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Surinamese Maroon and Indigenous Knowledge in the Creation of Natural and Ethnographic Collections Housed in The Netherlands

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Abstract

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Royal Dutch Geographical Society commissioned three expeditions to Suriname with the aim of mapping the territory and promoting the collection of minerals, plants, and animals there. These were the Gonini (1903), the Tapanahoni (1904), and the Toemoekhoemak expeditions (1907). Through the analysis of official reports, diaries penned by expedition members, correspondence, photographs, and the ethnographic, botanical, geological, and zoological collections kept at the Wereldmuseum, Leiden University, and the Naturalis Biodiversity Center, this article seeks to rectify the marginalization of the contributions of Indige-

nous and Maroon laborers to the success of these expeditions in Suriname, challenging traditional narratives of exploration and "discovery." Our research illustrates how local communities were instrumental in curating the collections currently housed at the Wereldmuseum and the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in the Netherlands, underscoring the significance of acknowledging the invaluable contributions of non-European individuals in the annals of Western science.

Keywords

Suriname – Indigenous peoples – Maroons – colonial expeditions – local knowledge – museum collections

1 Introduction

The nineteenth century bore witness to a burgeoning era of scientific curiosity in the Netherlands (Van Berkel, Van Helden & Palm 1999:130). Having amassed considerable wealth from its colonial endeavors in preceding centuries, this small nation embarked on a journey of technological prosperity. This newfound affluence laid the groundwork for the establishment of numerous scientific societies which were driven by ambitions of progress and development (Van Wingerden 2020). In 1873, amidst this intellectual fervor, the Koninklijk Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap (KNAG, Royal Dutch Geographical Society) emerged with a singular mission: to advance the study of world geography (Wentholt 2003:10). Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the KNAG facilitated a series of expeditions to map Dutch-occupied territories. These expeditions also involved the collection of minerals, plants, and animals, aimed at unraveling the mysteries of the natural landscapes and capitalizing on their commodification potential (Donkers, 1998; De Jong 2007; Wentholt 2003). At the dawn of the twentieth century, the KNAG commissioned three such expeditions to Suriname: the Gonini (1903), Tapanahoni (1904), and Toemoekhoemak (1907) expeditions.

In this article, the intricate narratives of these expeditions are unraveled, exploring the roles played by the Indigenous and Maroon peoples in shaping the outcomes of the expeditions in question. The aim of this article is to highlight the significance of local contributors in achieving the expeditions' goals. The article also illustrates how these communities were instrumental in curating the collections currently housed at the Wereldmuseum and Naturalis Biodiversity Center in the Netherlands. These accounts underscore the

significance of acknowledging the invaluable contributions of non-European individuals in the annals of Western science.

2 Background and Problem Statement

The Gonini expedition (1903) aimed to explore and map the Gonini River basin in Suriname. Under the sponsorship of the KNAG, the team also probed the Lely, Cottica, and Manlobi mountain ranges, collecting botanical, entomological, and reptile specimens, and conducting ethnographic research on Indigenous populations (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:2–8). Led by Dutch military officer Alphons Franssen-Herderschee, whose colonial work in Indonesia had earned him recognition (Dröge 2021; Wentholt 2003:144), the team included Gerard Versteeg, a medical student and expedition doctor, who also collected plant and animal specimens (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:2), and Claudius Henricus de Goeje, a Royal Dutch Navy cartographer who studied the Wayana language and was to engage in anthropological tasks (Van Lier 1955:321–22). De Goeje was responsible for the ethnographic collections now in the Wereldmuseum (Wentholt 2003:151). A mere half year after concluding the Gonini expedition, the same team of Dutch explorers—Franssen-Herderschee, Versteeg, and De Goeje (Figure 1)—embarked on another journey to the Tapanahoni River. Each member retained their respective responsibilities from the Gonini expedition. The Tapanahoni expedition (1904) had multifaceted objectives: to map the Tapanahoni River, explore the Suriname River, and acquire ethnographic collections, especially from the Wayana and Trio communities (Mulder 2022).[1]

In 1907, a further expedition, to the Toemoekhoemak (Tumucumaque) mountains, saw only the return of De Goeje, accompanied by a new Dutch recruit, Harmen Bisschop-van Tuinen. This expedition did not include the collection of biological samples due to logistical constraints (De Goeje 1908:7). Instead, its primary focus was the mapping of the southernmost region of Suriname, where the Toemoekhoemak mountain range serves as a natural border with Brazil (Wentholt 2003:155). To reach the mountain range, the expedition necessitated several weeks of land travel, a departure from the predominantly river-oriented explorations of the prior expeditions.

Although the expeditions' successes are often attributed to their Dutch members (Donkers 1998; Wentholt 2003), they relied heavily on local laborers. The backbone of these ventures was formed by Afro-Surinamese workers. The

1 Claudius Henricus de Goeie, Dagboek I, "Tapanahoni expeditie" (transcript), Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (hereafter NMVW) archives, inv. nr. 7145–2a, Leiden, the Netherlands, 1904.

FIGURE 1 Franssen-Herderschee [left], Versteeg [center], and De Goeje [right], Tapanahoni, September 30, 1904
NMVW INV. NR. RV-A103-1-114, PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

Gonini expedition recruited about 50 men (Appendix 1), paying 4 florins per day with provisions (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:3). The Tapanahoni expedition employed around 28 people (Appendix 2), at half the pay (Franssen-Herderschee & Versteeg 2018:8), while the Toemoekhoemak expedition had about 21 laborers (De Goeje 1908; Appendix 3).

Some of these laborers were Maroons, descendants of enslaved Africans who had escaped captivity and established communities in the remote forests. Though there are several cultural groups (Ndyuka, Aluku, Kwinti, Paamaka, Saamaka, and Matawai), the Maroon laborers who participated in the relevant expeditions, termed "bosnegers" (bush negroes) by the Dutch expedition members, resided along the Marowijne River, the natural border between Suriname and French Guiana. The laborers predominantly belonged to the Aluku (or Boni) and Ndyuka (or Okanisi) groups. These communities had a much stronger influence from the French, who were occupying French Guiana on the other bank of the river. The laborers of African descent from Paramaribo, earned the moniker "stadsnegers" (urban negroes) otherwise referred to as "Creoles." This latter group commonly demonstrated a better command of the Dutch language, but its members were less confident in their knowledge of the rainforest. Both the Gonini and Tapanahoni expeditions also enlisted the aid

FIGURE 2 "Indians in the camp of the Gonini expedition at the mouth of the Gonini River in Marowijne"
LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES DIGITAL COLLECTIONS, INV. NR. KITLV 93902 (NOTE: ALL TRANSLATIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL DUTCH ARE OURS), PHOTOGRAPHER LIKELY G.M. VERSTEEG. LIKELY DEPICTS ALBERT (LEFT) AND ADOLPHE (RIGHT)

of an Afro-Surinamese man named Copijn, who acted as the overseer of the laborers and helped establish contact with the Maroon populations when the team needed to recruit guides (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:5).

These laborers performed numerous essential tasks, from navigating rivers and carrying heavy loads to setting up camp. They hunted, fished, and cooked, providing food, and some acted as interpreters, facilitating trade with Indigenous communities by managing bartering sessions.

