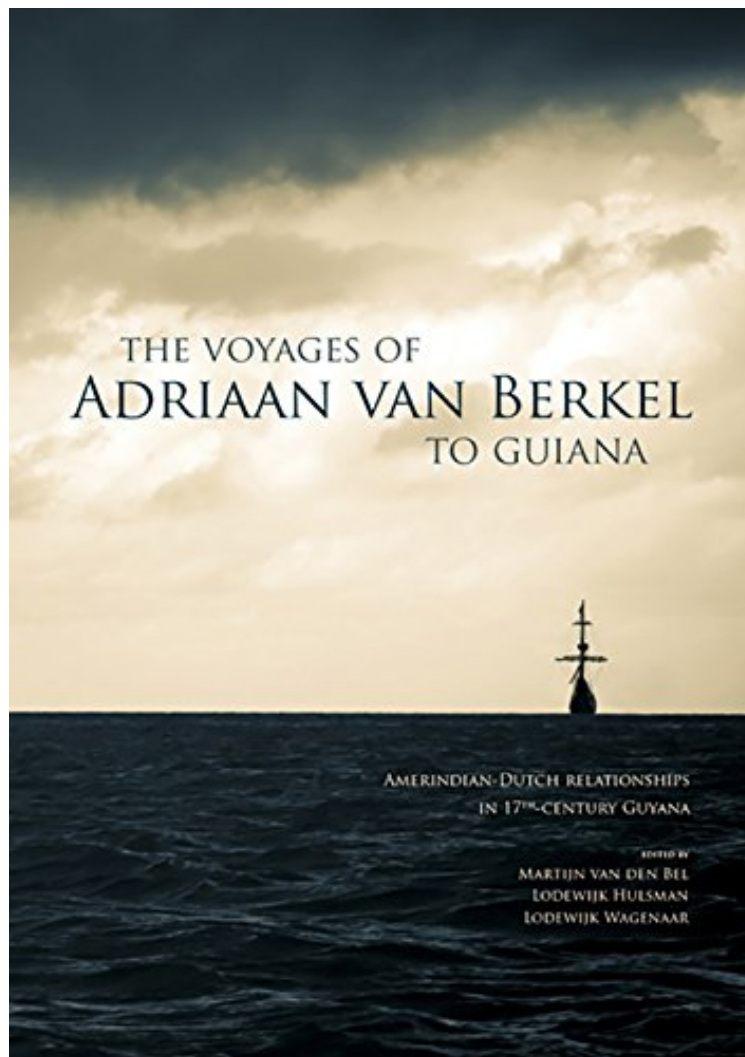


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The Voyages of Adriaan van Berkel to Guiana: Amerindian-Dutch Relationships in 17th Century Guyana

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From Sidestone Press : The Voyages of Adriaan van Berkel to Guiana: Amerindian-Dutch Relationships in 17th Century Guyana before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Voyages of Adriaan van Berkel to Guiana: Amerindian-Dutch Relationships in 17th Century Guyana:

In 1670 the 22-year old Adriaan van Berkel left the Dutch city of Leiden to join a trading vessel headed for Guiana in

the West Indies (South America). This book is a new English translation as well as a full transcription of Van Berkels travel journal, originally published in 1695 under the title of *Amerikaansche Voyagien*. In addition, this book contains an extensive glossary and an introduction about the historic context of Van Berkels travels by Lodewijk Hulsman and Martijn van den Bel, as well as a preface by Lodewijk Wagenaar. Van Berkel set out to visit the Dutch colony of Berbice upon the Wilde Kust or Wild Coast of Guiana in 1670. He was hired by the Masters van Rhee and van Pere, patrons of that colony, as a merchant and secretary. Van Berkel stayed at Berbice for three years and during that time he made various voyages on foot and in canoes, accompanied by local Amerindian guides to sort out a heated matter between this Zealander colony and the WIC colony upon the Essequibo River. He became acquainted with life on the sugar plantations, but also with Guiana and its inhabitants with whom the Dutch traded annatto. Twenty years after his return to the Netherlands Van Berkel wrote down his adventures and published these in 1695. The text of Van Berkel was adapted for a more pleasant reading by inserting numerous sections taken from other famous books about the Americas written by Biet, Champlain, Thevet and Von Staden, revealing a case of extensive plagiarism which appears to have normal practice in those days. The editor also added a second part to the book consisting of a Dutch translation of George Warrens *An Impartial Description of Surinam upon the continent of Guiana in America* (1667) as well as a precise discourse on the murder of Governor Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck in Paramaribo in July 1688. It is in particular this latter addition for which Van Berkels book is most often cited by Dutch historians. The *Amerikaansche Voyagien* of Van Berkel is without any doubt one of the most important and earliest publications of the Dutch presence in the country of Guyana. It represents a solid contribution to the knowledge of the early private and WIC trading ventures on the Wild Coast. It also features important early ethnographic information about the Amerindian peoples living in this region, notably the Arawak or modern Lokono, and their ties with the Dutch traders. The description of the colony along the Berbice river clearly shows that the Dutch were close partners of the Arawak and enemies of the Caribs of the Corantyne Rivers. This book provides a new English translation but also the first transcription of the 1695 text by Van Berkel. These two texts are accompanied by an extensive glossary and an introduction detailing the historic context of the Zealander and WIC presence in Guyana during the 17th century. Additional archival research in the Netherlands also uncovered the true identity of Adriaan van Berkel who until now remained unknown. Finally, Lodewijk Wagenaar provided a preface demonstrating insight in the business of the Amsterdam editors houses of this century which is at the very heart of modern travel writing and reveals how the second part of the book on Suriname was edited. In short, this book provides an important transcription and translation of the early colonial history of Guyana and that of the Netherlands during the 17th century in the Western Guianas.

The editors have done an impressive job of carefully editing and shedding light on many aspects of Van Berkels *American Voyages* scholars interested in European colonial expansion in the Atlantic World and in the history and culture of Indigenous peoples of the Wild Coast will find much of interest here. (Mark Meuwese *Mariner's Mirror*)

About the Author Drs. Martijn van den Bel has been living and working over a decade as an archaeologist for Inrap in Cayenne (French Guiana) and directs public excavations in the latter French Department as well as the French Antilles. At the moment he is finishing his PhD at the University of Leiden directed by Corinne Hofman and Arie Boomert, discussing the prehistory of the coastal area of French Guiana between the Cayenne and the Maroni Rivers. Dr. Lodewijk Hulsman is a researcher affiliated to the University of Amsterdam where he defended his PhD study on Amerindian and European trade connections in Dutch ia in 2009. He has published several articles on the Amerindians in Dutch ia based on non-published original source material retrieved from archives in the Netherlands. Hulsman is currently engaged in the research project *Atlas Dutch Brazil* of the New Holland Foundation and the *Atlas Mutual Heritage*. He is also affiliated to the *Ncleo de Pesquisas Eleitorais e Politicas da Amazonia* of the *Universidade Federal de Roraima*. Dr. Lodewijk Wagenaar received his PhD in Leiden (1994) on a study of the Dutch Period history of Sri Lanka. As curator of the Amsterdam Museum he was involved in the exhibition of the 18th-century history of Amsterdam, in which he included the history of Surinam and slavery. He was also involved in the 2005 exhibition on Sugar in the 17th and 18th century with special attention to the consumption of sugar in the Netherlands and its production in the West and East Dutch Indies.