

The Voyage of Gelein van Stapels to the Amazon River, the Guianas and the Caribbean, 1629–1630

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Dedicated to Neil Lancelot Whitehead (1956–2012)

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PREFACE

The manuscript presented here to the reader contains a detailed description of a voyage made in 1629–30 by the Dutch sea captain Gelein van Stapels along the northern coast of South America and throughout the Caribbean. The original manuscript is stored at the *Zeeuws Archief* in Middelburg, Netherlands, under the classification MS 182. It belongs to the Manuscript Collection and was damaged, probably as a result of the bombardment of the Archive in Middelburg in 1940 by the German air force. A few maps of the document were published for the first time by Doeke Roos in 1992.¹ Martin Wallenburg subsequently worked on the palaeography of this difficult document and published two articles on its content.² This is the first publication of the full text of the document.

The manuscript consists of two parts, the first being a succession of chapters providing descriptions of sixteen different geographical locations, ranging from the Amazon River to Caribbean islands. The second part is a copy of the ship's log that was maintained during the voyage. The manuscript once featured six coloured maps that illustrate a number of the chapters, but the first map of the Tauregue fortress on the Amazon River is now missing. We are probably dealing here with the original journal written by Gelein van Stapels himself during the homebound crossing when he left the Caribbean and put all his documents together to compile one master copy.³ A full transcription of this manuscript is to be published by the authors in a forthcoming volume of the Dutch *Linschoten Vereniging*.

INTRODUCTION

The background to the voyage

The journal of Gelein van Stapels covers events in the Caribbean and along the South American coast between the Amazon and Orinoco rivers. It reflects the extension of the Dutch maritime endeavour in this large geographical area in this period. Spanish settlements on the Caribbean islands of Hispaniola and Cuba had been founded at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, but, like the settlement of Nueva Cadiz on the island of Cubagua off the coast of Venezuela, had become peripheral to the Habsburg Empire after the conquest of Mexico and Peru. The relative weakness of this part of the Spanish empire made it a target for intrusion by the European nations that had previously been held at bay in America by the Iberian military supremacy.

Although Dutch merchants already traded actively in the Caribbean during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the publication of Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* in 1596 inspired a great number of adventurers to explore the coast between the mouths of the Amazon and Orinoco.⁴ This part of northeastern South America between the Portuguese colony of Brazil and Spanish Venezuela remained Amerindian territory. The Spanish had tried to establish colonies to the east of the Orinoco delta, but their attempts had been thwarted by the Amerindian population.⁵

¹ Roos, D., *Zeeuwen en de Westindische Compagnie (1621–1674)*, Hulst, van Geyt Productions, 1992, p. 25.

² Wallenburg, M., 'Het Reisverhaal van Gelein van Stapels', *Zeeuws Tijdschrift*, 1995, 1, pp. 9–14, and 2, pp. 6–10.

³ The authors would like to thank Ivo van Loo (Zeeuws Archief) for his expert advice on the manuscript.

⁴ Concerning Dutch merchants in the Caribbean see for example, Andrews, K. R., *English Privateering Voyages to the West Indies, 1588–1595*, The Hakluyt Society, Second Series 111, London, 1959, pp. 338–65; See also Goslinga, C. C. *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast 1580–1680*, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1971, pp. 47–8, 53–6.

The main motivation behind the Spanish expansion eastwards was the search for the mysterious El Dorado, which was supposed to be located in the vicinity of the city of Manoa near the so-called Lake of Parima.⁶ The local Amerindian population sought alliances with Europeans like Raleigh to strengthen their opposition to the Spanish expansion. This strategy was fairly successful and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Guiana coast became known to Dutch sailors as *The Wild Coast*, controlled not by Portuguese or Spanish, but by ‘Wilden’, or savages, as the Dutch commonly called the natives of the American continent. Despite the general lack of European interest in this part of the coast, and the widespread Iberian presence in the Caribbean and South America, this intermediate region must have been visited by many French and English ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean for trade and piracy during the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁷

Being a part of the Habsburg Empire, the Netherlands had access to trade with the Iberian colonies in America, and the port of Antwerp flourished as the undisputed centre in the middle of the sixteenth century. However, the rebellion that broke out against Spanish rule in the 1560s resulted in a division between the Southern and Northern Netherlands, and the Union of Utrecht in 1580 gave rise to the foundation of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces in the Northern Netherlands (Figure 1). Spanish embargoes on Dutch shipping to Iberian destinations in the final decades of the sixteenth century forced the Dutch merchant navy to explore the Atlantic. The personal union of Portugal with the Spanish crown in 1580 added extra weight to these embargoes as Dutch were forced to seek an alternative for the Setubal salt trade which led to the exploitation of salt ponds at Punta de Araya on the Venezuelan coast.⁸

Dutch expansion in eastern Asia was particularly impressive. The Dutch established a trading company for the East Indies in 1602 (the VOC), based on public capital vested in a private company with a patent from the Dutch government. A similar West India Company (WIC) had been advocated at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but did not materialize. The truce between the Republic and the Spanish crown in 1609 was a *de facto* recognition of the rebellious Netherlands, but abandoning the WIC was one of the concessions.⁹

There was considerable resistance to this truce within the Republic, and in the first quarter of the seventeenth century diverse companies of Holland and Zeeland merchants began exploring the coasts of North America, the Caribbean, northeastern South America and West Africa to establish trading posts. The earliest Dutch outposts on the Guiana coast were probably located at the mouth of the Amazon, Oyapock, and Essequibo rivers.¹⁰

For this type of trade, Dutch merchants founded private companies and hired men to settle in the vicinity of Amerindian trading centres. For example, the Amsterdam-based

⁵ Pedro de Acosta and 300 men tried to install themselves on the Paroma River in Guyana in 1530, and Gaspar de Sotelle and 126 families tried to start a colony on the island of Cayenne in 1568. Both colonies failed and the colonists were expelled by hostile Careebeans and Paragotoas: Harlow, V., *Colonising Expeditions to the West-Indies and Guiana, 1623–1667*, The Hakluyt Society, Second Series 56, London, 1925, p. 138.

⁶ Williamson, J. A., *English Colonies in Guiana and on the Amazon, 1604–1668*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1923; Hemming, J., *The Search for El Dorado*, London: Macmillan, 1978; Hemming, J., *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians, 1500–1760*, London: Macmillan, 1978; Ramos Perez, Demetrio, *El Mito Del Dorado: su Genesis y Proceso*, Caracas, 1973.

⁷ Moreau, J-P., *Les Petites Antilles, de Christophe Colomb à Richelieu*, Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1992.

⁸ Sluiter, E., ‘Dutch-Spanish Rivalry in the Caribbean Area, 1594–1609’, *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 28, 2, 1948.

⁹ Goslinga, 1971, pp. 67–73; Heijer, H., den, *De Geschiedenis van de WIC*, Walburg Pers: Zutphen, 2002.

¹⁰ Williamson, 1923; Lorimer, J., *English and Irish Settlement on the River Amazon 1550–1646*, The Hakluyt Society, Second Series 171, London, 1989; den Heijer, 2002; Hulsman, L. A. H. C., *Nederlands Amazonia. Handel met indianen tussen 1580 en 1680*, PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2009.

Guiaanse Compagnie was already operating in some of these centres as early as 1604.¹¹ Local traders were instructed to gather as many Amerindian goods as possible in exchange for European items before the return of the traders' ship. The Amerindians provided goods like hammocks, annatto balls, dye woods, speckled wood, tobacco and victuals, in exchange for a variety of European merchandise like iron tools and glass beads.

It may be evident that the few factors, or *leggers* in Dutch, of these early trading posts were living by the grace of the Amerindians in the surrounding villages, and that the slightest derogation of any matter could end their mutual understanding, leading to havoc. Personal interests, cultural misunderstanding and love affairs might have driven the Amerindians to end their relationships with these men, sometimes resulting in massacres, but trade relations were always resumed. 'Disturbed' areas were either temporarily abandoned or trading posts were fortified, a wooden palisade being erected around the house in order to protect the merchandise, i.e. strong houses.

These Dutch trading activities were recorded by the English and French who opted for 'durable' colonization tactics by implementing more isolated larger colonies (e.g. Charles Leigh, Robert Harcourt), but these colonies suffered for various reasons, notably the failure of supply.¹² The famous maps of Guiana made by Iodocus Hondius (1599) and Hessel Gerritsz (1625)¹³ show multiple indigenous settlements between the Island of Cayenne and the Essequibo where Europeans traded with the local population. Zeelander merchants such as Jan de Moor tried to install colonies in the Guianas, but Fort Kijkoveral was the only one to last beside the colonies on the lower Amazon, other attempts being thwarted by the local Amerindian populations.¹⁴

When the Twelve Years' Truce expired in April 1621, the Dutch Republic of the United Provinces once again took up arms against the Iberian powers of Spain and Portugal. The objective of the WIC, founded three months later, was twofold: on the one hand to capture Spanish and Portuguese freighters and to ransack colonies, and on the other to found colonies and to conduct trade with the local population. The WIC consisted of a federation of five separate enterprises, or so-called Chambers, established in Amsterdam, Middelburg, Maze (Rotterdam/Dordrecht), Noorderkwartier (Enkhuizen/Hoorn or Western Friesland) and Groningen. The deputies of the directors of these Chambers assembled twice a year to determine corporate policy, and separate chambers were assigned tasks like the outfitting of a certain number of ships. This gathering was called the 'Lords XIX' because there were eighteen deputies of the Chambers and one representative from the States General on the board. Daily affairs of the Zeeland Chamber were run by a small committee of directors selected by the directors or *bewindhebbers* that gathered virtually every day of the week to

¹¹ Hulsman, L. A. H. C., 'De Guiaansche Compagnie; Nederlanders in Suriname in de periode 1604–1617', *OSO Tijdschrift voor Surinamistiek en het Caraïbisch gebied*, 29, 2, 2010.

¹² These Dutch trading activities were observed by Charles Leigh and Jean Mocquet on the Oyapock River, and also by Unton Fisher on the Suriname River: Leigh, C., *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, by Samuel Purchas, Vol. XVI, Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1906, p. 320; Mocquet, J., *Voyages en Afrique, Asie, Indes orientales & occidentales. Faits par Jean Mocquet, garde du Cabinet des singularitez du Roy, aux Tuileries. Divisez en six livres, & enrichiz de figures*, Paris: Chez Jean de Heuqueville, 1617, p. 80; Fisher, U., 'A Relation of the habitations and other Observations of the River of Marwin, and the adjoining Regions', *Hakluytus posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes*. [...], London: H. Fetherston, 1625, p. 1285.

¹³ Hessel Gerritsz' map of Guiana was published in J. de Laet, *Nieuwe Wereldt ofte Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* [...], Leiden: Elzevier, 1625, p. 455 ff.

¹⁴ In 1615, Jan de Moor, burgomaster of Flushing, sent 280 planters to the Island of Cayenne under the command of Theodore Claessen from Amsterdam, and another group to the Oyapock River under the command of Jan Pietersz (in Harlow 1925, p. 133; Williamson, 1923, pp. 63–4; Goslinga, 1971, pp. 411–13). In 1626, another attempt was made to settle the Island of Cayenne and the Oyapock under the command of Claude Prevost and Jan van Ryen respectively: Netscher, P. M., *Geschiedenis van de Koloniën Essequibo, Demerary en Berbice, van de vestiging der Nederlanders aldaar tot op onze tijd*, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1888, pp. 53–7.

manage business at the West India House on the corner of the Lange Delft and the Sint Janstraat in Middelburg.¹⁵ The agenda included the building and outfitting of ships, the hiring and firing of employees, management of property like the warehouse and shipyard, the sale of the cargo that the ships brought in acquired by war or by trade, and the administration of these activities.



Figure 1. Geopolitical map of the United Netherlands (Noordelijke Nederlanden) and Spanish Netherlands (Zuidelijke Nederlanden) after the Union of Utrecht (1580) and the Twelve Year Truce (1609).

¹⁵ The gatherings of the Lords XIX were held for two years in Zeeland and four years in Amsterdam, during these periods the respective Chambers functioned as Presidential and were responsible for the general administration of the company (Heijer, 2002).

The WIC inherited prior concerns. In Zeeland most of the merchants that had been active before the founding of the WIC participated as directors, for example Jan de Moor, Balthasar de Moucheron, Abraham van Pere and Galeyn ten Haeff.¹⁶ The Zeeland Chamber continued the existing colonies in the Amazon delta and on the Essequibo, while the Amsterdam Chamber inherited New Netherland in North America. However, this territorial division was not binding and soon led to frictions. The Zeeland Chamber was greatly alarmed by the Amsterdam Chamber's interest in the Wild Coast when David Pietersz de Vries installed thirty planters on the Island of Cayenne in 1634 on behalf of the latter chamber, and by De Vries that same year, since the Zeelanders considered the Guianas to be exclusively their trading territory.¹⁷

The continuing efforts by the Zeeland Chamber on the Wild Coast were not very successful. An expedition to the Amazon delta in 1625 was repelled by the Portuguese, and other expeditions to the Oyapock and Cayenne in 1627 also failed (see footnote 3). The only successful attempt was made by the Zeelander merchant Abraham van Pere who founded a colony on the Berbice River near its confluence with the Wiruni in 1627.¹⁸

Dutch West India Company fleets in the Caribbean were in the meantime 'cruising' the Spanish trade routes from Honduras and New Spain to seize ships filled with Campeche wood, silk, tobacco, sugar, indigo and slave cargoes, and if possible gold or silver, as in 1628 when Piet Heyn plundered the Spanish Silver or Terra Firma fleet in the Bay of Matanzas, Cuba. Part of the revenue of this venture was used to outfit a fleet to conquer Olinda, a Portuguese town and capital of Pernambuco in 1630.¹⁹ The fairly small Dutch vessels infested the Caribbean and captured numerous Spanish ships, disrupting local Spanish communications.²⁰

These actions of the WIC contested the Spanish maritime supremacy in the Caribbean, making it possible for English, French and Dutch colonies to emerge on the Caribbean islands, while such colonies hardly materialized on the mainland, except for those at Essequibo and Berbice. The WIC claimed several Caribbean islands, such as Sint Eustatius, Tobago, Sint Maarten, Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao during the second quarter of the seventeenth century.²¹ In the Lesser Antilles, the major colony developed on the island of Barbados, which the English had taken possession in 1627.²² Other important settlements were the Anglo-French colony on Saint Kitts, or Saint Christopher as it was then called, and the French colonies on Martinique and Guadeloupe that arose after 1630 when Cardinal Richelieu founded the Compagnie des Iles de l'Amérique.²³

Before the foundation of the WIC many Dutch merchants had established trading posts and sometimes small colonies along the Wild Coast and the mouth of the Amazon River

¹⁶ Roos, 1992, p. 20.

¹⁷ Vries, D. Pietersz. de, *Korte Historiae ende Journaels Aenteykeninge van verscheyden Voyagiens in de Vier Deeles des Werelds-ronde, als Europa, Africa, Asia, ende Amerika gedaen* [...], Symon Cornelisz, Brekegeest, 1655, p. 124. The rivalry between Zeeland and Amsterdam from 1621 onwards is best described by Henk den Heijer, 'Het recht van de sterkste in de polder. Politieke en economische strijd tussen Amsterdam en Zeeland over de kwestie Brazilië, 1630–1654', *Harmonie in Holland, Het Poldermodel van 1500 to nu*, D. Bos, M. Ebben & H. te Velde (eds.), Amsterdam, 2007, pp. 72–92.

¹⁸ Wallenburg, M., 'Sites of Fortifications and Administrative Headquarters of Early Dutch Colonists on the Berbice River', *Archaeology and Anthropology*, 10, 1995; Benjamins, A., 'Fort Nassau and the van Wallenburg Thesis: A Re-evaluation of the Evidence', *Archaeology and Anthropology*, 12, 1998.

¹⁹ This Dutch invasion led to the construction of its present Capital, the city of Recife, which was at the time just an outpost of Olinda.

²⁰ Goslinga, 1971, pp. 144–5, 152–3.

²¹ Den Heijer, 2002.

²² Beckles, H., 'Plantation, Production, and White 'Proto-Slavery'', *Settlement Patterns in Early Modern Colonization, 16th–18th Centuries*, J. Lorimer (ed.), Aldershot, 1998, p. 152. See also Ligon, R., *History of the Island of Barbadoes* [...], London: Peter Parker, 1673.

²³ Moreau, 1992.

respectively. These places predominantly traded tobacco and annatto with the local Amerindian population and were populated by white colonists who had signed contracts with their masters or patrons, as promoted by Willem Usselinckx in his *Remonstrantie* of 1603.²⁴ According to the latter, the patrons needed to provide a minimum of participants who should also be equipped with guns and other useful tools when founding a colony. It is believed that Gelein van Stapels also served as an agent for the patrons when visiting their colonies.

The biography of Gelein van Stapels

Gelein van Stapel's very name is just one example of the kind of orthographic inconsistency any editor of seventeenth-century Dutch sources faces. He himself wrote his name in different ways, and numerous additional variant spellings appear in the citations: Gelein, Galien, Geleyn, Ghelein, Gheleijn, Ghalein, Ghaleyn, Ghalien, van Stapele, Stapels, etc. Such confounding orthographic inconsistency is a reflection of the complexity of the Netherlands and of a lack of standardization of the Dutch language at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Gelein, like many others in this turbulent period, had a complex identity. He gave his birthplace as Nieuwpoort, possibly the small port on the Flemish coast near Ostend, when he registered with the Nederduits Hervormde Gemeente in Flushing in 1612 (Figure 1).²⁵ He stated that he came from Haarlem and that he lived in a house on the Timmerwerf with his wife Mayken van Wijnter.²⁶ The place name Nieuwpoort was actually quite common in the Netherlands, and Gelein could have come from some other place, but the reference to Haarlem is an indication that he might have been a Flemish migrant. Many Flemings chose to migrate to the Republic in this period, and Gelein was probably one of them, although we do not know at what age he left Nieuwpoort.²⁷

Spanish forces had gradually extended their control over the Southern Netherlands after the revolt against the Spanish broke out, and the Flemish coast was the last area to succumb to them. The battle won by Prince Maurits at Nieuwpoort in 1600 failed to save the Flemish coast from Spanish reconquest. After a three-year siege Ostend yielded to Ambrogio Spinola in 1604, which restricted the rebel presence in the Southern Netherlands to Zeeuws Vlaanderen.²⁸

The siege of Ostend is linked with the history of the Caribbean because both English explorers of Trinidad, Raleigh and Dudley, were involved in the hostilities as allies of the Dutch on the Flemish coast. Nieuwpoort has produced many fine sailors over the centuries. Gelein can be classed with other Flemish sailors who were active on the coast of Guiana, and with Lawrence Keymis, Sir Walter Raleigh's right hand man who published the first extensive description of the Wild Coast as *A Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana*.²⁹ The history of the seafaring communities on the Flemish coast has been obscured by the complexities arising

²⁴ Den Heijer, 2002.

²⁵ Gelein's last name, van Stapels, is of toponymic origin: the village of Stapel or Étaple is situated to the south of Calais, whereas the abbreviated affix z for 'zoon' or 'son of' reveals a patronymic relationship. See Damsteegt, B. C., *Nomina Geographica Neerlandica*, Vol. XI, Leiden: Brill, 1938.

²⁶ DTLB Vlissingen 20 (NG lidmatenregister 1595–1612) Zeeuws Archief, Register K 481, f. 138vs.

²⁷ There are actually three villages called Nieuwpoort in the Netherlands of which Nieuwpoort near Ostend is believed to be the village where Gelein or his parents came from because of his Zeelander vocabulary. However, there is also a New Port in Vlissingen which was built between 1609–1616 which was also known as 'New or English Harbour' which was situated next to the Timmerwerf (see NL_HaNA_4.VTH_3492). The migration by the way of Haarlem is not typical though, most Flemish moved from the South to the North. An example of a similar migration pattern can be found in Abraham Cabeliau who moved from Belgium to England and from there to Amsterdam (Hulsman, 2009, p. 26).

²⁸ Israel, J., *The Dutch Republic, its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 259–60.

from the insertion of regional history into national history. These Flemish sailors became the main enemies of Dutch shipping after 1621 and were known as the *Duinkerkers*.

There are no other sources for the activities of Gelein in the period 1612–24. The only reference that has been found is to Susanna van Stapels, probably a relative, who registered at the same church as Gelein and in 1613 also gave Timmerwerf as her address. She died in 1625.³⁰

The city where Gelein lived, Vlissingen, had developed as a major shipping centre after it had been ceded as a guarantee for English assistance to the Dutch rebellion in 1585, together with Rammekens and Brielle. The freebooters from Vlissingen were even given a special Spanish name: *Pixelingues*.³¹ Oldenbarnevelt, the State Pensionary of Holland that effectively ruled the Republic, had accepted the condition, imposed by the Spanish crown for the Twelve Years' Truce with the Republic in 1609 that there would be no West India Company (WIC) to rival the success of the East India Company (VOC), which had been founded in 1602. Dutch opponents of the truce continued their expansion in the Americas and Asia though, and Vlissingen was an important gateway for expeditions to the Wild Coast.

The city of Vlissingen returned to the authority of the Republic in 1616 when Oldenbarnevelt paid off the Republic's debt to the English, which caused migration of the English and Irish population to other places, including the Amazon. Vlissingen remained a centre for English expeditions to the Amazon because the English king, James I, increasingly obstructed initiatives in this region, ending in 1620 with the prohibition of the activities of Oliver North.³²

The suspension of the Truce in 1621 and the subsequent war with Spain opened the way for the founding of the WIC. Between 1625 and 1634 Gelein acted as an employee of the Zeeland Chamber. The WIC inherited prior activities, as stated before, but organized these in a new way. While most of the companies that preceded the WIC were organized on a temporary basis that consisted of contracts between investors and ship masters for single ventures, the WIC contracted its shipmasters as employees. Though similar relations might have existed between sailors and some of the merchant houses like that of Van Pere or De Moor, it was a new way of organizing maritime enterprise. Gelein can thus be seen as an example of a new breed of sea captains that emerged at the beginning of the seventeenth century.³³

The resolutions of the Zeeland Chamber which are preserved from the year 1626 are an important source to trace the activities of Gelein. The preparation for his voyages and the reports that he made after his return are registered in this collection. The manuscript called MS 182 is the only original report by Gelein that has survived, maybe because it was saved by a collector when most of the Archive of the WIC Chamber of Zeeland was destroyed in the nineteenth century. Gelein is known to have delivered at least four reports to the Zeeland Chamber, and probably wrote more.³⁴

²⁹ Keymis, L., *A Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana, Performed and written in the yeare 1596 By Lawrence Keymis, Gent.*, London: Thomas Dawson, 1596.

³⁰ DTBL Vlissingen 21 (NG lidmatenregister 1613–1633), Zeeuws Archief, Register K 482, f. 3.

³¹ Sluiter, E., 1948.

³² Lorimer, 1989, pp. 64–6; Lorimer, J., 'The Failure of the English Guiana Ventures 1595–1667 and James I's Foreign Policy', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 21, 1, 1993.

³³ This development was in line with the gradual emergence of the Dutch Royal Navy that had been taking shape since the end of the sixteenth century. There was a process whereby the granting of privileges to private enterprise in the form of 'kapersbrieven' was gradually replaced by a permanent fleet of warships that belonged to the five admiralties of the Dutch Republic: see Nimwegen, O., R. Prud'homme van Reine, 'De Organisatie en financiering van leger en vloot van de Republiek', P. Groen (ed.), *Militaire Geschiedenis van Nederland – De Tachtigjarige Oorlog (1568–1648)*, Amsterdam: Boom, Part 1, 2013, pp. 377–81.

³⁴ These reports are cited several times by de Laet in *Iaerlick Verhael* but Gelein's reports also appear in various roteiros, such as the Gerritsz rutter translated by Eduard Johan Bondam, 'Journaux et Nouvelles tirées de la

His surviving account documents a period of great upheaval in the Atlantic. The sources that refer to Gelein cover the particular period 1625–34, and the geographical area where he is known to have operated covers the whole of the Atlantic Ocean, especially from the eastern coast of Brazil to the Caribbean.³⁵

The military history of this period has been described in the *Iaerlick Verhael* of Johannes de Laet, who consulted the archives of the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC and published reports of van Stapels in the *roteiros* he compiled with cartographer Hessel Gerritsz. Van Stapels appears in de Laet and in the WIC archives because he made a dedicated effort to produce written reports. His accounts also provide economic information that de Laet did not use in his *Iaerlick Verhael* because that work focussed on naval history. Van Stapels had a keen eye for the commercial aspects of WIC operation, and his comments on the emerging Dutch settlements and relations with the indigenous population reveal his unique point of view. He also produced some fine charts, which suggests that he had received a good education, probably when he was a ships mate in his youth.

Very little is recorded about Gelein himself. He was married, but there is no mention of children or parents. The Susanna van Stapels that registered in 1613 with Gelein and died in 1625 might have been his daughter or sister. Most references are related to his probable younger brother Jan van Stapels, who first sailed with Gelein in 1626 in the *Vliegende Draeck* and in 1628 acquired a captaincy of his own.³⁶ The last reference to Gelein appears in a letter he sent in 1634 together with his brother to the Chamber of Zeeland from an unidentified island which he wanted to occupy. The letter suggests that he was associated with ‘Abraham van der Pere’, who was patron of the Berbice colony. No further record of Gelein has so far been found.³⁷

The previous voyages of Gelein van Stapels

There are very few extensive manuscripts available on Dutch trading activities in the Caribbean and Guianas when compared to those on the Dutch strongholds in Brazil and New Amsterdam. The best known are the voyages of Abraham Cabeliau (1598), Lourens Lourensz (1618), David Pietersz de Vries (1634) and the Walloon attempt by Jesse de Forest (1623). Probably the first mention of Van Stapels’ presence in the Guianas was when the latter’s colony was shipped off the Oyapock River by ‘Master Gelin van Stables de Flixingue’ in the *Groene Draeck* on 28 May 1625, as recorded in the de Forest journal, *Journal du voyage fait par les peres de families envoyes par M^{rs} les Directeurs de la Compagnie des Indes occidentales pour visiter la coste de Gujane*.³⁸

bouche de Marins Hollandais et Portugais de la Navigation aux Antilles et sur les Cotes du Brésil, Manuscrit de Hessel Gerritsz traduit pour la Bibliothèque Nationale de Rio de Janeiro par E. J. Bondam’, *Annaes da Bibliotheca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro* (1907), 29, 1909, p. 103, or the ‘Brazilian’ de Laet rutter published by Ben Teensma, *Suiker, verfhout & tabak. Het Braziliaanse Handboek van Johannes de Laet*, Werken van de Linschoten Vereeniging 108, Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2009, pp. 30, 112.

³⁵ Gelein probably also participated in the 1634 conquest of Argijn that was organized by the Zeelander merchant Abraham van Pere; Geyl, P., *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse stam* (herziene uitgave). Wereldbibliotheek N.V., 3 Vols, Amsterdam/Antwerpen 1948–59, Vol. II, p. 54; Swalue, E. B., *De daden der Zeeuwen gedurende den opstand tegen Spanje*, Amsterdam, 1846, pp. 313–17.

³⁶ ‘Jan van Stapel (brother of Gelien van Stapel) has been hired as second helmsman [and] tailor on the yacht the Flying Dragon [den Vliegende Draeck] for four flemish pounds per month f 24’, *Zeeuws Archief*, Kamer van Zeeland (49), 3 December 1626.

³⁷ Nationaal Archief, Oude West-Indische Compagnie, Resoluties Kamer van Zeeland, , NL-HaNA_OWIC 1.05.01.01_50 f. 51, 21 Februari 1634

³⁸ Forest, R. de, *A Walloon Family in America: Lockwood de Forest and his Forbears 1500–1848, Together with a Voyage to Guiana being the Journal of Jesse de Forest and his Colonists 1623–1625*, 2 vols, Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914, Vol. 2, p. 258 (British Library, MS Sloane 179b, f. 10r).

The Walloon colony led by Jesse de Forest left Amsterdam on 1 July 1623 and sailed towards the mouth of the Amazon in the *Duijcken*, under the command of Pieter Frederiks from Haarlem. A common route towards Cape North (near the Araguari River) involved sailing to the Canaries, the Cape Verde Islands and then down to the equator in order to enter the left channel of the Amazon, or to follow the coast towards the Oyapock. The Walloon colonists had refused to stay on the western bank of the Amazon estuary because of the recent Portuguese attacks, as stated before. Frederiks had subsequently forced them to disembark at the Oyapock River. Their leader Jesse de Forest had died and they were busy constructing a vessel to escape, so they were very happy when the *Groene Draeck*, that belonged to a WIC force led by Admiral Lucifer, appeared.

Before reaching the Oyapock, Hendrick Lucifer (and probably Van Stapels as well) had visited the Amazon to convey Captain Oudaen and some hundred soldiers and colonists.³⁹ Their fort near Mandiutuba was attacked by Pedro Texeira shortly after its founding, and the remaining soldiers fled towards the Oyapock where most were slaughtered by the Amerindian population when they disbanded into quarrelling groups.⁴⁰

In the estuary of the Surinam River, the *Groene Draak* of Van Stapels rendezvoused with Lucifer in the *Zwarte Arend* and headed for the Lesser Antilles, finally anchoring in the 'Carakes' Bay of Saint Vincent. The Walloon colonists boarded the *Black Eagle* and arrived in Flushing on 16 November of that year.⁴¹ Gelein arrived at a later date and on 27 August 1626 delivered a report of his voyage with the *Groene Draak* to the Chamber of Zeeland, together with a map ('*doec van affteckeninge*').⁴² Jan van Stapels was contracted on 26 November 1626 to sail the *Vliegende Draeck* with his brother Gelein. The voyage of the *Vliegende Draak* is described by de Laet, its first destination being the Wild Coast.⁴³

Once back on the Oyapock, Van Stapels dropped off thirty-six settlers under the command of Jan van Ryen who founded a small fort (called Nassau), about 20 kilometres upstream from the Comaribo Mountain.⁴⁴ Van Stapels stayed on the Oyapock for two weeks and then left for Antonio Bay on Saint Vincent and found Lucifer anchored at Grenada, where they bartered for victuals with the Amerindians.⁴⁵

Both ships left for a rendezvous at Cabo de la Vela and passed, in chronological order, Isla Blanca, Los Testigos, Orchilla, Curacao, Aruba and Los Monjes. They aimed to cruise

³⁹ Lorimer, 1989, p. 80.

⁴⁰ Lorimer, 1989, p. 84, states that these hostile Amerindians were Caribs, but these, according to the journal of de Forest, did not dwell on the lower Oyapock, she probably meant the Carib speaking Yao that had already threatened the colonists of Leigh and Harcourt. The Oudaen group also may have been victim of a Carib raid from the Island of Cayenne since the Carib were in perpetual war with the Aricouros of the Oyapoc: see F. & P. Grenand, 'La côte d'Amapa, de la bouche de l'Amazone à la baie d'Oyapock, à travers la tradition orale Palikur', *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi*, Nova Série, Antropologia, 3, 1, 1987.

⁴¹ De Forest, 1914, Vol. 2, p. 248 (British Library, MS Sloane 179b, f. 11r). Jesse de Forest died upon the Oyapock River and Jean Mousnier de la Montagne, one of the survivors of the Walloon expedition, was taken to the Lesser Antilles by Gelein and sent home. It is believed that he may well have finished the diary and the maps which greatly resemble MS 182.