The inclusion of Indigenous laborers added a distinct dimension. In the Gonini expedition, Adolphe (Lokono) and Albert (Kali'na), who spoke French, joined as laborers (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:39). In the Tapanahoni expedition, William and Johannes, both Kali'na, served similar roles (Franssen-Herderschee & Versteeg 2018:61). While their tasks mirrored those of their Afro-Surinamese counterparts, they played a key role in sharing knowledge about local flora and fauna, and their presence eased interactions with Indigenous settlements.

The involvement of Indigenous and Afro-Surinamese laborers was crucial to the expeditions' successes. Their deep understanding of the region was essential not only for the survival of the teams but also for the collection of knowledge and artefacts now housed in Dutch museums.

3 Historiography

The KNAG expeditions in general have garnered considerable scholarly attention. In 2003, Arnold Wentholt authored a volume, titled *In kaart gebracht met kapmes en kompas* (Mapped with machete and compass), which delves into every expedition sponsored by the KNAG between 1873 and 1960. This book provides a chronological account of these expeditions, offering concise summaries and highlighting pivotal events. Caroline de Jong (2007) briefly summarized the expeditions as well, specifically focusing on the Indigenous communities living along the Corantijn River. Additionally, Henk Donkers (1998) discussed some of the KNAG's endeavors in anticipation of their 125th anniversary. While these sources offer valuable background information on the expeditions, they primarily serve as summarizations, offering a more streamlined overview, compared to the original, dense reports.

As is to be expected, the official reports offer the most substantial insights into the expeditions themselves. Nevertheless, the expeditions fueled more than just the writing of overview reports. De Goeje, for example, became a renowned anthropologist in the Netherlands, having published numerous works such as the 1906 encyclopedia of his collections from the Wayana and

Trio cultural groups, entitled *Bijdrage tot de ethnographie der Surinaamsche indianen*, encompassing what he considered to be the most crucial information on the life and culture of the Wayana and Trio. In 1941, he published an extensive essay about the Wayana, delving into their cosmovision, myths, legends, music, language, and other elements of their society. De Goeje also extended his research to the Maroon populations, co-authoring with W.F. van Lier an extensive article on the Ndyuka societies in Suriname in 1940. From 1946 to 1951, De Goeje was appointed professor of the linguistics and ethnology of Suriname and Curaçao at Leiden University (Van Lier 1955:324). Versteeg also contributed the paper "Op expeditie in Suriname" (1905), after which he commenced his career as a medical officer with the army of the Royal Dutch East Indies Army (KNIL, Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger) and collected biological samples in Dutch New Guinea.

Much accreditation has been given to the Dutch expedition members, who came to be viewed within Europe as experts of Surinamese flora, fauna, and Indigenous cultures. However, they did not operate alone. In *The Humble Ethnographer: Lodewijk Schmidt's Accounts from Three Voyages in Amazonian Guiana*, Renzo Duin offers English translations of writings by Lodewijk Schmidt, a Saamaka Maroon who participated in ethnographic expeditions between 1940 and 1942 (Duin 2020). Duin complements these translations with his own informed insights, highlighting the contributions of Maroon individuals to scientific expeditions in the mid-twentieth century. Duin has also discussed one of the objects collected during the Gonini expedition of 1903, in which he demonstrates how the labeling and description by De Goeje of the "Noeclat" in the collection of the Wereldmuseum were incorrect and offers a more accurate interpretation of the object's purpose (Duin 2014).

Duin is not the only scholar who has explicitly written about local contributions to colonial expeditions in Suriname. Konrad Rybka details the scientific contributions of Johannes Karwafodi, an Indigenous Lokono (or Arawak) man, who shared his extensive knowledge of the Surinamese flora with scholars working for colonial scientific institutions in the 1930s and 1940s (Rybka 2022). Karwafodi played a pivotal role in acquiring collections now housed at the Naturalis Biodiversity Center and provided valuable insights into Lokono culture, ultimately creating one of the few historical texts about an Indigenous community of Suriname authored by a member of that same community.

In recent years, the scholarly interest in provenance research combined with microhistories has gained traction. In 2023, Fenneke Sysling, a historian of science, commenced a project entitled "Who did all the work? The hidden labour of colonial science," which aims to give recognition to the various local actors involved in scientific expeditions to Indonesia in previous centuries. Using

approaches from the digital humanities, Sysling and her team are creating large data sets with names and roles played by various local contributors (Sysling et al. 2023). Dutch museums and universities have invested many hours into researching their colonial presence in Indonesia; however, a project of similar size and nature has yet to be conducted on Suriname. The diaries of the Dutch explorers during the Gonini, Tapanahoni, and Toemoekhoemak expeditions have only recently been transcribed and published, and therefore have yet to be academically discussed. This article aims to fill this gap in the scholarly literature, while recognizing the contributions of Surinamese locals to Western science.

4 Methods

This study draws on historical primary sources to examine the contributions of local laborers involved in the Gonini, Tapanahoni, and Toemoekhoemak expeditions in Suriname's interior. The narratives analyzed come from a range of historical records, including official reports published in KNAG journals, diaries of expedition members, and selected letters housed at the Wereldmuseum and Leiden University Libraries.

The official reports, written by the expedition leaders, are the primary focus of this analysis. These reports, aligned with the geographical goals of the KNAG, follow a chronological format, documenting the expedition routes, descriptions of the landscape, methods for collecting geospatial data, and techniques for botanical and zoological specimen collection. While laborers are occasionally mentioned, their contributions are often minimized. Despite digital transcriptions being available, the analysis relies on original hard-copy journals, which contain photographs of Indigenous peoples and African diaspora laborers.

The expedition members' diaries provide a more personal view of the Dutch experience, with richer details about their interactions and relationships with local collaborators. These entries offer deeper insights into the people who worked closely with the Dutch researchers. Letters are used to confirm or challenge the accounts in the diaries, with De Goeje's unpublished diaries, recently donated to the Wereldmuseum, proving particularly valuable.[2]

2 De Goeje, Dagboek I—"Gonini expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–1a, 1903; Dagboek II—"Gonini expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–1b, 1903; Dagboek III—"Gonini expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–1c, 1903; Dagboek IV—"Gonini expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–1d, 1903; Dagboek I—"Tapanahoni expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–2a, 1904; Dagboek II—"Tapanahoni expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–2b, 1904.

FIGURE 3 "Two Maroons seen from the back in a boat"
NMVW INV. NR. RV-A116–83, PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN,
GONINI EXPEDITION, 1903

Additionally, a digital archive of photographs from the expeditions, housed at the Wereldmuseum and Leiden University Libraries, complements the reports and diaries by offering visual context. These images help illustrate the events and individuals described in the written accounts.

However, the sources used in this study are limited by bias. Written solely by Dutch expedition members, they often reflect racial prejudices and provide a narrow perspective on the experiences of Maroon and Indigenous participants. Despite these limitations, a critical analysis of these sources uncovers important insights into the role of these local laborers, even if their contributions are downplayed in Dutch accounts.

