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## The journal of Lourens Lourenszoon and his 1618-1625 stay among the Arocouros on the lower Cassiporé River, northern Amapá Sate, Brazil

### O relato de Lourens Lourenszoon e sua estadia durante 1618 e 1625 entre os Arocouros do baixo rio Cassiporé, norte do Amapá, Brasil

Martijn van den Bel<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The journal of Lourens Lourenszoon is a brief original description of his observations of seven years among the Arocouro Indians. He gives a detailed description of his stay among these Indians and their way of life. The arrival of many European traders on the Guiana coasts at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century form the starting point of intensive trading activities between European seafarers and South American Indians at the lower Oyapock River. European-made ware and tools from this early historic period have been found at late precolonial and protohistoric archaeological sites forming archaeological evidence of contacts between the Dutch and the Indian tribes of what is now eastern French Guiana and northern Amapá state, in Brazil. The journal of Lourens Lourenszoon mentions that various Indian tribes are part of a political alliance under the leadership of the Arocouros. Eventually, this alliance vanished during the 17<sup>th</sup> century due to continuing warfare and decimation of several ethnic groups. The remnants of these populations grouped together and gave birth to the present day Palikur.

**Keywords:** Cassiporé River. Arocouros. Amapá. 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Ethnohistory. Dutch colonial history.

**Resumo:** O relato de Lourens Lourenszoon é uma breve e original descrição das observações que realizou durante os sete anos que passou entre os índios Arocouro. Ele fornece uma descrição detalhada da estadia entre os índios e do modo de vida destes. A chegada de muitos comerciantes europeus na costa das Guianas no começo do século XVII representa o ponto de partida para intensas atividades comerciais entre marinheiros europeus e índios sulamericanos no baixo rio Oyapoque. Louças e utensílios de fabricação europeia tem sido encontrados em sítios arqueológicos do período pré-colonial tardio e proto-histórico, formando uma evidência arqueológica de contatos entre holandeses e tribos indígenas do que hoje é o leste da Guiana Francesa e o norte do estado do Amapá, no Brasil. O relato de Lourens Lourenszoon menciona que várias tribos indígenas tomavam parte em uma aliança política sob a liderança dos Arocouros. Essa aliança desapareceu durante o século XVII devido às guerras contínuas e à dizimação de muitos grupos étnicos. Os remanescentes dessas populações se reuniram e deram origem aos atuais Palikur.

**Palavras-chave:** Rio Cassiporé. Arocouros. Amapá. Século XVII. Etno-história. História colonial holandesa.

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## INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the English, French and Dutch started exploring the river banks of the Amazon delta and the river mouths of the Guianas coast (Edmundson, 1903, p. 642; Lorimer, 1989). In their historic accounts they mentioned a variety of different Indian groups with whom they traded<sup>1</sup>. These accounts related generally to toponyms and names of friendly and enemy tribes. In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Guianas had been more or less definitively divided up among the three European powers. From this moment onward, historical accounts described the new country in more detail and they also included descriptions of the countries' populations. These documents are paramount sources for historians' and archaeologists' understanding of the first attempts of colonisation and the way of life of the Indian groups who lived in the vicinity of these early colonial outposts.

Archaeological research in both eastern French Guiana and Amapá State, Brazil, evidenced the first encounters between Indians and European traders during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Multiple Indian burial sites with precolonial and protohistoric ceramic complexes such as Aristé, Aruã and Maracá – mostly encountered in rock-shelters – yielded European objects clearly associated to the Indian material<sup>2</sup>. These burial sites are mainly found in eastern French-Guiana and coastal Amapá, where ceramic urns contained occasionally European trade ware such as glass beads, iron nails and faïence dated to this period (Goeldi, 1900; Meggers and Evans, 1957; Hilbert, 1957; Petitjean-Roget, 1992; Rydén and Stenborg, 2004). European ware found in Indian burial context confirms the continuity of local Indian traditions and the adoption of foreign material in their trade system and funerary rites.

Contacts with Europeans radically changed Indian societies due to rapid decline of their numbers and to

acculturation. Eventually, Indian groups' decimation and scattering urged them to re-group into newly established 'mixed' Indian groups during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This re-establishment of new ethnic groups, also known as ethnogenesis, is a common cultural process among surviving Indian groups in the Guianas (Whitehead, 1993; Passes, 2002; Collomb, 2003; Hornberg, 2005; van den Bel, 2009). Present time Palikur of the Urucauá and Oyapock Rivers recorded this process of ethnic melting in their oral traditions, considered today as a melting of various historic alliances of several ethnic groups joined under the name of Palikur (Grenand and Grenand, 1987).

The impact of European influence on the social and political organization of Indian tribes is a major subject in modern Amazonian anthropology and archaeology (Fausto, 2000; Green *et al.*, 2003; Grenand, 2006). The Palikur case is particularly interesting because they have been in contact with Europeans from the very beginning. Their claimed homeland (Uaça Territory) is a relatively well-known area from an archaeological point of view and they have been studied by ethnographers and anthropologists since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## A BRIEF PALIKUR HISTORY

The Palikur ethonym is to be found in all historic documents after 1650 (Grenand and Grenand, 1987, p. 22). Before this date, various ethnic names such as Arricarri and Arricouri (Keymis, 1968 [1596]) or Arricary and Arracoory (Harcourt, 1926 [1613]), Caripous (Mocquet, 1604), Aricours (de Forest, 1623), Arocouros or Arocores (Lourenszoon, 1618) and Arricoens (de Vries, 1911 [1632]) undoubtedly refer to groups later known as Palikur. Some documents also mention the existence of a confederation of groups such as the Yayos, Maraoan, Arawak, and Caripous at

<sup>1</sup> The Spanish had been very active along the Wild Coast in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and had been forming alliances with the 'aruacas' of the Pomeroon, Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice, and Corentyn rivers (see Whitehead in this issue).

