29</sup> Johan Maurits secured his military rule by a victory over the Portuguese-Brazilian troops in 1637. Initially, his main task was to reorganize sugar production, which had declined during the destruction of the war years. Before embarking on his political and economic mission, Johan Maurits had assembled a crew of scholars and artists to accompany him: Markgraf, Piso, Post, Eckhout and the German illustrator Zacharias Wagener. The architect Pieter Post, brother to Frans, was also involved in the expedition to Brazil; he designed the city of Mauritsstad (now Recife). It was their task to

'map' the land and upon their return to Europe illustrate the achievements of this governor, who had been placed in this important function by the WIC, the Dutch Republic and Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange, who was the stadholder of the Dutch Republic.

Between 1637 and 1644, Post was in Brazil in person to draw and paint the landscape and architecture, the flora and fauna, and the pre-industrial production of sugar cane by thousands upon thousands of enslaved Africans under the new Dutch rule in the formerly Spanish-Portuguese colony. When the WIC withdrew Johan Maurits in 1644 because they felt he had not sufficiently consolidated the military, administrative and financial state of affairs in the Dutch colony, Post returned to the Netherlands with him. There, he illustrated the book *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia et alibi nuper gestarum ... historia* (Amsterdam 1647), in which Caspar Barlaeus gave a glorifying description of Johan Maurits' years as WIC governor. His vignettes illuminated a monumental map of Brazil based on measurements and sketches by Markgraf, which had

been published in 1648.<sup>30</sup> The results of the research conducted in the course of the botanic, zoological and medical expedition by Markgraf (died 1644) and Piso was published in 1648 by Johan de Laet under the title of *Historia naturalia Brasiliae* (with reference to the frame). This was the first published work on the nature of Brazil of its kind and therefore remained a scientific reference work for a long time.<sup>31</sup>

After his return to Haarlem, Post painted Brazilian landscapes – at the time known as 'West Indian' landscapes – for the rest of his working life. He was obviously very successful on the domestic art market with his manner of familiarizing the strange and capturing the foreign. Many of the early landscapes were smaller and some of these had been created in Brazil (fig. 19); they are true to nature depictions of the discovery and exploitation of the foreign, empty land; at the same time they familiarize the faraway country by using European landscape painting traditions, thereby introducing elements of the known into the unknown.<sup>32</sup> Post continued to adhere to the conventions of Dutch



Fig. 19  
FRANS POST,  
*View of the Island  
of Itamaracá,  
Brazil, 1637.*  
Oil on canvas,  
63,5 x 89,5 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-A-4271.

landscape painting in the composition of his later, usually larger works.<sup>33</sup> These included the use of framing trees at the edge of the painting, and the inclusion of repoussoir objects placed in a dark foreground zone behind which extends a wide landscape. The depiction of sugar mills and well-planned production processes on the plantations with small figures and the wide, prolific landscapes that testify to the successful cultivation achieved by Dutch management showed those at home an idealized image of the colony's economic development under Dutch rule governed by Johan Maurits. These paintings appealed to Post's Dutch clients 'not only [for] the attractive exoticism of tropical flora and fauna, but also [for] a successful colony that symbolized Holland's military and mercantile success'.<sup>34</sup>

The composition of *View of Olinda, Brazil* adheres to the conventional structure. The painter chose not to depict the cultivation of the land by direct motifs: the central image is that of the remnants of Olinda, the former capital city of the province of Pernambuco, which the Dutch colonizers had destroyed in 1631 – a good thirty years before this painting was created (1662). The church had been one of the two basilicas of the city. It did not stand alone in the landscape as it does in this painting, in which Post takes great liberties with the landscape motifs, the flora, the fauna, the architecture and the people of different ethnic backgrounds. The artist also borrowed elements of the Franciscan abbey of Igarauçu eight kilometres away from Olinda for the building on the right side.<sup>35</sup> The motif of the remnants of a basilica that had been erected by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century was deliberately chosen; it is a political symbol that Post repeatedly employed. As a reminder of the Dutch Protestant victory over the Catholic Portuguese, it recalls the triumph that had been

achieved in the faraway Americas.<sup>36</sup> The choice of a ruined abbey as the object of the picture carried an even weightier message in the Northern Netherlands, where Protestantism was prevalent. 'Catholic orders were associated with the former Spanish lords there, and even a Brazilian landscape was able to depict how this domination was overcome.'<sup>37</sup>