⁴² De Laet mentions that 'Capiteyn Stapel ende Capiteyn Estienne' rescued General Boudewijn Hendricksz in February 1626 when the latter had attacked the Spanish fortress at Margarita: Laet, J., de, 1644, *Historie of iaerlijck verhael van de verrichtinghen der geotroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie, zedert haer begin, tot het eynde van 't jaer sesttien-hondert ses-en dertich* [...], In: *Werken van de Linschoten Vereniging* 35, 4 Vols (1931–37), S. P. L'Honoré Naber & J. C. M. Warnsinck (eds.), Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931, pp. 117.

⁴³ De Laet, 1932, pp. 16–18.

⁴⁴ Ryen, J., van, 'Brief van Jan van Ryen aan de Directeuren van de Kamer van Zeeland van de WIC Fort Nassau, Wiapoco, April 25, 1625' [1627?], *Documents Relating to New Netherland 1624–1626*, The Henry E. Huntington Library, translated and edited by A. J. F. van Laer, Document B. San Marino: The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1924, pp. 21–33, 256–8.

⁴⁵ Van Stapels gave a description of Saint Vincent that can be found in the Gerritsz rutter as translated by Bondam based on this visit or another, one year earlier. See Gerritsz, 1909, p. 103.

around Cabo de la Vela and Bay Honda to seize Spanish ships from Cartagena. They were joined by two more ships from Amsterdam, and, after capturing a few prizes, they crossed the Caribbean Sea and sailed for Isla de la Vaca. They passed Cabo Tiburón, Los Pinos, and the Cayman Islands, bound for Cabo Corrientes and Rio Puercos to cruise for Spanish ships from Honduras. They seized a large cargo of 1404 boxes of Guatemalan indigo, 4280 hides and 32 *pipas* of balm oil. A few ships were sent home with the cargo, while the others headed for ‘De Kroon’ [The Crown] of Cuba to cruise in the vicinity of Las Tortugas and the Florida Keys or Martyr Islands.⁴⁶ The Dutch ships gathered information on the fortifications and military forces of Havana and finally left for New Amsterdam where they stayed for one month before departing for Texel in the Netherlands. Gelein reported to the directors of the Zeeland Chamber on 25 November 1627.

On 9 December 1627 the Chamber decided to contract Gelein as captain for a voyage with the *Fortuin*, one of the objectives being to supply the colonies in the Amazon. The directors decided on 27 December that Gelein would be supplied for a voyage of eighteen months and would try to make his voyage ‘profitable’ after his mission on the Amazon. Abraham van Pere asked for permission to send people and supplies with Gelein for his colony in Berbice, which was granted on 17 January 1628. On 20 January the WIC awarded Gelein and Jan Mast (the *Walcheren*) a silver platter for their services, probably as a reward for taking the Honduras ships.⁴⁷

Together with the *Zuidster*, the *Fortuin* of Gelein left Vlissingen on 3 March 1628 to deliver sixty-three colonists to Tobago for the Chamber of Zeeland and to join afterwards a large WIC fleet of twelve vessels under the command of Admiral Pieter Adriaensz Ita from Flushing which they met at Cabo San Nicolas after a detour through the northern Lesser Antilles.⁴⁸ After departing from Tobago on 2 May, Van Stapels found on the island of Saint Vincent two survivors of the Jan van Ryen colony on the Oyapock River. They related that their houses and crops had been destroyed by the Amerindians and that the Captain had been slain by them after a quarrel.⁴⁹ Gelein delivered his report to the Zeeland Chamber on 2 October 1628, and one of the directors, Confrater Munnixs, was commissioned to review the section on the ‘Honduras vaarders’, the Spanish ships sailing from Honduras.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ In the Martyr Islands they encountered an Amerindian population that was ‘politer than the Caribs’ (de Laet 1932, p. 30). These were probably either Tequesta or Calusa, both groups occupying the islands at various times. See Fontanedo, H., d’Escalante, ‘Mémoire sur la Floride, ses côtes et ses habitants, qu’aucun de ceux qui l’ont visitée n’ont su décrire’, *Voyages, relations et mémoires originaux pour servir à l’histoire de la découverte de l’Amérique*, translated and edited by Henri Ternaux-Compans, Vol. 20: *Recueil de pièces sur la Floride*, Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1841, pp. 9–42.

⁴⁷ Nationaal Archief, Oude West-Indische Compagnie, Resoluties Kamer van Zeeland, NL-HaNA_1.05.01.01_21 1 Januari 1629. See also Brommer, B., H. den Heijer (eds), *Grote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie, Deel I: De Oude WIC, 1621–1674*, met bijdragen van J. Jacobs, A. Bick & M. van Wallenburg, Voorburg: Asia Maior, 2011.

⁴⁸ De Laet, 1932, pp. 39, 46–7.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 40. Besides De Laet, Netscher (1888, p. 56) also records two survivors for Tobago, which makes four in total. For more detail on this matter, see also Goslinga, 1971, p. 413 and Arie Boomert’s ‘Amerindian-European Encounters on and around Tobago (1498–ca.1810)’, *Antropológica*, 97–98, 2002, pp. 105–06.

⁵⁰ Nationaal Archief, Oude West-Indische Compagnie, Resoluties Kamer van Zeeland, NL-HaNA_1.05.01.01_21, 2 October 1628.

The voyage of 1629–30

It is the next voyage of Gelein van Stapels (1629–30) that is presented here. The transcription and translation of the manuscript MS 182 provides not only a description of the various forts, towns and islands visited by Gelein van Stapels during this voyage (ff. 1–24), but also includes the log of the voyage in the *Jager* or *Zeeuwse Jager* that started in January 1629 and ended in June 1630 (ff. 25–34). In addition to this textual partition we may also divide his voyage into two parts. The first part is dedicated to the supply of the Irish-Dutch colony on the Tauregue or ‘Torego’ Creek on the Amazon River and the Zeelander colonies of the Berbice River and the island of Tobago.

The second part can be considered as a privateering enterprise, the so-called *kaapvaart*, in the Caribbean under the flag of Admiral Adriaen Jansz Pater for the WIC.⁵¹ Gelein was contracted by the directors of the Zeeland Chamber as captain of the *Jager* (or *Zeeuwse Jager*) on 16 October 1628. His brother Jan was contracted on 26 October as captain of the yacht *Noordster*, also destined for the Amazon.⁵² The story of the voyage of 1629 is recounted below.

It has to be remembered here that the year 1629 is considered to be a crucial point in the history of the Dutch Republic during the war with the Iberian monarchy. The conquest of a Spanish silver fleet by Piet Hein in 1628 provided the financial means that resulted in the rather difficult victory over Den Bosch (f. 33r) which, according to some, would lead eventually to the Peace of Munster.⁵³ Secondly it financed the conquest of Recife and Olinda in 1630 which determined further Dutch trade in the Caribbean. The notorious Dutch trade in black slaves would henceforth begin, whereas Van Stapels primarily observed indentured labour in the present Dutch colonies, i.e., Tauregue, Berbice, Essequibo and Tobago. The astonishing success of Piet Hein certainly affected the voyage of Van Stapels. When the latter was preparing his voyage, the loaded homebound ships sent by Piet Hein were entering various Dutch ports⁵⁴ and it is easily understandable that the ships would like to gain the western tip of Cuba as fast as possible.⁵⁵

Terra firma

This first part of the voyage is not related by de Laet but includes an important passage concerning the construction of the Irish-Dutch fort on Tauregue creek on the Amazon. It also contains a valuable description of the early colony of Abraham van Pere on the Berbice River, and the Zeelander fortifications on Tobago (Figure 6).

⁵¹ Goslinga, 1971, fig. 7.

⁵² The *Noordster* is a raiding ship called ‘jacht’ in Dutch and can be translated as a pinnace. NL-HaNA_1.05.01.01_21, See also note 120.

⁵³ Cauwer, P., de, *Tranen en Bloed: Het beleg van ‘s Hertogenbosch en de oorlog in de Nederlanden, 1629*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007, p. 29.

⁵⁴ L’Honoré Naber, S. P., I. A. Wright, *Piet Heyn en de Zilvervloot. Bescheiden uit de Nederlandsche en Spaansche archieven*. In: *Werken uitgegeven door het Historische Genootschap*, 54, Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1928, p. 200.

⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that Van Stapels ignored to cruise the Bight of Campeche (f. 28r) and preferred to join the fleet of Pater.

Tauregue

Preparation for the Irish-Dutch expedition to Tauregue had already started on 20 July 1626 when Samuel Lucas addressed the Chamber of Zeeland to ask on behalf of William Gayner⁵⁶ if the Company could provide him with transport to the Amazon, and under what conditions. The directors replied that Gayner would be invited to discuss the case personally. Gayner was an Irishman who had been to the Amazon before. He might have been in England where the death of James I had raised hopes, and new expeditions to the Amazon were being organized.⁵⁷

Gayner appeared nearly a year later, on 15 July 1627, with a proposal to carry English and Irish to the Amazon, but this was declined by the directors because of shortage of ships and the absence of Samuel Lucas. In September of that same year the Irishmen James Purcell and Mathew More acquired passports to travel to Zeeland. Both men had been captured on the Amazon by the Portuguese in 1625 when the destruction of the Oudaen settlement was followed by an attack on English and Irish settlements further west. Purcell and More had been released because they were Catholics.⁵⁸

The North European presence on the lower Amazon dates back to the end of the sixteenth century. The initiation of factories and plantations is principally attested between 1611 and 1620, primarily in the form of English and Irish entrepreneurship with Zeelander associates. A Spanish spy in the Netherlands reported that Pieter Lodewijks of Flushing, an associate of Jan de Moor, and his son, had planted tobacco on the Oyapock River and had also visited the Amazon to bring back large quantities of red dye.⁵⁹ The English Major John Scott wrote around 1665 that Pieter Adriaensz Ita from Flushing explored the Amazon and had founded an Anglo-Dutch colony at the mouth of the Paru River (Rio Ginipape).⁶⁰

Tauregue was probably founded in 1612 and was initially known as Purcell's Creek after its Irish founder Philip Purcell, an acquaintance of Sir Thomas Roe.⁶¹ This particular settlement was very successful and remained an Irish stronghold, but it was more than a commercial undertaking; it is probably the earliest recorded effort in establishing a shelter for Irish refugees with a strong nationalistic impact what is proudly reflected in its Irish name *Toruighe*, a derogatory term for Irish dispossessed of their land.⁶² It is also referred to by Jesse de Forest as the place where the Irish live: 'Le Mardy [Mercredi] premier jour de Novembre nous arrivâmes pres de Pieter Janss anchre en la Riviere de Tauregne habitation des Hirlandois'.⁶³ Both English and Irish colonies were dependent on the Dutch to ship their produce off to Zeeland and Amsterdam. WIC agents such as Pieter Jansz from Flushing and Pieter Fredericz from Haarlem frequented these Amazon colonies, as did ships from Hoorn and Enkhuizen.⁶⁴

⁵⁶ Sometimes 'Gaynor' but also found as 'Genner' in the Zeeland Chamber Resolutien Book: NL-HaNA_1.05.01.01_20, f. 11(d) 20 July 1626.

⁵⁷ Lorimer, 1989, pp. 89–91.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 163–5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶² In fact the word Tory is referred to as 'an outlaw' and specifically 'a robber,' derived from the Irish *toruighe* or 'plunderer'; originally 'pursuer, searcher,' from the Old Irish *toirighim* meaning 'I pursue', related to *toracht* 'pursuit.' By the end of the second half of the 17th century, it emerged as a derogatory term for Irish Catholics dispossessed of their land (see Tory at www.dictionary.com).

⁶³ De Forest, 1914, Vol. 2, p. 228 (British Library, MS Sloane 179b, f. 6v).

⁶⁴ Rees, O., van, *Geschiedenis der Koloniale Politiek van de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (II), *Geschiedenis des Staathuishoudkunde in Nederland tot het einde der achttiende eeuw*, Utrecht: Kemmink & Zoon, 1868, pp. 224–9; Hulsman, L., 'Swaerooch: o comércio holandês com índios no Amapá', *Revista estudos Amazônicas*, 6, 1, 2011.

In 1623, reinforced by four hundred Indians in canoes, the Portuguese departed from Belém, raided the Dutch forts at the mouth of the Xingu, and continued to Ilha do Gurupa, where the combined European forces were confronted, but they repulsed this attack and the newly built Portuguese fort Mariocay was destroyed by Pieter Jansz.⁶⁵

Early 1625 the WIC sent a squadron led by Admiral Hendrick Lucifer and Nicolaes Oudaen, probably to install a large number of colonists, including Philip Purcell and a new group of Irish planters who wanted to rebuild the Dutch fort on the Xingu.⁶⁶ The Portuguese immediately launched another strike against intruders under the command of Pedro Teixeira who massacred many of the North European settlers including Nicolaes Oudaen and Philip Purcell. They also captured seventy Irishmen. As mentioned, a few Dutch survivors fled to the Wiapoco and fell prey to the Amerindians. The Irish at Tauregue might have been the next victims after this attack, or they might have evacuated their holding just like the colonists did at the fort near the Paru River.⁶⁷

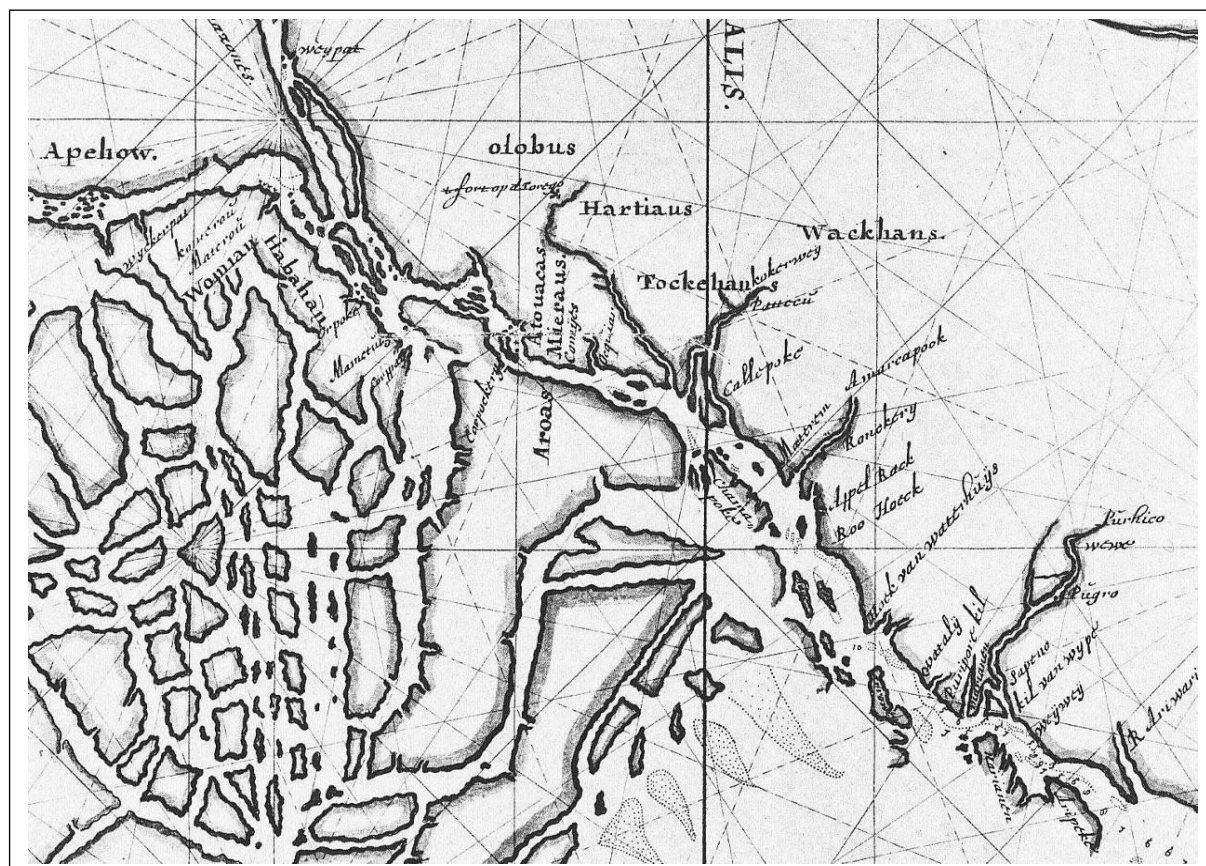


Figure 2. A detail of Vingboon's map of the Lower Amazon (see Hulsman, 2009, p. 327, after Wieder, F. C., *Monumenta cartographica: reproductions of unique and rare maps, plans and view in the actual size of the originals accompanied by cartographical monographs*, Vol. IV, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1932, Map 83). The fort, 'fort op de Torego' is situated higher up the creek, next to the word Hartiaus. See also the Tauregue creek on the *Riviere des Amazones* map in Jesse de Forest (British Library, MS Sloane 179b, f. 21).

Some of the Catholic Irish that were captured in 1625 obtained a quick release and returned to England, intent on returning to the Amazon in pursuit of fresh opportunities. James Purcell and Mathew More tried their luck with the WIC in September 1628. It seems they changed the minds of the Zeeland directors, because, as mentioned before, on 16 October

⁶⁵ Hulsman, 2009, p. 114; De Forest, 1914, Vol. 2, pp. 240–43 (British Library, MS Sloane 179b, f. 8r).

⁶⁶ Lorimer, 1989, p. 80.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 81–2.

1628 it was decided to send Gelein and Jan van Stapels to the Amazon. On 9 October 1628 Mayor de Moor had even spoken about the possible conquest of Belém to protect his settlers.⁶⁸ Little is known about those that sailed for the Amazon. They were not registered by the Zeeland Chamber and it is not clear whether Gaynor took part in the expedition.⁶⁹

One of the Irishmen who participated in the expedition was Bernard or Bernardo O'Brien, who wrote a letter to the Spanish King in 1636 recounting his adventures on the Amazon. O'Brien's tale is rather fantastic, but other sources support the reality of several events he recounts. He stated he was the son of Cornelio O'Brien, Earl of Thomond in Ireland, who lost his possessions because he adhered to his Catholic faith. Bernard first went to the Amazon as a seventeen-year-old boy in 1620 or 1621 with Thomas Roe.⁷⁰ O'Brien returned to Europe in a Dutch ship in 1625, shortly before the devastating Portuguese attacks later that year.⁷¹

Another passenger was Gedion Morris, son of a notary in Vlissingen who did most of the legal work for the WIC there. Gedion was captured when the fort of Tauregue surrendered and remained a prisoner of the Portuguese for eight years before he succeeded in returning to the Netherlands. He was later involved in the unhappy endeavour of the WIC to conquer São Luís de Maranhão and was killed by Amerindians in Ceará in 1644. Both these participants of the expedition were from well-to-do families and had received a good education.⁷²

The mixed force of Dutch, English, French and Irish settlers left the United Provinces under the command of James Purcell, sailing from Flushing on 24 January 1629 in the *Noordster* and *Jager*, the latter under the command of Gelein van Stapels (f. 25v). The ships reached the Cabo do Norte on the western side of the Amazon delta on 3 April 1629 and anchored before Sapno three days later. Sapno or Sapenou was a small settlement populated by the Maraon or Marawan and had developed into the principal rendezvous for shipping that entered the Canal do Norte en route to the Amazon.

The colonists and their belongings were ferried by the yacht *Noordster* and the sloop, while the *Jager* remained anchored off Sapno. It took four days to prepare the ships, and on 10 April 1629 the yacht and the sloop made their way up the Canal do Norte, reaching the Tauregue creek on 15 April. During the ten days that Gelein stayed there, a large part of the fortification was built. This was probably facilitated by the colonists having brought a large quantity of planks so they did not need to saw the wood for their fort that was situated near the river. The document is badly damaged so that details of the construction remain obscure. Padre Luís Figueira (SJ), who assisted in the surrender of the fort in September 1629, described it as a wooden fort, square with an earthwork '20 palms' high and '15 palms' wide; a stockade '12 palms' high and 15 wide, with its parapet on top 'four palms' high and another four wide. It had five cannons (Figure 2).⁷³

Gelein also describes it as square, mentioning '400 feet'. There seem to have been two rings of palisades, one of which was 14 feet high. It had gates and was mainly surrounded by a dry moat, but a canal had been dug near the river to provide a landing for canoes. Inside the compound were the main house and three smaller buildings. These houses probably had thatched roofs as Figueira mentions that Pedro Texeira tried to set them alight.⁷⁴ Gelein left on

⁶⁸ Hulsman, 2009, pp. 114–15.

⁶⁹ Gaynor or Gayner obtained permission from the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC to colonize the island of Tobago and organized an expedition in 1633. See also Roos, 1992, p. 108.

⁷⁰ Lorimer, 1989, pp. 72–5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷² Morris' journal is available in the late 19th century Portuguese translation by Hygino, J., Pereira, 'Relatorios e Cartas de Gedeon Morris de Jonge no tempo do dominio Holandez no Brazil', *Revista Trimensal do Instituto Historico e Geographico brasileiro*, 58, 1, 1895; Hulsman, 2009.

⁷³ Lorimer, 1989, p. 307.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

26 April 1629 and the fort was first attacked in May by a force commanded by Pedro da Costa, but this attack was repelled. O'Brien wrote that the Portuguese tried to take prisoners amongst some Europeans that were in the tobacco plantation, but he surprised them with a large force of Amerindians and they were forced to retreat.⁷⁵

The second attack, carried out by a large force under command of Pedro Texeira, began on 28 September 1629. The defenders tried to stall the Portuguese with negotiations, hoping to hold out for reinforcements that were on the way. O'Brien wrote that he tried to negotiate a separate settlement for the Irish based on their claim to be Catholic instead of the Protestant English and Dutch. Texeira perceived their ploys and did not give in. The expedition to Tauregue ended with the surrender and capture of eighty colonists.⁷⁶

Long before these events Gelein had returned downriver and he reached his ship the *Jager* in the evening of 28 April. He held council and an unanimous decision was made to continue directly to Berbice, and to not call at Oyapock and Cayenne, since the Indians had told him that the Dutch ships of the *Arnemuiden* and the *West Kapelle* had already visited the Amazon a few months before, making barter with the Indians less interesting.⁷⁷

Berbice and Essequibo

Van Stapels' description of the Berbice colony is the first account of this Zeelander settlement. This colony was a private patronship obtained in 1627 by Abraham van Pere after negotiations with the WIC in which he participated as one of the directors of the Chamber of Zeeland.⁷⁸ That same year two ships with sixty settlers sailed towards Berbice to start Van Pere's colony.⁷⁹

Van Stapels arrived at the stronghouse that was the centre of the colony at the time on 15 May 1629 and provides an intimate description of this colony commanded by Cornelis van Pere, a son of Abraham.⁸⁰ He also drew a fairly detailed fold-out map (ff. 3–5). Van Stapels had sailed up the Berbice in his sloop while his ship the *Jager* had continued to the Demerara River, which was the usual anchorage.⁸¹ When Van Stapels arrived at the stronghouse on the Wiruni River he found two men and two boys, the others being out in the fields. Most settlers lived in the villages with the Amerindians planting tobacco. He also observed that the relationship between settlers and Amerindians was fairly peaceful. The settlers clearly did not need to be on their guard since the rifle he saw at the house was totally rusted.

Gelein commented that the Dutch were completely at the mercy of their Amerindian allies. Despite this idyllic picture, the settlers suffered from many diseases and unknown insects (Portuguese: *bicho do pé*) that compromised the well-being of the colony. According to Van Stapels, this colony lacked the conditions to produce good quantities of tobacco because the soil was not suitable. He deemed the ground poor and fit only for the cultivation of cotton. Gelein thought that the trade in annatto could render a good profit because it could

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 301–02

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 309–11.

⁷⁷ The ship *Arnemuiden* left Antonio Bay on Saint Vincent on 15 March 1630. See de Laet, 1932, p. 164. For West Cappel and Arnmuysden see also British Guiana Boundary, Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela, Appendix to the case on behalf of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, Vol. I. (1593–1723). London: Foreign Office, 1898, p. 64.

⁷⁸ Netscher 1888, pp. 57–60; Grol, G. J., van, *De Grondpolitiek in het West-Indische Domein der Generaliteit: een Historische Studie*, Den Haag: Algemene Landsdrukkerij, 1934, p. 25.

⁷⁹ Abraham van Pere and Pieter van Rhee also obtained a patronship for the island of Sint Eustatius in 1636.

⁸⁰ Bel, M. van den, L. Hulsmann & J. J. Wagenaar (ed.), *The Voyages of Adriaan van Berkel to Guiana; Amerindian-Dutch Relationships in 17th Century Guyana*, Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2014, p. 50.

⁸¹ The Walloon colonists reported that they also anchored in the Demerara River to trade in Berbice and the Essequibo during their visit in 1625. See de Forest, 1914, Vol. 2, 1914, p. 265 (British Library, MS Sloane 179b, f. 10v).

be handled by only a few traders who would collect it from Indians who were increasingly growing it. Annatto was prepared by many Amerindian groups as a dye to colour their bodies, which gave them the name 'redskins'. It was also used as an ingredient for food, such as the *xocolatl* in Mexico that was the precursor of our modern chocolate. The Amerindians in the Guianas mixed the seeds of the *Bixa Orellana* with (crabtree) oil to prepare balls of this dye, which they wrapped in leaves and sold to the Europeans. The annatto that was used to dye textile and colour dairy products, remained an important export item from the Guianas until the nineteenth century.⁸²

Van Stapels left the Berbice to call at the Demerara River where his ship was anchored. He continued with his sloop up the Essequibo as far as the village of Baliskus, Captain of the Arawak, where on the night of 19 May he met *commies* Jan van Beverland. The commander, Jan van der Goes, was away trading. Van Stapels found five traders, *leggers*, and one Negro in an Amerindian hut, all suffering from the pox. The principal house, Fort Kijkoveral, where they stocked their cargo, was situated one day's sailing upriver and was surrounded by a 'pallisado'. The Dutch traded annatto dye and hammocks with the Amerindians. Gelein wrote that they received seven balls of dye, each weighing 2 pounds, or 14 pounds for one axe, and they received one hammock for one axe. Most of the cargo was shipped to Saint Kitts, which had developed into the region's trading depot. Besides large and small axes, the Amerindians of the Essequibo were especially interested in butchers' knives (*carneserders*) with double points, all sorts of small ware, and beads of all colours (f. 6v).

Tobago

On 27 May 1629, Gelein van Stapels arrived at Tobago and anchored in 9 fathoms of water in front of the forts Nieuw Vlissingen and Nassau (Figure 3). In 1627 Jan de Moor had received a patronship from the WIC to settle Tobago. One year later about sixty settlers started a colony on the leeward side and christened the island 'Nieuw Walcheren'.⁸³ It was indeed probably Van Stapels in the *Fortuin*, accompanied by the *Zuidster*, who dropped off the first settlers on the island in early May 1628.⁸⁴

The description given by Van Stapels is probably the first account of this colony after its establishment in 1628 and before its destruction by the Spanish in 1637. Compared to the misery of the Guiana colonies, the settlers of Tobago were healthy, and only the newly arrived settlers from the ship *Walcheren* were somewhat weak. Fortifications were still under construction, but Van Stapels leaves one in no doubt that it would become a strong colony. The settlers produced great quantities of tobacco due to the fact that they worked in four rotating teams. One would work three to four hours in the cool of the morning and another in the afternoon, while one team would stand guard and the fourth would rest. The victuals were also distributed in an organised manner, each person receiving three pounds of bread per week and eating with seven to a bench, twice a day. All houses were within the perimeter of the

⁸² Annatto (annotto), kusuwe, roucou, and achiote are several names for the dye that Amerindian peoples prepared from the seeds of the bush that is called *Bixa Orellana*. The Dutch called it Orleaan, Oriane, Oranje or simply Verwe. The trade in annatto indeed became one of the commercial mainstays of the Berbice colony for nearly a century. See for example Hulsman, 2009 or Donkin, R. A., 'Bixa orellana: The eternal shrub', *Anthropos*, 69, 1/2, 1974.

⁸³ See Goslinga, 1971, chapter 17.

⁸⁴ Menkman, W. R., 'Tobago; Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Nederlandsche kolonisatie in Tropisch Amerika', *De West-Indische Gids*, 21, 1939. A sketch of this fort is found in the 1627 Gerritsz rutter now located in the Dutch National Archives in The Hague (NL_HaNA_4.VEL_X, Leupe Collection, f. 96r) which is reproduced in the WIC Atlas: Brommer, B., *Het Caraïbisch gebied en de Wilde Kust: kaarten, plattegronden en topografische tekeningen, Grote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie, Deel I: De Oude WIC (1621-1674)*, B. Brommer & H. den Heijer met bijdragen van J. Jacobs, A. Bick & M. van Wallenburg, pp. 76-153, Voorburg: Atlas Maior, 2011, p. 191.

fort. Three or four individuals lived in each house, each with their own bunk, and rifles were cleaned every day. There was plenty of food in the surroundings of the colony, such as bananas, pineapples, pepper, and cassava. Van Stapels also left the settlers a load of cassava stems that he had taken aboard in Berbice, before continuing his voyage to the Grenadines on 29 May, where he would rendezvous with the *Macht van Enkhuizen* and the *Otter* to exchange victuals and goods.

The Caribbean (Figure 7)

The general outline of the Caribbean section of the account has been related by Johannes de Laet, who even lists the ships that participated in this voyage (Figure 4).⁸⁵ However, Gelein van Stapels is not mentioned by de Laet, although Jan van Stapel [*sic*] is listed for the *Zeeuwse Jager*. The latter master was said to have left Zeeland in January 1629 and to have joined the fleet of Pater on 8 July after it had taken aboard colonists for Tobago. The date appears to be correct (f. 28v), but it was Gelein van Stapels who delivered colonists to the Tauregue colony and cargo to Tobago, and not his brother Jan (although they sailed together in 1634).