<sup>2</sup> The presence of the Aruã Phase in Amapá was attested by Meggers and Evans (1957) to exist at stone alignment sites although recent archaeological studies at similar sites revealed only Aristé Phase ceramics (Cabral and Saldanha, 2007). Another ceramic complex which is often situated in early historical times, according to radiocarbon dates is the Koriabo complex, but up until now there is no archaeological evidence of any European trade ware found in or in context with Koriabo styled ceramics (Figure 1).

the lower Oyapock River, enemies of the Caribes and Mayzers. This confederation was ruled by a Caripou chief called Anacaïoury, held in warlock with Camaria, the Carib chief of Cayenne. Harcourt (1926 [1613], p. 79, 82) stated:

From Arrawary unto the river of Cassipurogh extendeth the Province of Arricary; containing the Signiories of Arrawary, Maicary, and Cooshebery; of which Anakyry is principall, who by Nation is a Yaïo (...). Hee hath seated himselfe in the Province of Arricary, and now dwelleth at Morooga in the Signiorie of Maicari. To the N. Norwest of which, there falleth into the Sea a river called Conawini, whereupon the Signiory of Cooshebery bordereth; whereof an Indian named Leonard Ragapo is Chiefe, under the subiection of Anaki-v-ry. From the river of Cassipurogh N. Westward to the river Arracov, and up further into the land towards the West, and Southwest, as farre as the river of Arwy, (which falleth into the Wiapoco above the overfalls) extend the Provinces of Arracoory, and Morownia, which also to the landward (...) are pleasant and delightfull plaine countries, like unto Cooshebery. The Arracoory Country is well peopled, and their chiefe Captaine is called Ipero. Betwixt the Wiapocoories and Arracoories there is no hearty love and friendship, yet outward shew they hold good quarter.

These documents further mentioned that the confederations themselves were the joining of several native (precolonial?) groups of Indians fled from the Orinoco and the lower Amazon Rivers, such as the Paragotos, Itutan, Yayos etc. Throughout colonial times, the latter 'exotic' groups finally assimilated into the contemporary Palikur by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 1).

The territory of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Arocoursos is stretching roughly between the Island of Cayenne and the Araguari River (Grenand and Grenand, 1987, p. 47). As mentioned by Nimuendajú (1926) for the first time, this area corresponds more or less to the geographical distribution of Aristé burial sites (Goeldi, 1900; Rydén and Stenborg, 2004). The Aristé ceramic complex, as defined

by Meggers and Evans (1957), is mainly based on the typology of ceramic urns found in caves and ceremonial pits. The chronology of the precolonial funerary Aristé sites is hard to determine due to the lack of multiple radio carbon dates<sup>3</sup>. The Aristé phase can be attributed to the proto- or early historic period, since European objects such as knives, nails, pipes, glass beads and faïence has been found at Aristé burial sites and thus clearly associated with Indian mortuary practices. For example, the cave site of Trou Delft situated in the lower Oyapock River, yielded vitrified European glass beads stuck to burnt human bone found within an Aristé urn but also a Dutch faïence plate dated between 1700 and 1730 (Petitjean-Roget, 1992; Figure 2).

It is unclear until when the Aristé funerary ceramics were produced, but the fairly late date of the faïence makes it possible to suggest that the Guiana Indians may have re-used precolonial funerary sites or even urns during the colonial period. In 1925, Nimuendajú (Rydén and Stenborg, 2004, p. 43-44) already observed that a Palikur shaman was fully aware of these 'old' sites and that he gathered the glass beads from the urns for his own use. In this sense, Aristé urns may have been taken out of a precolonial context by later (historic) groups, an assumption that may indicate that Aristé was not a contact period culture. The very presence of European trade ware found within these urns may also reflect a shift in Indian burial practices during colonial times, linked to the ethnogenesis of this region or simply the social status of the deceased. The presence of heirlooms in historic times has already been evidenced in French Guiana. The site Eva 2 revealed an Indian urn burial in which a German grey ware (Beardman), produced in 1640, was found together with glass beads that could only have been manufactured after 1820 due to technological developments in Europe (van den Bel *et al.*, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Radiocarbon dates are scarce for these funerary sites: a charcoal sample (GrN-20167) taken from the content of a polychrome painted urn attributed to the Late Aristé Phase by Petitjean-Roget (1992) was dated  $160 \pm 25$  BP. Although this sample was probably contaminated, it yielded a calibrated date at 2 sigma (48%) between 1718 and 1827 AD (Calib 4.14; Reimer *et al.*, 2004). A Maracá urn from southern Amapá yielded a date of  $360 \pm 40$  BP (Beta-142117) which gives a date after calibration at a 2 sigma range between 1445-1645 AD (Guapindaia, 2001, p. 173).