The rich depiction of the fauna in the foreground of the painting is based on Post's own sketches from Dutch Brazil, as De Bruin showed by means of the newly discovered drawings for the remarkable 'sloth' in the foreground, the 'green iguana' at left above it and the almost centrally placed 'spider monkey'.<sup>38</sup> As far as we know, these animals are all part of the local fauna. Post chose Brazilian bird species as motifs; their red and orange plumage is striking. They are the lined woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus erythroptus*), campo trupial (*Icterus jamaicaii*), red-capped manakin (*Pipra mentalis*) and great jacamar (*Jacamerops aureus*). Furthermore, there are reptiles including the green anaconda (*Eunectes marinus*) and the above-mentioned green iguana (*Iguana iguana*) as well as an amphibian species. The latter is a toad that is native only to the North East of Brazil, *Rhinella jimi*, identifiable by its pattern of dark markings on the back. Mammal species include the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*), the brown-throated sloth (*Bradypus variegatus*), the six-banded armadillo (*Euphractus sexcinctus*) (fig. 1) and a kind of spider monkey that cannot be identified more closely. The painting also features an insect that was particularly popular among collectors of specimens from nature: a Hercules beetle (*Dynastes hercules*).

There are numerous plant species, of which we shall mention here only the coconut tree (*Cocos nucifera*), the pindoba (*Attalea oleifera*), the mandacaru (*Cereus jamacaru*), the achiote (*Bixa orellana*), the chilli

pepper (*Capsicum chinense*), the rooster flower (*Aristolochia brasiliensis*) and the jatropa (*Jatropha curcas*). The cultivated plants of castor plant (*Ricinus communis*), calabash (*Lagenaria siceraria*) and watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) (fig. 1) were new arrivals to the Brazilian flora: these fruits and seeds had been brought to the tropical Americas by Portuguese and Dutch seafarers with the slave trade.

### Painting and Frame: An Ensemble

Like the picture itself, which takes a European view of the colonized country, does not adhere to the topographic lie of the land and sees Post mixing Brazilian flora and fauna with those of other origins, the frame also features insect motifs based on Brazilian fauna and flora (passion flower (fig. 5), rooster flower) next to African (watermelon (fig. 10), calabash) and European plants (ivy (fig. 11), hops, acanthus). Whereas the foreign fruits signify the novel and exotic, ivy and hops are familiar European cultivated plants. The acanthus motif is a cultural signifier going back to Antiquity and the Renaissance, while laurel serves as a political symbol of conquest and victory. The frame adopts the motifs and symbols of economically successful colonization under unfamiliar conditions against the background of 'exotic' nature and an alien climate.

The Haarlem drawing of the lizard (fig. 15) is an important piece of evidence revealing Post's immediate involvement in the creation of the frame. This is further indicated by the correlations between the frame and the painting outlined above. Let us stress again, as well, the connections to the woodcuts in *De Indiae utriusque re naturali et medica* (1658): there are clear parallels in the motifs of stick insect and centipede,<sup>39</sup> which are taken from Post's immediate surroundings.

The painter must therefore have worked very closely together with the frame-maker. The latter remains anonymous. We know no detail of the relationship between the artist and the craftsman nor who commissioned the work: did Post himself commission the frame or did the buyer of the painting do so? It also remains to be discovered whether the artist merely made individual drawings available or whether he was responsible for the design of the overall frame concept. The latter would be suggested by the fact that Post himself sketched ornamental models such as the above-mentioned vignettes on the map of Brazil.

In either case, Post appears to have designed the ivory furniture from Pernambuco-Recife which his patron Johan Maurits had probably ordered for the two newly erected palaces Vrijburg and Boavista in around 1640, and took back to The Hague from Brazil when his governorship in the colony came to an end. Still extant from the ensemble of African ivory are a chair, a bench and a stool.<sup>40</sup> The top cresting the back of the bench that has survived to this day was carved by unknown craftsmen to show ornaments and festoons containing motifs of tropical fruit (fig. 20).