5 Results

5.1 *Exploiting Local Labor*

In the uncharted territories ventured during the expeditions, local guides played a crucial role. As they embarked on explorations to regions rarely touched by European presence, Maroon laborers emerged as indispensable

navigators (Figure 3). For each expedition, laborers were recruited either in Paramaribo or along the Marowijne River, which forms the natural border between Suriname and French Guiana. The laborers from Paramaribo had varying degrees of familiarity with the hinterland; some of them had never entered these territories (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:20). As such, the recruitment of laborers in Maroon settlements was vital. Here, the Maroon *granmans* (chiefs) consequently played pivotal roles in connecting the expedition to potential (but often hesitant) guides, who had extensive knowledge of the river rapids and branches. During the Gonini expedition, for example, Granman Apeusa facilitated the recruitment of the Paramakan guide, Adingob'ey (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:26). Similarly, during the Tapanahoni expedition, the Ndyuka granman Oseisi had sent two of his direct relatives, Soni and Akrosi, who knew the waters well and were fluent in the Trio language, to aid the expedition.[3] There is no mention of their names in the official report.

These examples illustrate the limited influence of the Dutch when it came to recruiting laborers. It was the Maroon chiefs who frequently convinced their people to participate in these expeditions. The motivations behind their assistance remain somewhat ambiguous. While those they recruited were compensated with wages, there is no evidence within the primary sources used to suggest that the leaders themselves received any form of direct reward or incentive. Nevertheless, secondary literature alludes to the Maroon perspective regarding such colonial expeditions. H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen explored how the Ndyuka (Okanisi) were apprehensive about allowing Dutch expeditions into their "backyard" due to fears that direct Dutch interaction with Indigenous communities would eliminate the need for the Maroons as middlemen in the trade between the coast and the hinterland (Thoden van Velzen 2022:240). However, Thoden van Velzen writes that De Goeje had negotiated this hurdle by revealing that the Dutch were seeking natural resources that could be exploited; he had made it clear that the Maroons would also have access to these if they participated in the expeditions (Thoden van Velzen 2022:241). These opportunities may have encouraged their participation.

Additionally, in French expeditions led by Creveaux (1877) and Coudreau (1883), the Aluku Maroons played a similar pivotal role. For example, Apatou participated in both these expeditions and was awarded a gold medal by the Société de Géographie in Paris, which elevated his status and earned him a

3 De Goeje, Dagboek I—"Tapanahoni expeditie" (transcript), NMVW archives, inv. nr. 7145–2a, 1904, p. 69.

salary from the French colonial government (Bilby 2004:198–204). Such recognition may have encouraged others to join colonial expeditions. However, the Dutch did not show the same generosity toward local participants.

An account detailed in Price (2008), *Travels with Tooy*, discusses the Saamaka view of colonial expeditions. For the Maroons, then as well as now, the landscape was sacred, every element of it containing a specific meaning and history, but "for white folks this was virgin territory that had to be brought under rational control," famously referred to by Europeans as the "blank spaces" on maps (Price 2008:113). The Saamaka chief, Djankusó, warned them: "there are things on the Upper River that haven't yet made peace with me, Djankusó. So all the more so for you, white man!," but the explorer persisted "and the chief was forced to yield" (Price 2008:113). Such narratives suggest that participation was involuntary, the Dutch having coerced the Maroons into their explorations.

The Maroon laborers proved very useful as the expeditions moved further from the coastal towns, where the chances of encountering Indigenous people increased. During the Gonini expedition, the team encountered a group of Wayana on the Litani River who were acquainted with the Aluku laborer Awensai (Figure 4). Awensai, who was fluent in Wayana due to strong ties between the Aluku and Wayana communities, explained to the Dutch that the Wayana were returning home after having attended a dance ceremony in a nearby town called Yamaiké.[4] Awensai convinced two men, Akomali and Alawi, and two women, Aemeru and Makeru, to stay with them and lead the way to Yamaiké the following day. In this manner, the expedition encountered the first of many Indigenous settlements. Akomali and Alawi agreed to stay with the expedition for a longer period and guide them to another Wayana settlement, Panapi. Here, two more men, Oulatta and Cupi, were enlisted to guide the expedition team to the top of the Knopaiamoi Rock, where the Dutch were hoping to get a bird's eye view of the area for cartographic purposes.

During the Toemoekhoemak expedition, the team followed the map they created during the Tapanahoni expedition to reach the southernmost region of Suriname. Here, they engaged in extensive land travel through the Toemoekhoemak mountains. For this journey, De Goeje and Bisschop van Tuinen

4 Wayana and Trio towns are named after the *tamusi* (chief) of the town. Hence, the tamusi of Yamaiké was named Yamaiké. This is the case for every Indigenous settlement mentioned in this article. The tamusi is the founder of the settlement and establishes relationships with surrounding people, who become his dependents, or *peito*. This social structure is contingent on alliance and matrilocal residence (Collomb & Dupuy 2009:113).

FIGURE 4 "Awinsai" [and Sam]
NMVW INV. NR. RV-A102-1-215, PHOTOGRAPHER G.M. VERSTEEG, 1903

assembled a substantial team of guides to navigate the challenging terrain. Their company comprised seven Afro-Surinamese laborers and 21 Trio porters (Figure 5).[5]

5 Names of laborers during the Toemoekhoemak land journey starting in Langu: Creole: Aken, de Bes, Heerde en Sullie (4 total); Maroon: Soni, Lanti, Todoi (3 total); Trio: Apoera, Apoera's wife, Apoera's 8-year-old daughter, Apoera's 4-year-old son, Ajembai (Apoera's brother), Ajembai's wife, Santé, Janki, Lesani, Lesani's sister, Makriki (Lesani's son), Mokula, Kowfre, Kowfre's wife, Kowfre's stepdaughter, Kowfre's stepdaughter's 4-year-old daughter, Langu, Langu's wife, Langu's 14-year-old daughter, Langu's 14-year-old niece, Amenakee (21 total).

FIGURE 5 "Members of the Toemoekhoemak-expedition in a large savanna, likely in Nickerie" [correction to KITLV title: likely not in Nickerie] LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES DIGITAL COLLECTIONS, KITLV 94112, PHOTOGRAPHER LIKELY H. BISSCHOP VAN TUINEN, 1907

However, at the time of the Toemoekhoemak expedition, there was a deadly and highly contagious disease, potentially tuberculosis (Kahn 1937), spreading through the rainforest, which had caused the premature deaths of many Indigenous people. As such, some *tamusi* (Indigenous chiefs) were hesitant to allow the expedition team access into their settlements. The Trio chief, Langu, whose settlement was situated conveniently beside the Toemoekhoemak mountains, perceived the foreigners to be the harbingers of this disease (De Goeje 1908:84). Here is where the bias of the Dutch sources becomes apparent. De Goeje explains in his report that Langu was distrustful of the Dutch procession (De Goeje 1907:83). As such, De Goeje requested that another Trio chief, Majoli (Figure 6), ease the tension and persuade Langu to cooperate. Majoli supposedly responded with "maybe not go," which De Goeje interpreted as "it might not be possible" (De Goeje 1908:82). De Goeje then writes, "We kept a close eye on the company to see if they were preparing to leave, and we stood ready to follow him immediately if he tried to escape, even to his village if necessary" (De Goeje 1908:84). The expedition team then proceeded to bring forth the bartering goods, in an attempt to create an incentive. In the words of De

FIGURE 6 "Majoli, chief of the Trios, 20 Oct. 1907"
SOURCE: C.H. DE GOEJE 1908: IMAGE 16 (MODIFIED BY THE AUTHORS)

Goeje, "Langoe became more and more cooperative, especially when we gave him a machete and a large piece of red cloth … The friendship with Langoe was indeed sealed" (De Goeje 1908:85, 90).