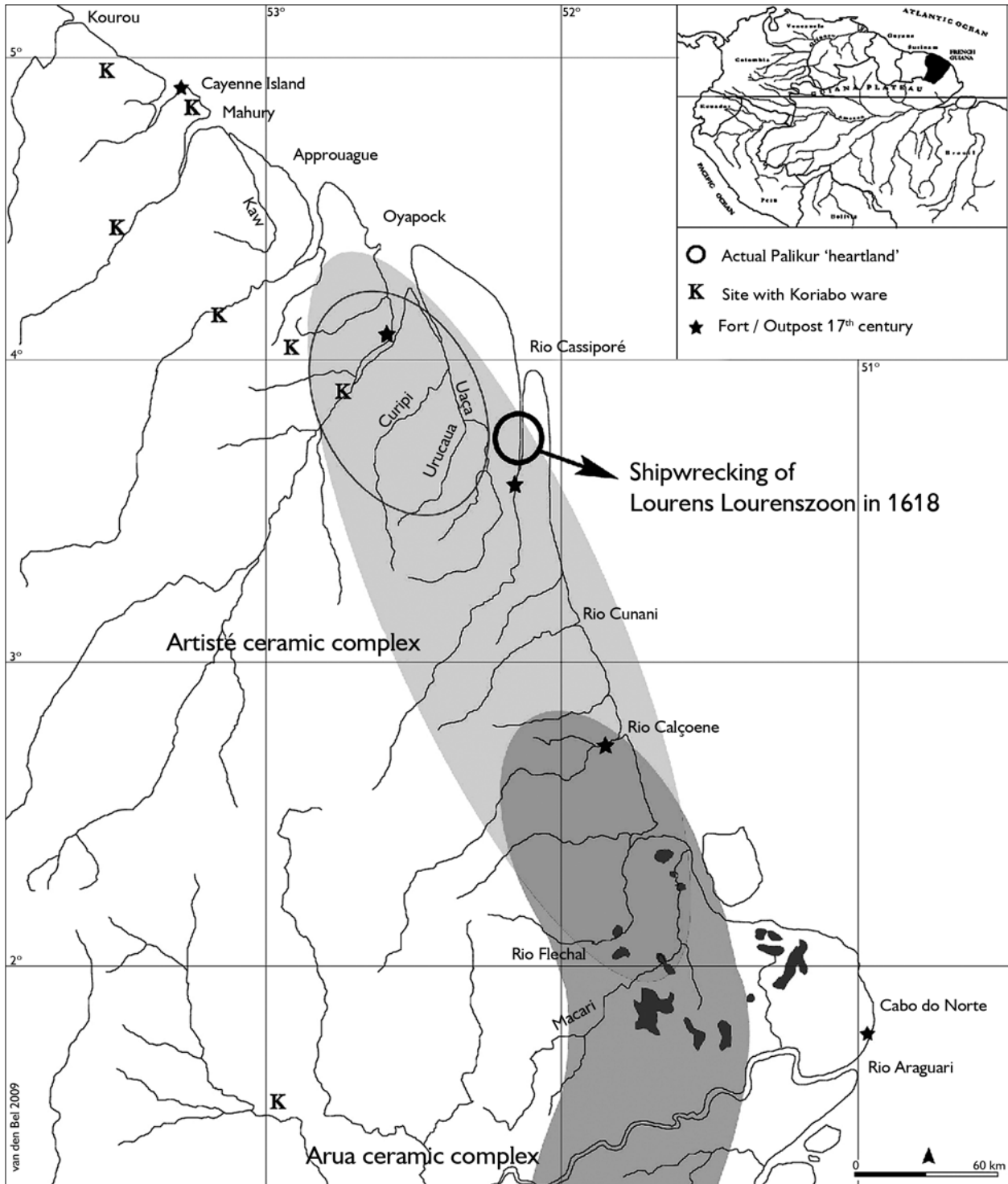


Figure 1. Map of the eastern French-Guiana and northern Amapá. Distribution of colonial forts and of Aruã and Aristé ceramic complexes after Meggers and Evans (1957) and for the Koriabo sites after Rostain (1994), Jérémie (1998), Mestre (2006), van den Bel (2007), Saldanha and Cabral (2008) and Samuelian (2009).

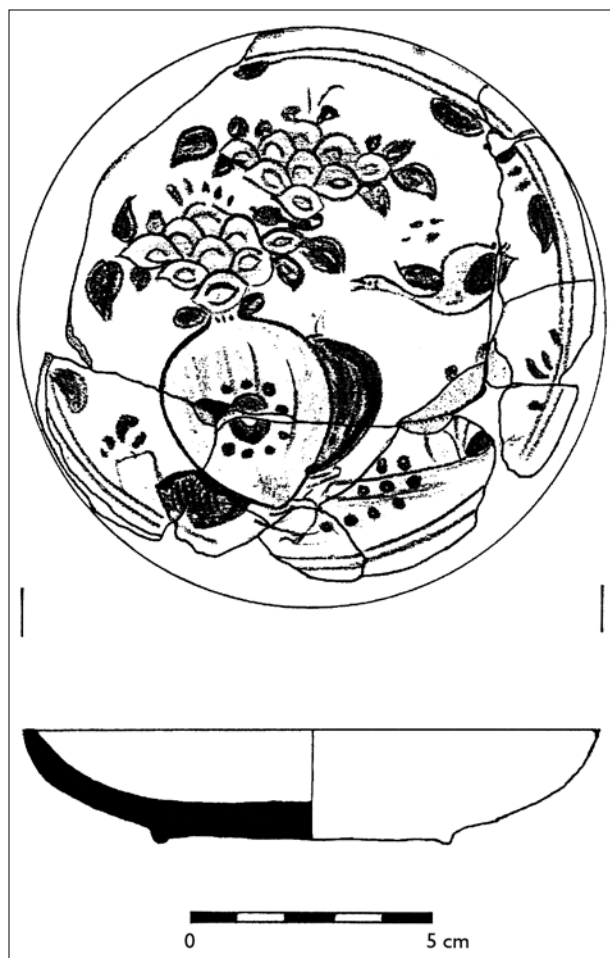


Figure 2. Faience found at a funerary cave site in eastern French Guiana. Produced in Delft (The Netherlands) between 1700 and 1730 (Petitjean-Roget, 1992).