Pieter Post, the architect, interior designer and painter – Frans's brother – could also have been involved in the design and perhaps even the production of the frame, as many architects were in that period. We know from invoices that Pieter Post designed mantelpieces with wooden ornaments, festoons, etc., as well as furniture. Why should he not have designed a frame for a painting, even if we have no proof for that yet?<sup>41</sup>

### The Style of the Frame in Context

In light of the size, quality and significance of the painting, we must assume that the frame was made in 1662 or shortly thereafter; it is unlikely that



the painting remained unframed for some years or had been in another frame, as suggested by Van Thiel.<sup>42</sup> He had assumed that the frame was made about ten years after the creation of the painting on the basis of the all-round garlands which he described as 'taut festoons'. He obviously considered these a later version of hanging festoons and therefore chose this late date. However, the festoons could also have been inspired by festoon frames in the style of Louis XIII. These had been produced in French and Dutch workshops from the sixteen-forties to the sixteen-seventies and were very popular among collectors in the Netherlands.<sup>43</sup> Such frames also had foliage in the corners and were sometimes decorated with naturalistic motifs.

As the French influence on the fine arts in Holland did not gain significance until after the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685, and the style of Louis XIII was, like Dutch Classicism, shaped by Italian influences, it is more likely that

the frame design was influenced by Dutch Classicism: its laurel leaf and acanthus corner ornaments make the frame Classicist in its underlying structure.<sup>44</sup> The carver of the frame used this foliage to connect a highly individual, imaginative, freely designed repertoire of naturalistic motifs to the painting. As Dutch Classicism developed from the sixteen-forties onwards, the frame could very well also be dated to 1662 or shortly thereafter.<sup>45</sup> This was a time when a range of different types of frame were in fashion: auricular and trophy frames as well as those in the style of Dutch Classicism; this obviously highly skilled frame-maker was surely able to add the sculptural design shapes to the Classicist underlying structure because he was experienced in the manufacture of special frames with 'trophies' (three-dimensional motifs).

We know of a number of frames for portraits that include 'trophies' featuring motifs that allude to the

*Fig. 20*  
Back of a bench with ornaments and garlands of tropical flora, c. 1640. Ivory, oak, h. 87 x w. 204 x d. 76 cm. Oranienburg, Oranienburg Palace. Photograph: Gerlinde Klatte.



sitters (figs. 21, 22). Landscape paintings are a different matter: *View of Olinda, Brazil* with its original frame in this individual design stands out and is unique in this tradition. The alignment of motifs between painting and frame include colour correspondence between the painting (the plumage of the birds) and the polychrome design of the frame (scorpions and fruit), both of which feature minor accents in red. All of this indicates that this frame represents an early form of the 'artist's frame',<sup>46</sup> which picks up on the intention of the painting in its design and therefore combines the effect of both media – painting and frame – on behalf of the artist.

The design concept behind the sculpturally carved naturalistic depictions of the frame follows a tradition going back to Renaissance. In the course of the discovery of what was described as the New World, there arose a great interest in the natural study of non-European plants and animals as well as the domestic flora and fauna.<sup>47</sup> The sculptural zoological and botanic elements in the carving of the frame are reminiscent of the tradition of nature casts taken of amphibians and reptiles, small mammals, insects, flower and plants by the Italian sculptor Andrea Riccio, the German goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer and the French potter Bernard Palissy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for writing and dining instruments or vessels made of noble metals and ceramic.<sup>48</sup> Wenzel Jamnitzer's *Table Ornament* of 1549 features zoological and botanic casts from nature; it is an excellent example of this. The lizard motif on the frame for Post's landscape painting recalls the cast of such an animal that appears to have settled on a balance stand (fig. 23).

There are several other motifs bridging such casts of natural objects from the mid-sixteenth century and the time of the making of the frame and its botanic and zoological motifs:



Fig. 21  
Dutch polychrome trophy frame, the original frame for Anonymous, *Portrait of an Admiral, Probably Willem van Ewijck*, c. 1680. Oil on canvas, 135 x 110 cm.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. nos. SK-A-1628 (painting) and SK-L-3550 (frame). Outside dimensions of the frame 188 x 152 cm, sight size 132 x 106,5 cm.

Fig. 22  
Detail of the frame, upper right, featuring attributive objects representing navigation (fig. 21).



skirting boards featuring flora and fauna, still life painting, as well as in some way also the auricular style where it included zoological and botanic motifs in its development: flowers, fruit, animals.<sup>49</sup> The design of that frame type nevertheless evidently differs from the design of the one for *View of Olinda, Brazil*: the organic motifs featured on auricular frames are distorted and graduated; they are not very true to nature. The biological motifs for the Post frame are, in contrast, added to the Classicist ornaments.