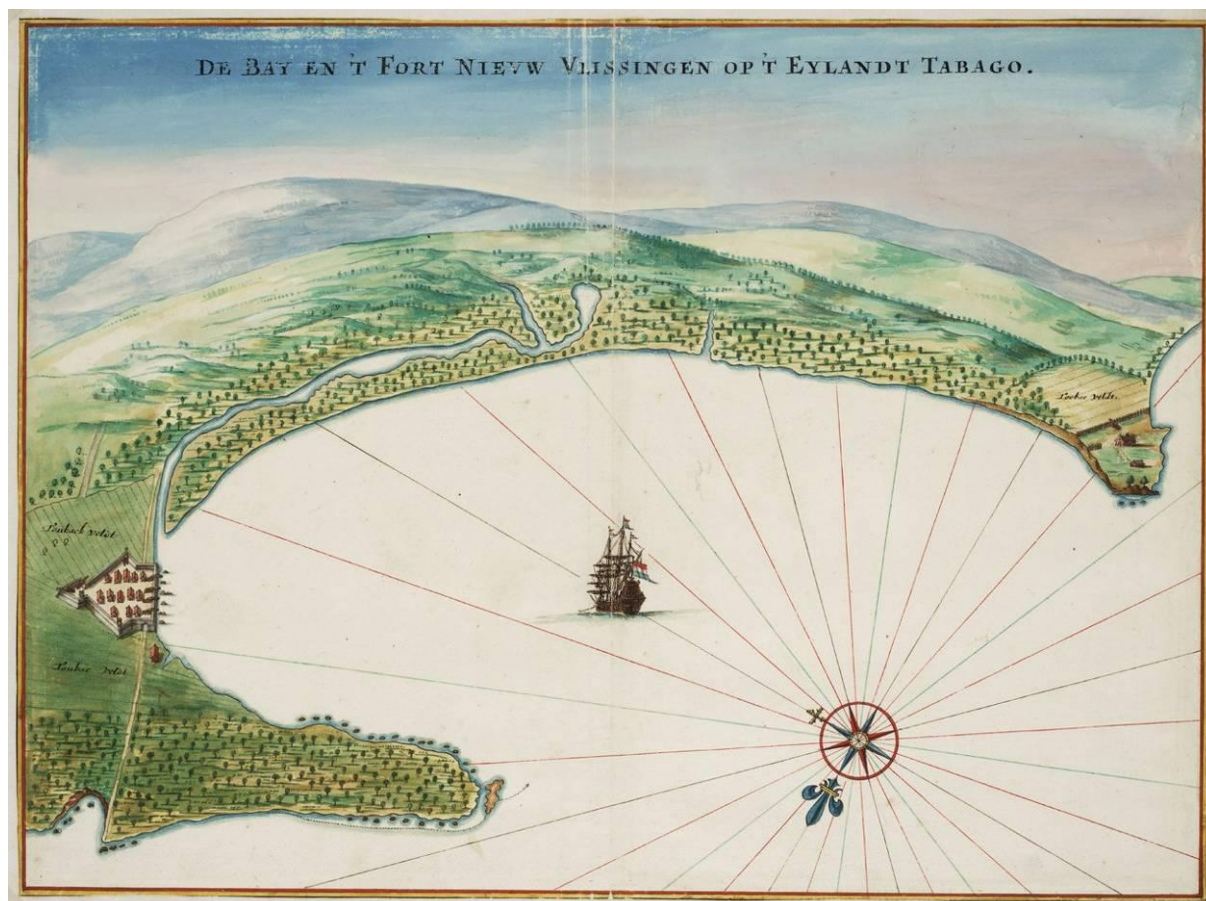


Figure 3. Vingboon's map of Tobago (Nieuw Vlissingen / Plymouth Bay) c.1665. Leupe collection NL-HaNA_4.VELH_619.100

⁸⁵ De Laet, 1932, p. 91.

De Laet also relates the journey of Commander Jan van Hoorn who left Amsterdam in April 1629.⁸⁶ This fleet called at Barbados, Saint Vincent, Grenada, Isla Blanca and Cabo Tiburon, where they found letters left by the Zeelander ships. They intercepted a small Spanish bark and learnt that Santiago de Cuba had been heavily damaged by a hurricane the previous year. They subsequently continued their voyage to the Cayman Islands and Cabo Corrientes to join Admiral Pater and Van Stapels on 10 July off De Kroon of Cuba.⁸⁷ On 26 July the *Zeeuwse Jager* was struck by lightning and a falling mast killed the ‘bottelier’ or ‘master of victuals’.

A few days later, the fleet of Pater was reinforced by the *Zwaan* from Flushing (captained by Samuel Lucifer), the ships *Dordrecht*, *Drie Koningen*, *Griffioen*, *Zuidster*, *Tijger*, and the *Wapen van Medemblick* with Captain Outger Jansz Minne, in order to capture an important fleet that the Spaniards called ‘El Pan de Cabannas’ while cruising between Las Tortugas and De Kroon of Cuba. This mighty Dutch fleet was in need of water which they took on at Bay Cavanos, where they seized one bark (the bark *Cavanos, sic*), and at Rio Porcos, but they sighted only a few barks. Gelein gives a detailed description of the technique that the Dutch used to supply their ships with large quantities of fresh water in dangerous territory, by submerging the boats in the fresh water river and having them transported to sea by sailors swimming on their sides. At the end of September they left through the Bahama Canal and proceeded to longitude 32°, off the coast of Virginia, where they met nine Dutch ships that would take the goods to the Netherlands.

Schip (S), Jacht (J)	Groot Lasten	Stukken		Matr.	Sold.	Kapiteins, enz.	
		Met.	IJz.				
[160] uyt de Camer Zeelandt							
Anno 1629	Waicheren (S)	280	9	22	155 totaal	Jan Mast	
	Zuydsterre (J)	30	4	4	44		
	Zeeuwse Jagher (S) ¹⁾	80	4	12	56	Jan van Stapel	
uyt de Camer van Amsterdam							
	Witte Leeuw (S)	250	4	26	131	44	Commandeur Jan van Hoorn
	Delfijn (S)	130	4	24	90	33	Jochim Gijsen
	Leyden (S)	220	4	22	104	42	Albert Hendricksz
	Dry Koninghen (S)	230	2	28	132	41	Cornelis Meyndertsz
	Kat (J)	90		14	52	21	Jacob Barentsz.
dese ginghen uyt Texel t'zeyl den 21sten Aprilis. Ende een weynich te voren							
uyt de Camer van Stadt en Landen							
	Vriessche Jagher	140	4	18	90	22	Claes Hendricksz
ende den 15den Maij uyt de Camer op de Maese							
	Dordrecht (S)	200	4	22	120	50	
	Tijger (J)	70	2	22	68	17	Leunis Pietersz Hollaer
ende uyt de Camer van 't Noorder Quartier ¹⁾							
	Griffioen (S)	250	8	24	126	80	Jan Cornelisz Keert de Koe.

Figure 4. The ship's list for the 1629 expedition of Admiral Pater, revealing the name of Jan van Stapel (de Laet, 1932, p. 91).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ De Kroon or The Crown of Cuba, situated behind Havana, is not translated since we do not know if English sailors referred to these mountains tops (in the shape of a Crown) in a similar way. See letter H on the map of Rio Puercos.

Admiral Pater continued his journey towards Barbados, which was sighted on 4 November 1629. Ten days later the ships *Walcheren*, *Drie Koningen* and *Wapen van Medemblik* sailed for Grenada. Two days later the *Zwaan*, *Griffioen*, *Leiden* and *Witte Leeuw* sailed to Saint Vincent under the command of Jan Jansz van Hoorn. The latter fleet refreshed at this island and sailed for Saint Kitts but eventually anchored off Nevis alongside four ships from London. The crew told them that Don Fadrique de Toledo had arrived three months earlier with thirty-eight ships to destroy all fortifications of both English and French colonies at Saint Kitts.⁸⁸ Furthermore, according to the English, Don Fadrique was also carrying 12,000 soldiers to reinforce Spanish towns in the Caribbean, since they feared the ships of the Dutch West India Company. Jan Jansz continued his voyage onwards past Saint Martin, Anguilla, Sombrero, Puerto Rico and Mona to eastern Hispaniola, where they cruised for Spanish ships until they joined Pater again on 28 January 1630, as documented by Gelein van Stapels (f. 32r).⁸⁹

Admiral Pater and Vice-Admiral Maarten Thijsz sailed towards the mouth of the Orinoco with the remaining ships from Barbados to attack the Spanish town of San Thomé de Guayana (Figure 5). The description that Gelein provides represents a very rare source on the Orinoco during this period. Most Spanish sources are desperate cries for help against the Dutch and Carib, but provide little detail.⁹⁰ The Dutch mariners in Pater's fleet clearly did not possess detailed information on the Orinoco River and had great difficulty in finding the main entrance near the Amacuro River.

There is no mention whatsoever of Carib participation in the raid. Indeed it seems that most of the indigenous population had withdrawn from the area. Gelein even comments that if the river were populated with Indians it would be a very good place, but being as it was, he called it 'dead'. The fleet only succeeded in negotiating the treacherous waterways of the Orinoco after they had enlisted the help of some Warao pilots who were found after searching a long time.

The Warao are an indigenous people that still live in the Orinoco delta and further eastward along the coast of Guiana. In the seventeenth century Warao lived as far east as the present day Republic of Suriname.⁹¹ Gelein apparently had little knowledge of their culture as he describes them as being the same as other indigenous peoples on the Guiana coast, while the Warao have a number of qualities that are quite different from other contemporary cultures, like the construction of their dwellings and their ship building capability. Gelein did notice their dependence on the *Mauritia Flexuosa* (moriche or buriti palm), provider of their staple food. He described the fruit of this palm tree as a sort of net and wrote that it was a very poor fare. As soon as the fleet arrived before the town on 11 December 1629, the inhabitants set fire to their houses and fled. The Dutch moved speedily to extinguish the fire and set up quarters to prepare for the Spanish counter-attack. In the following days the town was ransacked and burnt down, and the fleet finally left the Orinoco on 28 December and anchored at the Punta Galeota in southeastern Trinidad.⁹²

There were many sick shipmates aboard, and on 8 January 1630 Pater decided to sail through the Bocas. Pater sailed for Bonaire and passed the islands of Margarita, Blanca,

⁸⁸ See Goslinga, 1971, p. 213.

⁸⁹ De Laet mentions the interception of numerous Spanish letters by WIC ships concerning the impending arrival of the large fleet of Don Fadrique: De Laet, 1932, pp. 116–20.

⁹⁰ Read the Spanish report and resolution as to the sacking of San Thomé written by the Marquis de Sofraga in the Appendix to the case on behalf of the Government of her Britannic Majesty, Vol. I (1593–1723), *The Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela*, London, 1898, pp. 70–71. Interestingly, these Spanish sources mention the presence of English ships which are not referred to by Gelein.

⁹¹ Heinen, D., A. García-Castro, 'The Multiethnic Network of the Lower Orinoco in Early Colonial Times', *Ethnohistory*, 47, 3–4, 2000.

⁹² De Laet, 1932, pp. 99–102.

Tortuga, Roccha and Aves before finally anchoring northwest of Bonaire on the morning of 20 January. All soldiers landed and headed for the Spanish village which had been completely abandoned by the Spanish who were hiding in the surrounding country. After a few skirmishes, the town was burnt down and the soldiers left the island, but were suddenly caught off guard by savannah fires lit by the Spaniards.⁹³

The fleet crossed the Caribbean Sea towards Puerto Rico and met the following ships at Mona Island on 28 January: the *Witte Leeuw*, *Griffioen*, *Witte Zwaan* and the *Sphaera Mundi* from Dordrecht. The fleet sailed to the south of Hispaniola where the secretly planned attack on the Spanish town of Santa Marta in Colombia was unfolded, based on information in an intercepted letter written in 1626 by Governor Don Geronimo de Queso, in which the latter had disclosed the military ‘nakedness’ of this town.⁹⁴

The Dutch fleet was sent to plunder this town and bring home its treasures. On 26 February 1630 they launched the attack by cannon fire and quickly landed their soldiers, which easily breached the town’s defences. After they had taken over the fort, the Spaniards proposed a ransom of 5500 *Reales de a ocho* and a few hostages to save the town. When this was not delivered on time, the Spanish clergy finally concluded the deal with the addition of valuable goods.⁹⁵ On 5 March the Dutch set sail for Cabo Tiburon, where they redistributed their cargoes and goods. They released all the remaining prisoners in a bay near Cabo San Nicolas and then sailed for the Netherlands where some ships arrived in July 1630.⁹⁶ Gelein had apparently arrived earlier because he reported to the directors on 13 June, perhaps handing in his report the very same day.

The other voyages of van Stapels

There is some confusion over Gelein’s subsequent appointments as it appears that he was first made captain of the *Jager* on 11 July 1630, but on 29 July was appointed to the ship *Geunieerde Provintien*. Apparently Gelein remained on the *Jager* because de Laet wrote that he participated in a naval battle before the coast of Brazil that cost the life of Admiral Pater in 1631. Gelein had the important function of *equipage meester*.⁹⁷ De Laet probably used other reports by Gelein to describe naval actions near Rio Grande do Norte in Brazil. De Laet reports that Gelein arrived in Bonaire in 1632 with three ships from the Zeeland Chamber, which had sailed from Recife in Brazil.⁹⁸ Gelein transferred his command to the yacht *Pernambuco*, which cruised throughout the Caribbean and arrived in Zeeland on 10 November 1632.⁹⁹

The next reference to Gelein van Stapels is found in a letter (3 folios) written on the island of Hispaniola and dated 21 February 1634.¹⁰⁰ Again, Van Stapels sailed in the *Jager* and made landfall in Cayenne in July 1633 together with his brother Jan van Stapels. They

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 178–80.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 181–2.

⁹⁵ The Spanish version of the attack on Santa Marta written by Geronimo de Queso and his successor Juan de Orozco can be found in Wright, I. A., *Nederlandsche Zeevaarders op de Eilanden in de Caraïbische Zee en aan de Kust van Columbia en Venezuela gedurende de jaren 1621–1648(9)*. Documenten hoofdzakelijk uit het Archivo General de Indias te Sevilla, Vol. 1 (1621–1641), Utrecht: Keminck en Zoon NV, 1934, pp. 185–98.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 181–4. In order to assure a permanent presence in the Caribbean, the WIC sent another fleet under the command of Jan Gijsbertsz Booneter that departed on 1 May 1630 from Flushing, and another, one week later, with Pieter Adriaens Ita and Dirk Ruiters.

⁹⁷ De Laet, 1934, p. 18.

⁹⁸ De Laet, 1934, p. 118. An undated letter from Fernando de Noronha reports that Gelein had visited the island and left, this might well have been the voyage of 1632; NL–HaNA_OWIC 1.05.01.01 49_f. 206B.

⁹⁹ De Laet, 1934, p. 119–23.

¹⁰⁰ NL–HaNA_OWIC 1.05.01.01 42_ff. 48–9.

called at Suriname and delivered cargo on the Berbice River, before continuing their voyage to the Grenadines though not calling at Tobago (already destroyed once by the Spanish?). They had probably participated in the expedition that Abraham van Pere had organized after signing a contract with the WIC Zeeland to conquer the castle of Arguin on the African Coast.¹⁰¹ The castle was indeed conquered and occupied by the Dutch. The participation of Gelein in this venture is supported by an anonymous map of the Castle of Arguin that strongly resembles other maps drawn by van Stapels.¹⁰²

The van Stapels brothers stopped off at Margarita, Caracas, and Bonaire where they met Andries Gerritsen, Cornelis Huijgen and Andries Parijs, and then continued to Curaçao and Aruba, finally crossing the Caribbean towards Hispaniola to sell the Brazil-wood obtained upon the Berbice River. However, Van Stapels was unable to sell his wood and proceeded to the ‘Tordoudes’ (island) where the governor allowed him to construct a house to stock the wood.¹⁰³ On this island he encountered Gaspar van Voubergen and boarded his ship to check for a better ship. He wanted to secure this island for Lord van Pere since it had a good stock of ‘pockhout’. The letter is dated four years after the voyage of 1629–30. Van Stapels probably served in Brazil in the period 1630–32 since there is a map of the coastline of northeastern Brazil bearing his initials ‘GVS’.¹⁰⁴

The last reference to Gelein is found in the Archive of the WIC. On the first of June 1634 Abraham van Pere signed a contract with the Zeeland Chamber for a voyage to Arguin and further on to the Caribbean. The ship *Regenboog* together with its yacht were used for this private voyage, but the ships remained the property of the WIC Middelburg and were to be returned after the voyage. The contract mentions that the ships meant to find ‘Geleyn van Stabels’ who was waiting on a Caribbennan island where he had readied a good quantity of brazil wood that was to be loaded aboard the *Regenboog*.¹⁰⁵

We have no further information on van Stapels in the Caribbean or another place, there is no further mention of his name in the resolutions of the Zeeland Chamber or other WIC archives which makes it likely that Gelein did not survive this last venture.

¹⁰¹ Arguin was situated on an island off the coast of the modern African state of Mauritania.

¹⁰² NL–HaNA_4.VEL_744: see Brommer & den Heijer (eds), 2011, p. 352.

¹⁰³ A possible island is perhaps Tortoga as found in the journal of Ellffryth. See Pargellis, S., R. Butler, ‘Daniell Ellffryth’s Guide to the Caribbean, 1631’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 1, 3, 1944, p. 284.

¹⁰⁴ See de Laet, 1932, p. 187–98 and de Laet, 1934, pp. 5–45, for descriptions of northeastern Brasil (1630–1631). For this particular map entitled “Caerte van de Cust van Brasijl” (NL_UBL_CKA_COLL_BN_054-07-001), see for example Vries, D., de, B. N. Teensma, *Nederlands Brazilië in zicht: de Bahia-documenten en de tekst van Soler en Baro geïllustreerd met kaarten en prenten*. In: Kleine Publicaties van de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek 41, Leiden: Universiteitsbibliotheek, 2001, p. 23; Heijer, H., den, B. N. Teensma, *Nederlands–Brazilië in Kaart. Nederlanders in het Atlantisch gebied, 1600–1650*, Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2011, p. 57.

¹⁰⁵ NL–HaNA_1.05.01.01_42.

THE JOURNAL

Transcribed and translated from the manuscript held at the Zeeuws Archief of Middelburg, Netherlands (ref: NL_Mdb_ZA_33.1_182_MS Gelein_ENG_folios 1–35v) by Martin van Wallenburg, Alistair Bright, Lodewijk Hulsman and Martijn van den Bel.

Notes on the transcription:

Damaged or illegible sections of the manuscript, or missing words added by the editors, are shown thus: [].

Abbreviated directions like N, NE are written in capitals.

Original orthography of ships (in *italics*), personal names and toponyms has been modernised (see Appendices).¹⁰⁶

Literally translated Dutch expressions are in “double quotes” whereas untranslated (difficult) words or expressions are in ‘single quotes’.

Marginal notes have not been included.

All latitudes are those of the northern hemisphere.

Chapters and maps

- 1r Description and appearance of the [fort] they are constructing in Tauregue, which form it has and how it is situated
- 1v Indications of the fort in the Amazon River that the Irish are building along the creek of Taurege
- 2 Missing (map of the Fort of Taurege)
- 3r Description of the form and state of the river of Berbice where the colony of Lord van Pere lies
- 3v Short description of the condition in which I found the colonists and their general and how they occupy themselves
- 5r Map Berbice River
- 6r Description of the Essequibo and Demerara and of the depth one has when sailing from the Berbice to the Demerara, as well as the trade there
- 6v Description of the island Tobago; in what condition I found the colonists there
- 7v A short description of the Island called the Great Cayman
- 7v Description of what depths one finds West of Las Tortugas and what kind of grounds
- 8r Description and appearance of Rio del Puerco in Cuba, where we took on water with a few yachts on the 29 and 30th August
- 8v Description of Rio Puercos
- 9r Map of mouth of Rio Puercos
- 10r Description of the islands that people call Las Tortugas; their shape and what grounds and depth one has there
- 10v Description of the seafaring around Havana, Honduras and New Spain, moreover my opinion on where one should expect the ships that sail from Honduras and when, according to me, the fleet could be expected to cross
- 11r Description of the island Barbados and its condition
- 11v Description of the appearance of the river Orinoco, at what latitude it lies and what depths one sounds there

¹⁰⁶ All toponyms can be found on the Caribbean map made by Hessel Gerritsz and published in 1631. See also Brommer, 2011, p. 77 (NL-HaNA_4.VEL_539) or *Pascaert van de Caribes eylanden curiooslijck betrocken, met Octroy van de Ho[ge] Mo[gende] Heeren de Staten Generaal der vereenighde Nederlanden en de Den E. E. Heeren Bewinthebberen der Gheoctroyeerde West Indische Compagnie gediensstigh opgedraghen door Hessel Gerrits A° 1631* (FR_BNF_CPL GE C-9070).

- 12v Description of the Orinoco River, the surrounding country, the people living there and also the situation of San Thomé
- 14r Description of the order that was conceived by the Lord Admiral and Lord Vice-Admirals well as their advice on soldiers and boatsmen capturing the town
- 15r Map of the Orinoco with the following text in the margin
- 16r Description of the course out from the Orinoco to Trinidad and so forth to the Bocas, what depths and shallows there are
- 17r Description of the island Tortuga, how to sail to it from other places and on its appearance
- 17v Description of the expedition that we undertook on Bonaire on January 21 as well as something on the appearance of the land
- 19r Follows the description of our expedition to Santa Marta and first of all how one should sail to it and what depths and banks there are
- 19v Description of the city Santa Marta and also the appearance of the fortress that they had there and the appearance of the surrounding land
- 20v Account of the orders given in sailing the ships into the bay of Santa Marta as well as capturing the city and castle
- 22r What follows are the goods we acquired from the city as well as the jewellery they offered as ransom as well as what to trade for in Santa Marta
- 23r Map of Santa Marta
- 24r Description of the course starting at Cabo Tiburon until Port François which lies on the North side of Hispaniola and so on into the Caicos, along with the latitude of the principal places
- 24 Map of the Caicos (between folios 24 and 25)
- 25r Journal of our voyage set forth in the year 1629, the 24 of January with the ship the [Zeeuwse] *Jager* and yacht the *Noordster* to the Amazon River and other coasts, God give us a safe journey

[folio 1r]

Description and appearance of the [fort] they are constructing in Tauregue, which form it has and how it is situated

The land where the fort lies is named Goede Hoop. It is a clearing where formerly a large Indian village stood. A freshwater river or creek runs there and to the North it is surrounded by a vast open savannah. To the South and W and WSW it is surrounded by forest and low mountains. The fort has been constructed close by the river so that a quarter of the fort is protected by the river and the rest by dry moats. The land behind the fort is higher than that where the fort lies and we would have built the fort on the highest ground, but for the problem that enemies could cut off access to water when besieging the fort. It was therefore considered advisable to construct it beside the river.

To write further about the appearance of the fort:¹⁰⁷ it was made [] measuring within its points [bastions], 400 feet [] square, but for its points, it has 4 [] north wood [around] [covered with [] [] feet, landwards between [both] the outer palisades [] 14 feet high between both palisades [with] [wreck?] 12 feet high and there [] [to go] round about the fort furthermore it has a []

¹⁰⁷ The central section of the first folio is severely damaged. It gives a description of the Irish fort which Van Stapels helped build. The legend, written on the verso side, is complementary and attests to the existence of a drawing of this fort. Unfortunately, this folio (folio 2) is missing. We refer therefore to the description of Figueira for this fort. We decided to leave this part of the translation ‘unworked’.

from the outer palisade 8 feet high to [] [to anchor?] to the NW it has a [] exit [between] 5 feet wide [] 8 feet wide. To [load] the goods from [].

To the South one close by the said gate [] round about [] dry [] 12 feet wide and 8 deep, yet [] to lie by the NW gate [] and the [] made and an earthen wall [] on the front side of the fort [] the same shape as [] on the SE side for [] a moat had been dug for the canoes [] feet [].

In the fort are [] the house in [] the 2 other lodgings [] half [] house before the principal house was 60 feet long and 35 feet wide, with a raised earthen floor of 3 to 4 feet high, two galleries would run from the front of the house [].

This is in sum the appearance [] of fort Goede Hoop, God grant that they in their Goede Hoop [] the appearance of the fort follows hereafter [] the greater part was constructed when I was there [] so that I do not doubt that it shall [] be finished and once finished I believe not there [] strength that the Portuguese have there, will do much damage to those people as they are otherwise loyal, which time will [tell]. [1v]

Indications of the fort in the Amazon River that the Irish are building along the creek of Taurege

- a: the [] palisade 14 feet high
- b: the [] palisade 17 to 18 feet high between a and d
the [wall] earth
- c: 3 [] by the moat
- d: [] 9 to 10 feet wide, 8 to 9 feet deep
- e: [] feet wide
- f: a small [] for the canoes to deliver goods to the fort
- g: the land [] feet wide
- h: the [] the moat
- i: [the house] to come back to
- k, l: []
- m: []
- n: the [long feet] wide 15 feet
- o: the [wall] of the ravelin 10 [] high
- p: [] wide and [] the other
- q: the creek [] that runs past the fort
This work that [] was partly finished and the rest was organized such [] when I was leaving

[2]

Missing but certainly featuring a map of Fort Taurege

[3r]

Description of the form and state of the river of Berbice where the colony of Lord van Pere lies

The Berbice River lies 6 degrees 30 minutes north and 10 miles NW of the Courantyne River and 11 miles SE of the Demerara River. This river is not very wide, about ¼ mile, to the SE it has a very low lying point with trees that stretch outwards onto a large mud flat, which is exposed at low tide, and where the sea breaks with great force when a strong wind blows. This flat stretches approximately 2 miles out from the land. On the northwestern side of the river there are trees of very different sizes, making it easy to recognize the river mouth, which stretches mostly southward. There are no banks when one enters the river, only very shallow water that is 2 fathoms and 13 feet deep at high tide. The bottom is soft mud and it is not suitable for large vessels. The tide is high when the moon stands E to W making for a difference of 6 to 7 feet. That is in short all on the appearance and state of the river concerning its navigation. We shall continue to write about the appearance upstream and which people live there.

The river Berbice is quite narrow and stretches for about 50 or 60 miles before one reaches the waterfalls. These falls are the place where the river has its source. The water comes falling from high stone cliffs and meanders its way downwards through empty land till where the land becomes thickly forested. However, some 20 to 25 miles from the coast the land is nothing but dry forests and savannah, very unfertile. These savannahs are great wildernesses, sandy ground that is so unfertile that it can support no trees. A plant grows here that is not unlike marram grass in the dunes. The river is populated by three different Nations of which the Arawak are the strongest, fairly good people as much as the last voyage concerns, since they keep their word. There is a fair amount of game, to wit pigs, peccaries, hares and deer which is found mostly in the thick swampy forests. Because upriver is all savannah as was mentioned above, most of the game is found downriver. These nations wage great wars against the Carib from the Courantyne River and these Carib often lie in ambush to capture the Arawak, who because of their enemies dare not go downriver except in large parties. They provision themselves mostly by hunting. There is furthermore no suitable land along this river for a plantation of tobacco¹⁰⁸ or other crops as far as I have witnessed and heard from the colonists, because the land upriver is all barren, so that the savages go far and wide to find any small places to plant their cassava. The river also has no other [valuable] wood as far as has been found out until now. There is an abundance of yellow wood,¹⁰⁹ [3v] but I guessed that it would not be worth much in the Netherlands. The best profit that could be got or made here would be from cotton as it grows well in poor soil. It is a crop that requires little labour and bears a lot of fruit each year and also the same year it is planted.

Furthermore, this river produces about 9,000 pounds of dye [annatto] yearly and this will only increase as the Indians are planting more trees. Each year more and more houses of savages from other rivers appear, so that much dye might be produced here in the future. This is about all that I have been able to learn about the state of this river. Its condition follows hereafter.

¹⁰⁸ Tobacco, cotton, and annatto were the main crops to be planted in the Guianas and Lesser Antilles by the first European settlers.

¹⁰⁹ Van Stapels talks about 'gelen opper' which could be a type of wood we have been unable to identify, but it might as well be 'opperment', 'koningsgeel', or 'swavelarsenicum' being a yellow colored, phosphor containing sediment.

Short description of the condition in which I found the colonists and their general and how they occupy themselves

I visited the river Berbice, where the colony of Lord van Pere was, by the order of the Lords Directors.¹¹⁰ On 15 May 1629 I arrived upstream where general Kornelis van Pere was staying, about 4 to 5 miles up the river.¹¹¹ They had built a fairly large house on an open savannah, made from logs and covered with tiles, provided with two guns shooting iron and four guns shooting stone. This house was built with an attic that functioned as a storehouse with a gallery along the front. I encountered four persons in this house, two men and two boys, the other people were staying here and there among the savages, partly to plant tobacco. Except for the general, I found these people in a sorry state, disease-ridden, both young and old afflicted by pocks so that most of them could not walk or stand because of the hurt and pain. The pox is a very common disease in this country.¹¹² Newcomers will catch it for a short and sometimes for a long period of time, so that anyone who stays here is rarely free from it and because it is a nasty disease I cannot refrain from writing something about it.

The Indians, who are subjected to it, just like other nations, say it is best to have it in youth or old age just like the smallpox. Those who catch it for the first time feel a great pain in all of their limbs, especially in their loins, so that they cannot rest day or night. After some time very large fiery sores break out all over the body, and especially in the face, as big as a shilling. They have not found a remedy yet and for some they can sometimes persist as long as three to four years with excruciating pain. This disease is also of a kind that it does not heal in another country than in that land where one catches it, so that these persons are obliged to stay put until nature has cured them. [4r]

Besides this plague there is another ailment in this country. It afflicts the feet of the people by means of an unbearable itching and if they scratch it, it becomes so infected that they are sometimes crippled for months. Thirdly the people here are plagued by a certain vermin that is called 'lites' [Portuguese: *bicho do pé*] by the Spanish. It looks most like a flea but is half its size. This [thing] is mostly found in those houses that have earthen floors and they nestle between the nails of the toes so skilfully that one does not notice it. After having been there 4 to 5 days, it turns into something resembling a pearl that is completely filled with young worms, which spread themselves throughout the feet again. In short, someone who is a little inattentive and does not take care to remove them in time, will be indisposed in a little while so that one can neither walk nor stand, as is the case with most of those people, so that it was a misery to see these men and boys. These are the principal afflictions plaguing the people here.

Now, when the colonists perceived that this river was not yielding the profit that they had hoped for when they were in the Netherlands, but rather were harvesting many diseases and little profit, they came to their commander to ask if it would please him to grant these following conditions, to wit; that they would produce tobacco themselves in some groups and that they would give him one third of the tobacco and two thirds would be for them. They did not want any part of the dye [annatto *sic*], only that the general would provide them merchandise to trade for their provisions. Once the general had deliberated about everything and recognised the condition of the men because of the aforementioned reasons, he saw only the annatto dye as profit that he could gather easily enough with three to four men without running any risk and granted this to them. This led the people of the colony to spread all over the country, each as he saw best.

¹¹⁰ Van Stapels is referring to the directors of the Chamber of Zeeland of the WIC and not the Lords XIX.

¹¹¹ Kornelis or Cornelis van Pere was the oldest son of Abraham van Pere (Van den Bel, Hulsman & Wagenaar, 2014, p. 50). This is probably the Wiruni River: see Wallenburg, *Sites and Fortifications*, 1995, p. 50.

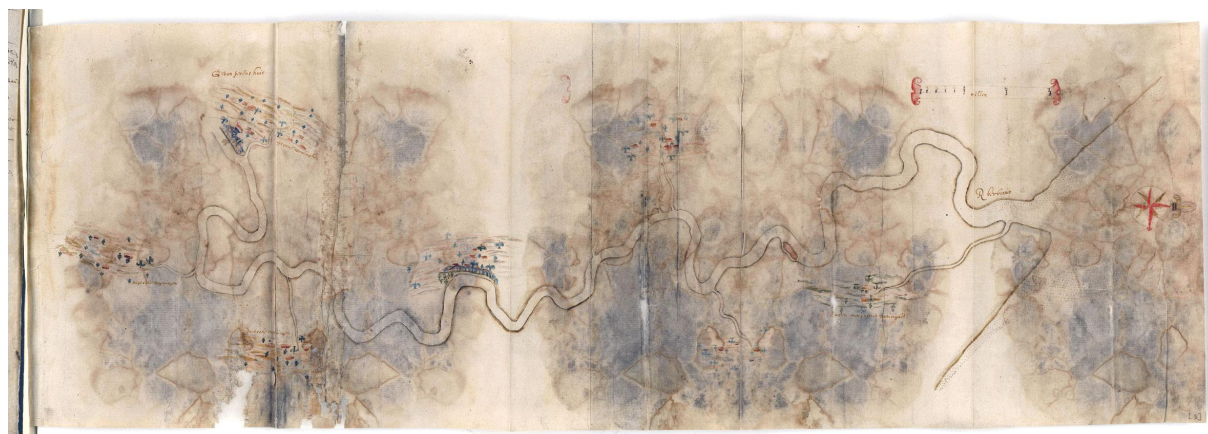
¹¹² These pocks are pustules caused by smallpox.