To conclude, it is highly probable that present day Palikur are the descendents of historic Arocouros who inhabited the estuaries of the Oyapock and Cassiporé Rivers at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as already stated by several authors (Hilbert, 1957; Petitjean-Roget, 1983; Grenand and Grenand, 1987).

According to historic documents, the Arocouros were a native group of the humid eastern Guianas savannahs, which probably practiced urnification of their dead as the Palikur still did until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Nimuendajú, 1926).

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DUTCH IN FRENCH GUIANA AND NORTHERN BRAZIL

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Spanish and Portuguese had respectively settled the coast of Venezuela and the northern coast of Brazil. Apparently, they were not very interested in the Guianas, since this area was inhabited by warlike peoples who did not possess valuable goods such as gold or red wood. Moreover, the swampy coast was ravaged by mosquitoes and deprived from natural harbours; it was soon to be named The Wild Coast.

After overcoming the Spanish occupation in their own country in second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch founded the United Provinces and started eagerly to explore the East and West Indies to barter with local populations<sup>4</sup>. Exploration of the American continent was intensified when the West India Company (WIC) was founded in 1621 (Williamson, 1923; Goslinga, 1971). At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they established multiple trading posts in the Lower Xingu River (1600), and on the banks of the Lower Amazon: 1610, Jari; 1610, Tilletille; 1616, Parú; 1616, Gurupá; 1620, Tucujus; but also in north-eastern Brazil near Recife (1624, Mauritsstad).

In the Guianas they tried to establish small colonies on the Corantin and Essequibo Rivers (1613), Berbice River (1627), the Island of Cayenne (1634, 1654)<sup>5</sup>, the Oyapock River (1623), the Cassiporé River (1647), the Calçoene River (1646), the Araguari River (1616) and Cabo do Norte (1616) (Meggers and Evans, 1957, figure 203)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The Dutch interests in the East Indies will not be discussed further in this paper.

<sup>5</sup> In 1632, de Vries shipped nearly 30 Dutchmen to Cayenne to start a colony: they all died quickly of diseases and Indian attacks. The colonisation of Cayenne Island in 1654 by Dutch and Portuguese Jews from Pernambuco lasted until 1664. This settlement was important for the final French establishment on the Island of Cayenne since it introduced slavery and the sugar cane culture (Le Roux, 1994, p. 402).

<sup>6</sup> Meggers and Evans (1957, p. 557-559) published a schematic chronology of colonial installation between the Island of Cayenne and the mouth of the Amazon, based on G. Edmundson (1903) and J. A. Williamson (1923). It's noteworthy that the 1648 map by Blaué clearly indicates many (Dutch?) settlements or fortifications by little circles in the vicinity of nearly all river mouths mentioned above.



Once outposts were established, trade and barter with the Indians was their most important goal (Edmundson, 1903; Hornberg, 2005). Iron tools, fish hooks, axes, muskets and glass beads were the principal trade items in exchange for hammocks, wood, feathers, *roucou* (red dye) and food. Their encounters were frequent and trading took often several days. The Dutch and more specifically the Zealanders frequented the Guianas more often since they were politically excluded from the WIC which was dominated by Dutch traders and seated in Amsterdam. These Zealanders were highly interested in Cayenne Island and the Oyapock River and made several tentative expeditions to establish a colony which was probably due to the presence of good natural harbours (eg. Cabeliau, 1598; Lourenszoon, 1625; Mocquet, 1617, p. 80; de Vries, 1634)<sup>7</sup>.

### THE JOURNAL OF LOURENS LOURENSZOOM

The Guianas' early colonial period may be roughly dated between 1600 and 1660 and represents an era of exploration before the (almost) definite repartition of the Guianas around the middle of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This period remains fairly unknown to local historians since documents are written in various languages and scattered in libraries all over Europe. However, the early English accounts such as the journals of Sir Walter Raleigh, Lawrence Keymis, Robert Harcourt or Charles Leigh are fairly well known documents among the French, Dutch, and Brazilian historians, but the Dutch documentation is barely known since these documents are written in (old) Dutch<sup>8</sup>. French historians tend to focus on the French settlements (Sinnamary and Cayenne) and often start their history with the definite capture of Cayenne by the French in 1664 (Polderman, 2004)<sup>9</sup> while the Brazilian (and Dutch) historians are mostly interested in the Dutch colony of Mauritsstad or Pernambuco. And

again, the Dutch historians tend to focus on the first Dutch settlements on the Essequibo and Berbice Rivers and the final Dutch presence in Paramaribo in 1668 marking the beginning of the Surinam colony<sup>10</sup>.

The 1618-1625 journal of Lourens Lourenszoon is a good example of an early document of Dutch traders on the Wild Coast. This document was published for the first time in 1625 in Amsterdam and re-published in 1660. The text is finally transcribed in 1958 (re-published in 1980) by Lichtveld and Voorhoeve (1958) (Figure 3). The latter transcription was published in a Dutch encyclopaedic book on the colonial period of Surinam, where the journal of