### Painting – Frame – Collection

The growing interest in the discovery of non-European territories since the Renaissance resulted in the establishment of private universal collections in Europe; these brought together and systematized material evidence of the history (*antiquitas*), and arts and crafts

objects (*artificialia*) as well as animals, desiccated plants and other organic and inorganic matter from nature (*naturalia*) in particular from other continents, ethnographic objects and many more items.<sup>50</sup> In the seventeenth-century Netherlands, large and small private collections abounded. The exploration of the New World and the gathering of new knowledge in this context often followed upon violent conquest and subjugation – as had been the case in Brazil.<sup>51</sup>

The ensemble of Post's painting and frame is likely to have found a place in such a collection of paintings as well as three-dimensional objects that aimed to inspire admiration, enthusiasm and new insights. It is easier to imagine it there than on a wall of paintings as had, for example, been assembled at the same time by Gillis van Tilborgh in *A Picture Gallery with an Artist Painting a Woman and a Girl: Allegory of*

Fig. 23

ATTRIBUTED TO  
THE WORKSHOP OF  
WENZEL JAMNITZER,  
*Balance stand with  
a counterweight,*  
c. 1560-70.  
Bronze, silver, lead,  
h. 3.6 x w. 6.4 x  
d. 5.2 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. BK-17006-B.





*the Art of Painting* (fig. 24). However, the special frame would also have allowed the painting to stand out and come into its own on a wall with dark brown and black frames. When an artist like Rembrandt painted frame and curtain for his *Holy Family with a Curtain* in 1646, he had in fact reacted in his own way to this manner of presenting collections as was widespread at the time, creating in doing so an early version of the artist's frame.<sup>52</sup>

There is another question that will bring us closer to the historic context of presentation: what was the function of the frame, beyond protection? The frame divides and connects at the same time, communicating between the inside and outside. Frames 'demarcate, structure or mediate between the space and the picture'.<sup>53</sup> It is quite possible that the frame for Post's landscape was designed more to connect with the surrounding space than to demarcate: its relief-style

motifs could – especially if the flora and fauna were finished in colour – have constituted an element to mediate between the two-dimensional painting with plants, fruit and animals on the one hand and the three-dimensional *naturalia* (desiccated plants, animal specimens and minerals) on the other within an encyclopaedic collection.

There is a comparable instance of a frame connecting picture and collection space, which was shown in the 1636 painting *Cabinet of Curiosities* by the Flemish artist Frans Francken II (fig. 25). The foreground shows a Madonna surrounded by a garland of flowers in a carved gold frame with floral motifs. These ornaments in relief represent a link within the picture between the two-dimensional painting and a three-dimensional glass bottle with flower specimens.

Fig. 24  
GILLIS VAN TILBORGH,  
*A Picture Gallery  
with an Artist  
Painting a Woman  
and a Girl: Allegory  
of the Art of Painting*,  
1660-70.  
Oil on canvas,  
97.5 x 137 cm.  
Copenhagen, Statens  
Museum for Kunst,  
inv. no. KMssp292.



### From the Prospering Present to a Fecund Past

It is very probable that Post's *View of Olinda, Brazil* was a commission. His works were popular and the artist was at the height of his career. Who might have been the purchaser of the painting? What were their interests? Did the client merely want to be able to claim ownership of a painting by Post? Or were they attracted by the subject and the heroic phase of Dutch colonialism in Brazil that had, however, already come to an end before the painting was created? What kind of collection originally housed Post's picture? Unfortunately, we do not know any details of the creation of painting and frame, as the whereabouts of the painting between 1662 and the late nineteenth century remain unknown. It was in private ownership in Haarlem until

1880 and came to the Rijksmuseum from there;<sup>54</sup> this makes it likely that the painting had never left the city since its completion by the painter in 1662. The provenance of the drawings by Post that have recently been unearthed in the archive also provide no clues to potential previous owners of the painting.<sup>55</sup>