Though De Goeje perceived mistrust among the Trio, he did not reflect on the reasons why there may have been any apprehension; he simply saw it as a hurdle that needed to be overcome. He tried to entice the Trio with bartering goods he knew were needed in the communities, and he did not offer them freely. The power play resulted in coerced cooperation, which he then perceived as "friendship." In 1987, Cees Koelewijn and Peter Rivière recovered

the Trio perspective on De Goeje's visit through their oral history. In this source, which seems to be the only one that sheds light on the Indigenous experience regarding these expeditions, an entirely different narrative is presented. As told by the Trio Tëmeta:

> The Trio danced in order to keep the strangers away … the strangers did not come back for many years … The men who came were Tëkujenë (De Goeje), Pesikanpu (Bisschop Van Tuinen) and Ankumasoi … At first, they came to see but later they would come back to destroy us. Had not the white man eaten the Trio before, had not they hated us, hadn't they been fierce to us? "They have come back," the people said to one another, "the white people have come back. We will perish again. The coming of the white man means destruction for us. What happened long ago will happen again. Be careful!" They wondered what the white people wanted. Tëkujenë said that he wanted to know how many villages there were and where they were. "I would like to go there, to the other villages," he said. "I would like to see all the people who live far away." But he asked this in vain. "No," Majori replied. "No! You say you want to destroy us again? That's what your grandfathers did long ago. I don't want you to do now what they did long ago" … [T]he white people said, "We are good, we have come as your trading partners." And it was a fact that they brought a lot of trade-goods. "Well," Majori said, "you are not from here. I don't want you to come frequently … We only remember the fights we had with you. We just stopped fighting, but there has never been a time we made peace." … "Is that true? Who informed you? Who told you about that? How do you know about what happened to your ancestors? Do you know your forefathers?" Tëkujenë asked. "No," Majori replied, "but I have heard this. I have heard of your cruelty in the past … They said be careful with white people, don't try to ingratiate yourself with them, because they may stab you, they may catch you and take you away from here. They may even eat you." … With these words Majori shut the white people out again. After Tëkujenë had left there came no white people for a long time. They did not come because of what Majori had said … and Majori told everybody to be careful. "Be careful," he said, "perhaps they will come back some day."
>
> KOELEWIJN & RIVIÈRE 1987:281–2

The fear of the White man among the Trio was entirely valid, for they understood that the expeditions did not have their best interests in mind. The Dutch presence in the region was altogether self-serving. This perspective illustrates how De Goeje's interpretation of friendship was wholly misplaced and mislead-

ing. However, in his writings, De Goeje seems genuinely convinced they were indeed friends. This may be due to his experiences among the Wayana, who seemed to harbor less negative sentiment. In particular, the Wayana chief Pontutu (Figure 7) stands out. In the final month of the Tapanahoni expedition, two years prior to the account of the Trio people mentioned above, De Goeje visited Pontutu, who proclaimed that he had named his newborn son Tëkujenë in honor of De Goeje (Franssen-Herderschee & Versteeg 2018:120). The contrast is striking, and no definite conclusion can be drawn regarding this disparity.

It is possible that the Wayana were more accustomed to foreign influence; they lived somewhat closer to the coast, in areas that were easier to reach by canoe. De Goeje was also able to converse in Wayana (though the extent of this linguistic skill during the first two expeditions is unclear). As such, the Wayana may have been less anxious with regard to the Dutch presence. Still, De Goeje's friendship with the Trio seems to be an illusion on his part; the variations in the narratives affect the credibility of De Goeje's accounts.

Notably, the Trio may have been misled by the Maroons to believe that the Dutch were there to harm them; during the Tapanahoni expedition the Dutch even accused the Ndyuka of sabotage. The seeds of distrust were sown early in the journey, after the team encountered a figure of note, Captain Arabi (Figure 8), presiding over a Ndyuka settlement. The team came in search of guides and porters, but Arabi asserted the Ndyuka's lack of knowledge concerning the upper reaches of the Tapanahoni River and the Indigenous settlements situated there (Franssen-Herderschee, 1905b:39). This turned out to be untrue; in reality, the recruited guides, Soni and Akrosi, had visited the desired location several times (Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:84). As the expedition progressed, it unraveled a web of hostilities and rivalries involving the Ndyuka laborers. Insights gleaned from the Wayana tamusi Intelewa indicated that the Ndyuka often aimed to undermine the Wayana. While the Ndyuka granman Oseisie, who had provided guides Akrosi and Soni, was viewed favorably by Intelewa, other Ndyuka individuals elicited disapproval, with Captain Arabi singled out for particular disdain (Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:55).

Intelewa had provided directions to numerous nearby Indigenous settlements and helped recruit two of his *peito* (subjects), named Apipo (Figure 9) and Alakamui, who received their payment, of a bread knife, a pair of scissors, a mirror, a card with white porcelain buttons, and a bunch of light blue beads, in advance (Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:61). Apipo and Alakamui eventually led the team to two additional Wayana communities, Tuwoli and Pontutu, and the Trio village Majoli. Upon arrival in Tuwoli, the Dutch contingent was met with palpable apprehension among the Wayana. Subsequently, Tuwoli revealed that