The ultimate means – in my opinion – to derive any future profit from this colony would be to cut all unnecessary costs that are made here in abundance, and to send back the greater part of the people, because they don't accomplish much with all the boys that are of little help. It would be better to send them home and leave 6 to 7 good young lads with a capable person in charge, who having learned the language, could replace the general. They should be paid monthly, that would amount to a small sum yearly because one could hire hands for a small monthly wage. One could run this colony for an amount of less than 2,000 guilders a year. Seven men each at 9 guilders a month and the commis[sionary] 10 [guilders], this would cost [in total] 73 Carolus guilders a month and this would amount to 876 guilders a year. Furthermore, 1,000 guilders a year for merchandise and 200 to 250 guilders for necessities that would total a little over 2,000 guilders a year. [4v] The yearly return would amount to over 9,000 pounds of annatto dye. I calculate 2,000 pounds for the Lords Directors, so there would remain 7,000 pounds, amounting to 7,000 guilders at one guilder a pound, from which 2,000 guilders would be deducted for merchandise and expenses. This would thus result in a profit of 5,000 guilders and this can only increase each year provided there is proper maintenance. This is in my opinion the best way to derive some gain from this river, because it cannot support many people. If someone objected that such a small number of men would be at risk from the savages, [this is not true since] they run the same risk now as there are hardly four men in one place. They are spread so widely that it would take them more than 8 days to join up with each other and even if they got together they would be powerless because of their sickness and the weaponry that I have seen there was already rotting away and broken. In short, they may well wish for the savages not to go wild, because they are living at the indulgence of the savages. This is as much as I have been able to gather and see of this colony. May God bless it, so that it may grow, although they do not have [appropriate] land for it.

The outline follows on the next page.

[5r]

Map of the Berbice River



[6r]

Description of the Essequibo and Demerara [Rivers] and of the depth one has when sailing from the Berbice to the Demerara [River], as well as the trade there

From the river Berbice till the Demerara River one heads northwest for 12 miles. The Demerara lies at the latitude of 7 degrees north. The coast, 2 miles from the land, is 4½ fathoms deep, soft ground. 4 miles from the Demerara is a small river where the forest is very “even” and low from this river until the point of the Demerara. When one approaches the

point of the Demerara one sees a large plain where the water is very shallow, only 3 to 2½ fathoms deep, very muddy ground. The point of the Demerara is a low-lying point. In front of it lies a flat that is not unlike a small island, although it is connected to the mainland by a mud bank, which makes it easy to recognize the said point. Whoever wants to enter the Demerara sails NW till he sees the entire mouth of the Demerara, the river then lies to your south, then one sails straight into the river. At high tide you will be ensured of 3 fathoms and 15 feet, very soft mud. There are no banks. The river is about two musket shots wide at its mouth. At high tide one has 3½ fathoms in the river mouth. High tide occurs here when the moon is in the east and west, as along the whole coast. The difference between high and low tide is about 7 feet. The Essequibo River lies 4 miles WNW from this river. Light ships of shallow draft can enter the river, but for ships with a deep draft it is too dangerous because of the many sand banks that lie before it. Therefore, the ships of deeper draught remain anchored in the Demerara and send their sloops over there where the first traders lie, which is 12 miles upstream on the west bank of the river opposite three islands with an Indian Captain of the Arawak named Baliskus.

This is as much as I deemed necessary to write about the Demerara and the Essequibo, as these places have been fairly often frequented by ships and are sufficiently known. We will continue to write a little about the traders and the trade that is carried out there.

When I arrived with my sloop upriver at the commissary Jan van Beverlant on 19 May 1629, I did not find Jan van der Goes over there since he was away trading. The tradesmen numbered five in all as well as a Negro and they were staying in an Indian house. They were in the same condition as those in Berbice, pretty bad afflicted by the pox. Their principal dwelling was a day's navigation upstream at the falls, and fortified all around by a palisade, satisfactorily equipped to deal with an attack of the savages. This is where they keep most of their merchandise. They trade mainly for annatto and hammocks; they get 7 balls of annatto for an axe. [6v]

Each ball weighs about 2 pounds, which makes 14 pounds for one axe. Furthermore all other goods [are traded] likewise. The hammocks are usually traded for one axe or more, depending on their quality. They trade quite a lot, which they ship to Saint Kitts. The most important merchandise that is traded here are large and small axes, but machetes are not in particular demand here. What they want are butcher's knives with double points and some other small merchandise that is usually sent to the West Indies. Furthermore beads of all colours. That is as much as I gathered about the trade.

Description of the island Tobago; in what condition I found the colonists there

As soon as we anchored on the 27 May 1629 in the bay in front of the fort Nieuw Vlissingen and Fort Nassau, I went ashore. I found the colonists in a very good condition, all of them very healthy, except for a few who had arrived shortly before with the ship *Walcheren*. They were somewhat sick because of the insalubriousness of the country: one of them had afflictions.

Their fortress is well made, as had been ordained before. They have a bastion on the landside that has three guns that fire landwards but also out to the water on the seaside, to wit on the slope of the mountain six guns stand in very good order that cover the whole anchorage and the rest of the bay. They also have a southern path they take to the fort that is protected on both sides with palisades. This way is so narrow that only one man a time can ascend it. Furthermore they have a large cannon, a 'pothoofd', that stands directly across the causeway.¹¹³ Forth they have also constructed a breastwork of a double palisade; 5 feet wide

¹¹³ A 'pothoofd', '(h)oozemond' or 'steenstuk' is a particular type of canon that shoots stones: see Jonge, J. C., de, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Zeewezen*, Haarlem: A.C. Kruseman, 1862, Part 2 (Second Print), p. 280.

and 6 feet high, and also a dry moat 9 feet wide and 5 feet deep. Beyond the moat stands a palisade 6 to 7 feet high, and because the fort was too small for all the people there, they have decided to expand it by 30 feet. In short, in time it will become a stronghold.

Concerning the cultivation of tobacco; they do this in very orderly fashion. They are divided in 4 shifts that work in the morning for 3 to 4 hours when it is still cool and in the evening another shift, the third shift stands guard and the fourth shift rests. These people have cleared so much land that they could plant over 150,000 plants. They only await the rain to start planting, which usually falls here in June or July. They do not doubt that they will have a good quantity of tobacco next year. The tobacco that grows here is very good; it has large and thick leaves. Their organisation [is] in good order; they keep a very sharp watch by night. Every night 8 watchmen are stationed, a few right into the forest. [7r]

The distribution of the victuals among the people is done in the same way as on board the ships. Each person has 3 pounds of bread per week. They eat together in groups of 7 twice a day. They all live together in the fort; 3 to 4 persons to a hut, constructed very neatly, in which each person has his own berth. They keep their weapons in good condition, very clean and at the ready. Furthermore there are three houses in the fort that are somewhat larger than the others. One for the Captain, the second is a warehouse where the food is stocked too, and the lieutenant lives in the third house in which they also say their prayers.

The other fort named Nassau will also become a fairly good stronghold, but they have only recently started with its construction. The command is represented by the Ensign of the people that arrived recently with the ship *Walcheren*. They have already cleared a lot of land to plant tobacco. In short, all matters are going fairly well here. The only thing is that the people are not very happy that so many commissionaires, second commissionaires and tax collectors are arriving, who refuse to work or lend a hand for anything, so that nobody is free from any officers. The people say that the colony has been founded for the profit of their masters and for themselves too, but that they cannot be held to work for lazy bums. They say that it would initially be sufficient if the Lords would send a capable person there, who would keep good reckoning of their goods, and not so many useless persons from which nothing was to be expected. The Lords should keep a watch on these things, which happen here daily under the higher and lower ranks. As far as their food is concerned that is a little sober because they have to work hard each day so that they had little time for hunting. It would not be unreasonable if these people were to be supplied with flour to bake bread and with barley, oil and vinegar till they got settled a little better, because they cannot look for their food and make profit at the same time. Concerning the available fruit; there are a lot of bananas, pineapples, pepper and cassava tubers. I have brought them also a good quantity of cassava shoots that are only three days old and a lot of pepper.¹¹⁴ In short, they are fairly well provisioned but the land is not very good. This is in short the description of Tobago; I hope it [the situation] will improve each day. [7v]

A short description of the Island called the Great Cayman

The island called the Great Cayman, lies on the northern hemisphere at the latitude of 19 degrees 36 to 37 minutes. It lies 14 to 15 miles west of the islands that are called the Little Caymans. On the south side it stretches 2 miles W by [quarter] S and 2 miles west. At the end of this promontory it curves moderately south and northwards for 2 miles, where the anchorage is situated. One usually anchors halfway the bay in 8 fathoms. The [sea] bottom is very “dirty” all around so that one can damage ones cables easily.¹¹⁵ Furthermore this island is

¹¹⁴ Although European food was imported, the population of the colonies was clearly dependent on the local production. Van Stapels probably took the cassava shoots from Guyana.

¹¹⁵ Unsuitable sea bottom for anchorage is called ‘vuil’ in Dutch or “dirty grounds”.

surrounded by many sandbanks. It is a low [lying] island that cannot be seen from more than 3 to 4 miles away. We have never found any fresh water here, only a large inland salt swamp that is full of salty brine. The only animals here are very large caimans or crocodiles and many turtles which are not very good to eat though. There is very little fowl, so that there is little to obtain for any arriving ships. That is so much as we deem necessary to write about the Great Cayman Island.

Description of what depths one finds West of Las Tortugas and what kind of grounds

Whoever wants to cruise¹¹⁶ behind Las Tortugas and is coming from ‘De Kroon’ of Cuba,¹¹⁷ must go NNW from De Kroon Mountain till one touches ground. When one has ground at the latitude of 24 degrees, 35 to 38 minutes, and one is on the S W side of the Tortugas, the ground will be rocky. Having this ground at this latitude one can be sure to be west of the Tortugas.

However, when one goes above 25 degrees north and one sounds fine chalk ground at 70 to 80 fathoms then this ground is part of the main land, situated west of the Tortugas. Having this ground one should tack upwards till one sounds ground at 24 degrees, 35 to 36 minutes. The sea bottom on the SW side of the Tortugas is steep all over, to wit the first half hour no ground and then 40 to 50 fathoms. At this depth the sea floor gradually rises and the grounds become sandy somewhat further up. Once one meets the grounds of the Tortugas one will encounter turbulent currents that appear to us to be flowing to the SE. Further at the latitude of 25 degrees west of the Tortugas the currents weaken, only a small limited tide that goes to the NNE, [8r] by reckoning between the land of Florida and the Tortugas. There is good anchorage here at about 25 degrees due to the fair weather. Drifting at the latitude of 24 degrees, 40 minutes one can catch as much fish as the crew can eat daily, principally on the rocky grounds, but not so much on the clean [sandy] grounds. The fish is not unlike the parrotfish that is caught off the Barbary Coast.

Then, with a depth of 40 fathoms and at the latitude of 24 degrees, halfway the crossing, we headed SE and drifted off course towards De Kroon. However, the currents here are very unpredictable so that it is hard to make good calculations. Sometimes one can be carried far above Havana and sometimes far below, as the currents run strongly upwards and sometimes also downwards as we heard here. So that little can be written with certainty about the currents. That is as much as we have gathered on the Tortugas during our stay.

Description and appearance of Rio del Puerco in Cuba, where we took on water with a few yachts¹¹⁸ on the 29 and 30th August

In some of my prior journals I wrote that the Rio del Puerco would be 10 miles west of the mountains that are called De Kroon, but I was ill informed. Now that we have taken on water there ourselves, we will write something about the country there.

Rio del Puerco is situated, knowing that we had watered with our ship because ships with more than 8 feet of draft could not enter this small river, to the SE and SEE about 3 to 4 miles from the mountain called De Kroon. One positions one’s ships about 2 miles SSW of the small river in front of the opening of two keys or islands that lie approximately one mile apart. They stretch mostly ENE and WSW and one sounds coral ground at 12 to 10 fathoms, reasonably clean, however, it is very steep because one has to drop anchor as soon as one

¹¹⁶ The Dutch verb ‘kruizen’ or to cruise (to patrol) is used to describe sailing in squadron between fixed points patrolling for ships to attack.

¹¹⁷ ‘De Kroon’ or The Crown of Cuba: mountains situated behind Havana. See also note 87.

¹¹⁸ The ‘jacht’ is a light boat used to carry out fast missions along the coast. The 16th-century English word ‘yacht’ came directly from the Dutch.

sounds 12 fathoms or one would rapidly find 4 to 5 fathoms or even less. Furthermore those that want to collect water have to do so with sloops or light yachts with a draft of no more than 6 to 7 feet, because a reef stretches between both islands just 9 feet below the surface, a very rocky ground which one has to cross. When one is between both islands, one heads SSW to go straight up the little river that one can recognize by the multitude of withered trees. The little river is altogether narrow so that sloops cannot be rowed in there, but to enter it one needs fly boats propelled by poles. In the mouth the river is very dry [sandbar] and if it has rained a lot this little river carries so much surface water that the river is entirely fresh at its mouth. [8v]

One usually takes a boat some distance upriver to fill it up. The mates bring it over the bar, either by swimming or by rolling it, and bring it filled with fresh water to the yachts that lie in front of the river. One has to put many people on guard on both sides of the river because many folk live here in this country that use all means to prevent the collecting of water. The forest is very dense and one should be careful not to be ambushed. Our Spanish prisoner told us that there are many lemons growing $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile upstream, but it would be dangerous to procure them. The tidal range is about 3 feet here, so one can enter the river with a sloop at high tide, but at low tide it dries up completely. The appearance of Rio del Puerco is as follows; its bay and description.

Description of Rio Puercos

- a: these are islands that lie before and around the bay
- b: a fisherman's cabin
- c: these are withered trees that lie on the plain before the river
- d: the river of Rio del Puerco
- f, g: if one sees these two mountains before the other, one is before the mouth
- h: is 'De Kroon' mountain
- i, j: where we lay with our ship at 12 fathoms
- k: where the yachts and barks were, which took on water
- l, m, n: where our soldiers kept watch for the arrival of the Spanish

[9r] Map of the mouth of the Rio Puercos



[10r] Description of the islands that people call Las Tortugas; their shape and what grounds and depth one has there

The islands called Las Tortugas lie at 24 degrees 40 to 45 minutes. There are 6 or 7 of them that are more like cays than like islands because they resemble shoals as they emerge from the water, entirely treeless as far as we could see. Although the Spanish say there are trees on one of them, we did not see them. When these islands are approximately 2 miles to the NNW, one can see them from the topsail. It is 20 to 19 fathoms deep. One has a fine chalky ground but a large rocky reef stretches NW and WNW. This reef has about 5 fathoms of water when you can see the west end of the Martyr Islands from the topsail to your NE. This reef is very irregular; sometimes more than 15 fathoms and other times 4 fathoms, invariably rocky. One can see the bottom at 12 to 13 fathoms. The Tortugas islands lie mostly northeast of the Martyr Islands and southwest at 9 to 10 miles from the Martyr Islands [*sic*], between both it is very treacherous, although the Spanish say that a channel runs between the Martyr Island and Las Tortugas, but how is unknown to me. One can approach the Tortugas from the western side till the south [side] by loading [sounding], but to the SE and ESE this is more difficult because it is very rocky. On the south side the sea floor rises very steeply, to wit first having no ground at 60 fathoms it then rises till 6 to 5 fathoms. The currents are very unpredictable; we sailed with the fleet between Havana and Matanzas Bay but mostly adrift without wind. We reckoned that the current carried us in the channel and we drifted near the reef, having only 4 fathoms, so that the whole fleet was imperilled, because when parting from the coast of Cuba, we thought that the currents would have carried us to northeast as usual. However, we drifted northwest and when we saw the first shallows, we all thought we had arrived at the cays called the Anguilla Keys, but when we anchored with the fleet, we found we were near the Tortugas, because of the currents that flow very strongly to the WNW here. This was surprising because they tend to flow very much to the east here, so that one never can depend too much on the currents. [10v]

Description of the seafaring around Havana, Honduras and New Spain, moreover my opinion on where one should expect the ships that sail from Honduras and when, according to me, the fleet could be expected to cross

Fleets that came from all over used to sail between July and the beginning of August, but as the Spanish suffered many losses in the aforementioned period because our ships usually cruised in the aforementioned period, the ships that were freighted in Honduras changed their route and timing and departed in the month of May to set course for Veracruz when our ships were not cruising off the coast of Cuba. They set their course past the islands of Triangulo and Las Arcas,¹¹⁹ either around them or in between them, I do not know, and so continue to Veracruz to have a safer passage with the fleet. It is our understanding that this Saint John's Fleet¹²⁰ has not sailed this year, because they [the Spanish] have been warned that we have patrolled there in such force. On the other hand they have also been delayed waiting for the arrival of 22 galleons from Spain of which 8 would guard the King's silver in Cartagena and 14 would cruise near Las Tortugas. These galleons should have arrived here in June, as was advised from Spain, but we never heard any notice of them for which reason we presumed that they must have been delayed in Spain. We guessed that this is why the fleets have not arrived this year, but they will undoubtedly arrive by March or April to make sure to arrive in Havana by mid May at the latest before any of our fleets will reach the coast there because the

¹¹⁹ These small islands are situated off Campeche, the southern part of the Yucatán peninsular.

¹²⁰ The Saint John's Fleet or *flota* was captured by the Dutch in 1628 who remember this as the capture of the Silver Fleet. See Goslinga, 1971, pp. 178–9, 185–92.

northern winds cease in March and April so they can easily advance. Concerning the King's silver fleet, it can sail anytime when it has been advised that the coast is clear, because it lies to the windward and is less subjected to the strong northern wind. They run many risks, but not as great as others and [that posed] by us. When the Dutch ships have left, the word spreads from Bayamo, from behind Cabo Cruz, and will swiftly reach Cartagena. In short, one can never be certain when this fleet will arrive.

The fleet from New Spain must necessarily cross between March and September, so that those who want to cruise here must make sure to arrive by March near Havana or Las Tortugas and stay there till September. Furthermore, from October till February such strong winds blow continuously in the bight of New Spain that they even have difficulty to keep their ships anchored in the bay. [11r]

In addition, one should wait, in my opinion, in 2 places to catch the ships from Honduras. To wit 4 to 5 ships should cruise from the month of March till the month of July out of sight of the land, directly before Veracruz, and the others at De Kroon in the usual place. The Honduras ships can just as easily sail for both places, so that one year they would go to Veracruz and the other to Havana. This would be the surest means to intercept these ships. This is in my opinion the best way to catch them. Furthermore the seafaring with barks has virtually come to a halt. When they hear that our ships are in the region, they immediately detain them in all harbours. That is as much as we have learned about the seafaring during the time that we have cruised here.

Description of the island Barbados and its condition

The island of Barbados, where we had our rendezvous, lies at the latitude of 13 degrees 12 to 14 minutes. It is not very high but has a gently sloping mountain. It is approximately 6 to 5 miles long, stretching generally WSW. The anchorage is on the western side in a fairly large bay, but with "dirty" ground. To get to the anchorage, coming from the South, one first sails around a low-lying point and directly behind it is another low-lying point, and around this point is the anchorage in the aforementioned bay.

This island is inhabited by about 2,000 Englishmen that cultivate tobacco but of very poor quality in my opinion, because the land is very chalky and unfertile. There are also few victuals, but there is a good quantity of wild pigs which are rapidly declining due to the daily hunting. They feed themselves with pumpkins which they cultivate here with reasonable success. They also have many beans not unlike Turkish beans [maize *sic*]. These are the most important crops that they have there.

They are ruled by a Governor. This island was granted by the King of England to a certain Lord Carlisle, who appointed a Governor there under whose command they all are.¹²¹ Everyone has his own land and employs some planters to cultivate it.¹²² They have to give 5 percent of their crops to the aforementioned Lord and furthermore 5 percent to the Governor and 9 pence sterling for each pound of tobacco in tax to the King. Moreover, they all put money towards the expenses of the guards, their victuals and also the services of 3 preachers. [11v]

They have no particular fortified locations on this island but on the north side they have a square palisade, about two fathoms high, where they keep two small cannons. This is all the might they have there. They generally trust in their large numbers and that the land is densely

¹²¹ James Hay, first earl of Carlisle, obtained a grant from King James I in 1627. Carlisle appointed Henry Hawley as his representative to take possession of the island in 1629. See, G. J. van Grol, *De Grondpolitiek in het West-Indische Domein der Generaliteit*, Deel 1, 1934, p. 47n.

¹²² Van Stapels used the word 'prenters' to designate the workers or planters employed on the land. This could be translated as 'stamped' or 'marked' men, which refers to slaves of any kind.

covered by forest where they intend to do their enemy most damage. That is as much as we could gather about the character of this island.

Description of the appearance of the river Orinoco, at what latitude it lies and what depths one sounds there

When we were at Barbados and our design [plan] was to go for the Orinoco River, we set sail from said island, heading approximately SSE and SES between 21 and 22 November, we sounded sandy ground at 50 fathoms. Then until daybreak, we continued to sail towards the land [Terra Firma] where the sea bottom rose till 8 fathoms, where we saw the land of the Company [unknown toponym], very low land full of trees that cannot be seen from 4 miles out, it stretched straight westwards. We were at the latitude of 9 degrees and since we were not familiar with this place and there was nobody in the fleet that had been here, we searched with great difficulty for the Orinoco River as is shown in the ship's logs. We will now continue with the description of the Orinoco River.

Whoever wishes to enter this river, coming from the sea, shall make landfall at 8 degrees 45 to 50 minutes. The land stretches West and is very low-lying land just like the whole Wild Coast. The water is shallow, having 3 and 3½ fathoms. When at the coast at this latitude, stretching this way, one sails along the coast at ditto depth till one encounters a small river called Amacuro. This river stretches straight towards the east and is ⅔ mile wide. A mile out from this river it is 3½ to 4 fathoms deep, very soft ground and shallow water and due to the great [mud] flat, for up to 5 to 6 miles north of ditto river it is only 3 fathoms deep and in the middle of said river the course is west, 4 miles to the northern point of the Orinoco. Between both lies another small river that also runs east, ⅓ of a mile wide, called by us the 'Honde' River.¹²³ The delta of the Orinoco River is full of islands from which great banks stretch 4 to 4½ miles SE to the north and ENE, but when coming from the Amacuro one has to go straight W by S, directly to a small round island that lies in the mouth of the river to the west side, next to a large island. One sails as far north until one can see between the ditto small and large island and then one sails the course [mentioned] above W by S, [12r] finding soft ground as one goes along at 4 then 5 to 6 and 8 and 10 to 12 fathoms; the nearer to the aforementioned small island, the deeper. In short, one has to be as close to the small islands in order to hit them with a musket shot. It is 13 to 14 fathoms deep. It is a very good entrance, but the most important is that one must ensure that one makes land 7 to 8 miles before the river. That is because of the flats that stretch far out from the north side of the river. One should not be afraid to get near the coast even if it only is 3 to 3½ fathoms deep. One has to cross this flat because the nearer the land, the shallower the water becomes and it is very soft ground. It is then best to tack away from the land, but one should not sail a "quarter" and one should not position oneself with the island further to the west than W by S, or else one encounters the north bank which is mostly steep. Therefore it is better to stay a tack from the land. Moreover, when one comes very close to the said island, that lies in the river, one sails straight up the river to a point that lies at larboard, approximately W by S, one mile from the islands. One can come close to the said point, between both it is deep 9 to 10 fathoms. The river is a little less than a mile wide here.

Furthermore from this point one sails west towards another island, one mile from this point. While it becomes shallow at larboard, having this island at the side, one has to sail closely past it. It is approximately ⅔ mile long west to south. One keeps this island very close on one's starboard until the end. Farther SW of this island lies another small island, ½ mile from said island. One sails straight to it and then leaves it to larboard. Having 8 to 9 fathoms in this water, one courses in between two islands and the "broken" land [a multitude of islands] is

¹²³ Probably Shallow River or 'honda' in Spanish, but can also be translated as Dog River in Dutch.

left to starboard, it is $\frac{1}{3}$ mile wide there. From these islands one then sails SW to W, $\frac{2}{3}$ mile, and one arrives in the river where it becomes very narrow, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ mile and in some places only $\frac{1}{4}$ wide, with winding creeks and inlets and smaller waterways. The multitude of islands that one finds here makes it impossible to give an accurate description, but most stretch west to south and WSW until San Thomé. Approximately [...] miles upriver is an inlet that runs NNE for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and at the end the river is only a musket shot wide. Behind this inlet is another one that runs NE to N for $\frac{1}{3}$ mile. These two inlets represent the dry part of the river because in the NNE inlet it is 14 feet, and at the other inlet, running NE and N, there is only 2 fathoms to 13 feet of water. We had to pass these inlets by hauling the ships [with ropes and anchors] because we had no more water to sail. It took us altogether 25 to 26 hours. [12v]

Furthermore there are more inlets full of banks that have only $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms depth, but as it is impossible to describe everything, we can point it out better in the map that follows. An E and W moon generates the high tide in this Orinoco River, encompassing about 6 to 7 feet of difference in the lower river, but very little upstream. This river lies at the latitude of 8 degrees 45 to 50 minutes, and the town of San Thomé at the latitude of 8 degrees 16 to 20 minutes. This is all concerning the navigation and appearance of the river. In the following map one can better perceive its true outline, where the banks and the shallows lie. I designed the same with great effort to my utmost ability.

Description of the Orinoco River, the surrounding country, the people living there and also the situation of San Thomé

The Orinoco River is a very large river, the largest of the whole coast besides the Amazon River. It is very wide at its mouth and full of innumerable islands, a low-lying and sunken land. The river runs, as has been described before, W by S and WSW till the town of San Thomé, more than 20 miles upriver. It is all low-lying and drowned land that is generally inundated when the river is full of water. It is densely forested.

The nations that live along the lower part of the river are called Tivitivi [Warao]. They are a very poor people that make their living off fishing and by hunting a few wild animals in the forest, to wit pigs and peccaries. They do not have dry land to live on nor do they have any crops as far as we know. Their most important food is nuts from palmito trees. These nuts are the size of an egg, and 50 to 60 grow together in bunches in the trees from a thing resembling a net [buriti; *Mauritia fluxuosa*]. They are very sharp on the outside, and when opened they are like a coconut with liquid inside. They use these nuts instead of bread, a very poor fare, because they cannot grow cassava or any other crops here as far as we could see.

They are the same as all other Indians along this coast in their lifestyle and habits. Concerning their nature and manners, we did not see any differences with the other Indians on this coast.

Concerning their dwellings, we have not seen them anywhere, so we guessed that these people have no fixed abodes, because they have to live wherever they can find plenty of the aforementioned nuts. When they have eaten them all in one place they go to another place. They cannot have fixed [13r] dwellings either because the water rises very high during the rainy season, causing most of the low lying lands to be inundated. When sailing upriver we saw flood marks of the high river water that were 3 or 4 fathoms higher than the water level.

This river is also inhabited by a few Caribs; however they live more inland, so that they seldom appear upon the river. In sum, it is a river bereft of people, as compared to other rivers on the coast, and the few that live there are very poor, so that anyone who comes here can obtain little refreshment. When one has travelled 20 to 25 miles upstream, one encounters good land that rises about 2 fathoms above water. It is very good land to sow during the dry season, but I reckon that it would be inundated during the rainy season. Nevertheless, in the

dry season one could easily sow maize and rice since these crops will grow well on soggy terrain. Once one has sailed about 30 miles one comes first from the islands into the [main] channel of the Orinoco. There, the river is a mile wide in some places with very good and high land on either side, with good savannas to keep cattle on, such as the Spanish also keep cattle in this country. The land is of reddish colour with stony riverbanks; very pleasant to behold.

Once one leaves behind the aforementioned wide river and islands, so it is just 12 to 14 miles to the town San Thomé. This place lies on a promontory but not so high, on the south bank, opposite three islands that are a mile in length. The town lies close to the water's edge and one is moored so close to it, that one can shoot at it with a pistol. The town stretches $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile along the water, [and] numbers around 130 or 140 houses in all. They had a church there that stood partly in town, as well as a monastery of the Franciscan Order on the west side of town. Concerning their houses, they were in very poor condition: the walls of the houses were made of wood and loam, the roof of palm leaves, and the interiors timbered with cedar planks. They had no fortification in this place, the houses stood as they do in villages in the Netherlands. There were few trees between the houses and the water, across which several paths ran to the water. This place had very pleasant farms and gardens and such, in which they had some good orange apples, limes, and various other kinds of fruit. They also had very nice cassava gardens. In sum, very [13v] pleasant to behold. Throughout the land they also had some houses or 'Hatten'¹²⁴ as they called them as was told by the savages but also [it was] seen that they keep many animals such as horses and pigs, but we got most of those from us. As far as their tobacco plantations are concerned, they have their fields where they grow tobacco both far from and close to the town because not all the land is suitable to grow tobacco since, on the one hand, many parts are savannah and, on the other hand, other parts are too stony.

The nations of savages that live in the vicinity of the people [Spanish], of which some live at a distance, some nearby, are mostly Carib, and a few Arawak, as well as a nation they call Goianes, and in addition, there are a few Negroes, their slaves. These people do most of their work in producing tobacco. In sum, they lived peacefully here.

According to three Negroes that surrendered themselves to us, the Spanish were fairly creolised and numbered 150 men. This is all concerning the town, we shall now write on the nature of the river and other such characteristics.

On this river, according to the Spanish, the heaviest and main rainy season occurs in April and May, when it rains very hard in all of this land [so] that as a result of the rain, the river can rise some 3 fathoms higher than usual in only a short time. That is why most of the low lands and islands in the river are flooded. The river streams very fast continually, both in the dry season and the rainy season, so that over 12 to 14 miles upriver, one cannot navigate anymore. Downriver [one] is very subject to rainfall, so that one rarely experiences dry weather there, which in my opinion causes great unhealthiness. The like we experienced amongst our own, because all the while we were on the river, we had many that fell ill with dysentery and fiery fevers and very rarely dry weather. Only upriver did we experience fair weather, so that, in my opinion, it is much healthier upriver than downriver. Furthermore it is very different from other rivers along the Wild Coast, because other rivers are full of mosquitoes downriver and deprived from it upriver. However, this one is altogether the opposite, for here along the lower Orinoco there are no mosquitoes and upriver many. [14r]

This river is also very full of fish, so that we daily caught many here. It has also a lot of fresh water, there are turtles like in the Amazon River, manatees and animals that live on land and in the water, which are called 'oittes' [capybara] in the Amazon region. They are not dissimilar to mules for they have cloven hoofs. The animals on land are in general similar as

¹²⁴ 'Hato' is pasture for cattle in Spanish.

along other rivers of the Wild Coast. In sum, it is a good river, if only it were more inhabited by savages. One is actually amazed by how few there are, and the few that are around live so far up creeks and river bends that it is impossible to find them, unless they want to be found. In sum, it is the river most bereft of inhabitants of the entire Wild Coast. In short, this is what we could see of and remark upon the river Orinoco in the short time we were there.

Description of the order that was conceived by the Lord Admiral and Lord Vice-Admiral as well as their advice on soldiers and boatsmen capturing the town

Since we struggled past the difficult north-east channel on the 3rd of December and we were now just 16 to 17 miles from San Thomé, the Lord Admiral assembled the captains of the soldiers to conceive the following order:

First of all, since we had five companies, to wit two from Amsterdam, one from Zeeland, one from the Maas and one from Groningen, and as these companies were not complete, namely [missing] 100 men, it was approved to make up the difference with boatsmen who were trained in using firearms.