It is tempting to assume that the first owner of the painting had a connection to Brazil, like Post, so that the ensemble of painting and frame is at the same time an indication of this owner's collection and interests. In stark contrast to the Do Lagos' description in the Frans Post catalogue of works, the painting *View of Olinda, Brazil* and its frame are in any case definitely not 'of decorative nature',<sup>56</sup> but in fact have something to say. This places the work side by side with such significant Post

Fig. 25  
FRANS FRANCKEN II,  
*Cabinet of  
Curiosities*, 1636.  
Oil on canvas,  
49 x 64 cm.  
Frankfurt am Main,  
Historisches  
Museum,  
inv. no. B 621.  
Photograph:  
Horst Ziegenfusz.

paintings as *Brazilian Landscape with Manoah's Sacrifice* of 1648 and *Landscape in Brazil* of 1652 (figs. 26, 27). Contemporaries were able to interpret the biblical story of the sacrifice of Manoah as an allegory of the Dutch victory in battle over the Catholic Portuguese in Brazil.<sup>57</sup> *Landscape in Brazil* as well as *View of Olinda, Brazil* can also be considered statements on the successful colonization efforts undertaken by the Dutch.<sup>58</sup>

The interpretation of these three works by contemporary viewers, however, was heavily influenced by both the time of the works' creation and the time of viewing. In 1654, only a few years after *Brazilian Landscape with Manoah's Sacrifice* and *Landscape in Brazil* had been made, the Netherlands suffered a defeat and lost their Brazilian colony to the Portuguese. This loss of New Holland was a heavy blow for the country. The manner in which the 1648 painting *Brazilian Landscape with Manoah's Sacrifice* was understood as an allegory of victory will have changed after the

loss of the Dutch colony in Brazil to include the implication of defeat.<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, the painting *Landscape in Brazil* is also in its original frame; Post included the gold-brown painted round arch to make it a part of his painting. In this way, he brought a view from an interior space into the landscape. The motif of the bird that is placed on the centre of the frame marks the transition from interior to exterior space. The painting therefore initially enabled the patron, the Dutch diplomat Peter van der Hagen (1598-1668), to cast a self-satisfied look into the distance through a window to see a landscape that would forever be 'paradisial'. He had ordered the large landscape painting after he returned to Holland from his Brazilian tasks.<sup>60</sup> The painting could only appear idyllic, however, because it turned a blind eye to the brutalities of slavery. While the painting therefore initially provided a view of a landscape that appeared to its patron to have developed so prosperously due to the achievements of the Dutch colonizers, meaning also

Fig. 26  
FRANS POST,  
*Brazilian Landscape with Manoah's Sacrifice*, 1648.  
Oil on canvas,  
193 x 167 cm.  
Rotterdam,  
Museum Boijmans  
Van Beuningen,  
inv. no. 1693.  
Photograph:  
Studio Tromp.

Fig. 27  
FRANS POST,  
*Landscape in Brazil*, 1652.  
Oil on canvas,  
282.5 x 210.5 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-A-3224;  
purchased with  
the support of  
the Stichting tot  
Bevordering van  
de Belangen van  
het Rijksmuseum.



the owner of the painting himself, it took on a rather different guise after 1654, when it came to look back at a land that had by now been lost. The view was no longer the stuff of dreams, but of national trauma.

### Conclusion

Frans Post painted *View of Olinda, Brazil* after the loss of the Brazilian colony. Despite the altered circumstances, the painter remained true to his pictorial repertoire, telling the tale of the conquest of the territory in the depiction of the destroyed church. The frame, which was created with the artist's involvement, contains a multitude of zoological and botanical motifs that are mainly based on South American fauna and flora, but also some from Europe and Africa. The picturesque animal and plant depictions support the romanticizing and by that time even nostalgic view of that strange territory of Brazil, which had already been lost again after a period during which the Dutch colonizers had ruled and cultivated it with an attitude of having 'permission to alter it to its and [their] own advantage'.<sup>61</sup>

However, the diversity shown in the ensemble of picture and frame was already endangered by monocropping by the time of Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen's arrival. The Dutch sugar barons had concentrated their agricultural efforts so excessively on sugar cane plantations that the population's food supply was seriously compromised. In order to put a stop to exclusive sugar cane growing, shortly after his arrival in 1637, governor

general Johan Maurits ordered that a minimum amount of manioc and vegetables had to be cultivated for each slave.<sup>62</sup>

The painting and the frame were created not in the face of a prospering present but looking back at a 'fecund past', which was being reflected in curiosity cabinets that contained paintings as well as strange objects from foreign countries. Perhaps, proof will be found in the future to show that the painting, the frame and *naturalia* were presented in such a collection, intended by these means to reference each other.