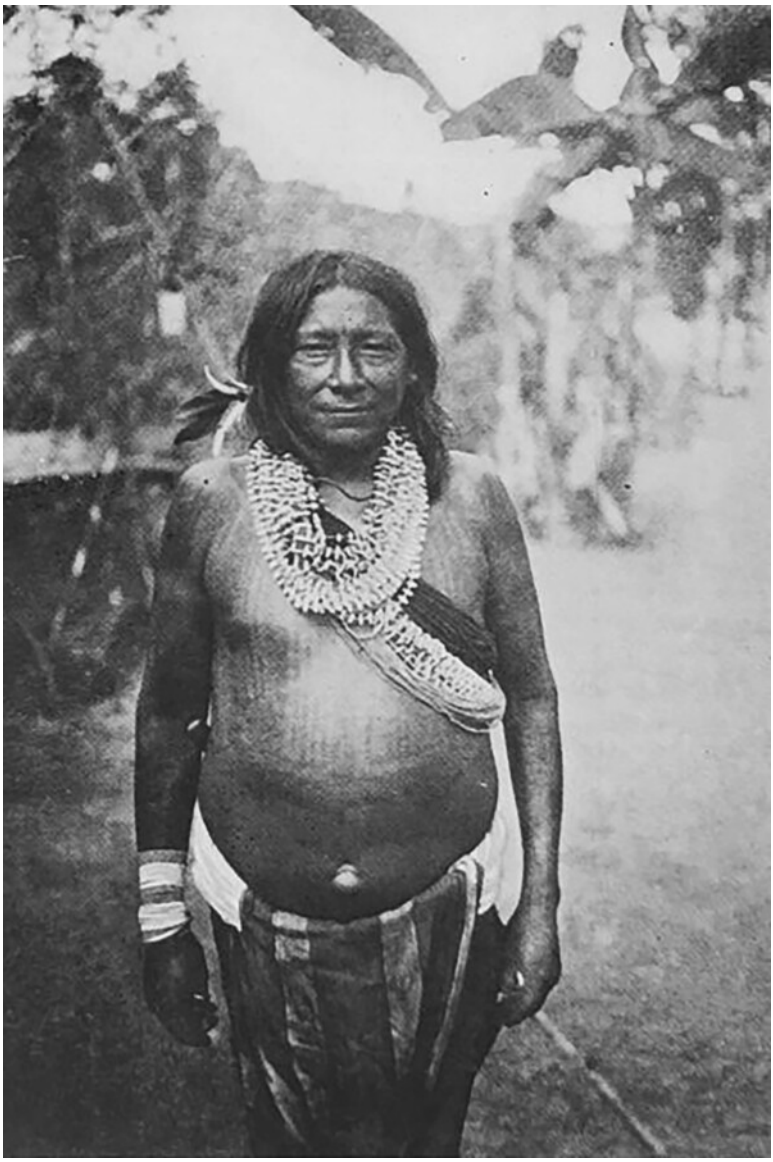

FIGURE 7 "Pontoetoe, chief of the Oyanas, 3 Nov. 1907"
SOURCE: C.H. DE GOEJE 1908: IMAGE 12 (MODIFIED BY THE AUTHORS)

FIGURE 8 "Arabi on Granbori (6 Nov.)," NMVW INV. NR. RV-A103-1-203, PHOTOGRAPHER LIKELY C.H. DE GOEJE, 1904. LEFT TO RIGHT: A. FRANSSEN-HERDERSCHEE, CAPTAIN ARABI, G.M. VERSTEEG, AND TWO UNIDENTIFIED MEN

Captain Arabi had dispatched a foreboding message to the Indigenous settlements along the Paloemeu River, forewarning them of the Dutch expedition's intentions to shoot any Indigenous individuals encountered. This communication served as counsel for the Indigenous groups to abscond upon the Dutch arrival, seeking refuge in the surrounding woods. The repercussions of this message reverberated throughout the rest of the expedition, leaving a trail of abandoned settlements in Trio territory (Franssen-Herderschee & Versteeg 2018:90). It was surmised that Captain Arabi may have deliberately sabotaged the expedition, by giving false directions and misleading information.

Given that these are Dutch-authored primary sources, the situation can only be understood from their perspective. It is fair to assume there was a reason for the misinformation, and De Goeje's conclusion that they are simply "big liars" feels inadequate (De Goeje, cited in Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:84). It is important to note that the Dutch presence in Indigenous settlements posed a palpable threat to the Maroon populations, who relied heavily on trade with Indigenous groups and the resale of traded items in coastal towns and cities. The Dutch, unfamiliar with prevailing price structures, often engaged in barter sessions at markedly higher rates than the Maroons were willing to pay for the same goods. Consequently, concerns of market disruption loomed large,

FIGURE 9 "Apipo,"
NMVW INV. NR. RV-A103-1-121, PHOTOGRAPHER G.M. VERSTEEG, 1903

stoking fears that the Dutch presence would disrupt the existing economic equilibrium—a plausible reason for the Ndyuka to prevent the Dutch from reaching certain Indigenous settlements.

Evidently, the Dutch contingent was reliant on the participation of local individuals to succeed in their expedition goals. Frankly, the majority of the hard and essential labor was done by the people they hired. In addition, this recruitment process was only made possible by local guidance and coopera-

tion. Without the assistance of local leaders in convincing their (often hesitant) communities to participate, the Dutch would have likely been lost and unable to proceed into the vast forests. Though these laborers were compensated either by a small financial sum or a certain quantity of bartering goods (for instance, knives, fishhooks, and machetes), the laborers were not by any means treated as equal contributors to the expedition outcomes. Their importance was consistently downplayed and their contributions taken at face value.

5.2 *Extracting Local Knowledge*

Arguably, the most significant contribution the Indigenous and Maroon laborers made to the expeditions' scientific goals was in sharing their knowledge about the natural environment; this laid the foundation for botanical and zoological studies relating to Surinamese Amazonia. Since the expeditions were, after all, funded by a geographical society aiming to gather comprehensive geographical insights, collecting data about local plants and animals was imperative. The samples taken back to the Netherlands were meant to inform the Dutch of the flora, fauna, and minerals in their colony and provide a coherent overview of the rainforest ecosystem. Nevertheless, the Dutch were unfamiliar with the local environment. Crucially, before being hired as a botanist and zoologist, Versteeg had confessed to the recruitment committee that he did not feel entirely competent for the role of collector:

> I naturally informed Professor Went that I would be delighted to participate in the expedition, expressed my sincere gratitude for the esteemed proposal, and mentioned that Professor W. should not hold my botanical knowledge in too high regard. While I had been an enthusiastic plant collector in the past, I had set this interest aside in the last three years, focusing on other pursuits. As for zoology, I knew no more than any other medical student … The following week was filled with anticipation, and my motivation for attending lectures and the like had vanished. I began searching for my old botanical books and herbarium, and within about three days, I was back to being something of a botanist.
>
> VERSTEEG 2019:4–5

This ineptitude is further reflected and confirmed in an intriguing letter exchange between Dr. J.A. Jentink and Major L.A. Bakhuis. Jentink expressed disapproval regarding Versteeg's competence, citing instances of negligence such as the loss of botanical collections to the wind and the spoilage of collected insects due to improper preservation (Versteeg 2019:213).

FIGURE 10 "Melchiot, Versteeg and William"
NMVW INV. NR. RV-A103-1-91, PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, TAPANAHONI EXPEDITION 1904

Consequently, Indigenous communities, possessing millennia of ecological wisdom, played a role as essential sources of knowledge.[6] The Gonini collection consisted of no less than 460 plant vouchers, according to the diaries of Versteeg (originally written in 1903). The data chart at the end of this source includes the genus, species, author, family, and dates the specimens were collected. Such precise data are not available for the Tapanahoni collection, but it can be determined that Versteeg depended heavily on the Kali'na laborer William; "he always sat as foreman in my little boat, and so I was always in a position to admire his skill … and to take advantage of his keen senses, whether it was the hunt for animals or plants" (Versteeg 1905:171; Figure 10).

The zoological collections were significantly smaller, potentially due to Versteeg's insufficient knowledge regarding preservation techniques. The Gonini expedition brought back a variety of zoological specimens, though a concrete list is not readily available. Jentink, who had declared Versteeg unfit for his role,

6 It is important to note that the knowledge of the local peoples was essential to finding and collecting plants and animals. However, Versteeg's interaction and interest in local knowledge was restricted to the collection of specimens, and although he had the opportunity to document local knowledge, he barely recorded any indigenous plant or animal names or uses.

stated that the Gonini collection consisted of one bird, nine mammals, three fish, ten snakes, nine lizards, and seven frogs (Versteeg 2019:213). Nevertheless, the zoological collection from the Gonini expedition currently housed at Naturalis does not include all of these animals.