Secondly, it was ordered that there would be 100 pounds of gunpowder for ammunition for each company, in four barrels to be carried by four men, altogether 500 pounds of gunpowder carried by 20 seamen. Each company also received 100 pounds of [musket] shot and as much fuse as 40 men could carry.

Thirdly, each company was instructed to outfit four men with shovels, spades and axes. In total, 60 men were charged with carrying powder, shot, shovels and spades. Three reverends were in charge of the men and the ammunition.

Fourthly, 30 volunteers were selected out of the soldiers and boatsmen, who were equipped with visors and flintlocks. These were the “lost” troops that would broach the terrain upon landing. A sergeant was in charge of these troops. [14v]

Fifthly, 6 rowers and one helmsman who held the command over his boat were ordered for every sloop. These boats were equipped with two [iron pieces] and one stone [shot] piece each. The people were armed with their rifles and a few pistols. Claas Hendriksen, skipper of the *Friese Jager*, was in overall command of the boats.

Sixthly, it was ordained that [of] the two companies from Amsterdam, one would take the vanguard and the other the rearguard, and those of Zeeland, Maas, and Groningen the battalion. The people of each of these five companies had two banners for greater hope; a few chaplains accompanied these banner bearers.

Seventhly, it was decreed on board all ships that no one, having arrived in the town, would begin to plunder before orders were given to that effect. Also that no one would set about drinking and if anyone were to be found guilty of these mentioned malpractices they would be executed without mercy.

Having arrived in town, the Lord Admiral as well as his council commenced setting up quarters and as there was a very large square by the church that was also the market square, a company was stationed in all four corners. The fifth stood main guard at the admiral’s tent, beside which stood the ammunition tent. In every quarter tents were erected directly because the houses had been burned down. The captains of the soldiers straight away gave good orders that all roads and exits be well guarded by sentinels. The main guard was fortified every night. While the quarters were being divided, the “lost” troops entered all burnt houses and took out as much tobacco as possible. In sum, in all such order was kept as time dictated. In short, these are the orders that were given on this campaign. On the next page [is] the true depiction of the river Orinoco, to wit the passages we took, as well as the appearance of the town, all made to the utmost of my ability.

[15]

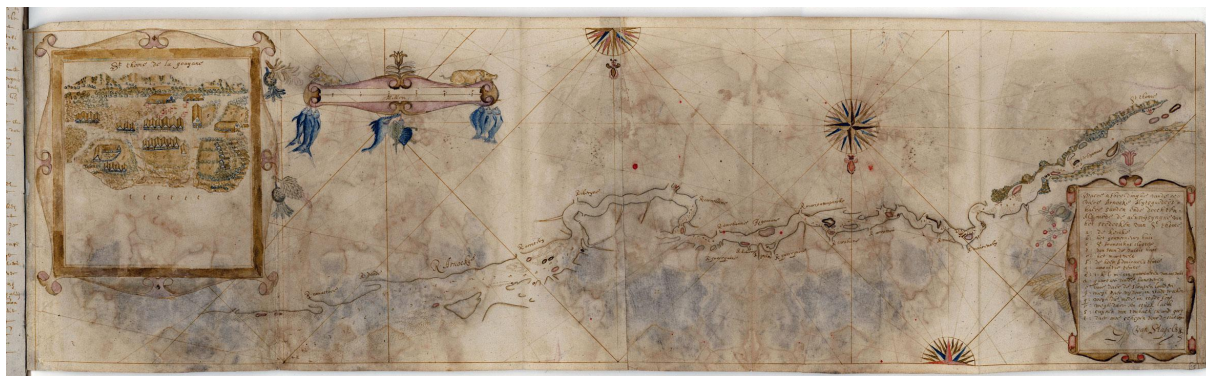
Map of the Orinoco with the following text in the margin:

“St. Thomé de la Gouyane”

**True depiction of the river Orinoco as well as her sandbanks and shallows.
Including the directions about the town of San Thomé**

- a: the church
- b: the Governor’s house
- c: St. Francis monastery
- d: House of Don Joan de Valois
- e: the market square
- f: the Lord Admiral’s tent
- g: ammunition tent
- h:i:k:l:m: quarters of our people¹²⁵
- n: quarters of the Flintlocks
- o: bay where the sloops landed
- p: road by which we entered town
- q: road that also runs through town
- r: road where a piece was located
- s: gardens of tobacco and other stuffs
- t: where our ships lay before the town

G. van Stapels



¹²⁵ Legend ‘j’ is lacking.

[16r]

Description of the course out from the Orinoco to Trinidad and so forth to Las Bocas, what depths and shallows there are

If one is coming from the Orinoco and wants to go to Trinidad, sailing out of the Bocas, one should tack until before the Amacuro River. Then one should set a course N and NE until one has passed the flats. Having passed them, one goes NW, for the islands of the Orinoco stretch NNW to the South of Galleons Point. Staying on this NW course, one comes upon a white point, named Point Blanquiales. From this point the land stretches north as far as we could see and to Galleons Point 5 or 6 miles WSW. One must sail close to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile past Trinidad due to the flats from the Orinoco. From Amacuro to ditto white point, the course is mainly NW and NNW for 16 or 17 miles. Furthermore this WSW course is 6 and 5 to 4 fathoms deep, soft bottom. Once this stretch is passed, the land stretches 6 or 7 miles west to Galleons Point. The closer to this point the deeper the water. Galleons Point is a very low point, directly to the east of which are many palm trees. To the west of this point, approximately 2 miles, lies a high cliff; on the same course a canon shot away, just off the point lies a stony reef covered by no more than 11 or 12 feet of water. Those who round this point must be aware that they should pass this point by sounding constantly, for they could easily run aground upon it due to the strong currents coming around the point from the east, for during some tides there is a very strong current. He who wants to sail on from Galleons Point to Las Bocas should sail between the reef and the point at 4 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms. The Bocas lie 14 or 15 miles north of Galleons Point, in between both Trinidads [*sic*], it is 10 to 8 or 7 fathoms deep, mostly soft bottom.

The Bocas are 4 or 5 islands that lie between the mainland and the northern end of Trinidad. There are two navigable passages, namely the Small Bocas and the Large Bocas. There are also two passages that are not to be sailed. The [Large Bocas] passage between the mainland and the NW tip of Trinidad which is about three miles in size, in which lie 4 islands that stretch WSW. The Small Bocas [passage], through which we sailed, lies $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off Trinidad. One leaves room alongside Trinidad with a very high [16v] island. Then one encounters the Small Bocas that is represented by a passage that stretches NNW $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. One keeps to one's West a very high steep island. This passage is about a canon's shot wide, it has no bottom anywhere, and both banks are very steep. To the west of the aforementioned high island lie the Large Bocas, that is by reckoning one mile wide. According to some there is a submerged ledge there, but one of our small yachts sailed there without detecting one. West of this passage lies another very high island, though not as high as the other. To the west of this island off the mainland, four passages lead to the sea. However, what the situation is, we do not know. When one approaches the Bocas up to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile before them, one still has 36 or 37 fathoms of water but in the passages our two [sounding] lines had no more bottom nor to the east beyond them. As far as the Small Bocas where we passed them, it was very clear. One could sail so close to the islands that one could hit them with a stone. During some tides an extremely strong current passes through here, so that one goes through it with some speed.

And to write also something about the character of Trinidad, as much as we have been able to observe by passing by, we will discuss it a little. It is a very high country full of woods and it also has a number of savannas. It is inhabited by Spanish and Arawak and a few other nations that are mostly enemies of the Spanish. The Indians live on the east side. The Arawak live at a place called 'Nippie', and the Spanish in the north-west corner, right inside the Bocas at a port called Port of Spain. According to our Negroes, their village lies some three miles inland, and there are about 40 houses and [it] is called Saint Joseph. As the Negroes told us, it has a road that is hard going, part of which runs through a swamp, another part over hilly tracks, very arduous. As in San Thomé the Spanish occupy themselves here with growing tobacco. It is also subjected to a lot of rain so that this is a very unhealthy place, as a captured priest

declared who had lived here off water and victuals. As far as water and victuals are concerned, palmito is easily acquired here for the land is densely covered with it.¹²⁶ One can acquire water at Galleons Point by digging pits in the sand, [17r] or in some places also from fresh water streams. Here is also a certain point, at most halfway between the Bocas and Galleons Point that the Spanish call ‘Pont de Bre’ or Tar Point [La Brea]. This point has a pool where tar flows out of the earth, which appears very good but it has been found unsuitable for tarring ships. When the sun is beating down upon it and one steps on it, it is as if one were walking in clay. Further, I do not know what kind of animals this island has, because we did not tarry here much. I would have made a map but because I was sick of dysentery during that time, I was unable to do so.

Description of the island Tortuga, how to sail to it from other places and on its appearance

The island Tortuga lies 15 or 16 miles SSW of Isla Blanca, and NE of the west side of Isla Margarita. It stretches 2 miles on the South side NE and SW, then 2 miles west, so that this island is about 4 miles long. At the NW end it has a number of small isles and reefs. It has a very good harbour on the west side of 8 to 10 fathoms, sandy ground. According to some there is fresh water in wells. At the SE end there is a very large plain inland wherein lies a good saltpan which we found to contain a good quantity of salt, a good two or three ship loads worth. This pan lies a great cannon’s shot inland, but ships that load up here can anchor safely because the easterly winds blow some 4 gradients, so that the ships anchored with strong SE winds can suffer much damage.

Furthermore, this island is very barren [unfertile] due to its rocky nature. However, it does have quite a lot of goats, but they are difficult to catch due to the sharp, stony ground. This is all that we thought to write down in passing this island, because it is an island that is regularly visited by us and sufficiently well-known. [17v]

Description of the expedition that we undertook on Bonaire on January 21 as well as something on the appearance of the land

Bonaire is an island about 6 or 7 miles in circumference which lies around 10 miles from the island Isla Aves at the latitude of [...] degrees, [...] minutes.¹²⁷ It has a large plain at its SE end and high hills along its north side. Very little grows here as it is very stony and has extremely little water. There is an abundance of red wood which is called “stockfish wood” and grows extensively all over the island. There are also many sheep that do well here, and many tame animals and horses too. There are 45 to 50 Indian creoles here ruled by a Spaniard they call Mayor Domo. These people have been hired by a gentleman from Santo Domingo to whom this island belongs. The people are occupied with driving ox meat and the sheep that they ship off. They also chop down a lot of stockfish wood that they ship from here to Santo Domingo. It is a poor people that live very poorly.

Further, as we arrived here on the 20th of January and the Spanish did not extend to us the friendship of giving us sheep and animals, the Admiral saw fit to mount an expedition, hoping to find some chopped wood or animal skins. We disembarked with about 450 men on the 21st during the day. The place where the Spanish lived was a good 4 miles from the ships, all the way at the NW end, mostly surrounded by savannas and little forest. The path is quite good. One first goes 2½ miles NW until the coastline of the other side of the island, then west to the houses passing through narrow and high hills, where just two men can march side by side. If

¹²⁶ The word ‘palmito’ is used by Van Stapels for any kind of palm tree of which the fruits and heart are edible.

¹²⁷ The blanks [...] have not been filled in by the author.

the Spanish wanted to, only 30 men could cover this passage in such a way that 1000 men would not get through for they would smite the passers-by dead with stones from the hills. Having passed this route which stretches $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, one encounters the open savannas once more, in which the houses stand. Thus, in the morning [18r] we disembarked and arrived exhausted at the village a little past midday on account of great thirst, because not a drop of water is to be found along the entire route. Now, the troops being in the best shape were ordered to search around the village for sources of water for the people to drink. One of those who set out was the skipper of the *Kat* named Jacob Bersen along with the helmsman of the *Dolfijn* with no other arms than a pistol and a pick. When being just beyond the quarters, 6 or 8 Spanish attacked them and brutally murdered the skipper who intended to shoot his pistol but it failed. The helmsman fended them off as best he could with his pick so that he was finally rescued by the soldiers who had heard the shouting. They brought the dead skipper back to the quarters and the helmsman was seriously injured. This misfortune was mostly down to lack of caution in their walking off so far so poorly armed. The injured person and dead person were brought back to the ships; the injured in a chair and the dead on a horse in a large convoy that arrived on board late in the evening, very tired and worn out.

On January 22, having found nothing but empty houses, we set these on fire in the morning, which we would not have done had they not the day before murdered our skipper. Once we burnt down the houses, which were made of very light materials, we passed through the narrow hills through which we had come the day before, where we found a freshwater well. Here we refreshed our men somewhat with water and we also captured two horses there that we loaded with two barrels and a sack of gunpowder, because it was too heavy to carry. On the other horse we would every now and then put a soldier who could not carry on any longer. Thus we passed through the narrow hills in good order and so onwards along the seashore, following the road until we arrived at a very large savannah where the entire group rested a little. Having been here about a quarter of an hour, some 20 to 25 Spanish horsemen showed up, who set the savannah on fire all around us. In less than a quarter of an hour, we were entirely surrounded by fire, very terrifying to see. To describe what these savannahs are, I shall write something about them. Savannahs are very large plains [18v] without trees; they are covered with a tall rush [reed] not unlike the helm that grows so densely in the dunes, 2 to 3 feet high. Because of the intense heat it is very dry so that as soon as fire comes near it, it goes up in flames and does not stop until everything is burnt. Being in the fire as said before, we did not know what to do because of the great surprise of the people, for all the troops were mostly in disarray. Thus all of us set off upwind, where the fire burnt less intensely. The soldiers came close to casting off their bandoliers and arms. The horse we had with us with about 50 pounds of gunpowder we had to pull through the flames, caught the fire which gave off terrifying flames, but wounded no one, because the one leading the horse had abandoned it. The Spanish rode ahead and where we encountered them, they set everything on fire again, causing us great hardship. Eventually we got so far that we left the savannah and came into a forest where we spent almost the whole day searching for a way out of it again. Since there was no water anywhere, we suffered terrible thirst such that several soldiers were so exhausted that they could go no further. If the Spanish had let us march $\frac{1}{2}$ mile [further] into the great savannah, they would have scared us so much that most of us would have given up on getting out. Thus wandering in the forest the Spanish stood atop the hills and watched us go and wherever we came out of the forest we were immediately engulfed in flames so that we had to turn back every time. In sum, at night we made it back on board with great difficulty, very faint and tired so that many became ill. We will long remember this expedition, that such a great company should be caused such trouble by 20 to 25 unarmed men. May it be a warning if further expeditions were planned in such savannah-like landscape, it would not be unwise to first burn down the savannahs, which is done in $\frac{1}{2}$ day,

and then to advance through them unhindered, otherwise one should travel more lightly than we did before, but smarter. This is in short the account of our expedition of Bonaire that did not bring us any profit and where we were at great risk. [19r]

Follows the description of our expedition to Santa Marta and first of all how one should sail to it and what depths and banks there are

Whoever comes from Cabo de la Vela and wants to go to Santa Marta should set their course SW of W, and then he will come to very high hills called the high land of Santa Marta [Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta *sic*]. From here the land stretches mainly WSW until Cabo San Juan de Guia, very high land and covered at the top in snow. Though the cape is sloping, it is quite high and in front of it at 1/6 of a mile is an island. From the Cabo de la Vela to this island the course is WSW [3]6 to 37 miles. Just in front of this island lie 3 rocky outcrops, quite high. One may sail close by these rocks; there is no “dirty” [ground]. When one comes around this island, the land stretches just under a mile SW until the bay of Santa Marta. Right at the northern corner of ditto bay lies a high cavernous island and another outcrop. In front of ditto northern corner, the outcrop is high and pointy and if one wants to enter the bay, one has to pass between the outcrop and the island. The width between them is one great cannon’s shot, and 28 to 30 fathoms deep. One can skirt close by the outcrop and the island for it is fair in between them. Being alongside the outcrop one skirts the outcrop towards the city. Being less than a cannon’s shot from the outcrop in the bay, one is at 12 to 16 fathoms in the bay. One should not come much closer than 10 fathoms and perpendicular to the fortress, for there stretches a mass of land that is relatively steep. If one is able to skirt enough, then one can sail into an inlet in the NE corner of the bay where one is entirely sheltered at 6 to 8 fathoms, however, one can seldom skirt that high. Whoever wants to get there must haul the ship into it. It is a suitable mooring to maintain the ships.

When one sails out of the bay, one keeps the island to the starboard in sailing away, 26 to [28] [19v] fathoms at the anchorage, and no “dirty” ground. It is a very good ground so that anchors do not go lightly here. If one is moored in this bay, the high country of Santa Marta lies east of you. The bay lies on the northern hemisphere, at the latitude of 11 degrees, 2 to 3 minutes. Those who come here in the time of the Breeze¹²⁸ and moor in this bay should also make sure that they use a good anchor and rope because occasionally the wind blows so strongly over the high land that one can only just handle it. This is in short the account of how one should navigate this bay.

Description of the city Santa Marta and also the appearance of the fortress that they had there and the appearance of the surrounding land

The city Santa Marta lies as described before, just under a mile SW in the Cabo San Juan de Guia, in the western foothills of the high land of Santa Marta. The city lies in a large bay close to the beach and a musket’s shot to the South thereof lies the castle [fort] of which we will write in the following. Right at the northern end of the bay close to land lies an outcrop which is flat on top upon which they also had a small fort. Around the city on the water’s side lies a breastwork as high as a man. It is a relatively large city as far as cities here in the Indies go. It consists of about 250 houses; it has three large churches and a Franciscan monastery with a chapel. The houses are very long, buildings not unlike warehouses though not very high. They are made partly of stone and earth, their roofs tiled. They are constructed mostly east–west which I reckon is because the wind blows so strongly over the land that they would catch less

¹²⁸ In autumn, the Caribbean suffers a period of strong winds and hurricanes.

wind. Concerning their churches, these were very well decorated inside in their fashion with silk tapestries and paintings, particularly the bishop's church that stood out from the others. Furthermore, the castle lies, as said before, a musket's shot south of the city. This [20r] castle has 4 bastions and is constructed of grey stone 30 to 32 feet high. Atop is a stone level, upon which the artillery stands with a quarter guard and below the foundations are 2 large cellars where the ammunition is kept. It does not have a [bridge] head but one climbs up a ladder in the back, of which the first $\frac{1}{2}$ is fixed, and the other $\frac{1}{2}$ they draw in like a bridge with a handle. Above it has a breastwork of red stone 3 to 4 feet high, and on top of that stand 6 pieces, 4 of metal and 2 of iron.

The fort is straight on all 4 sides with 4 whole bastions. Its curtain walls within the bastions are 30 feet long and are perfectly square; it measured 50 feet within the points of the bastions. A palisade had once stood outside the fort but it was mostly in decay. This was a good enough fort to keep 2 or 3 ships from mooring, or from an attack, but not sufficient for such a fleet [as ours *sic*]. The fortress at the east corner or north corner of the bay, as said before, is of minor importance. They had an iron piece there but it did not resist. Furthermore at ditto corner on a small round hill stands a watch house from where they can look out as far as the cape, and as many ships as they [see] so many vanes do they raise. At ditto corner which comprises 3 or 4 hillocks stands a hermitage [monastery] on a hill which they call Calvary Hill. This bay also has a handsome wick, which has been described before, as of 6 or 7 fathoms deep. The end of this bay or wick reaches to the city, and one can be moored there sheltered from all winds. At the south side of the castle a musket shot away, is a very beautiful fresh [water] river that comes from the high land, very good water. Concerning the land, as much as we have seen it, it is very dry land where we saw no fruit growing anywhere except for 3 or 4 coconut trees without fruit. The hills seem to be nothing but dry savannahs, but we guess that the Spanish have been further inland than we, [where they] have valleys that are fertile. According to the Spanish that we captured 300 Whites lived here, as well as Negroes and Indians, but the interior is densely populated by Indians that are all in the service of the Spanish. From December to May the wind blows here [20v] mainly in this bay because the ENE winds arrive so forcefully over the high land here that anchors and ropes can scarcely cope. This high land of Santa Marta is so high that even at the hottest time of the year when the heat can trouble people, the high lands are still covered in snow, white as chalk, which indicates how high this land must be. This is all that we have been able to observe of the characteristics of the city in the short time that we have been there.

Account of the orders given in sailing the ships into the bay of Santa Marta as well as capturing the city and castle

As soon as we reached the coast at Cabo de Vela, the Lord Admiral together with his council ordained the following regarding sailing the ships into the bay of Santa Marta; firstly it was agreed that all soldiers and boatsmen that had been assigned as soldiers, some 750 in number, would be divided over the following ships, to wit the *Medemblik*, in which the Lord Admiral would sail, in the ship the *Zwaan*, in the *Tijger*, in the *Friese Jager*, in the *Zeeuwse Jager*, in the *Kat*, [and] in the ship *Dordrecht*. The large ships would carry no soldiers, but would fire upon the fort. In sailing in [to the bay] the *Medemblik* would lead, flying the flag, after that the Vice-Admiral [in the] the *Zwaan*, next the Night watch in the *Tijger*, after that the *Friese Jager*, after that the *Zeeuwse Jager*, after that the *Kat*, then *Dordrecht*. The large ships would be last, as has already been said, to shoot at the fort. However, coming round Cabo San Juan de Guia and because the wind was blowing very strongly, the ships could not obey these orders so that the ships sailed in as follows: the Admiral before the Vice-Admiral, the Night watch, the *Kat*, the *Zeeuwse Jager*, the *Dordrecht* and the *Friese Jager*. As the wind was

slightly too easterly, the light ships could not sail before the city according to our plan, to make room for the large ships. In fact, we had to stop right in front of the castle so that the large ships could not fire at the fort. [21r] The castle fired bravely at us while we sailed in and we fired back. During this firing we manned the boats and sloops with men. In the meantime the other ships arrived that had been delayed and found little room, as has been said before, to fire at the castle since our light ships were in front of it. Around 200 shots were fired back and forth, a few hits but more misses. We sailed to shore with as many people as we could transport in the boats. The city folk resisted little other than firing their muskets 5 or 6 times. We landed an hour after the sun had gone down on the north side of the city as that side was unprotected. On an open square we organised our troops and marched into the city up to the large church in broad moonlight and without any resistance. We set up our quarters in a large broad street in front of the Governor's house and occupied the streets well with guards. Having done all this we marched to the castle with the "Flintlocks"¹²⁹ who were about 50 men strong, and the 'Zeeuwse' Company, and the Admiral and Vice-Admiral. We assumed that those at the fort would have run off like those in town, but arriving there they unleashed a volley of musket-fire and two cannon shots, injuring 2 or 3 of us. They would have killed even more people but we were so close to the fort that those inside could not easily hit them. We also fired at them so heavily with muskets that they hardly dared to stick their heads out. Thus, having fought a little against the others and the Admiral not thinking to gain any profit from the fort, he called everyone to retreat, being intent on having the ships fire upon it again. Then word came from the fort to parley and as we agreed, someone came from the castle to parley with our Admiral and [the rendition] was accepted on the following condition: Firstly, the fully armed soldiers with shot in their mouth would march from the fort to the bottom, where they would cast off their weapons.¹³⁰ [21v] Secondly, they would have to remain imprisoned in the ships until we departed. Thirdly, they would surrender everything, ammunition as well as all that was inside the fort. They would be allowed to keep on all clothes they were wearing at the time. On these conditions they left the fort that night numbering 17 men in all under the command of a lord of the manor [*chatelaine*]. At the fort we found as described before 6 pieces, 4 metal ones, 2 of iron with some pots of gunpowder and shot. This was all there was in the castle. That night the Admiral, together with his council, decided to send a captured soldier to the Governor, to ask him whether he wanted to pay ransom for the city. He replied the next day that he had no money, but he would pay the Lord Admiral 8 Reales for every prisoner. He would find a way to procure these, but shortly after 2 Spanish came that requested to speak with the Lord Admiral, and upon arrival they declared that they were fully authorised to negotiate with us about the city ransom. The Admiral demanded 30,000 pieces of 8, but these men offered 5,000. In sum, they could not come to an agreement that day. The second day that we were there, they returned to negotiate and then it was agreed that they would give 5,500 pieces of 8, and 70 animals on the condition that we would leave the city before dawn. They would remain held hostage for the money. However, since we had already removed everything that was profitable to our Lords Masters and had totally plundered the city so that not even a pot remained in which to cook, we marched out of the city that day, taking along our hostages. It had been decided to deliver the ransom the next day. The next afternoon the news arrived that the Governor did not want to give the promised ransom. They only did this to see what we would do because they imagined that as we had just left the city, we would not come ashore again to burn it down.

¹²⁹ 'Haneveren' has been translated here as "Flintlocks" indicating infantry, armed with guns, but the precise implication of the word is uncertain. Another option is that it indicates mercenaries from Hanover who frequently operated in the armed forces of the Dutch Republic.

¹³⁰ Shot carried in the mouth or loaded guns.

The Admiral being dissatisfied with such tidings gave the order to land the following morning with four barks to burn the city down. [22r] The day having come and most of us being close to the shore, the Spanish came and brought the news that the money would arrive within two or three hours. Based on this report, the Admiral recalled the troops again.

Then we waited until midnight for the money, when it arrived with a clergyman. They had been unable to raise the promised amount for they brought many of their sacred church furnishings of silver instead of payments as well as a few pearl chains. In sum, they had scraped together all they could to raise the city ransom. That this place was so bereft of money was because shortly before our arrival an Angolan slaver with Negroes had come, from which they had bought Negroes to the tune of 30,000 pieces of 8 [Reales] and as a result were so bereft of money.

In capturing this place we lost two men in our fleet that were shot aboard the Vice-Admiral's ship and [suffered] three or four casualties, one of which was the skipper Samuel Lucas who lost a piece of the calf of his leg by a shot of large iron piece.¹³¹

The Spanish in the castle lost three men, the constable and two others, and one in the city, who was shot at night while attempting to creep up on one of our guards. This is the entire history of Santa Marta.

What follows are the goods we acquired from the city as well as the jewellery they offered as ransom as well as what to trade for in Santa Marta

From the city of Santa Marta we received the following goods as city ransom:

Firstly, 46,346 pounds of red Saint Martin wood

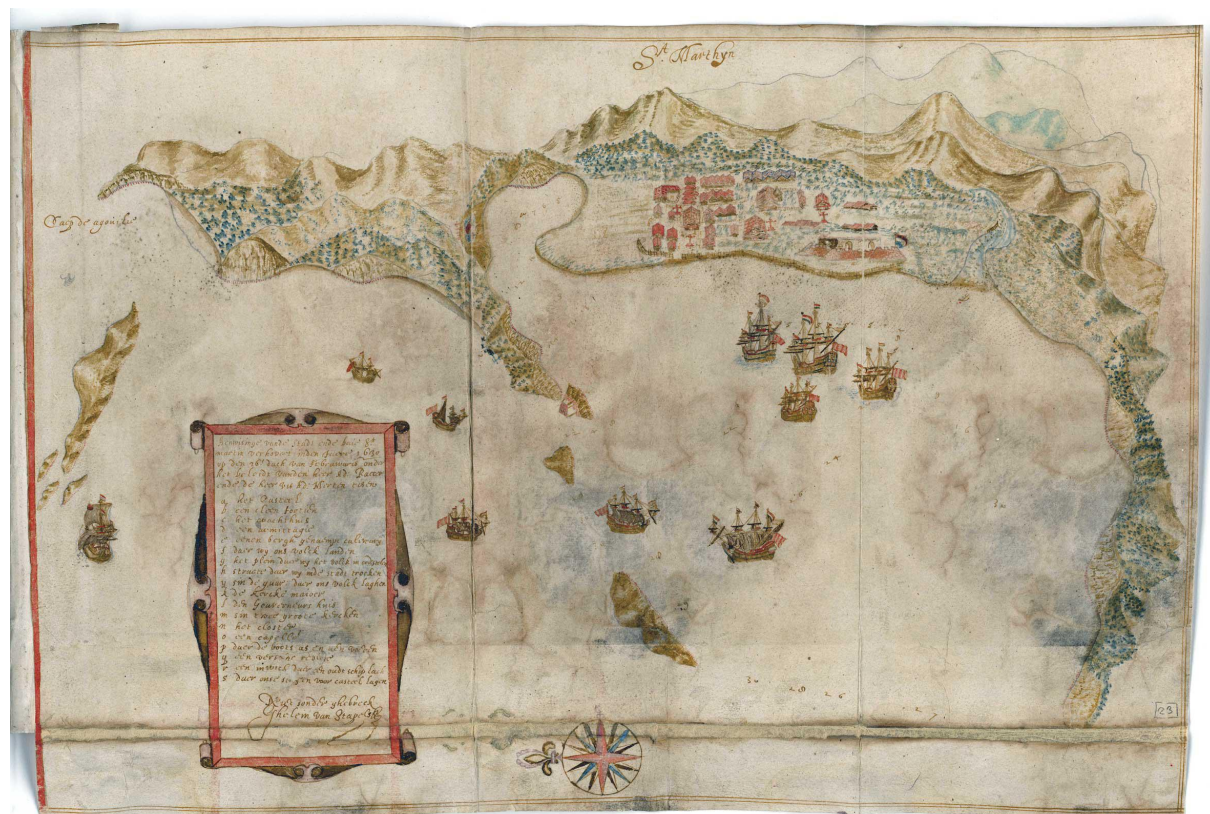
- 4 metal pieces, each weighing around 4,000 pounds
- 3 iron pieces, each some 6 to 700 pounds in weight
- 8 large and small clocks
- 232 hides
- 9 barrels of tobacco
- a load of old copper
- 5 silver table plates
- 1 large silver lamp stand
- 1 silver salt barrel
- 1 silver spoon from the church
- 1 silver cross
- 1 breadbasket encrusted with silver [22v]
- 1 silver lid of a barrel
- 5 silver spoons
- 1 silver snuffbox
- 8 plates inlaid with silver
- 2 silver lamps
- 5,500 pieces of eight
- 2 women's hair clasps of pearls and gold
- 3 women's necklaces with "crinkles" of gold [to make noise]
- 1 golden chain
- 1 crystal chandelier encrusted with 3 emeralds

¹³¹ A Samuel Lucas as well as 'Leyn in de balans' (possibly Gelein van Stapels) is also mentioned in the rescue of Lourens Lourensz in 1625: Wassenae, N., 'Twaelfde deel of 't vervolgh van het Historisch Verhael aller gedenckwaerdiger geschiedenissen die in Europa', *Historisch Verhael alleredenckwaerdiger geschiedenissen*, 17 Vols. (1622–1630), Amsterdam: Jan Jansen, Vol. 12, 1627, p. 64r. This might be the same Samuel Lucas who 'lost 12 years ago a sloop near this Indian village' indicated on a Dutch map of the early Portuguese colony of Belém, see Brommer, 2011, p. 174 (NL_NaHA_4.VEL_685).

This is all that we found in the city. Furthermore the plunder of our people amassed as ransom was so little that it amounted to little. The trade here concerns wood, hides and tobacco. There used to be gold to be had, but now that is all over. The commoner makes a living here by making pots and pans at home. This is all concerning the trade here, as much as we have been able to ascertain in the short time we were there.

[23r]

Map of Santa Marta



“St. Marthyn”

Description of the city and bay of Santa Marta captured in the year 1630 on the 26th day of February under the command of the Lord Admiral Pater and the Lord Vice-Admiral Maarten Thijsz

- a: the Castle
- b: a small fort
- c: a hermitage
- d: a hill named Calvary
- e: where we put our people ashore
- g: the square where we arranged our people¹³²
- h: street through which we marched into city
- ij: are the quarters where our people were set up
- k: the great church
- l: the Governor's house

¹³² The legend 'f' is lacking.