### ABSTRACT

The article discusses the frame of Frans Post's *View of Olinda, Brazil* (1662) and its structure, identifying the flora and fauna carved into it. The Rijksmuseum conservators used our identification of the plants and animals as a basis for their rendered images of various possible original colour schemes for the frames that are presented here. The painting by Post must be understood in its historical context, as is the case for the frame and its motifs taken from nature. An analysis of the frame's style makes it possible to establish that it must have been created around the same time as the painting was made and that Post was closely involved in its creation.

## NOTES

- \* This text is based on a lecture given by the authors at the symposium 'Frans Post: Animals in Brazil', held at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in November 2016. We wish to thank Eveline Sint Nicolaas, senior curator of history at the Rijksmuseum, for the invitation and support. We are particularly grateful for the numerous pieces of information on the history of frames provided by Huub Baija, senior conservator of frames and gilding at the Rijksmuseum. We are also grateful to him and his colleague Robert Erdmann, senior scientist at the museum, for the rendered images. We further extend our special gratitude to the historian of frames Lynn Roberts (<https://theframeblog.com>), who provided us with important information and ideas. Our thanks also to Gerlinde Klatte, Bonn, for photographing the ivory furniture.
- 1 See Pedro and Bia Corrêa do Lago, *Frans Post (1612-1680): Catalogue Raisonné*, Milan 2007; Tanja Michalsky, 'Die kulturelle Eroberung der Fremde. Frans Posts Bilder der niederländischen Kolonie in Brasilien', in Gerhard Brunn (ed.), *Aufbruch in Neue Welten. Johann Moritz von Nassau-Siegen, der Brasilianer (1604-1679)*, Siegen 2004, pp. 101-08; Thomas Kellein and Urs-Beat Frei (eds.), *Frans Post. 1612-1680*, exh. cat. Basel (Kunsthalle)/Tübingen (Kunsthalle) 1990.
  - 2 Do Lago 2007 (note 1), no. 52, p. 200.
  - 3 See Pieter J.J. van Thiel and C.J. de Bruyn Kops, *Framing the Golden Age*, cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1995, no. 46, pp. 246 ff.; the Dutch edition appeared under the title *Prijst de Lijst. De Hollandse schilderijlijst in de zeventiende eeuw*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1984, no. 46, pp. 200 ff.
  - 4 Do Lago 2007 (note 1), p. 202.
  - 5 On this, see Michalsky 2004 (note 1); Alan Chong, 'Ruins of the Cathedral of Olinda, Brazil, 1662', in Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of the 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting*, Boston 1988, p. 414; Niels Büttner, *Geschichte der Landschaftsmalerei*, Munich 2006, p. 185.
  - 6 Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 246.
  - 7 Ibid.
  - 8 Gerlinde Klatte, Helga Prüßmann-Zemper and Katharina Schmidt-Loske, *Exotismus und Globalisierung. Brasilien auf Wandteppichen: die Tenture des Indes*, Munich 2016, fig. x1/37.
  - 9 Katharina Schmidt-Loske, 'Die *Libri Picturati* und weitere Zeichnungen aus Brasilien. Ein Schlüssel zur Fauna und Flora der *Anciennes Indes*', in Klatte et al. 2016 (note 8), pp. 119 ff.
  - 10 Peter J. Palmer Whitehead, 'The Original Drawings for the *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae* of Piso and Marcgrave (1648)', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History* 7 (1976), no. 4, pp. 409-22; Cristina Ferrão, José Paulo Monteiro Soares and Dante Martins Teixeira, *Brasil Holandês*, vols. 1-5, Rio de Janeiro 1995; Rebecca Parker Brienen and Albert Eckhout, *Visões do Paraíso Selvagem – Obra Completa*, Rio de Janeiro 2010.
  - 11 Gerlinde Klatte, 'Die *Anciennes Indes* (Serien 1-8)', in Klatte et al. 2016 (note 8), p. 348 and fig. v/27.
  - 12 Ibid., figs. x1/15-x1/17.
  - 13 Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 246, however, identified these as Brazilian annona fruit.
  - 14 Klatte et al. 2016 (note 8), fig. 1/6.
  - 15 We agree here with the identification of the invertebrate animals as given by Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 246.
  - 16 Schmidt-Loske 2016 (note 9), pp. 120 ff.
  - 17 Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 247.
  - 18 Willem Piso, *De Indiae utriusque re naturali et medica*, Amsterdam 1658, p. 286.
  - 19 Alexander de Bruin, *Frans Post: Animals in Brazil*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 2016, extract from *Master Drawings* 54 (2016), no. 3, p. 20, fig. 23, no. 32.
  - 20 Ibid.
  - 21 De Bruin (ibid.) already saw this connection.
  - 22 Outside dimensions 120.5 x 184.8 cm; sight size 102.4 x 167.3 cm (information provided by Huub Baija); all-round frame width therefore 17.5-18.1 cm.
  - 23 Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 246: 'To judge from the ground the frame was originally gilt, as one would expect lime to have been.'
  - 24 Information provided by Huub Baija.
  - 25 Joint review together with Huub Baija and Robert Erdmann. These rendered images by Baija and Erdmann completed our presentation at the conference in November 2016.
  - 26 It is rare for landscape paintings to be placed in such frames. Among the few examples, there is a landscape format frame from the mid-seventeenth century which appears to have also been made for a landscape painting. The motifs of that frame are also executed in great detail and botanic precision, but show only European flora. As of recently, this narrow festoon frame surrounds