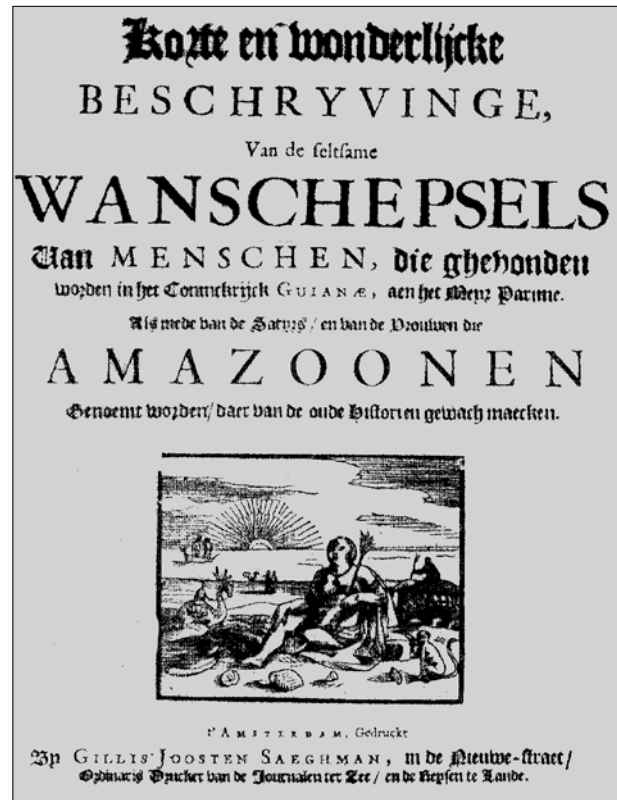


Figure 3. Front cover of the Saeghman document (1660, folio 1).

<sup>7</sup> Just as the Island of Cayenne, the lower Oyapock River was colonised several times by the different European powers between 1600 and 1650: Leigh (1604), de Ravardière (1607), Harcourt (1613), and various Dutch attempts (1614, 1623, 1627, and 1677).

<sup>8</sup> The WIC records for the period 1626-1684 relating to Essequibo were discarded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>9</sup> The Dutch recaptured Cayenne again in 1676 and occupied the town for a short period.

<sup>10</sup> Since a few years, the New Holland Foundation (a collaboration of various Dutch and Brazilian institutions and universities) is compiling an Atlas of Dutch Brazil (see [www.newhollandfoundation.com](http://www.newhollandfoundation.com)).

Lourens Lourenszoon features as an illustrating historic document. However, it is evident that historic data is fairly dispersed in regions where the territory has been divided by colonial powers. Publications and documents are written in several European languages, of which Dutch is certainly one of the more difficult languages for historians.

The following translation by the author into English is based on a copy of the original document from 1660 and on the 1958 transcription by Jan Voorhoeve of the original document. Words or characters in normal brackets are textual explanations and in square brackets fill in grammatical blanks.



## SHORT AND MIRACULOUS DESCRIPTION, OF THE RARE CREATURES OF HUMANS, WHO ARE FOUND IN THE KINGDOM OF GUIANAE, AT THE LAKE OF PARIME. BUT ALSO OF THE SATYRS, AND OF THE WOMEN WHO ARE CALLED THE AMAZONS, OF WHICH IS TOLD BY THE CLASSIC HISTORIANS<sup>11</sup>

### THE STRANGE TALE OF LOURENS LOURENSZOOM, THE ZEALANDER

In the year 1618 a ship of twelve charges<sup>12</sup>, the Duyfjen (the Pigeon) was equipped, in Vlissingen<sup>13</sup> by Ian Tijsz(oon), the ship owner. Claes the Nayer became skipper on this ship, together with twenty men; among them was Lourens Lourensz(oon) from Nieuwpoort, a village in Zeeland. Their destiny was the Amazon, and it [the ship] set sail during the spring; heading for the Amazon, [but] its course happened to be too far south and ended on the Clappopour<sup>14</sup>. They sailed up there [this river] and cast the anchor at three feet water. Then, a big wave entered [from the sea up the river], as high as eight or nine foot, which capsized the ship, and thereby loosing eight members of their crew; the remaining members reached an island [in the river; sandbank]. The skipper had already sailed further with his son in a launch boat.

When they had been together for three days without drinks and food, they started to get hungry; there was no food available, [and therefore they] started to get interested in each other, and one of them was caught and was slaughtered to feed the rest. Four of the remaining thirteen, who had an abomination of such practices, went into the water and swam to the other side, to the mainland. Amongst them was Lourens Lourensz(oon). Three of them came on shore; the fourth person, being the Steersman (*Stierman*), was bitten by a shark while swimming. When the three men got ashore, they were tired and battered, yes, they were almost dead. [Once arrived on the sandy riverbanks of the mainland] the stinging of the flies caused them to leave. They went into the direction of the sea [downstream], to find a possibility to meet any people.

On their way, they found the steersman on the beach, who had washed ashore [and was] missing one leg, which had been torn away by the monster. A half a mile further they found the skipper dead who had bound his son to his body, together with the wrecked launch boat. They made a big effort to bury them in the sand of the beach since it

<sup>11</sup> Korte en Wonderlijke Beschrijvinge, van de seltsame Wanschepsels van Menschen, die ghevonden worden in het Konickrijck van Guianae, aen het Meyr Parime. Als mede van de Satyrs / en van de Vrouwen die Amazoonen genoemt worden / daer van de Oude Historiën gewach maecken. Amsterdam: Gilles J. Saeghman, 1660. 16 folios. Bibliotheek van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, Afdeling Oude Geschriften, Code M-G-G-s-11.

<sup>12</sup> One charge = 2 tons.

<sup>13</sup> Flushing, one of the major harbours of Zeeland.

<sup>14</sup> The author is probably mistaken here since the Clappopour is situated north to the Amazon River.





was already the fifth day that they had left the ship and they had not eaten any bread since then. In spite of everything, they went on straying along the beach for a few days.

The tenth day expired and some people came, called the Arocouros, [they came] rowing down the river. And as soon as they saw them, [they] came to shore and stepped out of their canoes, grabbed them around the waist and took them into their canoes. They presented them food and drinks, and rowed down to their dwelling in the drowned [flooded] country, where they arrived at night fall. They were brought into their houses and were very well looked after.