There are a total of nine lizards (*Arthrosaura reticulata versteegii; Plica plica; Kentropyx calcaratus*); eleven bats (*Nyctinomops laticaudatus europs; Rhynchonycteris naso*); three crustaceans (*Potamocarcinus latifrons*); five microscopic slides of *Laelaps versteegi*; and two fishes (*Rhamphichthys rostratus; Leporinus megalepis*). There is no record of birds, frogs, or snakes collected during the Gonini expedition. This could be due to an issue in labeling, or perhaps the specimens are simply no longer in the collection. Notably, two of the species collected were named after Versteeg, who had "discovered" them: *Arthrosaura reticulata versteegii* and *Laelaps versteegi* (Oudemans 1904:223). The minerals collected during the expedition were supervised by B. von Faber, who traveled with his own team separate from the main expedition, and they include samples of granites, diorites, diabase, schist, and gneiss, as well as amphibolites, samples containing magnetite, hematite, or limonite, and several sediment or soil samples (Versluis 2022:86).

The Tapanahoni expedition's zoological collection in Naturalis is very rich in proboscis bats (*Rhynchonycteris nasoi*, 20 specimens). Furthermore, Versteeg and his laborers also acquired (at least) two lizards (*Mabuya nigropunctata; Plica plica*); two frogs (*Bufo guttatus; B. marinus*); three snakes (*Corallus hortulanus; Leptotyphlops albifrons; Atractus badius*); an octopus (*burryi*); one fish (*Chaetodon striatus*); one dragonfly (*Oxystigma*); and two scorpions (*Tityus pusillus; Broteas gervaisi*). A turtle was also added to the collection by De Goeje, who had found it scurrying beneath his hammock one day. Franssen-Herderschee (1905b:127) concluded his report by mentioning that Versteeg was able to collect no less than "300 insects and other animals." Nevertheless, the collection labeled "Tapanahoni 1904" at Naturalis is not this rich. For the mineralogical collection, a separate team collected 53 samples of printed granite and printed biotite granite; 13 samples of gneiss (biotite or schist); nine samples of granite, dolerite, gabbro, or diorite; two samples of shale (biotite or quartz); and one sample of sand (Versluis 2022:87).

The primary sources mention the instances when the collecting of these samples took place. However, examining the official reports and diary entries side-by-side, it becomes evident that the contributions of the laborers were written out of the script. Franssen-Herderschee frequently mentions Versteeg's collecting activities without acknowledging the involvement of other laborers. Nonetheless, Versteeg's diary reveals that he did not embark on these botanical and zoological missions in isolation. Consider the following passages:

> [August 19, 1903] Yesterday afternoon, Versteeg set one of his traps in a nearby creek and returned to the camp with an electric eel and a fish that had gotten caught in it. Both animals were immediately preserved in alcohol. Encouraged by this success, he set out his two traps today.
>
> FRANSSEN-HERDERSCHEE 1905a:42

> [August 19, 1903] In the morning, I went out with Melchiot and Albert. In the trap, there was an electric eel and a small fish. Albert shot an iguana. We collected some plants and insects. Around 13.30, I returned home and began to skin the iguana, which was quite challenging work. Albert went hunting and returned with an agouti and an eagle. I attempted to preserve the eagle's wings, but I was unsuccessful, so I had to discard them later.
>
> VERSTEEG 2019:28

> [August 20, 1903] On the 20th of August, Versteeg and I first went to check the traps. One was empty, and in the other, a large fish had likely been caught because the mesh was completely torn. Following this unfortunate result, Versteeg proceeded upstream in his small boat to study the river vegetation and collect flowers, while I mapped the section of the trail that had been cleared the previous day.
>
> FRANSSEN-HERDERSCHEE 1905a:42

> [August 20, 1903] Franssen and I went to check the trap at 7 o'clock. There was a fairly large fish in it, but before I could lift the net, the fish tore it and escaped. So, the result was a damaged trap. Around 08.30, I went out again with Melchiot and Albert and collected some more plants.
>
> VERSTEEG 2019:28

Evidently, there are some discrepancies. In Franssen-Herderschee's published KNAG report, there is no mention of the presence of anyone besides Versteeg. Additionally, certain aspects, such as Versteeg's inability to preserve the eagle's wing and the fish's escape, are omitted or downplayed. It must be mentioned that the diaries were not meant to be read by the public; Versteeg's diary was published by his descendant in 2019 and De Goeje's diaries were donated to the Wereldmuseum in 2018 and can be viewed upon request only. In essence, the only written sources available on the expeditions until this decade were the official KNAG reports; hence, it is unsurprising that for the last 100 years, sole credit for the collections and expedition results has been given to the Dutch members.

This sort of erasure is a centuries-old practice and was especially common in colonial South America (Alcantara-Rodrigues, Françozo & Van Andel 2019:398; Thurner & Cañizares-Esguerra 2023). European naturalists frequently used the labor and knowledge of Indigenous peoples in their research yet failed to acknowledge this in their reports written for European eyes (Alcantara-Rodrigues et al. 2019; Sysling et al. 2023; Thurner & Cañizares-Esguerra 2023). As a result, Western scientists were credited with having "discovered" the knowledge they appropriated from local communities. Thurner and Cañizares-Esguerra explore this in their case study of Alexander von Humboldt, the supposed founder of ecology and environmentalism, who traveled in the Americas between 1799–1804. The authors argue that the idea of the "solitary genius" is misleading, as scientific research is contingent on collaborative efforts, and that Humboldt himself relied on the dissemination of knowledge produced by Latin Americans for his extensive publications (Thurner & Cañizares-Esguerra 2023). This illusion of the "solitary genius" in regard to European naturalists and anthropologists has been perpetuated time and again; consider, for example, Carl Bovallius, Aimé Bonpland, Carl Ludwig Blume, the brothers Penard, and so on. The expeditions in question were not immune to the same tendencies. The Dutch explorers enjoyed title, fame, and financial compensation for the insights gleaned from their laborers, who in turn were forgotten and their communities neglected and left to fade away.

In addition to the knowledge they shared, the laborers were also held in high esteem by the Dutch for their practical skills in navigating the rainforest. These competencies encompassed various tasks, ranging from fishing and hunting, to constructing campsites with locally available resources. Photographic records from the expeditions, predominantly captured by Versteeg and De Goeje, frequently depict the laborers diligently engaged in their tasks while the Dutch observed (or photographed) from the periphery (Figure 11). These visual records also underscore the stark contrast between the cargo borne by the laborers and that which the Dutch carried themselves (Figure 5).