- Peter Paul Rubens's painting *Landscape with a Shepherd and his Flock*, c. 1638 (The National Gallery, London, NG157). Information from Lynn Roberts.
- 27 Depiction available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch\\_Brazil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Brazil) (consulted 4 November 2019).
- 28 On the historical context, see Gerhard Brunn, 'Die Brasilianischen Jahre', in Brunn 2004 (note 1), pp. 27-37.
- 29 See Eddy Stols, 'Flora und Fauna von Brasilien. Fünf Jahrhunderte Entdeckung und Eroberung', in Christian Welzbacher (ed.), *Terra Brasilia. Die Entdeckung einer neuen Welt*, Berlin 2013, pp. 41-87, esp. pp. 45 ff.
- 30 See the newly discovered drawings by Frans Post featuring animals that we also find on the map 'Brasilia qua parte paret Belgis'. See Klatte et al. 2016 (note 8), figs. 1x/4-6, x1/3, x1/4; De Bruin 2016 (note 19), pp. 31 ff.
- 31 See Stols 2013 (note 29), p. 48.
- 32 See Michalsky 2004 (note 1), pp. 101 ff., esp. p. 106.
- 33 See Chong 1988 (note 5), p. 414.
- 34 '... nicht nur die reizvolle Exotik tropischer Flora und Fauna, sondern eine erfolgreiche Kolonie, die ein Symbol für die militärischen und merkantilen Erfolge Hollands waren.' Büttner 2006 (note 5), p. 185.
- 35 Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 247; Chong 1988 (note 5), p. 415.
- 36 Chong 1988 (note 5), p. 415; Do Lago 2007 (note 1), cat. 52, p. 200; Michalsky 2004 (note 1), p. 106.
- 37 'Katholische Orden wurden dort mit den ehemaligen spanischen Besatzern in Verbindung gebracht – und auf einer brasilianischen Landschaft konnte man auch deren Überwindung noch einfließen lassen.' Michalsky 2004 (note 1), p. 106.
- 38 See De Bruin 2016 (note 19), nos. 5, 6, 10, 14.
- 39 There is an extant sketch in the *Libri picturati* for the motif showing the centipede, which served as model. See *Liber picturatus*, A 36, p. 412 (Jagiellonian Library, Cracow).
- 40 Extant in Oranienburg Palace, see Holger Kürbis, 'Fürst Johann Moritz von Nassau-Siegen. Zwischen Kunstpatronage und Kulturtransfer', in Klatte et al. 2016 (note 8), pp. 41 ff.
- 41 Information from Ada de Wit, art historian researching Pieter Post.
- 42 Van Thiel and De Bruyn Kops 1995 (note 3), p. 247.
- 43 Thanks to Lynn Roberts for this information; this is her own research area.
- 44 Huub Baija considers this confirmed by comparisons with Classicist frames at the Rijksmuseum.
- 45 On Dutch Classicism, see Albert Blankert, *Dutch Classicism in Seventeenth-Century Painting*, exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen)/Frankfurt am Main (Städelsches Kunstinstitut) 1999.
- 46 On artist's frames, see Wolfgang Kemp, 'Heimatrecht für Bilder. Funktionen und Formen des Rahmens im 19. Jahrhundert', in Eva Mendgen (ed.), *In Perfect Harmony: Bild + Rahmen 1850-1920*, Amsterdam 1995, pp. 13-25 as well as Wolfgang Kemp, *Rembrandt. Die Heilige Familie oder die Kunst, einen Vorhang zu lüften*, Frankfurt am Main 1986.
- 47 See Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance*, Princeton 1993 as well as David Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginning of Modern Natural History*, Chicago/London 2002.
- 48 See Andrea Klier, *Fixierte Natur – Naturabgüsse und Wachseffigies im 16. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2004.
- 49 See Reinier Baarsen, *Kwab: Ornament as Art in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 2018.
- 50 See Horst Bredekamp, *Antikensehnsucht und Maschinenglauben. Die Geschichte der Kustkammer und die Zukunft der Kunstgeschichte*, Berlin 1993.
- 51 See Ellinoor Bergvelt and Renée Kistemaker, *De wereld binnen handbereik. Nederlandse kunst- en rariteitenverzamelingen, 1585-1735*, 2 vols., exh. cat. Amsterdam (Amsterdams Historisch Museum) 1992 – on this, see Welzbacher 2013 (note 29); the richly illustrated *Zo wijd de wereld strekt*, exh. cat. The Hague (Mauritshuis) 1979; Denise Daum, *Albert Eckhouts' 'gemalte Kolonie'. Bild- und Wissensproduktion über Niederländisch-Brasilien um 1640*, Marburg 2009.
- 52 Kemp 1986 (note 46).
- 53 '... grenzen ab, gliedern oder vermitteln zwischen der räumlichen Umgebung und dem Bild.' Claus Grimm, *Alte Bilderrahmen, Epochen, Typen, Material*, Munich 1978, p. 7.
- 54 The painting by Post (no. 44, *Paysage dans les Indes Occidentales*) was auctioned together with the collection Copes van Hasselt and Copes van Hasselt-de Lange. Cornelia Elisabeth Anna Coop van Hasselt-de Lange had died on 4 October 1879, her husband Conrad Jacob Gerbrand Copes van Hasselt had already passed away in 1860.