- m: are large churches
- n: the monastery
- o: a chapel
- p: where the boats dock
- q: a freshwater river
- r: a wick where an old ship lay
- s: where our ships were moored in front of the castle

No one without fault
Ghelein van Stapels

[24r]

Description of the course starting at Cabo Tiburon until Port François which lies on the North side of Hispaniola and so on into the Caicos, along with the latitude of the principal places

The course from the Cabo Tiberon to Cape Dame-Marie, being offshore, is 7 to 7½ miles N. The Cap Dame-Marie is a low point, steep in front of it and right on the south side around the point is a large sandy bay with a freshwater river where the anchorage is. One can moor at 10 to 12 fathoms and the ground is not very clean here.

From ditto cape to the Cayemites islands the course is E to S, 12 to 13 miles. Those who are at the Pointe du Mole de Saint Nicolas have to tack so far to ditto island. Being at the Cayemites then one sails across to the Ile de Gonave which is in sight. This island lies NE to N of the Cayemites, 8 or 9 miles. It is a long island which stretches into the gulf, it is quite high. One can pass quite close by on the west end for this end is wholly clean, although some write that this west point would be “dirty”, but this is not so.

Being at this island, one may see the Pointe du Mole de Saint Nicolas and it lies 8 miles N E of the said island. The cape is a high round point, which falls off sharply. North of this point is a very clean anchorage or harbour. One can moor there sheltered from all winds, [it is] surrounded by land. Whoever wants to get in there has nothing to avoid when sailing in but what is before one’s eyes. One lies at least ½ a mile in and one has to be ¼ mile in before one finds ground. Or one sails on so far that one sees no sea. One is moored then at 8 to 10 fathoms, muddy ground. This is one of the most handsome harbours of all of Hispaniola but the worst is that one has to travel so far for fresh water. This cape lies at the latitude of 19 degrees, 50 minutes. From ditto cape to the west end of Île Tortue, the course is generally 8 miles E to N and ENE. Île Tortue stretches 4 miles mainly eastwards. The west end lies 1½ miles from Hispaniola and the east end 1 mile from Hispaniola. One mile from the eastern point of Île Tortue is the anchorage of this island. It is a small bay where one can only moor 3 to 4 ships properly, in between two reefs; the first comes from the east part of the bay and the other lies offshore. One sails in between them at 4 fathoms, to a depth of 5 to 6 fathoms. One can also sail out of this harbour with light ships to the west of the reef that lies offshore at 2½ fathoms. This anchorage can be recognized by a large green place, right above the bay in the hills opposite this anchorage. At Hispaniola are 2 or 3 good freshwater rivers, of which one is the largest of all that one can enter with sloops. Many orange trees and a great many palm trees grow beside these rivers, and there are many wild pigs in the palm tree forest.

The course from the east point of Île Tortue to the east corner of Port François is E to S and ESE, 6 miles. Port François represents a large fort inland; it lies 4 miles ESE of the eastern point of Tortue. One can recognize this bay by 3 or 4 islands that lie there. It is a very difficult bay to enter on account of the reefs and “blind” [invisible] outcrops that lie before them. Whoever wants to leave the Caicos with the wind coming from the east, should tack so far

upwind until the high east point of Port François lies south of you, then one can sail N to E and NNE, and towards the evening one “stays in place”.¹³³

As the currents also run eastwards, one can pick up sailing at night and not get in the way of the regular breeze. Normally one should then reach the shallows by noon at 21 degrees 12 to 15 minutes latitude, but if one ends up a little high following the aforementioned course, one normally arrives a little above a small white island with little vegetation upon it. Seen from afar, it appears just like a sponce we call ‘Biervliet’ and some the ‘Robben’ island. However, if one sails from Île Tortue and the wind comes from the south or west, then one should sail NE to E of Tortue and then one will reach two stony islands. An island a mile long lies E to E and east of this one [there are] 2 islands with 3 to 4 outcrops. Once there, one can sound the shallows but being lower to the cays the shallows cannot be sounded for they are as steep as walls. I experienced that I had just 3½ fathoms before me, and behind me could not find a bottom at 45 fathoms, so that one cannot rely on the plumb here.

Being at these two aforementioned islands, one sails closely by the shallows, firstly 3½ miles WNW, then 2 miles NW, then the shallows arch widely NW for 2 miles until the island of Biervliet or Robben Island. The southern end of the southern cay lies 4 miles NW to W of these islands and one can only spot the southern key from below once one is alongside Biervliet. One can see Biervliet only from 2 miles’ distance and it is about the size of a farmstead. The southern cay is at most 1½ miles long, and its west side stretches NNE. The northern cay lies 4 miles NE of the southern cays.

Being at the southern point of the southern cay, where one can sail by very close by, one first sets course N to E 2½ miles, because of a shallows that lies between the cays and with one point sticking out. One sees them lying above water in some places, and waves breaking on them in others, having passed them [24v] one sets a NNE course as long as one can sail so high. If one is sailing lower, one has to be cautious, especially at night, because of the island Mayaguana that has a large reef ¼ mile SE of the island on top of which lie 6 or 7 outcrops sticking straight out of the water at the end of the reef. One can observe this reef once one sees these outcrops for there are no dirty grounds underwater as far as we noticed, because we passed by with the fleet no more than ¼ mile thereabove. This island Mayaguana lies north of the south point of the southern cay, 10 miles to the east. The southern cay lies at 21 degrees, 35 to 36 minutes latitude.

Of all these aforementioned islands, one cannot see the highest from more than 4 miles’ distance. They are very barren islands, few trees grow on them, but as I did not disembark there, I can write little thereof. There are also few anchorages at these islands, but for the southern cay, where there is a stretch of land running NNE with a harbour very close to shore with very dirty ground.

Furthermore, 18 miles N to E of the eastern point of Île Tortue lies a large island of 5 or 6 miles’ length and as it is not featured on maps or if it is featured, then very misplaced I could not resist describing it. In appearance it is the most fertile of all. It has a few low hills, seems to possess good sandy bays, and there are some outcrops at the eastern point. Apparently the English intend to implant a colony here, so we have heard, but what comes of this time will tell.

To write a little of the prevailing currents here, one can account little for them, because at one point they go one way, and at another time they do not. However, most of the time they run east towards the land and in my opinion against strong winds they run into the winds very strongly. Generally, during the day very strong northerly winds prevail. Against the northern wind sometimes 2 or 3 days beforehand, the current goes west, back and forth, with remarkable force. It lasts 3 or 4 days at most, before reverting back to east.

¹³³ Maritime term ‘offer staen’; difficult to interpret.

The times of the northern winds that blow so strongly here north of Hispaniola generally commence towards the end of October and end in March. During this time it is problematic to sail out of the Caicos. Furthermore, in March and April many western winds blow here and [there is] a lot of still, crazy weather, so that one can easily sail east in these 2 months. However, when April has passed then the breeze will arrive. This is the entire account of what we visited and experienced on this journey, with the maps and descriptions of the principal places where we have been. If anyone finds any faults herein that I reckon to be very few, he should think that nothing is without fault and should correct them in silence, for one's work tends to be sooner criticised than corrected.

The map of the Caicos follows hereafter.

Galien van Stapels

[24r b]

Map of the Caicos, between folios 24 and 25

True depiction and appearance of the Caicos, and the shallows that surround them, starting from Saint Nicolas to the east end of Port François right up to the Caicos everything plotted at the true latitude and course

G. van Stapels¹³⁴



¹³⁴ As on the map of San Thomé and Santa Martha, van Stapels's signature is followed by an unknown letter or abbreviation.

THE JOURNAL OF GELEIN VAN STAPELS

[25r]

Journal of our voyage set forth in the year 1629, the 24 of January with the ship De [Zeeuwse] *Jager* and yacht the *Noordster* to the Amazon River and other coasts, God give us a save journey

[25v]

January 1629

In the name of God we set sail from Flushing upon the 24 of January with the *Noordster*, the *Middelburg* and the *Fortuin* and 3 East India ships, the wind NE. At night we were off Oostende, the wind west.

The 25 in the morning we were near to North Foreland, the wind SE.

The 26 we set sail again, the wind south, we went below the [sandbanks of the] Goodwins. Ditto at night we set sail again [and] at night we got separated from the fleet.

The 27 we floated off the 'Singles', where we watered.

The 28 it started to blow from the SSW. The 3 East India ships went to Downs and we, the 4 of us being at sea, met a fleet of 70 ships.

The 29 we were near Beachy Head [Pevensey] with the 4 of us and 3 Dunkirkers came towards us, but they did not dare to approach us, the wind north.

The 30, the wind NW, fair weather [and] hoisted in the evening. At night bad weather from the WNW.

The 31 in the morning still a strong storm from the WNW. We were in between Portland and Torbay. We decided to go to Wight. At night we were at Needles Bay where it became windless. That night we stayed at sea.

February

The first we were off Portland, little wind. In the evening 'Bierdrager' came near us of whom we thought he was from Dunkirk. After we had spoken to him we set forth our course.

The 2 in the morning Lizard Point was situated W and N from us and because the wind was SSW and the weather was restless, we stayed with the 4 of us in Falmouth. Ditto at night a very strong storm, the *Middelburg* and the *Fortuin* ran aground.

The 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 strong winds from the WNW and NW.

The 7 in the evening such a violent storm that all the anchors broke from the ships. The yacht the *Noordster* drifted towards the cliffs so it had to chop down its big mast.

The 8 and 9 and 10 the yacht was remasted. Meanwhile gales were still blowing every day from the south and SW.

From the 10th until the 17th there was a continuous westerly wind.

The 17 at night we set sail from Falmouth with a NE wind. There was a strong wind at Lizard Point, we re-set our course SW to S and sailed by reckoning.

The 18 at noon we were at the height [latitude] of Lizard Point, 27 miles. Course as before, wind NE.¹³⁵

The 19 no latitude, sailed by reckoning 45 miles. Course as before, wind NE.

The 20 the latitude of 44 degrees, 34 minutes. Course SW, wind NE. Ditto we divided the cheese: the boat mates 2 each and the colonists one each.

The 21 the latitude of 43 degrees, 43 minutes. Wind SSW, we kept a SW to S course. In the evening we met Jacob van Enkhuizen, a freeboter from Vlissingen.

¹³⁵ One sea mile (the old Dutch or German sea mile) is 7407 metres or 1/15 degree.

The 22 a strong storm from the SSW. Ditto we lost sight of the *Middelburg* and the *Fortuin*, so we were only with the yacht now.

The 23 the latitude of 42 degrees 44 minutes. Wind SSW.

The 24 there was variable weather. Ditto we met a fleet of Strait freighters.

The 25 we had the latitude of 41 degrees 21 minutes. The wind west, we kept course since the 20th S to W.

The 26 we had taken no latitude. We had sailed by reckoning 36 miles, wind north. Ditto one of the colonists married a woman.

The 27 no latitude. We had sailed by reckoning 40 miles. Course SSW, wind NNE.

The 28 we had latitude of 34 degrees, 44 minutes. In the morning we saw to our windward a sail but we could not catch up with it. We kept our course south, wind NNE, strong winds.

March

The first we had no latitude. Our course had been south. At noon we reckoned Porto Santo [Madeira] to be NNE from us at 15 miles, our course SW to S.

The 2 in the morning we took latitude of 29 degrees 55 minutes. We had sailed by reckoning 36 miles. Ditto we saw the island which is called Ilhas Selvagens, by reckoning 5 miles to our west. This island is situated at the latitude of 29 degrees and 55 minutes. Our course was now SW in order to sail in between Las Palmas and Tenerife. [26r]

March 1629

The 3 we passed Tenerife and sailed in between Gomera and Hierro. We set our course SSW.

The 4 wind and course as before. We had latitude of 26 degrees, 30 minutes.

The 5 still and rainy. We had not taken latitude. We had sailed by reckoning 24 miles. Course as before.¹³⁶

The 6 the latitude of 24 degrees, still weather. Course SSW. Ditto we tried 2 criminals.

The 7 the latitude of 22 degrees, 24 minutes. Wind NNE, course as before.

The 8 the latitude of 20 degrees, 36 minutes. Course and wind as before.

The 9 the latitude of 18 degrees, 33 minutes. Wind and course as before. During the night, our course was SW until [the first] day's quarter.

The 10 our course until noon WSW. At noon the latitude of 17 degrees, 7 minutes. Then we set our course west to Ilha do Sal. Because we were very "light" we wanted to procure victuals and ballast at São Vincente. Ditto at night we saw the Ilha do Sal and because the wind was NW, we were not able to sail for São Vincente. We thought it would be wise to go towards the Ilha do Sal instead, where we moored ditto evening.

The 11 at noon we anchored where the land stretched SE to S next to a high roundish mountain, at 8 fathoms in good sandy ground.¹³⁷

The 12 sailed with our sloop to the salt pans where I found 2 English ships which were loading salt and I received from each ½ a load. Ditto at night we set sail off this island.

The 13 our course SW to S and we passed ditto Boa Vista and Santiago on the side. At night we sailed in between Santiago and Fogo.

The 14 still, we drifted near Ilha do Fogo. Course W.

The 15 still.

The 16 in the morning the wind NW and during the day NE. Course SW.

The 17 the latitude of 11 degrees, 31 minutes. Course and wind as before.

¹³⁶ Latitude is taken at noon. Bad and cloudy weather usually prevents the captains from measuring latitude.

¹³⁷ A fathom is 183 cm. Ilha do Sal has various curious cone-shaped hilltops, representing ancient volcanic activity.

The 18 the latitude of 10 degrees, 42 minutes. Course and wind as before.
 The 19 the latitude of 8 degrees, 55 minutes. Wind ENN, course as before.
 The 20 the latitude of 7 degrees, 34 minutes. Course SW, wind NE, good progress.
 The 21 the latitude of 6 degrees, 15 minutes. Course SW, wind NE.
 The 22 the latitude of 5 degrees, 6 minutes. Course SW to W, and WSW.
 The 23 the latitude of 3 degrees, 45 minutes. Course S W, wind N E. During the evening a lot of rain. The currents were going around the West.
 The 24 no latitude, we sailed by reckoning 28 miles, wind NE, course SW. Dark weather with a lot of rain, thunder and lightning.
 The 25 in the morning our course was WSW. This day we had advanced by reckoning 15 miles. At noon the sun was at its zenith, we had latitude of 2 degrees.
 The 26 at the latitude of 2 degrees. Our course WSW because the currents are going around the north.
 The 27 the latitude of 1 degree, 49 minutes. We took the strong currents going towards the NW. Because it was fairly tranquil, we could not sail WSW at any latitude. We went SW and advanced this day 18 miles.
 The 28 at night we read various stars and obtained the latitude of 1 degree, 43 minutes and 1 degree, 33 minutes. At noon latitude of 1 degree, 30 minutes. Our course WSW. We had sailed by reckoning 20 miles. Still weather.
 The 29 the latitude of 1 degree, 46 minutes. We sailed by reckoning 24 miles W S W. We kept to the west because of the currents that run around the north here. At night we reached dark green water but we sounded no ground. At night the latitude was taken by the Gemini Stars of 1 degree, 28 minutes.
 The 30 the latitude of 1 degree, 30 minutes. The water was completely dark green. We did not sound any ground. We sailed by reckoning 24 miles and once we had taken latitude we set our course west. At night a latitude average of 1 degree, 22 minutes taken on both ships.
 The 31 at 2 o'clock, we sounded at 30 fathoms sandy ground. We had very rough waves because of the currents.¹³⁸ At noon the latitude of 1 degree, 23 minutes and a depth of 28 fathoms. This day we sailed 30 miles. In the second quarter we sounded a depth of 13 fathoms, sandy ground. Because it was very rainy and dark weather, we anchored for safety reasons. Then the new cable broke and we lost a ½ ton anchor, because the ropes were clearly made of inferior material since we did not really need them over there. The low tide usually falls in NW here.¹³⁹ [26v]

April 1629

The first in the morning we set sail again. Until noon there was a continuous depth of 10 fathoms, the water is brackish and the bottom is soft. At noon no latitude [was] taken because of the dark weather. This day we sailed 16 miles towards the west, and a depth of 8 fathoms. Because we were not able to obtain latitude for 2 days and because one is obliged over here to have correct latitude, we anchored in the afternoon. At night we had latitude of 1 degree, 30 minutes at the southern back wheel of Charles Wagon [Latin: *Ursa Mayor*], and at the northern wheel latitude of 1 degree, 20 minutes. The low tide fell NE to N here.
 The 2 we set sail again. Seldom more than 6½ to 6 fathoms in a soft ground, and because the weather went tranquil, we anchored. Over here, there is normally high tide by a S and N moon.
 The 3 in the morning we set sail again. Depth of 6 fathoms in soft mud. At noon latitude of one degree, 33 minutes. Then we got into deeper water, to wit of 7 and 7½ fathoms, and 8 to

¹³⁸ A fine description of the turbulence of the Amazon River and the Atlantic currents meeting at sea.

¹³⁹ Reference unclear, but low tide is probably when the moon is standing NW.

9 fathoms. When we had 8 fathoms, we saw land; praise God. We went down [with the stream] as one could have wished for. We entered the river until the Hook of ‘Arriwarij’ [Cabo do Norte] was situated to the south of us. Then we reached a bank before which we had to anchor where we broke our new anchor cable, and so we lost an anchor with ½ an anchor cable.¹⁴⁰ We continued sailing until we were below the ‘Asseian’ Islands where we watered the following night.¹⁴¹

The 4 we were 2 miles from Sapno with yacht and ship.

The 5 the whole day still so we stayed here all day. Ditto we received 3 savages aboard.

The 6 in the morning off Sapno. The savages had told us that there were no Dutchmen upon the river, and that the yacht *Arnemuïden*¹⁴² had been here about 7 months ago. Most of the savages over here had fled from the Spaniards. From ditto until the 8th we have tried to cross the bank at Sapano. But because it was the rainy season and tranquil every day, we would apparently spend a lot of time to go higher up the river with the ship. So I had convened the officers of the colonists and our council and presented this situation to them. They agreed unanimously that we should leave the ship here and that the yacht the *Noordster* and my sloop would be loaded to bring their company higher up the river.

The 9 the yacht was loaded.

The 10th I went with the yacht and my sloop up the river with all the people of the colony.

The ship the *Jager* stayed at Sapno.

From the 10th to the 14th I sailed the yacht up the river. Ditto in the morning I went up Taurege creek with 2 sloops and a few colonists, where we arrived the 15th.

Furthermore, from the 15th to the 28th I was continuously transporting the goods of the colony upon this creek in order to help to construct the fort. Once all the goods were up there, we left the creek with the yacht.

The 20 [28] at night I went ahead with my sloop down the river.

The 28 [29] in the morning I boarded the ship after arriving with the sloop at Sapano.

The 30 yacht the *Noordster* rejoined us again.

May

The first we loaded some more bread and other goods from the colony into the yacht: also a barrel full of salted sea cow which I had traded at Sapno. Ditto my ship had been emptied, and we went down the river together with the yacht. God heard our prayers. [27r]

May 1629

The 2 we were before the Rio Gurijuba where we ran aground.

The 3 we anchored at the most southern creek opposite Ilha do Curuá.

The 4 we tacked until ‘Grote Kiel’ [Aripocke; perhaps Ponta do Bailique]. At night we set sail again.

The 5 we reached the end of the river and we watered over there.

The 6 we tacked all day and night.

The 7 in the morning Cabo do Norte was NNW of us. Ditto at night, we had sailed the fleet out of sight of this cape.

¹⁴⁰ This is the third misfortune with the anchors!

¹⁴¹ ‘Asseian’ Islands: unknown toponym in Amazon River channel.

¹⁴² In 1626, Master Adriaen Bolaert had sailed the ship *Arnemuïden* to the Amazon, Wiapoco and Isekepe Rivers to establish a colony for the Zeeland Chamber wherever the conditions might be most favorable, under the command of Claude Prevost; see Netscher, 1888, pp. 53–4. See also British Guiana Boundary, Arbitration with the United States of Venezuela, Appendix to the case on behalf of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, Vol. I. (1593–1723), London: Foreign Office, 1898, p. 62.

The 8 we were 15 to 16 miles N to W off the cape, at a depth of 12 fathoms. We set our course NW. Ditto I called the [ship] counsel and it was decided as described here:

First, as we had used up a lot of time sailing towards and in the [Amazon] river and it was already the 8th of May, and no profits had been made upon the Amazon for the Lords and Masters, and we were also instructed to visit the Oyapock, Cayenne, and Suriname Rivers, however, it would take a lot of time to visit these places because they are dry holes with little water left for our ships if we would go deep, and there would be very little profit to be made, and by visiting them we would probably lose our precious time, so we all agreed to pass these places by to have the best profit, knowing that the yachts *Arnemuiden* and *Westkappel* had been there only recently. So we agreed unanimously to sail as fast as possible to the Berbice and Essequibo Rivers, and forth towards Tobago in order to be in time for our rendezvous at Cabo Tiburón with the yacht *Zuidster*.

The 9 in the morning at the Oyapock, and sailing NW. At night at Cayenne. Still at night.

The 10 in the morning wind SW with a lot of rain, still weather. We drifted so far off with the currents that we anchored at 28 fathoms. In the evening we set sail again, our course SSW.

The 11 we passed the Maroni River.¹⁴³ Still all day. At night we made a lot of progress. At night we passed the Suriname River.

The 12 we sailed past the Saramacca River. At night we “smacked” 6 to 7 miles above Courantyne River.¹⁴⁴

The 13 we passed the Corentyne River before noon. In the afternoon we were before the river of Berbice. Ditto evening I went up the river with my sloop. The ship sailed to the Essequibo River to moor in the Demerara River and await my return.

The 14 and 15 we went up the river with the sloop until late that night when we reached the Commander, which I delivered his cargo.

The 16 we stayed there.

The 17 we went down the river.

The 18 in the morning we arrived downstream. Ditto in the evening at 2 hours before dawn we arrived in the Demerara River. That same evening we boarded with the sloop and [then] rowed towards the Essequibo River.

The 19 at night we arrived at merchant Jan van Beverlant.

The 20 we stayed over there because of bad weather.

The 21 we went back to the ship.

The 22 at night we came aboard.

The 23 we waited for the arrival of Jan van Beverlant. Ditto we delivered all cargo to Jan van Beverlant because Jan van der Goes was absent.

The 24 early in the morning the merchant received the cargo, which he was not happy to receive because he still had a lot of cargo in stock. But on the order of Lords and Masters he accepted them. Ditto at noon we sailed away from Demerara and set sail approximately N to E to the island of Tobago.

The 25 our course was N to W all day. At noon latitude of 9 degrees, 39 minutes.

The 26 in the morning I reckoned to be at the latitude of Tobago. By reckoning we were 15 miles to the East of [the island]. We set our course W to N. At noon we saw the island but drifted because it was calm.

The 27 we anchored in front of Fort Nieuw Vlissingen at 9 fathoms. [27v]

¹⁴³ This river is called Marowijne in Suriname and Maroni in France.

¹⁴⁴ ‘To smack’ has been translated literally and means that an extra sail has been attached to the bowsprit. For further detail on different sails see Chapter 7 of John Smith’s *A Sea Grammar* [...], London: John Haviland, 1627. This river is called Corantijn in Suriname and Courantyne in Guyana.

May 1629

The 28 we delivered the iron gun, weighing 18 pounds that was given by the Lords and Masters together with a box of cargo on land to the men of the fort. Meanwhile we fetched some water and chopped down firewood.

The 29 the yacht the *Zeeridder*, belonging to Admiral Pater, moored. He had lost the fleet at the "Flemish Islands" [Açores]. Ditto at night we sailed away from Tobago together with the yacht. We set our course N to W.

The 30 in the morning we anchored at Grenada where we found the yacht the *Otter* with 2 sugar prizes and the *Macht van Enkhuizen* with one prize. Here we took on some ballast.

The 31 we took on some victuals from these ships, to wit from the *Otter* 1200 pounds of bread since much of our bread was rotten. From the *Macht van Enkhuizen*, 5 barrels of barley and one barrel of grey peas, one small barrel of speck, one small barrel of meat, as well as 280 pounds of salted fish. They also gave us 18 barrels of cooked food to be delivered to the fleet of Pater when we would meet them.

June

The first we set sail from the island of Grenada to the island of Puerto Rico. In our company ditto yacht [*Zeeridder*]. Ditto at sea our Corporal fell from the gallant yard into the topsail without hurting himself. Furthermore, our course N W.

The 2 at noon latitude of 14 degrees, 48 minutes. Our course NW, we sailed 50 miles.

The 3 the latitude of 16 degrees, 46 minutes. Course NW.

The 4 the latitude of 17 degrees, 3 minutes. Course NW. We thought to have Puerto Rico in sight but we did not.

The 5 in the morning we passed Isla Saona by reckoning at 3 miles. At night at Santo Domingo.

The 6 in the afternoon we passed the islands called the *Islas Beata*.

The 7 in the evening we anchored below the *Isla Vaca* and because we did not see any ships out here, we left a letter on a post, so that when our yacht would come here, he would know that we had been here. At night the yacht *Zeeridder* left us to look for its fleet.

The 8 at dawn a ship had watered near us landward. We went there with our sloop and while approaching, it turned out to be the *Friese Jager* who came to us when they saw us last night. We landed here and found the letter of Admiral Pater, saying that he had left from here the first [of June]. Ditto at night we left with the *Friese Jager* for the *Cabo Tiburon* to acquire some water there.

The 9 we harboured at the *Cabo Tiburon* but no ships had been there.

The 10 we fetched some water at the *Cabo*. Because I had heard at Tobago that the yacht the *Zuidster* had gone home with a sugar prize, I did not waste any more time staying here since time was running out. I left a note here so that if the yacht would come here, it would find me at *De Kroon*. Ditto at night we left the *Cabo* and set our course for *Santiago de Cuba*. Ditto mostly still.

The 11 the yacht the *Zeeridder* which had watered behind the *Cabo* in an unknown bay had joined us again. At night we separated from the *Friese Jager*, which sets its course towards the *Little Cayman Islands*. At night there was a hurricane with thunder and rain.

The 12 mostly still. At night we were by reckoning 3 miles below *Santiago*. Then we set our course closely along the coast towards *Cabo Cruz*. [28r]

June

The 13 and 14 we floated off the Cabo Cruz because it was calm.

The 15 it was still. Our course W by S towards the Little Caymans. There was a strong wind during the night and because I was very sick, we sailed ditto past the Caymans.

The 16 our course was west again until the evening, then we “smacked”.

The 17 at dawn, we were near the Grand Caymans. Ditto we harboured there and we found the *Friese Jager* and the *Zeeridder* who had missed the Little Caymans. In the afternoon we got a lot of rain and wind from the SSW, and because the ground was bad [for anchoring], we set sail ditto at night. The other 2 [ships] followed too. We set our course NW towards Cuba.

The 18 our course as before.

The 19 in the morning we approached the land NNW for prospection. During the day we saw land, by reckoning 10 miles to the East of the Cabo Corrientes. This Cabo Corrientes is situated NW and west of the Grand Caymans. Ditto I summoned my council to discuss with them the following issue:

Once we arrived at the Cabo Corrientes I opened the secret instruction that told us to cruise in the Bight of Campeche and New Spain. Because this region has unknown waters for us where one can encounter many banks, and notably the Coast of Campeche, where there is much shallow water off the coast in such a manner that our ships, having 12 feet in depth, can barely sight the land in order to look for barks that sail closely along the coast, for this reason we were unable to sail for the shoreline without any yachts to execute this voyage. Furthermore, it would also be very difficult, without a yacht or a large sloop, to discover in the bight any bays, because the yacht the *Zuidster* was not available to us, and as said before as it would be difficult to seize any prizes alone we considered it to be advisable for further duty, to continue to cruise off De Kroon until the aforementioned yacht would join us, in order to go there together, as far as time could permit, which appeared longer once this decision was made.

The 20 in the afternoon we passed Cabo San Antonio. We sailed very close along the banks [reefs] of Las Organes, we even sounded 7 fathoms.

The 21 we drifted all day because of stillness.

The 22 was still. We were before the mountains called Sierra del Rosario.

The 23 we saw a sail in the wind that we pursued. We hunted it down behind an island named Isla de Soto. The Spaniards went ashore and took everything with them. It was a bark coming from Havana and heading for San Juan de Ulua [a fortified island at Veracruz, Mexico], as we understood from the letters that we found aboard this ship. It contained only ballast. We brought this bark to our ships.

The 24 in the morning total stillness. We saw another bark close to us to which we rowed with all the sloops. This bark was laden with salt and came from Isla Mujeres, and because the ‘Groninger’ [a ship from Groningen] was very rough [greedy] when loading up everything, we set our course away from it and left it drifting at De Kroon.

The 25 the wind from the west. In the morning close to De Kroon. We set sail NNE into sea.

The 26 we drifted south of Havana because of stillness. Furthermore still but we did our best to get back to De Kroon.

The 27 we drifted out of sight of land because of stillness.

The 28 we approached land again and we got back to Havana. Then we sailed and prospected the land towards De Kroon. The current was very strong towards the NE. [28v]

June 1629

The 29 we were perpendicular to 'De Tafelberg'.

The 30 at De Kroon. We had a strong breeze. Here, we kept the small sails.

July

The first in the evening, the *Friese Jager* joined us again. They had drifted to the west of the Matanzas Bay and captured a bark there that was coming from San Juan de Ulua. It was laden with bread and also with 4,000 pounds of gunpowder, and a few rolls of silk, but it had already been plundered by the men. The Spaniards said that the Honduras ships had already arrived at San Juan de Ulua in May and that they would come over here with the fleet¹⁴⁵.

The 2 we still drifted off De Kroon. Furthermore from ditto until the 8th we drifted off De Kroon and Havana. Ditto at sunset we saw to our windward side 12 sails and when we arrived there it turned out to be Admiral Pater's fleet. They had captured only one Campeche bark. They also had news concerning the arrival of a few Spanish galleons to escort the Saint Johns fleet to Havana.¹⁴⁶ Although I was not serving under their flag, they approved to have me as reinforcement for their fleet, to serve the [West Indian] Company, of which resolution they gave me a [written] notification. Ditto [I had] given to the Lord Admiral 5 barrels of grey peas which I took aboard for them at Grenada.

The 9, I was ordered to join the Night watch¹⁴⁷, and we cruised every day.

The 10, 4 more ships joined the fleet, to wit the *Witte Leeuw*, the *Dolfijn*, the *Leiden* and the *Kat*, and another ship they had captured.

The 11 we drifted past Havana.

The 12 we sailed again to De Kroon.

The 13 we sailed past Havana to carry out a prospection of the coastline.

The 14 in the Bay of Cavanos we took a ship that only transported some ballast.

The 15 we drifted due to stillness.

The 16 rough weather [storm].

The 17 we were with 12 ships in total. The Admiral included.

The 18 we sailed with the whole fleet NW to W towards the Tortugas.

The 19 until noon we sailed NW and NW to W. At noon latitude of 24 degrees, then we set our course north. We sailed ahead with the small ships to look for [anchoring] ground.

The 20 the latitude of 24 degrees, 46 minutes. The course until noon was north. At noon we sounded a depth of 75 fathoms, white sand.

The 21 the depth of 48 fathoms and latitude of 25 degrees, 26 minutes.