## THEIR HOUSEHOLD

The way of house holding is as follows: one encounters there as much as a thousand houses with thatched roofs, [and] each house accommodates at least 500 persons, each family has [in such a house] their own wicker-work compounds [situated] next to each other. Each man has his own wife. They all sleep in hammocks, which they spin of hemp, rolling it on their knees, long enough until it stays together. Each father feeds his own children. The taking of a wife happens generally on the advice of the captain, which they consider their Overlord (or Chief). A young man, who wants a girl, must be priced by him [the Overlord] to the daughter's father. He has to be brave in warfare and has to be experienced in fishing. He cannot spend time doing nothing, because once he is blessed with children, he can take care of them. Their food is fish and again, fish: the dried fish is eaten as bread and the fresh fish is served as a side dish, either cooked or roasted. The women behave themselves in a serving manner towards the men, doing everything that is dedicated to them. They seldomly eat meat, because the men do neither eat [meat], although it is present in abundance, and in particular pigs, hares, rabbits and other fowl. The opinion [of people] there is that, when someone eats a lot of meat, he will not be brave in times of war; and for this reason the youngsters eat very little [meat] when they reach for adolescence. The little girls are allowed [to eat meat] as long as they are not yet married.

## THEIR RELIGION

It appears there is no religion amongst them. They live without fear of God. However, when they do 'good' or amusing themselves, they point in the sky as if there were someone who watches and could retaliate. Offenders are punished as a form of justice by the Overlord, who they call Father, by means of hanging, burning, whipping or any other means. They have no knowledge of the Eternal Holiness or Heaven. When this is being discussed, [they] were unable to understand this matter or at least they smirked at this matter. Some refused even to listen to this completely.

## THEIR LIFE

This nation walks entirely naked: shame is absent. The aforementioned Lourens has lived nude for eight years amongst them, in service of the person who had taken him prisoner. The other two were too [taken prisoner as well and they were] catching fish for him and themselves with a fishing cane or a scoop net and many other ways, which he had learned by much practicing.

They are man-eaters, conducting war against the Mayzers, which is a nation from their country. And the people from this nation will be eaten by them. And so it happened, that they had taken a young person prisoner, whom they slaughtered, and [he] was sent to his homeland which was being shared [as a message] among friends. Although Lourens protested and refused the flesh of this prisoner to be eaten, they wanted him to taste this man's flesh, to taste the sweet taste to lure him into the eating of human flesh. Subsequently, they prepared it as tasty as they were able to do so, and

served him the well prepared dish, being a very white [of colour] meat. He ate it, and it tasted sweet, and was better than any other food. He asked what kind of a flesh it was and they said it was human flesh of the Mayzer they had taken prisoner recently. [They asked him] if it was really that horrible as he had thought beforehand?

Straightaway, he started to be disgusted and vomited to get rid of it as soon as possible, thereby showing his inconvenience that [they] had ignored to tell him so, and he asked them not to do such thing again because for him and God it was horrifying. [Because He] will soon punish them for this, or that [they] will never receive the Eternal Happiness from Him, who, and pointing his finger to the sky, is up there. With these and similar other proposals he finally achieved that the inhabitants would never eat someone again during his stay amongst them, because he had told them that such behaviour was unnatural and unpleasant towards God, and he hoped that they would abandon it. This happened when he had lived five years among them. The other two had never eaten it [human flesh] as far as he knew, although they both had died in the third year of their imprisonment (enslavement) of 'red runnings' (diarrhoea with blood), while they had served their masters (in equal service) at fishing.

The fish they caught most of the time has a lot of scales, [such as the fish] that is also being caught in our Dutch and Zealand estuaries. [The fish] has a sweet taste, both the large and the small ones. If they catch them, they bite it [the fish] in the head until it is dead, and they throw them in a (wicker) basket. When they come home they hang them to dry; and the rest is directly prepared for the whole house holding.

## THEIR WARFARE

Halfway through [his stay] there were skirmishes with their enemies, who were situated around their villages. And it was the feeling of the aforementioned Lourens, that they [the Arocours] were the strongest, because others feared them too, as they ran away of their wars or (common) villages, which happened every two months or so. This appeared to be the case for the Mayzers, but also for the Guajaporckers, Yaejers, Arowackers, and others, who were situated farther away from them, such as a nation of people without heads; with whom they had often wars going on. He [Lourens] could not accept this, just like anybody else, being a Believer, but it made him wonder though. They had seen them often and had driven them away [from their territories] and [they] promised him that if they would go to war again, they would bring him along.

## THE BEGINNING OF A NEW TRIP

When he had lived more than five years amongst them, they equipped a large number of canoes, armed with arrows, [they] rowed for two days eastward, higher [latitude; upstream] than they were situated, where [they] arrived in the afternoon at a certain country where they said that these people lived. Briefly afterwards, Lourens experienced the truth about what they had said, as he could observe in the distance more than hundred of such [peoples without heads] fishing on the beach. But as soon as they saw the foreign canoes, they fled land-inward. Nevertheless, twelve Arocours went ashore; among them was Lourens too, to find out [about the monsters] whatever was possible. When they arrived at the beach, they saw one standing on a pole behind some rocks (clips), and they attacked [him] from behind. And he, not having any way out, went into the water; on which the hunting group went after him, and [they] had to make big efforts to reach him, since he was continuously turning around like a Brownfish [dolphin species] and thus being very powerful so they could barely overpower him. Eventually, after the long [exhaustive] turning around, he was caught by the hair, and his hands and feet were tied together and [he was] thrown into the canoe, and taken in this way. Since this [the whole event] took place at nightfall, they went upstream when night fell, and for this reason [they] tied him up

to a (wooden) pole, until dawn [the next morning would arrive]. The [next day] they were rowing for the whole day before reaching their village. Once they had arrived a large crowd had gathered immediately, like never seen before, and everyone was frightened and amazed by this monster.