- 55 On the provenance of this drawing, see De Bruin 2016 (note 19), p. 38.
- 56 Do Lago 2007 (note 1), no. 52, p. 202: 'This masterful painting was certainly an expensive commission of decorative nature ...'
- 57 Chong 1988 (note 5), p. 415 referring to J. de Sousa-Leão, *Frans Post. 1612-1680*, Amsterdam 1973, p. 63, no. 9.
- 58 Chong 1988 (note 5), p. 415.
- 59 There was already another political meaning given to the painting in *Maurits de Braziliaan*, exh. cat. The Hague (Mauritshuis) 1953, no. 17 and following that, Susan Kuretzky in *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat. Washington (National Gallery of Art)/Detroit (Detroit Institute of Arts)/Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1980, no. 77, p. 266: 'Post may have wished to include this Old Testament story because he saw in it a parallel to the recent downfall of the Dutch empire in Brazil. ... Possibly the painting expresses the hope that a new "Samson" would be sent again to Brazil to defeat the "Philistines" (i.e. the Portuguese).' It was not a military defeat when Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen was recalled in 1644, as also agreed by Chong 1988 (note 5), p. 416, note 14. After Dutch Brazil had been lost to the Portuguese, however, it appears conceivable to us that there appeared an interpretation associated with defeat and connected with the hope for a turn of events.
- 60 See the details on this painting (Frans Post, *Landscape in Brazil, 1652*) on the Rijksmuseum website.
- 61 '... zu dessen und dem eigenen Vorteil verändern zu dürfen.' Michalsky 2004 (note 1), p. 106.
- 62 See Katharina Schmidt-Loske, 'Die Pflanzenabbildungen auf den Tappiserien der Anciennes Indes. Von der Färberpflanze zum Rauschmittel', in Klatte et al. 2016 (note 8), p. 166, note 40.