The 22 the same latitude and a depth of 38 fathoms. At night we anchored with the whole fleet. The 23 and 24 we cruised with the small ships, a few around the north, and the other around the south. The large ships remained anchored the whole time.

The 25 we cruised as before and anchored at night.

The 26 very variable weather. We went cruising as before. About noon, when we were busy lowering the topsails because of a *travado* [Portuguese: hurricane], a terrible thing happened because of a "thunderstruck" [strike of lightning] that raised the hairs of anyone who saw it. It happened as follows:

When the men were in the topsails and standing in the ropes to reef the sails, a bolt of lightning struck our ship with such violence, it appeared that heaven and earth would end. It

¹⁴⁵ For the Spanish fleet organization see Goslinga, 1971, p. 179.

¹⁴⁶ The Saint John's fleet or Flota de San Juan was named after the port San Juan de Ulúa in Mexico from where it generally sailed in June for the return journey (Goslinga, 1971, pp. 178–9).

¹⁴⁷ 'Schout van de Nacht' or Night watch is a typical Dutch name for the last ship in a squadron and synonymous with 'Commandeur': see de Jonge, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Zeewezen*, 1858, Part I, p. 296–9.

struck first upon the side of the large top sail [‘bramzeil’] and then it tore away the ropes but the flag was left untouched.¹⁴⁸ Then the round wood of the large top sail was splintered in such a way as if it was clawed to pieces. Next this round wood was broken like a reed that had been snapped. It then fell through the large sail without hurting any men who were working up there. The hole that it [the bolt of lightning] made in the top sail was very small. Forth [then] it tore apart our large mast just like a gutter until the middle deck. Our victuals master, called Abraham Stevensen, who stood with some other men at the brails [‘gijttouw’] next to the mast, received it [the lightning] on his chest and dropped dead. The lightning had singed the hair off his body [29r]

July 1629

in such a manner as if he had lain in a fire. Furthermore, his toes were ripped off his feet too. He had no other wounds, only on his chest which was totally blue, and near his heart only 2 to 3 scratches were visible. Next a bolt of lightning struck our middle deck and left 2 little holes that looked like they had been made with a drill, and fell in the resting quarters of our Quarter master who was sleeping in his bed [hut], but kept on sleeping! A [ships] mate who was frying salt fish near the mast was also hurt, his arms were ripped from his shoulders. Also, the port was ripped apart, to wit the exterior part, but the first part of the port was left untouched. This whole event had scared us to death and we were beaten black and blue on our arms and legs. This was a remarkable visit by the good God. We cannot thank God enough [for the fact] that he had so mercifully warned us and we will take to heart such visits, that we will abandon our sinful life which was granted by our good God by Jesus Christ, Amen.

The 27 we repaired the things that were struck by lightning.

The 28 we set sail with the fleet. Ditto we sold the goods of the deceased victuals master.

The 29 we saw a sail, coming closer it turned out to be the *Zwaan* from Vlissingen.

The 30 the Lord Admiral ordered that we would take on board 12 soldiers from the *Walcheren*, since the *Zwaan* had brought soldiers for the *Walcheren*. Ditto we gave the *Walcheren* the remaining cooked food from Grenada.

The 31 the ordered soldiers came over.

August

The first variable weather with thunder and lightning. The wind west.

The 2 the latitude of 25 degrees, a depth of 32 fathoms.

The 3 and 4 we sailed constantly at the aforementioned latitude.

The 5 we sounded a depth of 50 fathoms. We had latitude of 24 degrees, 40 minutes. We experienced strong currents here.

The 6 at the same latitude as before. We caught a lot of fish every day.

The 7 we kept to the above mentioned latitude and depth. Ditto the ship *Dordrecht* joined us.

The 8, 4 more ships joined us, to wit the *Griffioen* from Hoorn, the *Drie Koningen* from Amsterdam, the yacht *Tijger* from Rotterdam, and the yacht *Zuidster* from Middelburg.

The 9 the new ships were mustered.¹⁴⁹

The 10 we cleaned our ship.

The 11 we drifted off the ground and were not able to regain ground again.¹⁵⁰

The 12 we saw a sail. Getting there, it was the yacht *Medemblik*. Ditto the latitude of 24

¹⁴⁸ The ‘bramzeil’ or topgallant sail is the topsail of the largest mast.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Monsteren’ or ‘to embark’ means in Dutch to have been added officially to the fleet.

¹⁵⁰ In order to clean the outside of the ship, it was stranded on a bank to scrape off the mucus, seaweed, barnacles and mussels from the exterior. During this cleaning or careening, the ship apparently drifted off the bank and was not able to gain ground again.

degrees, 48 minutes.

The 13 the same latitude as before. We had a depth of 48 fathoms, rocky ground.

The 14 the same depth and latitude.

The 15 at abovementioned latitude, it has been decided to sail towards Cuba. Every day we had very variable weather.

The 16 at noon we saw De Kroon SE to S of us. Our course had been S and E.

The 17 was decided to fetch water with the yachts at Rio Puercos.

The 18 the Lord Admiral ordered me to go with my sloop to Rio Puercos too, since I knew this place.

From the 19 until 20 we tacked without any advancement because we were a bit too low.

The 20 we rejoined the fleet. We said to the Admiral that we were not able to reach this place. He replied that we should make another attempt, which we did, but took our ship with us.

The 21 we had sailed below the fleet since the barks did not advance a lot because of the heavy boats they were towing. It was very windy.

The 22 we tacked again. We lost more than we gained since the currents were going around the west. One of the barks drifted out of sight.

The 23 I sent the yacht the *Zuidster*, which had come, towards the bark we had lost sight of on the lee side.

The 24 and 25 we tacked constantly with little gain.

The 26 during the evening the bark which the Admiral's ship had to set adrift [in order] not to be pushed away from the coast, returned to us.

The 27 in the morning we were still 3 miles below Rio Puercos.

The 28 still weather. A light breeze from the SW.

The 29 all day the wind SW. During the evening we anchored in between 2 keys in front of Rio Puercos. At night we went towards the river with 3 yachts and one bark. [29v]

August 1629

The 30 in the morning we came before the river, we landed our soldiers and obtained some water. We had constant alarms [skirmishes]. One of our men was shot through the knee.

The 31 we got some more water. Our soldiers fired continuously at the Spaniards who kept alarming us.

September

The first we got our last [shipment of] water and we finished at noon.¹⁵¹ Then we sailed away in the evening with the wind blowing from the land.

The 2 beautiful weather. We tacked and reckoned that the fleet had to be before Havana.

The 3 we joined the fleet at Cavanos. They had sent the *Kat* there to be re-masted because its mast had also been ripped off by lightning.

The 4 we took over from the ship *Zeeland* 2 metal guns and other necessities because these ships were going home and we were still continuing our journey.

The 5 still weather.

The 6 the 12 soldiers were taken back by *Zeeland* to sail home.

The 7 we drifted off Matanzas Bay. No wind all day.

The 8 bad weather. At night we met with a storm from the north with a lot of thunder and lightning. At dusk the wind ENE.

The 9 still bad weather. Ditto the yacht the *Raaf* joined us coming from Cavanos.

¹⁵¹ To get fresh water, a sloop was filled with water in the river and brought back to the ship.

The 10 in the afternoon the [other] ships from Cavanos joined us. In the evening I reckoned to be at De Tafel.

The 11 we took all the victuals from the ships bound for the homeland that they could possibly miss. Ditto at Havana all the prisoners were put in a bark and cast adrift.

The 12 [it] was decided that the Admiral and Lord Vice-Admiral would continue the voyage with the new[ly arrived] ships.

The 13 all steersmen visited the Admiral to plot a good course to pass the [Caicos] Channel.

The 14 we saw land and coming nearer to it, we could even see the ground; it was only 5 fathoms deep. At first we supposed that we were at the 'Plusselles', but when we sailed a little more towards the west, we stood SE of the Dry Tortugas. Since we arrived here at night, it is possible that the whole fleet had "missed" them. Then we anchored at the Tortugas.

The 15 it was decided that I would sail ahead with my ship until off Cuba again. Ditto we saw a sail. Upon approaching it, it turned out to be an English ship.¹⁵²

The 16 we were off De Tafel again. At night we sailed north with one sail.

The 17 bad weather from the east, such that we had to lower the short sail. At night we wanted to sink the bark Cavanos and that is why the fleet drifted without sails all night long.

The 18 bad weather as before. Towards the afternoon we saw land, we fell 7 to 6 miles above Havana. At night offshore and set our course NNE with small sails all night.

The 19 in the morning we arrived near Cape Florida. Reaching land, we sailed back out to sea again. We had strong currents.

The 20 at noon latitude of 25 degrees. In the afternoon we saw land that stretched towards the south and the north.

The 21 the Lord Admiral switched to the *Witte Leeuw* and the Lord Vice-Admiral to the *Zwaan*. Wind SW, course N and E.

The 22 in the morning we were with only 6 ships all together. At noon latitude of 29 degrees and 8 minutes, wind NNE. Ditto we joined the ships again. In the afternoon we sounded ground at 32 fathoms off the Coast of Florida.

The 23 we tacked here, and in the evening we sounded ground at 30 fathoms. Ditto the *Griffioen* and yacht the *Raaf* who had lost us at Cape Florida joined us.

The 24 latitude of 30 degrees, 8 minutes. We tacked up along the coast.

The 25 latitude of 30 degrees, 43 minutes, fair weather. We kept a N to E course. We sailed with small sails since the Vice-Admiral had lost the fleet.

The 26 latitude of 31 degrees, 8 minutes, course E to N and ENE. At night the wind NNE.

The 27 latitude of 31 degrees, 15 minutes, course as before.

The 28 latitude of 31 degrees, course E to S. Ditto the steersmen had gathered with the Admiral. [30r]

September 1629

The 29 latitude of 31 degrees, 21 minutes, kept ENE course, by reckoning we sailed 16 miles.

The 30 no latitude, kept E to N course 18 miles, wind SW.

¹⁵² Here we remark the special status of Gelein van Stapels. After his incorporation in the Night watch, this is the second time he is leading the fleet. See note 118.

October

The first we cleaned our ships. We experienced some still weather. At noon the latitude of 32 degrees, 12 minutes. [We have sailed] by reckoning [according] to my map 8 to 10 miles off the Coast of Virginia.¹⁵³

The 2 no latitude, course ENE, wind SE. Ditto the ships bound for home parted company with us.

The 3 latitude of 32 degrees, 42 minutes, course E to N. Ditto the Vice-Admiral who had been separated from us since the 22nd *passado* [Spanish: previous] joined us.

The 4 no latitude, course E to S, wind SW.

The 5 latitude of 31 degrees 49 minutes, course E to S. Because of a third compass change, we kept east. A lot of rain today.

The 6 latitude of 31 degrees, 30 minutes. We made little progress because of a yacht that was not able to follow the fleet.

The 7 latitude of 31 degrees, 24 minutes, course E to S, 8 miles. Dysentery struck the fleet badly.

The 8 latitude of 31 degrees, 30 minutes, course east 22 miles, wind south.

The 9 latitude of 31 degrees, 7 minutes, course E to S, 2 miles, wind south.

The 10 latitude of 31 degrees, course ESE, 16 miles, still weather, wind south.

The 11 no latitude, course and wind as before, 26 miles.

The 12 latitude of 30 degrees, 14 minutes. From the 9th until now, we kept course E to S and ESE 70 miles [!].

The 13 latitude of 29 degrees, 30 minutes, course SE to S, 16 miles, wind south.

The 14 latitude of 29 degrees, course ESE, 21 miles, wind SSW.

The 15 latitude of 28 degrees, 15 minutes, course SE to E. During the day the wind SW, course SSE.

The 16 latitude of 27 degrees, 40 minutes, course SSE, wind WSW.

The 17 latitude of 27 degrees, 47 minutes, we kept E to N course, 10 miles, wind SSE.

The 18 latitude of 28 degrees, 30 minutes, course NE to E, 20 miles, wind SE.

The 19 latitude of 29 degrees, 39 minutes. We kept E and E to N course, 20 miles, wind south, foul weather.

The 20 latitude of 28 degrees, 20 minutes, course SE to E, 20 miles. SW wind during the day, course SSE.

The 21 no latitude, course SSE, 18 miles, wind SW to W.

The 22 latitude of 27 degrees, 3 minutes. Mostly still, wind and course as before.

The 23 latitude of 25 degrees, 40 minutes, course SSE, wind E to N, 23 miles.

The 24 latitude of 24 degrees, course S S E, wind East, 26 miles. The dysentery was so bad within the fleet that there were ships which had over 40 men in their berths. We had 6 to 7.

The 25 latitude of 22 degrees, 35 minutes, course SSE, wind ENE, 24 miles.

The 26 no latitude, course SSE, 28 miles, wind ENE.

The 27 latitude of 19 degrees, 20 minutes, course SSE, wind east.

The 28 latitude of 17 degrees, 9 minutes, course S to E, wind east. We made a lot of progress.

The 29 latitude of 14 degrees, 58 minutes, course south. I reckoned that Barbados would be W by S from me, 155 miles. Ditto the captains and steersmen were summoned by the Admiral.

The 30 latitude of 13 degrees, 54 minutes, course S to W, wind ESE.

The 31 latitude of 13 degrees, 7 to 8 minutes, course west to the Island of Barbados.

November

¹⁵³ This is an error; Virginia is located in a much higher latitude, i.e. 36°.

The first a latitude of 13 degrees, 8 minutes, course west, 30 miles, wind east.

The 2 latitude of 13 degrees, 14 to 15 minutes, course west, 25 miles, wind east.

The 3 latitude of 13 degrees, 15 minutes, course and wind as before, 25 miles.

The 4 latitude of 12 degrees, 50 minutes, course west, 30 miles, wind east. At dawn we saw the Island of Barbados, our rendezvous, W by S from us. At nightfall we were 4 to 5 miles away from there, we drift off it with the fleet [lowering the sails *sic*]. I would make landfall, according to my reckoning, in 30 miles.

The 5 in the morning we anchored at the west end of the bay in 4 to 5 fathoms of “dirty” ground. Ditto it was proclaimed on all the ships that nobody of the crew would plunder the tobacco or fruit of the population of the [is]land on pains of corporal punishment. Here we refreshed our men until the 14th. Ditto got some potato leaves and some crumbs; a meagre supply.¹⁵⁴ We also caught a few pigs but it was hardly enough since there were ships with a lot of men suffering from dysentery, [so that] they could hardly man their ships. The ship *Leiden* lost 24 to 25 to the ditto sickness.

The 14 ditto the ships *Walcheren*, *Drie Koningen* and *Medemblik* parted from us for Saint Vincent, leaving their soldiers with us.

The 15 we took over from the ship the *Zwaan* 3 months of victuals for 65 soldiers. Ditto the Lord Admiral went to the *Dolfijn* and the Lord Vice-Admiral [transferred] to our ship the *Jager*. Ditto 4 more ships left for Saint Vincent: the *Witte Leeuw*, the *Zwaan*, the *Leiden* and the *Griffioen*.¹⁵⁵

The 16 we stayed here with the ships that would continue up the Orinoco River, to wit the *Dolfijn*, the *Zeeuwse Jager*, the *Friese Jager*, the *Tijger*, the *Kat*, the *Zeeridder*, the *Zuidster*, the *Raaf* and the bark *Cavanos*. [30v]

November 1629

The 17 we were still anchored here and ready to set sail, because the Governor,¹⁵⁶ to whom we had only done good, had taken hostage the captain of the *Zeeridder*, stating that we had taken [stolen] from his people, which caused us to stay moored that night.

The 18 ditto we got the captain back with a lot of difficulty. At night we set sail, wind east, bad weather and a lot of rain.

The 19 we kept a S to E course, variable weather and wind east.

The 20 at noon a latitude of 11 degrees, 15 minutes, course S to E, bad weather.

The 21 a latitude of 9 degrees, 30 minutes, course S to E, rainy weather.

The 22 at night we sounded ground at 50 fathoms. At dawn we saw land, a very low land. It was decided that I would sail along the coast with 2 sloops to explore how far we were from the Orinoco, since we had never sailed on this coast. The Admiral followed us with the yachts.

Thus from ditto until the 25th we sailed with the sloops along the coast and into a few small rivers without any knowledge of either this land or encountering any Savages, as has been written in the description in more detail. We entered ditto night with the sloop a large river that we took to be the Orinoco.

The 26 when going upon this river with the sloop, we found a place where savages had been recently. We suffered much discomfort in the sloops because it was raining very hard day and night.

¹⁵⁴ Potato and senna leaves were used to cure dysentery.

¹⁵⁵ Van Stapels does not mention any rendezvous at the island of Saint Vincent for these seven ships, but they are clearly not participating in the raid on San Thomé de Guayana.

¹⁵⁶ This was probably Robert Wheatley who had been appointed by Hawley on his departure for England earlier that year. See also note 122.

The 27 we continued upon the river until noon. We reckoned to have advanced 18 miles up the river without having seen any people. We rowed back again until at nightfall we arrived at the yacht of the Lord Admiral which had already come 12 to 14 miles up the river. The ships had anchored offshore in a very dangerous location at 16 to 17 feet of water. When coming to the Admiral, I gave my report. Ditto we stayed aboard for the night.

The 28 at dawn we went up a large creek until late in the evening. We were so far upstream that we were not able to continue. There we fired 2 to 3 shots and 3 to 4 savages came to us and told us that we were in the Orinoco River. We came with these savages to the Lord Admiral who was very happy. Ditto night, the Lord Admiral had sent me with the sloop to the ships at sea, to bring them into the river.

The 29 at night we reached the ships which were in difficulty. Our ship had lost its bowsprit and galley, the *Tijger* had lost 3 anchors, the *Dolfijn* one anchor and a cable.

The 30 in the morning, I sailed with the whole fleet towards the river, we sailed up front with our ship. In the evening, when we were 4 miles up the river, we were stranded but we sailed free again at night.

December

The first we were off the ground and set sail until night to the first narrow channel in the river, once arrived we waited for the low tide. We had a lot of rain every day.

The 2 at night, we were 18 miles up the river in front of a channel that stretched NNE. At night we hauled for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.¹⁵⁷

The 3 we hauled through another channel that stretched NE where a few were stranded and others stayed until nightfall. Here, we found 2 savages willing to serve as guides to take us to the town since there was nobody in our fleet who had ever been in this river. Ditto the Lord Admiral gave orders concerning the landing all of which is written precisely in the description of the Orinoco River.

The 4 we had everything ready, necessary for this mission. This day we advanced about 2 miles up the river, having a lot of rain. [31r]

December 1629

The 5 we sailed up the river about 4 miles, reaching a channel which we had to cross. There, the *Tijger* ran aground, making us wait for it. We had a lot of foul weather and lots of rain day and night. We saw high mountains on our port side.

The 6 we got through the channel because we followed the instructions of our Indian pilot; first we ran aground but we freed ourselves straight away again. We sailed about 3 miles this day past a lot of islands, impossible to describe. We had a very strong current going down the river. Furthermore, we anchored every night.

The 7 we set sail again. In the morning rain, but during the day fair weather. It would have been very difficult for us to sail upon this river if we did not have those Indians with us. At night, we anchored in a channel, 16 fathoms deep.

The 8 no wind, advancing about one mile. We had a very strong current down the river but no flood.

The 9 in the morning we set sail again. We passed by the islands into the straight [of the] Orinoco where the river was by reckoning $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile wide and divided in 3 channels going down the river.

The 10 we advanced about $4\frac{1}{2}$ [miles]. At night, we anchored because of a sandbar where the

¹⁵⁷ They hauled the boats with small anchors, thrown further into the shallow river channel and pulled the ship through it.

yachts had become stranded, near an island named Isla Iguana, 4 miles off San Thomé.

The 11 at noon, we sighted the city where we arrived around 2 o'clock at ½ mile [distance]. When we approached the city, it was in flames because the Spaniards had set it on fire. Once in front of the city, we fired a few shots at a few Spaniards who showed themselves, and landed our men immediately. We entered the city without any resistance as has been written in the description in more detail.

The 12 we packed the tobacco in barrels [and we] also found 3 guns, which ditto were carried aboard.

The 13 we continued razing [the city] what was left standing by the fire. We also brought down the walls of the churches and houses and we cut down all the fruit trees, finally nothing was standing tall anymore.

The 14 our reverend performed a sermon ashore. Once finished, we all embarked and went that day about 3 miles below the city. We had a lot of men in the ships with the bloody flux.

The 15 we went downstream about 9 miles where the river split in 3 channels. Here, the *Dolfijn* was stranded.

The 16 the *Dolfijn* was freed from the ground, but the *Friese Jager* was stranded.

The 17 the *Friese Jager* was freed from the ground and now we found ourselves stranded with the *Zeeuwse Jager* and we were freed with a great deal of difficulty that night.

The 18 we drifted 2 to 4 miles down the river.

The 19 we arrived in front of the last channel and anchored there at night. Now we had 15 to [17] men with the bloody flux in our ship.

The 20 we went down the channel. We advanced today about 4 miles.

The 21 we sailed through the channel where we hauled the ships when entering the river [2 and 3 December]. Ditto at nightfall, we met the savages again in their canoes and our pilots went ashore. They were very satisfied that we had chased the Spaniards away. The pilots were [paid] with axes and knives and a garment each.

The 22 we arrived at night at 4 miles downstream in the river near an island that is usually situated half in the river, where we re-timbered the bark *Cavano*s and refreshed the ships. We also made a new galley. The savages sometimes brought us fish and a few peccaries.

The 23 and 24 we timbered our galley and constructed a new bark.

The 25 Reverend Jaspers and I got very sick of the bloody flux and we also suffered a heavy fever.

The 26 the savages brought 6 pigs aboard.

The 27 we went down the river into the mouth of the river. Ditto 2 of our men died of the bloody flux. One is called Lourens Muis from Lon[don] and the other Bartel Iackopsen from Na[a]rden. [31v]

December 1629

The 28 we got as far from the river as Amacuro. We watered the ship at low tide at 16 feet water.

The 29 at dawn, we sailed over the mudflats. Once out of sight of the land, it was still 3 fathoms deep. In the evening, we saw the Island of Trinidad. At night we anchored at 24 fathoms. Ditto the Admiral and the Vice-Admiral went with the sloops and the yacht the *Zeeridder* to see if they could find any Nipoye [Indians], to see if they could get a hold of a few Arawak [Indians] who would be our guides in Trinidad.

The 30 2 hours before dawn Reverend Jaspers died of the bloody flux. Ditto I got a little bit better. At nightfall, since we had little opportunity to bury him, we had his coffin sunk [at sea]. Ditto at night, the yachts and the Admiral returned to the fleet. They did not find any Arawak. They had visited a few savages but these savages would not come with them. At

night, we watered at Trinidad.

The 31 we anchored at night at Galleons Point. Ditto one of our soldiers died of the flux, named Jorres de Aumbu, a Frenchman.

January

The first we hacked some palmito-wood at Galleons Point. Ditto Illes Snellen, [...] assistant of the *Zwaan* fell sick to the bloody flux and burning fevers.

The 2 we tacked to Port of Spain where the Spaniards resided. At night we anchored at 7 fathoms.

The 3 and 4 and 5 we tacked continuously with little progress. Then we anchored at 6 to 7 and 12 fathoms. Ditto our constable's mate [Yve] Clark, Englishman, died of the bloody flux.

The 6 and 7 we tacked continuously with little progress. We had a lot rain and rainy weather every day, causing a lot of diseases for the men in our ships. There were few ships with fewer than 15 to 20 men sick of the flux and the healthy ones were very weak. Therefore the Lord Admiral convened the council aboard where it was decided to abandon the mission of Trinidad, as was outlined in the resolution.¹⁵⁸ In this resolution it was further decided to go as quickly as possible to Isla Blanca to have our men refreshed who could not endure otherwise.

The 8 we set sail again to confirm the resolution. At night Illes Snellen died. Ditto at night we anchored at Las Bocas.

The 9 in the morning we buried Illes Snellen in a coffin on the largest island of the Bocas.¹⁵⁹ Because nobody on our ships had sailed out of the Bocas but me, it was ordered that I would sail ahead until we were past them. Ditto at noon, we sailed out of Las Bocas. We set our course NW until nightfall, then NW to N and NNW.

The 10 until noon SW to W course, then [having] latitude of 11 degrees, 42 minutes. At night we saw the islands [Los Hermanos] to the east of Isla Blanca, we drifted all night with the triangular ['besane'] sail.

The 11 at sunset we saw Isla Blanca to our SSE. At noon we anchored there and caught a few bucks that day.

The 12 and 13 and 14 and 15 we refreshed over there and caught over 2,000 bucks to refresh the sick and healthy men.¹⁶⁰

The 16 we tried a few criminals in our ships. At night we set sail and set our course South with "few" sails, towards La Tortuga.

The 17 we saw La Tortuga where we acquired that day a good quantity of planks which the ships were lacking. At night, we harboured at the west end [of the island].¹⁶¹

The 18 we departed from La Tortuga, our course W to N towards Bonaire.

The 19 in the morning, we saw the island one calls Las Rocas. Ditto at night we passed Isla Aves, ditto Bonaire came into view. We drifted off it all night long.

The 20 we harboured at Bonaire. Ditto we spoke to a few Spaniards who told us that 10 to 12 days ago there had been a bark that had seen 20 to 25 ships at Isla Blanca 20 to 25 days ago, but not knowing what kind of ships. He [*sic*] also said that in Santo Domingo the news was that Don Fadrique Alvarez de Toledo was on his way with a big fleet, and that he was expected any day. They had also seen here 10 to 12 days ago 2 ships with Dutch flags sailing by, but they did not anchor here.¹⁶²

The 21 in the morning at dawn, we went ashore with some 450 men. Our return is written in

¹⁵⁸ We may suspect that they aimed to plunder Port of Spain but the great number of sick crew members probably made them continue their journey.

¹⁵⁹ It is noteworthy that Illes Snellen was buried whereas the Reverend was just lowered at sea.

¹⁶⁰ Apparently, fresh meat was deemed to have medicinal properties.

¹⁶¹ It is unclear whether these planks were fabricated on the island by the crew or bought from people living on the island.

the above description.

The 22 we burnt down the village. Ditto got back on board with great difficulty. Here we lost Jacop Kersen, Captain of the *Kat* and the skipper of the *Dolfijn* was hurt badly. [32r]

January 1630

The 23 another was made captain in place of the deceased captain. It was also decided to sail across [the Caribbean Sea] to Isla Mona and Saone since we could gain no more profit on this coast. Here we also put ashore 2 prisoners, a Catholic and another.

The 24 in the morning we departed, our course N to E.

The 25 latitude of 13 degrees, 53 minutes, course N to E, wind east.

The 26 latitude of 15 degrees, 30 minutes, course N to E, wind east.

The 27 before noon, we saw the west end of Puerto Rico. The course from Bonaire is N to E. At night, we drifted off it with the besane sail.

The 28 in the morning by daylight, we saw on our windward side 5 sails that we reached at noon. They were our ships, cruising there. They had been joined by the ship *Dordrecht* which, since we left Havana, had become separated from the fleet, because they had visited St Kitts. They found out that ditto island had been taken by Don Fadrique and that he was around here with at least 50 ships. Ditto all soldiers I had aboard were transferred to the *Zwaan*.

The 29 the Lord Admiral and the Lord Vice-Admiral returned to their ships. Ditto we drifted below Isla Mona and tacked back [to the island].

The 30 [arrived] near the Isla Mona. Ditto the secret council gathered.

The 31 we went to the Barbados rendezvous, to wit behind Isla Vaca.

February

The first course W by S. At night we had the Cabo Beata alongside us, wind east.

The 2, 6 to 7 miles above Isla Vaca, set the bowsprit sail [smack sail] and drifted off it during the night.

The 3 so far off land that we could barely see it. At night at the Salines, tranquil weather.

The 4 we anchored behind Isla Vaca. We found 10 Englishmen on the island who were not able to stand on their legs anymore and had abandoned their ship. Ditto I was sent by the Lord Admiral with the *Zeeridder* to Port Morgan to see if there were any ships but I did not find any.¹⁶³

The 5 we stayed below the island, and caught 2 beasts that day.

The 6 we arrived at Port Morgan.

The 7 the boats and sloops went off to collect apples and lemons. They brought a good quantity. We caught 4 pigs that day.

The 8 the *Walcheren*, the 3 *Koningen* and the *Medemblik* anchored, which had been cruising at Los Monjes. They had captured two barks with flour and meat which were coming from Maracaïbo. One [bark] had been stranded at Baia Honda, where [it did not manage to get] away from, and the other had sunk due to foul weather, so they could save a small quantity of flour only.

The 9 we cleaned our ships.

¹⁶² Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Mendoza (1580–1634) and his ‘Armada de Sotavento’ was sent to Mexico but also received orders to clear out the heavily armed English and French colonies at Saint Kitts and Nevis which happened in September 1629; see Tertre, F.I.B. du, *Histoire générale des Isles des S. Christophe* [...], Paris: Chez Jacques Langlois, 1654, pp. 13–14. The Pater fleet just ‘missed’ the Armada of Don Fadrique.

¹⁶³ It is noteworthy that van Stapels had to leave his ship to accompany the *Zeeridder*. Further, what happened to the Englishmen?

The 10 we went hunting. We caught 7 pigs that day and divided them over the fleet.

The 11 all the victuals in the fleet were distributed evenly. Ditto, we had the following victuals in our ship for 61 men:

250 lb	bread
440 lb	stockfish (salt fish)
2...	small barrels of meat
3...	small barrels of speck
½...	barrel of barley
1...	barrel of pies
1½...	'amen' of oil ¹⁶⁴
⅓...	<i>pipa</i> of Spanish wine

The 12 our men went hunting and caught 6 pigs that day. Here, our boatsman suffered a large wound to his arm because of a hog. Ditto were still busy dividing up the victuals. We still had victuals for 16 weeks.

The 13 all the victuals were distributed correctly for 16 weeks. We got our share from various ships, for 61 men, to wit:

from the <i>Zwaan</i>	3,840 lb bread
from ditto ship	600 lb meat
from the <i>Dordrecht</i>	5½ barrels of barley, each 2 small barrels
from ditto ship	1 <i>pipa</i> of wine
from the <i>Friese Jager</i>	½ barrel of grey peas
from the <i>Leiden</i>	1¾ barrels of rotten white peas
from the <i>Witte Leeuw</i>	1/3 barrel of rotten white peas
from the <i>Zuidster</i>	¼ barrel of beans

These are the victuals we got as our share for 16 weeks.

The 14 we fetched some water and [it was] given to the ships.

The 15 [it] was decided to return to Santa Marta on the 17th to demand our destination.

The 16 our men went hunting. At noon they brought one of our men aboard who was hurt in the foot by a spear.¹⁶⁵ At night we brought an anchor on board.¹⁶⁶ Ditto [it] was also decided to have a day of prayers for the whole fleet every fortnight. [32v]

February 1630

The 17 in the morning we set sail with the wind blowing from the land. At night we anchored at Isla Vaca because the wind had died down.

The 18 we departed from Isla Vaca with the wind blowing from the land during the day, wind SW. At night at the Pointe des Salines.

The 19 variable weather. At night we reckoned to be at Santo Domingo. At night we sailed SE to S.

The 20 latitude of 16 degrees, 30 minutes, strong wind from the ENE, course SE to S.

The 21 latitude of 15 degrees, 15 minutes, course SE to S, wind ENE.

The 22 latitude of 14 degrees, 26 minutes, we kept SSE course, fair weather.