The Dutch expedition members were armed and indulged in targeting avian, sloth, anaconda, and tapir species. However, the local laborers proved to be much more proficient hunters. The remarkable hunting abilities of the Indigenous laborers often left the Dutch expedition members genuinely impressed:

> In the afternoon, Albert embarked on a hunting expedition and swiftly returned with an agouti, a creature seemingly abundant in these woodlands. Our astonishment at the Indian's swift success prompted us to inquire about his method. We discovered that after penetrating deep into the forest, he would conceal himself and skillfully mimic the agouti's

FIGURE 11 "Expedition members Zuil and Albert with an iguana on the bank of the Wilhelmina River during the Gonini expedition in Marowijne"
LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES DIGITAL COLLECTIONS, KITLV 93750, PHOTOGRAPHER LIKELY G.M. VERSTEEG, 1903

> calls. Consequently, the inquisitive animals would invariably approach, unknowingly becoming prey to the adept hunter.
>
> FRANSSEN-HERDERSCHEE 1905a:41

Another account from the same expedition recounts an incident in which Albert's imitation of an agouti was so convincing that it attracted the attention of a jaguar (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:76). Such narratives celebrating Albert's hunting prowess are not infrequent. It was documented that "Albert served as the expedition's primary hunter, displaying exceptional marksmanship skills" (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:77). The same report underscores the pivotal role of fishing in sustaining the expedition: "Fishing significantly contributed to our sustenance, surpassing the returns from hunting. An abundance of anjumaras was captured, overwhelming our consumption capacity" (Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:77).

The success of the hunting endeavors received a valuable boost from Agentoa (Figure 12), a laborer who contributed the expertise of his skilled hunting dog during the Tapanahoni expedition. In the region, hunting dogs were held in considerable esteem and were likely among the most coveted commodi-

FIGURE 12 "Agentoa"
NMVW INV. NR. RV-A102-1-216, PHOTOGRAPHER G.M. VERSTEEG, 1903

ties available from the Trios. The acquisition of one trained hunting dog typically required a barter consisting of one axe, one machete, one standard knife, one pair of scissors, one piece of cloth, and one bundle of beads (Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:55). Agentoa's canine companion proved instrumental in securing substantial game for the expedition, and Agentoa himself exhibited proficiency in the art of fishing.

The contributions of Indigenous and Maroon laborers extended well beyond their profound understanding of Suriname's natural terrain. All three expeditions also resulted in an extensive ethnographic collection, largely facilitated by

the laborers themselves. This remarkable material culture is now housed in the Wereldmuseum in the Netherlands. During the Gonini expedition, which did not prioritize ethnographic collecting, the team managed to return with nearly 200 Wayana artefacts. The Tapanahoni expedition, with its focus on amassing a substantial collection, gathered approximately 457 objects from both the Wayana and Trio peoples, as well as various Maroon communities. Lastly, the Toemoekhoemak expedition acquired around 260 artefacts, primarily from the Trio but with some originating from the Wayana as well (De Ruiter 2023; see also Mulder 2022: Chapter 4). Consequently, the Indigenous and Maroon peoples were not only active participants in the expeditions but also the subjects of study, leading to an ambiguous power dynamic worthy of further discussion.

Before the Dutch embarked on their explorations of Suriname's hinterland, Maroon populations had already established themselves alongside Indigenous societies. For instance, the Aluku, previously known as the Boni, initiated contact with the Wayana in the Upper Maroni region of Suriname during the 1790s. By the 1830s, the Aluku had assumed control over commercial interactions with the Wayana (Boven 2006:77–78). As the expeditions unfolded, these historical relationships, both amicable and at times adversarial, continued to exert influence in the region.

A favorable outcome emerged from preexisting trade relations between the Wayana and the Aluku Maroons, who actively participated in the Gonini expedition. The Aluku engaged in trade with the Wayana, acquiring essential tools and other items for their own settlements, as well as goods for resale in coastal areas where Dutch trade interests were burgeoning. Subsequently, they would obtain items from the Dutch, including beads, buttons, knives, and fishhooks, and perpetuate this cycle by trading these items with Indigenous populations. Similar trade networks were in place between the Ndyuka Maroons, participants in the Tapanahoni expedition, and both the Wayana and Trio communities along the Palumeu River. During the 1907 Toemoekhoemak expedition, potentially prompted by his experiences with Captain Arabi in 1904, De Goeje wrote:

> Since the Joeka people have settled on the Tapanahoni River, they have maintained a trade with the Indians who inhabit the upper reaches of this river. They have consistently endeavored through every possible means to prevent these Indians from coming into contact with the coastal inhabitants. Anything that could facilitate a direct exchange between consumers and producers would be quite unwelcome to the Joeka people..
>
> DE GOEJE 1908:31

The Dutch expedition members strategically harnessed this existing system by recruiting Maroon laborers actively engaged in this trade, regardless of the Maroons' discontent with Dutch presence in the region. This approach offered multiple advantages for the Dutch: the Maroons not only possessed knowledge of settlement locations but could also communicate with Indigenous communities in their native languages. Furthermore, they were well-versed in local pricing for various goods and had already established a foundation of trust with the Indigenous populations. This symbiotic arrangement allowed for seamless communication, with the Indigenous people conversing with the Maroon intermediaries, who, in turn, relayed information in Dutch, English, or French.

Though the official report concludes that "De Goeje mainly brought together this collection" (Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:90), the text often contradicts this. These objects were acquired through trade; the Dutch would present their bartering goods, and the Indigenous people would come with trading offers. These trades were almost always facilitated by either the Maroon laborers or the Indigenous leaders. Again, two laborers of note during both the Gonini and Tapanahoni expeditions were Awensai (Figure 13) and Agentoa (Figure 12). Awensai was appointed as the main interpreter during these expeditions, and Agentoa aided him in these transactions. Akrosi and Soni, both sent by Granman Oseisi during the Tapanahoni expedition, were fluent in Trio, thus acting as interpreters in the Trio settlements. Notably, however, De Goeje took a keen interest in the Wayana language, making the effort to study existing knowledge of the language before embarking on the journey. He continued to compile a dictionary of Wayana and Trio words during his time in the field.

The relationships fostered with Indigenous inhabitants of the settlements encountered also served as a significant advantage. After some of the locals had engaged in trade themselves and seen the types of goods the Dutch had to offer, they were often willing to aid the expedition team so their friends in other towns would also be able to acquire some of the goods. As such, during each of the expeditions in question, the tamusi and their peito (subjects) were instrumental in driving the trade further.

During the Gonini expedition, Akomali and Alawi facilitated trade in Yamaike and Panapi, while Jalu, Panapi's brother and the shaman, taught Trio words to De Goeje. In the Tapanahoni expedition, Wayana chiefs Intelewa, Tuwoli, and Pontutu drove trade, with Intelewa guiding the Dutch to Tuwoli's town and Pontutu ensuring a visit to his settlement before the Dutch returned to Paramaribo. Tuwoli also reassured the Trios amidst the Ndyuka-related complications, and, alongside Soni and Akrosi, acted as an interpreter during the visit to Majoli. As such, the rich ethnographic collection was conditional on the

FIGURE 13 "Awinsai in conversation with Surinamese natives" NMVW INV. NR. RV-A102-1-144, PHOTOGRAPHER G.M. VERSTEEG, 1903

willingness of the Indigenous communities to trade, as well as their readiness to facilitate more trade.