### THE FIGURE OF THE MONSTER

He was short of stature, chubby, and fat. On top, where every person has its neck, a quiff of black hair was present; [and] in the middle of its chest was its nose. The eyes were a few inches away from each other, [and] the ears under the armpit, its veins were barely visible, and in this way everything was terrifying. When they arrived at nightfall, and he was being held as a prisoner, a scaffolding was being constructed, which was put into the ground, and [they] hung him [to it], the feet being tied to two sticks of the scaffolding. When they were doing so, he made raging and screaming sounds that were so terrible that it could not be resisted. At last they started to hit him with sticks to the chest (near his heart), and his legs, so that he started to scream even more. Eventually, they succeeded in making him numb. When they hit him in the loins, the blood started running from his nose and mouth: sticking out his tongue, releasing his spirit [Dutch for dying]. And [they] left him hanging.

In the morning, the birds [vultures?], being very hungry, were already present on the body; jerking pieces of his body so that the same day all the flesh had disappeared, thereby leaving nothing but a carcass attached to the scaffolding. This was the end of this monster, which had frightened everyone. The skin of his hands and feet, and everything it clung to, could tear apart [your] skin and hair, [and these were the] injuries he had suffered when turning around in the water when he was caught. Therefore his hands and feet were tied together with double ropes at night in the canoe, [because] he would have freed himself. And this was also to be believed by Lourens, although he never would have imagined so, [and maybe] accepted by a few, unless such [monsters] could have been seen by others.

### BEING RESCUED IN THE YEAR OF 1625

Nevertheless, when this had taken place, he continued to stay with this people, often calling for God to offer him a solution so that he would be released from this slavery; with high hopes, that such would be granted to him by the Lord by means of [the arrival] of traders, who would suddenly arrive there with their yachts and boats to trade. And so it happened at the beginning of the eighth year that he had lived with them, that the Arocouros were invited by the Guayapocers for a feast. They travelled in their canoes; and [they] stayed for ten days and met people from Zealand, who were trading with this nation. They were telling about their country, the power of their people, their neighbours, the nation Without Heads; what could not be accepted by the Zealanders. Nevertheless they wanted to meet the Flamenco [Spanish word for a Dutchman, Zealander or Flanders] who had eye-witnessed such a thing and had lived ninety months amongst them. When they heard about him, the Zealanders were suddenly eager to free this man, who had lived such a long time among the Wild people. [They] asked straightaway whether he could be released, which they were willing to do so if they were given an old musket and one or two axes.

### JOINING HIS COMPATRIOTS

When the Arocouros returned, two Zealanders went along with them in their canoes, and arrived in the place where Lourens was, [who] was very surprised to the arrival of his compatriots, and the long expected salvation. Immediately,

he thanked God for his mercy, and admitted never to forget such a merciful deed. These two [Zealanders] did not stay any longer once their compatriot was released, and rowed downstream quickly, where they had rowed more than three days to arrive.

They found the ship of Zealand, with Leyn in de Balans being its skipper, and the boat of Samuel Lucas, sailing for the West Indische Compagnie [WIC], which [both] had sailed from Zealand. [The latter] had arrived [in Holland] in the year of 1626, when the fleet of Admiral Boudewijn Hendricksz [also] had arrived. Once at home, he found most of his friends dead, only his sister had married and had moved to Medenblick, where he went too, and got himself in the month of November of the same year on a Medenblicker boat to sail to the Strait [of Gibraltar]. [Once back] and when this boat was anchored in Amsterdam, he was being brought [to us = the Board of the WIC] because his skipper was told, the H. H. (Hooge Heeren = High Lords) of the West Indische Compagnie were already informed [about Lourens], to come with such a man, who had lived eight years among the Savages. He was thereby being heard during a meeting, where everything what was being told was written down, in every detail. [It was] presented in such a way that the Compagnie wished to use him, that he could make large profits in that country of cotton, snakewood<sup>15</sup> and other goods that this region produced, and also persisting on the outer appearance of the Monster People, not doubting that, when going over there again, he could find these people again and bring them over.



## DISCUSSION AND FINAL REMARKS

It is evident that the Zealander Lourens Lourenszoon shipwrecked in 1618 in the estuary of the Clappopour River (present day Cassiporé River) in north-western Amapá, Brazil. Together with two ship mates (who died three years later) he was taken prisoner by the Arocouro Indians. The account of Jesse de Forest revealed a map of the Cassiporé estuary featuring the villages of the Arocouros and Mayzers (de Forest, 1914; Figure 4). Lourens mentioned that during his stay, the latter two native groups were at constant war, a fact confirmed by other historical accounts (eg. de Vries and de Forest).

According to Lourens, the Arocouros were the most powerful nation in this area. Other groups such as the Arowackers, Guajaporckers and Yaejers were afraid of the Arocouros and may actually have been subjected to them. Apparently they formed polities in which the

Arocouros were the leading group. Whether or not these various groups spoke different languages is not stated by Lourens, but together they constituted a political entity ruled by one group which may have represented a sort of chiefdom (*capitania* or *signorie*) according to the English documents (eg. Raleigh, Keymis, Harcourt, Fischer). The Arocouros were also at war with people 'without heads' which are often cited in the historic accounts (eg. Raleigh, de Laet or de Bry). The detailed description made by Lourenszoon of this monster is probably a way of justifying his stay or his failure to escape from these godless savages by revealing the existence of an even more savage and monstrous nation.