The 23 latitude of 13 degrees, 26 minutes, we kept SSE course, strong wind.

The 24 latitude of 12 degrees, 24 minutes. We saw Cabo de la Vela, we drifted 4 to 5 miles off to the west of it. Ditto we anchored at night at 15 fathoms. The secret council debated with the Admiral how to divide the soldiers. At night we set sail again.

¹⁶⁴ This is a measure: 1 'aam' equals 100 pots and one pot equals 2 pints. See Bartjens, W., H. Haanstra, *De vernieuwe cyfferinge van Mr. Willem Bartjens geheel uitgewerkt: waar door men, zonder behulp van en Meester, of ander onderwys [...]*, Leeuwarden: Abraham Ferwerda, 1744, p. 76.

¹⁶⁵ This is the second casualty of pig hunting; apparently a dangerous activity!

¹⁶⁶ They found an anchor in the bay which came in very handy since they had already lost a few.

The 25 thirty boatsmen with their rifles left our ship to serve as soldiers on board the ship *Dordrecht*. We received from the ship *Medemblik* 50 men who would land ahead of the soldiers. It was also stated that over the coming days it was ordered that nobody would abandon their troop or quarters to plunder or to drink upon pain of being shot with a harquebus, which would be strictly enforced.

The 26 at nightfall, we passed Cabo de San Juan de Guia and one hour before sunrise we arrived in the bay of Santa Marta which we conquered in one hour after nightfall, as has been written in more detail in the description. It is noteworthy that ditto at broad daylight, we saw right above our heads a bright star for 2 hours.

The 27 the goods we found in the city were taken aboard.

The 28 three Spaniards arrived in the city to negotiate the ransom. We settled for 3,500 pieces of eight and 60 to 70 beasts [cattle]. Ditto we left the city again. We had two dead men and three wounded men in our fleet. The Spaniards had four dead men.

March

The first of March, the Spaniards let us know that the Governor did not want to pay the promised ransom. The Admiral ordered to raze the city the next day.

The 2 in the morning, all the manned boats landed again to burn the city. When we approached the land, a message was sent that the ransom would come. Because of this message the Lord Admiral ordered to return. During the day, the yacht the *Zuidster* joined us again. It had been looking for the ship of the night watch that had drifted away the night we arrived here, with few men aboard. It was without any damage since the ship the *Dordrecht* had “taken it aboard”.¹⁶⁷

The 3 ransom was paid. Meanwhile the ships fetched water and ditto the bark *Cavanos* was burnt since it was no good anymore. Ditto on our ship someone named Lukas Bersen was tried. The Spaniards told us that they had news from Cartagena that the King’s Fleet had left Cartagena 11 days ago. They also said that the[ir] courier had seen a ship anchored in the bay of the Rio Grande River. Once this message was passed on to the Lord Admiral, it was decided that yacht the *Zuidster* and the Night watch would sail there because they reckoned that it had to be the *Tijger*.

The 4 very strong storms, such that we stayed below upper [deck].

The 5 at noon, we set sail with the fleet. At sea a tempest raged and broke our first mast. We repaired it as best we could. Then stormy weather at night, we sailed over the north, wind ENE.

The 6 winds and course as before. At noon the latitude of 12 degrees, 3 minutes. We kept course NNW.

The 7 in the morning changed course again, and set to SE to E. So we kept the latitude of 12 degrees, 12 minutes.

The 8 during nightfall, we touched land. The ships that sailed well arrived about 2 miles above Cabo de San Juan de Guia but the *Leiden* and the *Dolfijn* landed about 2 miles below. They could not gain any [latitude] by tacking [and beating back]. At night, we went over there, towards the furthest ships. We had very bad weather constantly, so much we could hardly put up the sails.¹⁶⁸

The 9 one [ship] of our fleet got out of sight. We were allowed to put up the topsails again. We sailed N and N to E. [33r]

¹⁶⁷ The Night watch ship had drifted away and the *Dordrecht* had managed to cling on to the ship (with ropes) and transfer the crew.

¹⁶⁸ Apparently, the ships *Leiden* and *Dolfijn* did not sail very well. They were not able to tack back and were thus legging behind. Hence, Van Stapels went back to convoy them back to the fleet.

March 1630

The 10 now 2 ships were lost from the fleet, to wit the 9th the *Dolfijn* and now the *Leiden* and the *Drie Koningen*. In the morning changed course to the south.¹⁶⁹

The 11 at night a storm from the ENE. We changed course to north again without having seen any land. Ditto the *Drie Koningen* joined us again.

The 12 changed course to north again, having strong winds, sailing N and N to E

The 13 changed course to N to E, having handier [better] weather.

The 14 the latitude of 15 degrees, 8 minutes, course N to E. Now the following ships were missing from the fleet: the *Dolfijn*, the *Walcheren*, the *Drie Koningen* and the *Leiden*.

The 15 the latitude of 16 degrees, 50 minutes, course N to E, fair weather. At night one hour before dawn, we saw NW from us Morant Point [Danto Point], or the east end of Jamaica, at 8 miles from us. At night changed course, we sailed all night ESE and S E. Still weather.

The 16 most still. We sailed all day ESE and East. At night some progress, wind north.

The 17 in the morning, we saw Cabo Tiburón N to W from us at 7 miles. Forth still all day. At night, a light breeze from the west.

The 18 strong winds from NE, but during the day still. At night the wind west.

The 19 before noon still, during the day a fair breeze from the WSW, taking us close to the cape.

The 20 before noon, we harboured at the cape with 5 of our ships, to wit the *Witte Leeuw*, the *Zwaan*, the *Griffioen*, the *Medemblik* and the *Zeeuwse Jager*. The others had rejoined us the 18th when within sight of the cape.

The 21 we repaired our bowsprit with a large mast from the *Zwaan*.

The 22 collected water and provisioned the ships.

The 23 the *Dordrecht* and the *Friese Jager* harboured with us.

The 24 the *Kat*, the *Zeeridder* and the *Raaf* harboured there.

The 25 we provisioned our ships [with fresh water]. During the day we had winds from the west and by night from the land.

The 26 the *Walcheren* and the *Drie Koningen* harboured with us.

The 27 we provisioned the ships that had come to us lately.

The 28 the secret council gathered with the Admiral. A repartition was made of what was captured in Santa Marta.

The 29 we received a small barrel of vinegar from the *Zwaan* from which 9 thumbs was missing.¹⁷⁰ Ditto ship the *Leiden* arrived.

The 30 in the morning a small English ship from London that came from St Kitts anchored with us. It brought us the happy news that Den Bosch, Wesel and Lengen had been captured.¹⁷¹ Ditto we divided the plundered goods from Santa Marta. It did not amount to enough for every man "to repair the holes in their socks".

The 31 the general council gathered aboard [the ship] of the Admiral to decide about the mission of Santiago de Cuba. At first, it was stated that the bay was inappropriate to sail into with large ships. Secondly, little profit was to be made for the Lords and Masters at this time of the year. Thirdly, there was a lack of victuals in the fleet, which could not last longer than 9 weeks. Fourthly, we had no materials to fortify this place [if taken]. When all this was discussed, it was decided to leave as quickly as possible through the Caicos in order to cruise off the Flemish Islands. Since nobody had left [the Caribbean] through the Caicos but me, it

¹⁶⁹ The fleet is clearly looking out for the missing ships.

¹⁷⁰ Meaning that the barrel with vinegar was not full.

¹⁷¹ These towns were occupied by the Spanish in the Southern Provinces and had now been captured by the Dutch.

was decided that I would “carry the torch” through the Caicos. The others would follow me carefully.¹⁷²

April

The first we waited for the ship *Leiden*.

The 2 the *Leiden* anchored.

The 3 all the skippers gathered aboard the ship of the Admiral where the following resolution was passed: if anyone would neglect orders or would drift off from the fleet, he would forfeit 8 months’ salary, except in the event of separation caused by a storm. Anyone who would pass the fireboat by night would be fined 12 guilders each time. This [statement] was signed by all. At night we set sail again, wind NNE, bad weather.

The 4 in the morning, at Navassa Island. At night near the Cape [Tiburón].

The 5 in the morning, back at the Cape again. We could not gain any [latitude] because of the strong current coming out of the Gulf.

The 6 at night, the *Zuidster* which had been sent away from Santa Marta, joined the fleet again. It had returned from Cartagena and had not found the night watch ship [the *Tijger sic*].

The 7 in the morning very close to Navassa Island. We could not determine any [latitude].

The 8 at night we saw [the Island of] Cuba.

The 9 in the morning we were at Santiago de Cuba. Tranquil all day. Furthermore we waited until nightfall for the *Zuidster* which had a broken mast. [33v]

April 1630

The 10 at night Cabo Tiburón SE to S from us. A light breeze from the SW. Tranquil at night.

The 11 tranquil all day. The Cape Dame Marie was situated E to S, at 5 miles from us.

The 12 in the morning, we were 2 miles to the east of Cape Dame Marie. Moreover gales from the SW all day, we sailed into the Gulf. At night, 4 miles off Cape Dame Marie, we set our course NE.

The 13 we were 2 miles off Île de Gonave, our course N to E until dawn. We arrived at Pointe du Mole du Saint Nicolas, the wind West, tranquil at night. The intention was to anchor here to re-mast the *Zuidster* and to careen the *Leiden* because neither sailed very well.

The 14 we anchored in the Baie du Mole at nightfall.

The 15 the yacht was almost ready and the wind was coming from the land. The Lord Admiral put all Spanish prisoners ashore and we set sail ditto at night.

The 16 the yacht left the bay as well, a breeze blowing from the WNW.

The 17 in the morning, nearby Île Tortue and because it was blowing from the north, we sailed through them. At night, we all got through.

The 18 in the morning, we were 2 miles to the east of Île Tortue. At night, Cap Français was situated S to E from us. Here we had strong currents going to the east. At night, I set my course towards the Caicos. We sailed all night N to E, 12 miles.

The 19 in the morning same course. At noon latitude of 21 degrees, 17 minutes. When we had taken latitude, we saw the white water of the sandbanks and a small island, 2 to 3 ship’s lengths long and named by us “Biervlit”. At night [we were] at the most southern island of the Caicos where we reefed the topsail.¹⁷³

The 20 in the morning close to the sandbank, one mile above the island. We went there and

¹⁷² To carry the torch is to be the ship to lead the fleet; another example of Van Stapels’ maritime expertise in the Caribbean. ‘Kaien’ and ‘Kakes’ in Dutch are used for the Cays or Caicos.

¹⁷³ Perhaps an allusion to the white spume that was like that of beer, ‘biervliet’ can be translated as stream of beer. Biervliet is a town in Zeeland which was mentioned earlier in relation to its fortification or sponce, or ‘schans’ in Dutch.

1½ hours after sunset, we passed the south end of the island. We sailed approximately N to E until 2 hours before dawn, then we saw the Island Mayaguana 2½ miles from us. When ditto island's cape was NW to W from us, we passed a reef that stretched one mile SE from the land. Furthermore this night continued sailing and carried the torch.

The 21 in the morning the *Zuidster* was missing from the fleet. Ditto the general council gathered at the Admiral's where it was decided that from this moment onwards no more than 2½ lb of bread per week would be given, and on Sunday and Thursday some wine for each man. Then, the victuals were further divided up. We got 244 lb of bread, 8 cheeses and a barrel of barley. Furthermore it was decided to set our course to Isla Fayal to cruise there a while. At noon latitude of 22 degrees, 54 minutes, we kept N to W course.

The 22 latitude of 24 degrees, 23 minutes, we kept course N to E, wind east.

The 23 latitude of 25 degrees, 28 minutes, course NE, wind S to W, and during the day SW.

The 24 latitude of 27 degrees, course NE, wind SW, fair weather.

The 25 latitude of 28 degrees, 30 minutes, course NE, wind as before.

The 26 latitude of 30 degrees, course as before, wind south. At noon the course ENE.

The 27 no latitude, course ENE, wind SW, bad weather. At night we came upon an Englishman.

The 28 latitude of 31 degrees, 50 minutes, course ENE, wind west, fair weather. Ditto we spoke to one of our ships who had spoken to the Englishman. He had said that he came from Bermuda and wanted to go to St Kitts. He also said that all tobacco on Bermuda had rotted away because of a hurricane [flooding]. He said that Bermuda is situated NW from us 16 to 17 miles on that night when we spoke to him.

The 29 latitude of 33 degrees, 9 minutes, course NE to E, and easterly, wind SW to W.

The 30 in the morning wind east. We sailed with little progress NNE and NE to N. At noon latitude of 33 degrees, 30 minutes. We set forth sailing in the afternoon ENE. Tranquil at night.

May

The first in the morning, the wind N to E and NNE. At noon no latitude. Until nightfall we kept an E to S course, 9 miles.

The 2 latitude of 33 degrees, 44 minutes. We kept an E to N course these 2 days, 24 miles, the wind then SW.

The 3 latitude of 34 degrees, 26 minutes, course ENE, wind NW. At night bad weather, wind as before.

The 4 latitude of 34 degrees 54 minutes, winds N to W. We kept course E to N, we had shifting winds.

The 5 latitude of 35 degrees, wind North with rainy weather. We kept course east, 16 miles. [34r]

May 1630

The 6 latitude of 35 degrees, 17 minutes, course ENE, wind south.

The 7 latitude of 35 degrees, 35 minutes, course ENE, wind WSW, still weather.

The 8 latitude of 36 degrees, 11 minutes, course ENE, wind WSW, still.

The 9 latitude of 36 degrees, 52 minutes, course ENE, wind SW, fair breeze.

The 10 latitude of 37 degrees, 49 minutes, course ENE, wind SW to W, strong breeze until night. At night shifting winds from the east. We kept course during the night SE to S, 5 miles.

The 11 calm and no latitude. We had rain, course ENE until noon, 4 miles.

The 12 latitude of 38 degrees, 18 minutes. These 2 days we kept course E to N, ¼ more to the

north, 45 miles. Ditto, according to my map, 155 miles to Isla Fayal. At noon course east.

The 13 in the morning such bad weather that our topsail was smashed to pieces. No latitude this day. We sailed by reckoning 42 miles, course East, wind SSW.

The 14 storm from the SSW. Ditto no latitude. We sailed by reckoning 35 miles, sometimes rain.

The 15 no latitude, calm weather. We sailed by reckoning 16 miles, course east. Ditto the captains and skippers gathered at the Admiral's and compared their [dead] reckonings of how far each [ship] was situated from Ilha Corvo. A few reckoned some 190 miles from [is]land and others 100 miles, 60, 50, 40, 30 and 25 miles. I reckoned to be at 10 to 12 miles.

The 16 quiet all night. Ditto latitude of 39 degrees, 30 minutes, foggy in the morning.

The 17 at noon latitude of 40 degrees, wind south, sometimes SE. We kept a NE to E course, 15 miles.¹⁷⁴

The 18 no latitude, wind south, course east. We reckoned to have sailed 18 miles.

The 19 latitude of 39 degrees, 24 minutes. We kept course E to S, 18 miles, wind south, fair weather. In the afternoon we saw Corvo and Ilha Flores. At night we sailed in between both aforementioned islands.

The 20 no latitude. Corvo was situated west from us, by reckoning 12 miles, wind towards E to S and ESE.

The 21 in the morning Ilha do Pico was situated S to E from us, 10 miles, wind S to E, fair weather. Ditto the Lord Admiral summoned the general council aboard to whom he suggested to cruise here about 3 to 4 more weeks. However, when the victuals of the fleet had been re-calculated, it appeared that a few ships only had enough food left for 20 to 22 days, and in other [ships only] for 4 weeks and a few for 5 weeks. So it was approved that we would cruise for 8 days to see if we could obtain some here. Then, it was decided that the ship *Leiden* and yacht the *Zuidster* and the *Raaf* were not sailing well. They would sail ahead homewards because they were the least well provided for in terms of victuals. Ditto the captain Illes Ag[agrake...] [with the] *Adder* from Vlissingen joined us.

The 22 in the morning, the *Leiden* and the 2 yachts left. At noon latitude of 40 degrees. Ditto day we drifted NE. At night the freebooter left us.

The 23 a latitude of 41 degrees, 15 minutes. We kept [sailing] with "short" sails WNW this day, 12 miles. At night, we drifted without any sails.

The 24 in the morning, we saw 2 sails of which one was the ditto freebooter and the other we could not approach. Ditto latitude of 40 degrees, 40 minutes. These 2 days we sailed and drifted NW to W, 16 miles.

The 25 we saw 2 sails again which we approached in the afternoon. One was a French *Terre Neuve* freighter and the other a freebooter from Rotterdam. Ditto the latitude as before. Ditto day we gained 3 miles west.

The 26 no latitude, wind WSW, rainy weather. We drifted 5 miles north by reckoning.

The 27 in the morning we hunted 2 ships. At noon no latitude, it was blowing from the ESE. This day we drifted by reckoning 10 miles N to E. Ditto the general council had gathered at the Admiral's where it was decided to sail home today because we only had food left for 20 to 25 days. Thick fog upon nightfall and during the night. Ditto yacht the *Zeeridder* parted from us because it kept up the hunt for the aforementioned sails. At night, we drifted without sails.

The 28 in the morning wind SW, foggy weather. At noon the latitude of 42 degrees, 18 minutes, course NE to E, wind as before. We had some gales.

The 29 a latitude of 43 degrees, 52 minutes, course NE to E, wind SW. Rain in the morning.

¹⁷⁴ Because of the bad weather they had not taken latitude for a few days, and it is therefore easy enough to sail past a very tiny island in the ocean. They sailed east and Corvo is situated at 40 degrees north. Their reckonings permitted them to evaluate the angle to sail north.

The 30 a latitude of 45 degrees, 6 minutes, course NE to E, wind SW. We had a strong breeze, at night some fog.

The 31 a latitude of 46 degrees, 39 minutes, course NE and NE to E, wind WSW. Rain in the morning. [34v]

June 1630

The first no latitude. We reckoned to have sailed 36 miles, course NE to E, wind WSW.

The 2 in the morning foggy weather. We had no latitude. We reckoned to have sailed 35 miles, course NE to E. At noon we set course ENE, wind WSW. I reckoned we were off the Scilly Islands, 95 miles.

The 3 in the morning very foggy, wind SW. At noon we took latitude of 49 degrees and 47 minutes. This day ENE course. When we had taken the latitude, we set our course east. By reckoning we were still 55 miles off the Scilly Islands.

The 4 in the morning thick fog. When casting the lead¹⁷⁵, we had a depth of 70 fathoms. It was greyish sand with yellow stones. Course east, very grim weather. This day we sailed by reckoning 32 miles. At night, we “smacked” again. We had a depth of 62 to 64 fathoms of coarse sand. Ditto one of our ships had spoken to a fisherman.

The 5 in the morning very thick fog. Later that day we spoke to a French fisherman who said that Lizard Point was north, at 10 miles from us. Ditto at noon, we spoke to a few fishermen from Plymouth who said that Plymouth was situated NW, 4 miles from us. Ditto the fog cleared a little, so we saw the high land of Salcombe. We set our course E to N, wind SW. Ditto at night we saw Portland.

The 6 very foggy weather, wind and course as before...

¹⁷⁵ In other words, sounding.

Appendix 1: Toponyms used in the manuscript

Modern Dutch and English	folio	Remarks
Amacuro (River)	31v	Affluent Orinoco River
Amazon (River)	25r	
Anguilla Keys	10r	Islands situated to the south of Florida
Araguari (River or Cape)	26v	Cape North; Cabo Raso do Norte
Baia Honda	32r	Colombia
Bayamo	10v	Cuba
Barbados	30r	
Barbary (coast)	8r	Atlantic coast of northwestern Africa
Beachy Head	25v	Bévezier (Fr.) or Pevensey
Beata Islands	27v	
Berbice River	27r	Guyana
Bermuda	33v	
'Biervliet'	33v	Dutch name for 'Kaikes' or Turks and Caicos Islands; originally a town in Flanders
Bight of Campeche	28r	
Bonaire	31v	
Cabo Beata	32r	Also known as Isla Beata; see de Laet 1932 p. 180
Cabo Corrientes	28r	Western Cuba
Cabo Cruz	27v	Western tip of Cuba
Cabo de la Cruz	10v	Cuba
Cabo de la Vela	32v	Colombia
Cabo San Antonio	28r	Western tip of Cuba
Cabo San Juan de Guia	19r	Cabo Elaguia, Colombia
Cabo Tiburon	27r	Western tip of Haiti
Caicos and Turcs	33r	
Cap Dame-Marie	33v	Haiti
Cap Haitien	33v	Formerly known as Cap Français
Cape North	27r	Historic name for Cabo Raso do Norte
Cartagena	10v	Colombia
Cavalry Mountain	23r	Historical name; part of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
Cavanos (Bay)	28r	Cuba
Cayenne (River or Island)	27r	French Guiana
Coast of Campeche	28r	Yucatán, Mexico
Courantyne/Corantijn (River)	27r	Present-day border between Guyana and Surinam
Cuba	28r	
Demerara (river)	27r	Guyana
De Kroon	7v	See "The Crown"
Den Bosch	33r	Frederik Hendrik of Orange captured the town Den Bosch from the Spaniards in 1629
Essequibo River	27r	
Falmouth	25v	Cornwall
Ferro	26v	The Canary Islands
"Flemish Islands"	27v	Historical name for the Açores
Florida (Cape)	29v	
Florida Keys	10r	Martyr Islands; historic name of the Florida Keys
Flushing	25v	The town of Vlissingen in Zeeland
Fort Nassau (fort)	6v	Dutch fort at Tobago
Galleons Point	31v	Trinidad
'Goede Hoop' (fort)	1r	Fort Good Hope
Goodwins	25v	Sandbanks off North Foreland
Great Cayman Islands	28r	
Grenadines	27v	Referring to the Grenadines archipelago of which the largest island is Grenada
Grote Kiel	27r	'Big Keel', a historical toponym for Aripocke, today Ponta do Bailique
Havana	28r	Cuba
Hispaniola	24r	Historical name for Haiti and Dominican Republic together
'Honde' River	11v	Historical Dutch toponym; affluent Orinoco River
Honduras	28r	

Iguana Island	31r	Island in the Orinoco River
Île de Gonave	33v	Off Haiti
Île Navasse	33r	Small island to the West of Cabo Tiburon
Île Tortue	33v	Off Haiti
Ilha Boavista	26r	Cape Verdean Islands
Ilha do Corvo	34r	The Açores
Ilha do Fogo	26r	Cape Verdean Islands
Ilha do Frango, Ilha Curua	26v	'Assiaanse' Islands: historical toponym
Idem	27r	'Assiaanse' Creek: historical toponym; maybe Furo do Araguari, opposite Ilha Curua
Ilha Fayal	33v	The Açores
Ilha Flores	34r	The Açores
Ilha do Pico	34r	The Açores
Ilha do Sal	26v	The Cape Verdean Islands
Ilha de Santiago	26r	The Cape Verdean Islands
Ilhas Selvagens	25v	Archipelago near Madeira
Isla Aves	31v	Islands north of Venezuela
Isla Blanca	31v	North of Isla Margarita
Isla Gomera	26v	The Canary Islands
Isla Margarita	17r	Venezuela
Isla Mona	32r	Twin island with Isla Saone
Isla Mujeres	28r	Mexico
Isla Saone	27v	Island south off Santo Domingo, see also Isla Mona
Isla Vaca	27v	Island southwest off Hispaniola near Cabo Tiburón
Island of Jamaica	33r	
Isle of Wight	25v	
Isles of Scilly	34v	Sorlingues (Fr.)
La Tortuga	31v	Island situated to the north of Venezuela
Las Arcas	10v	Small islands at large of the Yucatan Peninsula
Las Bocas	16r	Islands situated between Venezuela and Trinidad
Las Organes	28r	Reefs situated to the east of Cabo San Antonio
Las Palmas	25v	The Canary Islands
Las Rocas	31v	Islands situated to the north of Venezuela
Lengen	33r	Frederik Hendrik of Orange captured Lengen from the Spaniards in 1630
Les Cayemites	24r	Islands situated in the channel of Gonave (Haiti)
Little Caymans	27v	
Little Caymans Islands	7v	
Lizard Point	25v	
Los Monjes	32r	Islands off the mouth of Lake Maracaibo; see de Laet 1932, p. 19, 88
Maracaibo	32r	Colombia
Maroni River	27r	The present-day border between Surinam and French Guiana
Matanzas (Bay)	28r	Cuba
Mayaguana	33v	The Bahamas
Morant Point	33r	Danto Point in eastern Jamaica
Nassau (fort)	6v	Future Zeelander fort on Tobago
New Flushing (fort)	6v	Zeelander Fort on Tobago
New Spain	28r	Historical name for Mexico
'Nippie'	16v	Arawak village on eastern side of Trinidad
North Foreland	25v	Isle of Thanet, Kent
Orinoco River	30v	
Ostend	25v	A town in Belgium
Oyapock River	27r	Historically better known as Wiapogo or Wiapoco River, representing today the border between French Guiana and Brazil
Peninsular of Portland	25v	Dorset
Plusselles	29v	Unknown toponym or hydronym
Plymouth	34v	
Point Blanquaires	16r	Trinidad
Pointe des Salines	32r	Haiti
Pointe du Mole de Saint Nicolas	33v	Haiti

Port Morgan	32r	Port Morgan, Abaka Bay, Ferret Bay; see de Laet 1932, p. 167
Port of Spain	16v	Trinidad
Porto Rico	27v	Puerto Rico
Porto Santo	25v	Madeira
Rio del Puerco	29r	Cuba
Rio Grande de Magdalena	32v	A river in present-day Colombia
Rio Gurijuba	27r	Modern toponym for the river where Sapno was located, near Weype, a village north of Sapno
‘Robben Eiland’	24r	See also ‘Biervliet’
Saint Joseph	16v	Trinidad
Saint Vincent	30r	Caribbean Island
Salcombe	34v	
San Thomé	31r	A town along the Orinoco River founded by Antonio de Berrio
Santa Cruz de Tenerife	25v	Canary Islands
Santa Marta	32r	A town in present-day Colombia
Santiago de Cuba	27v	Cuba
Santo Domingo	27v	A town in Hispaniola
Sao Vicente	26r	Cape Verdean Islands
Sapno	26v	Historical toponym; Sapno, Sapeno; situated where Rio Gurijuba enters Canal de Gurijuba
Saramacca River	27r	Surinam
Sierra del Rosario	28r	Mountain range on Cuba or The Crown
‘Singles’	25v	Another synonym for Beachy Head, Dungesness, or Bevesier
Soto Island	28r	Small island, probably off Cavanos Bay (Cuba)
St Kitts	32r	Historically called St Christopher
Suriname River	27r	Surinam
Tauregue (River)	26v	Historical toponym in the modern Brazilian state of Amapá, maybe Rio Preto, maybe Rio Ajuruxi; see Fritz also 1717
“The Crown”	7v	Historical toponym: part of Rosario Mountain Range behind the city of Havana on Cuba, see letter H on the Rio Puercos map, f. 9r
The Downs	25v	Sandbanks at large of Foreland
The Needles	25v	Rocky outcrops at the northwest point of Isle of Wight
The Netherlands	3v	Also called the “Lowlands”
The Table (mountain)	28r	Historic toponym: mountaintop of Rosario; see de Laet 1932, p. 96
Tobago	27r	
Torquay	25v	Torbay, Devonshire
Tortugas	28r	Islands situated to the southwest of Florida
Triangulo	10v	An island off the Campeche Coast, Yucatán
Trinidad	31v	
Turks and Caicos	33r	
Veracruz	28r	Mexico
Virginia (coast)	30r	
Walcheren	7r	One of the islands of Zeeland Province
Wesel	33r	Frederik Hendrik of Orange captured Wesel from the Spaniards in 1630
West Indies	6v	
Wild Coast	11v	De Wilde Kust (D.), or <i>La Côte Sauvage</i> (Fr.)

Appendix 2: Personal names and ethnonyms used in the manuscript

English	folio	Remarks
Abraham Stevensen	28v	Steward
Admiral Maarten Thijssen	23r	Dutch Admiral, see map of Santa Marta, f. 23r
Admiral Pater	27v	Adriaan Janszoon Pater, Dutch Admiral in the service of the WIC.
Bartel Jacobsen from Naarden	31r	Jacobsen died of scurvy
‘Bierdrager’	25v	Name of a Captain, possibly the father of the Dutch Admiral Michiel Adriaensz de Ruyter. Also name for the ship that carried beer to the Dutch ships blockading the Flemish coast.
Don Fadrique	31v	Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Mendoza
Gilles A[...]	34r	Last name illegible
Guayanas	13v	Now extinct ethnic group in the Lower Orinoco River
Illes Snellen	31v	Snellen died of scurvy
Irish	1v	
Jacob Kersen	31v	Kersen died during the attack on Bonaire
Jacob van Enkhuizen	25v	
Jan Beverlant	27r	Commis of Essequibo Colony
Jan van der Goes	6r	Commander of Essequibo Colony
Joris de Aumbu	31v	Aumbu died of scurvy
Juan de Valois-Angoulême	15	In 1589 the Bourbon family took over the French Kingdom
Klaas Hendriksen	14v	Pilot of the <i>Friese Jager</i>
Kornelis van Pere	3v	Son of Abraham van Pere and Commander of Berbice Colony
Lord Abraham van Pere	3r	Patron of Berbice Colony
Lord Carlisle	11r	Patron of Barbados
Lourens Muis of London	31r	Muis died of scurvy
Lukas Bersen	32v	Bersen was tried 3 March 1630
Reverend Jasper	31r	Jasper died of scurvy
Samuel Lucas	22r	Captain in the service of the WIC. Lucas was injured during the siege of Santa Marta
The Arawak	3r	Lokono
The Carib	3r	Kalina or Karinya
The Nipoie	31v	Nepoyo: historic ethnic group Carib speaking group, now extinct
The Tivetives	12v	Historical name of the present-day Warao

Appendix 3: Ship names used in the manuscript

English translation	folio	Modern Dutch	Remarks
The Arnemuiden	26v	Arnemuiden	Ship that visited the Amazon River before Van Stapels arrived
The Cabanij	28v	De Cabanij	A captured Spanish bark at Cavanos Bay (Cuba)
The Cat	28r	De Kat	
The Dolphin	28r	De Dolfijn	
The Dordrecht	29r	Dordrecht	
The Flushing Viper	34r	Adder van Vlissingen	
The Fortune	25v	De Fortuin	
The Frisian Hunter	27v	De Friese Jager	
The Griffin	29r	De Griffioen	From Hoorn
The Hunter	25r	De Jager	Gelein's ship
The Leiden	28r	Leiden	
The Medemblick	29r	De Medemblik	
The Middleburgh	25v	Middelburg	
The Might of Enkhuizen	27v	De Macht van Enkhuizen	
The North Star	25r	De Noordster	
The Otter	27v	De Otter	
The Raven	29v	De Raaf	
The Sea Knight	27v	De Zeeridder	Served as Admiral Pater's ship
The South Star	27r	De Zuidster	From Middelburgh
The Swan	29r	De Zwaan	From Flushing
The Three Kings	29r	De Drie Koningen	From Amsterdam
The Tiger	29r	De Tijger	From Rotterdam
The Walcheren	29r	Walcheren	
The Walcheren	6v	Walcheren	
The West Kapelle	26v	West Kapelle	Ship that visited the Amazon before Van Stapels arrived
The White Lion	28r	De Witte Leeuw	
The Zeeland	29v	Zeeland	
The Zeeland Hunter	20v	De Zeeuwse Jager	