The pivotal role of Indigenous and Maroon laborers in the scientific pursuits of the expeditions cannot be overstated. Their profound knowledge of the natural environment laid the foundation for botanical and zoological studies in Suriname, contributing significantly to the understanding of the region's ecosystem. Despite initial inadequacies in the Dutch team, Indigenous communities served as essential sources of ecological wisdom, offering guidance and expertise. Furthermore, their practical skills in navigating the rainforest proved indispensable to the expeditions' successes. The expeditions also underscored the complex power dynamics at play, with Indigenous and Maroon peoples both participating in, and being subjects of, study, challenging traditional narratives of colonial exploration. Ultimately, local communities facilitated the acquisition of the extensive ethnographic collections now housed in the Wereldmuseum.

6 Discussion: The "Primitive" Fallacy

The narrative of scientific exploration in Suriname during the early twentieth century is one of exploitation, erasure, and colonial power dynamics. This article sheds light on the invaluable contributions of Indigenous and Maroon laborers to the KNAG expeditions, challenging traditional Eurocentric narratives of exploration and discovery. However, the neglect of these local contributors in historical accounts raises important questions about the reasons behind their erasure from the narrative of scientific exploration.

While racial prejudice undoubtedly played a role in the marginalization of Indigenous and Maroon laborers, the discussion is more nuanced than a simple narrative of racial superiority harbored by the Dutch. Franssen-Herderschee's remarks at the end of the Tapanahoni report highlight the economic motivations behind the expeditions, suggesting that the primary goal was to exploit Suriname's natural resources for the benefit of the Dutch economy (Franssen-Herderschee 1905b:127). This extract underscores the colonial mentality that drove the KNAG's developmental mission.

The consequences of colonial exploitation are evident in the environmental degradation and social upheaval caused by the expeditions. The maps created during the expeditions attracted foreign investors seeking to exploit Suriname's natural riches, leading to pollution, deforestation, and the displacement of Indigenous populations. De Goeje's observations of the impoverished state of Indigenous communities during the Toemoekhoemak expedition highlight the human cost of colonial exploitation, challenging the romanticized narrative of "exploration" and "discovery."

Many Western nations turned a blind eye toward the suffering in their colonies, and in order to justify the decline of Indigenous populations, they began to fabricate stories of uncivilized peoples. As such, the "primitive fallacy" was created and maintained well into the twentieth century. This "primitive fallacy" perpetuated the myth of Indigenous inferiority and justified the exploitation of their lands and resources. By portraying Indigenous peoples as savage or uncivilized, colonial powers sought to justify their domination and exploitation of these peoples. This narrative served to erase Indigenous contributions to scientific knowledge and reinforce colonial power structures.

The Dutch control over the narrative of the expeditions ensured that they received the most acclaim and recognition for their achievements. However, the diaries of Versteeg and De Goeje provide a new perspective on the expeditions, highlighting the neglect of Indigenous and Maroon laborers in official KNAG reports. Further research on this topic could delve into the long-term impacts of colonial expeditions on Indigenous communities in Suriname.

Exploring how these expeditions shaped local economies, social structures, and ecological systems over time would provide valuable insights into the enduring legacies of colonialism in the region. Additionally, comparative studies could be conducted to examine the experiences of Indigenous and Maroon laborers across different colonial contexts, shedding light on the varied forms of exploitation and resistance within the broader framework of European colonial expansion in the Americas. Lastly, interdisciplinary approaches integrating historical, anthropological, and environmental perspectives could offer a more holistic understanding of the complex interactions between colonial powers and Indigenous peoples, paving the way for more inclusive and decolonized narratives of exploration and scientific knowledge production.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the contributions of Indigenous and Maroon laborers to scientific exploration in Suriname have been largely overlooked and neglected. Their invaluable knowledge, skills, and expertise were essential to the success of the expeditions, yet they have been marginalized in historical accounts. This article seeks to rectify this oversight and challenge traditional narratives of exploration and discovery in Suriname. However, further research is needed to fully understand the complex dynamics of colonial exploitation and its impact on Indigenous communities. Only by centering Indigenous perspectives and experiences can we begin to unravel the true story of scientific exploration in Suriname.

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of Trading Objects: Understanding the Provenance of Objects Collected during the Gonini- and Tapanahoni-Expeditions to Suriname (1903–1904)," which explores a similar topic with a focus on the ethnographic objects acquired during the same KNAG expeditions. Lastly, we would like to thank the editor and anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and criticisms.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Afro-Surinamese Laborers during the Gonini Expedition (1903)

1. Adingob'ey
2. Heerde
3. Kloppenburg
4. Aken
5. Badrisin ("Hindoe-koelie")
6. Madonné
7. Alexander
8. Agentana
9. Awensai
10. Pitburg (Boeboe)
11. Melchiot
12. Fekoti
13. Fop
14. Meersorg
15. Cadell (cook)
16. Braaf (the main cook)
17. Sullie
18. Zuyl
19. Lubson
20. Baron
21. Stoffel
22. Leeflang
23. Winter
24. Ikkes
25. Abendanon
26. Percival
27. Holband
28. Saité
29. Weyting?
30. Noordwijk
31. Joll
32. Pinas
33. Charmant
34. Rozendaal
35. Gruserman

36. Dening
37. Van de Linde
38. Agentoa
39. Jop
40. Sluijerman
41. Corsten
42. Meles
43. Mendaron
44. *Adolph (Indigenous Lokono)
45. *Albert (Indigenous Kali'na)

According to Franssen-Herderschee, the team had ca. 50 laborers, meaning there are likely some names missing from this list. Source:Franssen-Herderschee 1905a:1–176.

Appendix 2: Afro-Surinamese Laborers during the Tapanahoni Expedition (1904)

1. Copijn
2. Andreas
3. Koffie
4. Soekroe
5. Karel
6. Madonné
7. Paté (guide)
8. Malo (guide)
9. Sully (cook)
10. Madretsma (second cook)
11. Sindélé
12. Sako
13. Makandro
14. Akrosi (grandson of Oseisi) (guide/translator)
15. Sonie (guide/translator)
16. Melchiot
17. Roozendaal
18. Dens
19. Leeflang
20. Heerde
21. Henze
22. Teboe
23. Lebitetei

24. Abaaitong
25. Brandon
26. *Ho-a-Hing (Chinese)
27. *Johannes (Indigenous, Kali'na)
28. *William (Indigenous, Kali'na)

According to Versteeg, there were 28 laborers, of which there was one Chinese laborer and two Indigenous laborers, meaning this list is complete. Source: Franssen-Herderschee 1905b; Versteeg 1905:171.

Appendix 3: Afro-Surinamese Laborers during the Toemoekhoemak Expedition (1907)

1. Simeon
2. Tigritetéi
3. Asjina (and Elité, his four-year-old son)
4. Helder
5. Soni
6. Lanti
7. Todói
8. Jangaman
9. Pajóng
10. Apianái
11. Aweri
12. Adjoewa
13. Edi
14. Amapóe
15. Pajé
16. Koeiakoeia
17. Baja
18. Sullie (cook)
19. Tikiti
20. Aken
21. De Bes
22. Heerde

Source: De Goeje 1908 (these lists were made by taking note of the names scattered throughout the entire texts).

Appendix 4: Known Populations and Family Trees of Indigenous Settlements Encountered (spelling of "tamouchi" in line with the original reports by Franssen-Herderschee 1905a and 1905b and De Goeje 1908)