The village description has another point of interest for archaeologists and anthropologists. Although the numbers are obviously exaggerated, he observed clearly that many families lived together in rather large

<sup>15</sup> Also known as specklewood (*Brosimum* spp.) or *letterhout* in Dutch. This tropical hard wood is known for its small curly designs that look like letters or snakes once polished and is often used for the fabrication of decorative furniture items, walking canes and music instruments.



Figure 4. Map of the Cassiporé estuary by Jesse de Forest (Ms Sloane 179 B, folio 15, 1623).

houses. Within these houses, the families were physically separated by wicker-work walls, creating separate social units. Whether several houses together formed larger social entities is not stated, but a sort of social order is described which is mirrored in house architecture and dimensions. We can also observe the fact of living together in one communal house, and not in isolated houses as is the case today in that region.

In 1625, Lourens was rescued by fellow countrymen. For a specific occasion, the Arocouros were invited by the Guayaporckers who inhabited the Lower Oyapock. The following encounter is a perfect example of the earliest contacts between Indians and Europeans. Lourenszoon actually mentions that ships regularly anchored in the river estuaries for several days and traded with the Indians. On the map by de Forest of the Oyapock River one notes the toponym of Cape d'Orange for the outward sticking cape or point at the

right bank of the Oyapock embouchure (Figure 5). This toponym might refer to the Dutch Royal House of Orange Nassau and therefore reveal the Dutch interest in this river which is confirmed by a fortification (Fort Nassau and renamed by the French as Saint-Louis).

Lourens was 'bought back' by his countrymen for a rifle and one or two axes. This human economic transaction may point out the presence of a slave system among the Arocouros. This system was outspread in South American societies and consists of taking enemy male prisoners; after several years of service, the slave might become a brother-in-law or *poito* by marrying into the family. The daily tasks given to Lourens as a hostage may correspond to the status of *poito* (Whitehead, 1993, p. 41).

Finally, the journal of Lourens Lourenszoon is a brief momentum at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, revealing the intensive trading activities between Europeans and South American Indians and the increasing economic



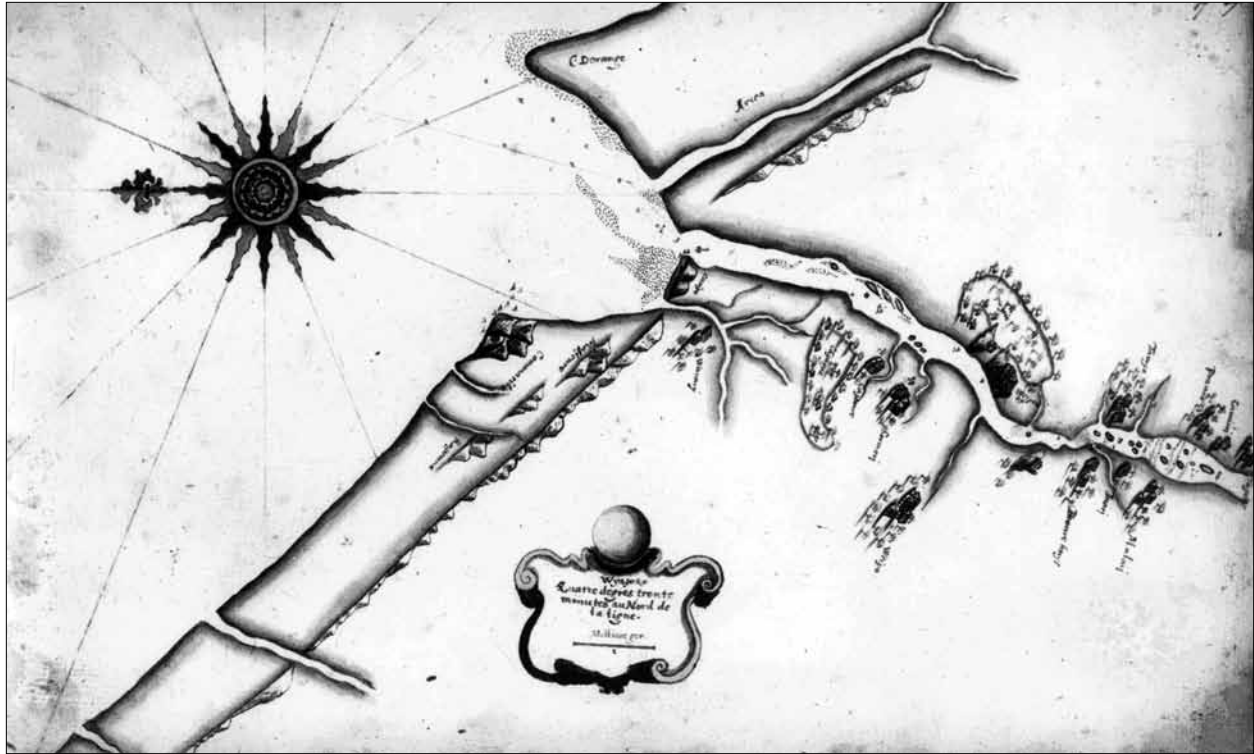


Figure 5. Map of the Oyapock estuary by Jesse de Forest (Ms Sloane 179 B, folio 17, 1623).

interest of the northern European powers in the Guianas. The Indian groups of the lower Oyapock and Cassiporé Rivers were united in political alliances and ruled by one dominating group which is identified as the Arocouros, revealing a highly organised political system at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This political system vanished in colonial times due to continuing warfare and the decimation of the Indian populations; somewhere in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they came to form the Palikur as we know them today.

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