



Illustration 1. Willem de Vlamingh's ships with black swans at the entrance to the Swan River, Western Australia, coloured engraving by Johannes van Keulen, 1726.

Brief Account of the Principal Events on the Voyage of the Frigate *De Geelvink* to the Southland (Australia), 20 March 1697

CONTENT

- 1 Introduction 2
- 2 Transcription of the Dutch text 4
- 3 English translation 7
- 4 Colophon 9
- 5 Folio images 10





1 Introduction

Roelof van Gelder, “Brief Account of the Principal Events on the Voyage of the Frigate *De Geelvink* to the Southland (Australia), 20 March 1697”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 2. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2013.

BY ROELOF VAN GELDER

‘About one o’clock in the afternoon, we anchored in the roadstead of Batavia, with five fathoms depth. God be praised for a safe journey’. These lines were written by Captain Willem de Vlamingh on March 20 1697 at the end of the log which he had kept during his expedition to the Southland (Australia). On the same day, a clerk in Batavia reported De Vlamingh’s arrival, as we can read in the following document.

This marked the final act of an expedition of three ships which had sailed eleven months earlier, in May 1696. After long deliberations, the VOC directors in the Netherlands had decided to organize this expedition. Three goals were set. In the first place, the ships had to look for a VOC ship, *De Ridderschap van Holland*, which had departed from Flushing in 1693. She had reached Cape Town and had continued her voyage to Batavia from there, but since then nothing had been heard of her. Although this had all happened three years before, not all hope had been abandoned of finding *De Ridderschap van Holland* and her crew. Maybe she had been stranded somewhere in the Indian Ocean on the shores of the islands of Amsterdam or St Paul, or on the west coast of Australia. Nevertheless, before investigating these places, De Vlamingh was ordered to sail to the Tristan da Cunha group in the South Atlantic.

All these islands and coasts had to be surveyed, described and meticulously mapped. A report was

expected which would outline the commercial opportunities for the Company. Over and above this, the expedition had a scientific aspect. At the request of the Amsterdam VOC director, the scholar Nicolaas Witsen, De Vlamingh and his men were to try to capture one or more inhabitants of Australia and transport them to Batavia or even to the Netherlands. They might possibly provide useful information about the land and its culture. Witsen also urged that an artist be attached to the crew.

After well-organized preparations, De Vlamingh commenced his voyage on the frigate *Geelvinck* accompanied by two smaller ships, the *Nijptang en Het Wezeltje*. A one hundred and ninety-eight man crew embarked on the ships, including the painter Victor Victorsz.

The expedition began successfully. Tristan da Cunha was reached and explored. From there the ships sailed for Cape Town, where three Asian persons were taken on board. De Vlamingh expected them to serve as translators in Australia. The islands of Amsterdam and St Paul were surveyed and after that, for almost two months, the west coast of Australia was investigated and mapped. However, although they came upon some wreckage of Dutch ships, they found no trace of *De Ridderschap van Holland* or her crew. From Australia the ships sailed to Batavia.

The goal of the expedition had been achieved, but only just. The lost ship was not found and, although De Vlamingh could give full reports of the geographical and physical aspects of the places he had inspected, as well as the flora, fauna and inhabitants, the directors were disappointed that he had not investigated larger areas of the Southland. De Vlamingh’s conclusion was that Australia would not in any way be useful to the Company. In this wild, dry and desolate land no



INTRODUCTION



Illustration 2. The (VOC) sailors meet the residents of New Holland (Australia), Caspar Luyken, 1698.

minerals were to be found and commercial relations with the inhabitants carried absolutely no prospect of any profit. After reporting extensively, De Vlamingh returned to the Netherlands. His voyage was the last VOC expedition of any importance to Australasia.

This expedition is extremely well documented. All the instructions have been preserved in the VOC archives in The Hague, the names of the

crew members are all known, the logs of the three ships have survived, as well as the maps and the watercolours of Victor Victorsz. These last are kept in the Maritime Museum Rotterdam.

The whole expedition is extensively analysed in G.G. Schilder, *De ontdekkingsreis van Willem Hesselz. de Vlamingh in de jaren 1696-1697*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1976.



2 Transcription of the Dutch text

Roelof van Gelder, “Brief Account of the Principal Events on the Voyage of the Frigate *De Geelvink* to the Southland (Australia), 20 March 1697”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 20 MAART 1697 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL. 231.]

ARRIVEMENT VAN 'T FREGUAT DE GEELVINK ALHIER TER RHEDE; KORT VERHAEL VAN DE PRINCIPALE VOORVALLEN IN DESSELS REYSE NA 'T ZUYTLAND. Tegens middag arriveerde uyt de havenen onses lieven vaderlands alhier ter rheede het frequat de Geelvink, ten eynde onder den 17e deser vermeld benevens de hoeker de Nijptangh en 't galjoot het Weseltje voor de kamer Amsterdam in zee gelopen, den 3e may van 't voorleden jaer 1696 onder het gesag van den schipper Willem de Vlamingh en den adsistent Joannes Bremer, voorts bemant met 101 zeevarenden en 33 militairen, aangaande welke reyse en wat ten principalen gedurende deselve van aanmerkinge is comen voor te vallen, uyt 't gehoude journael van den voormelte schipper De Vlamingh¹ cortelijck alhier werd genoteert. Dat se den 17e augusty daaraan volgende gearriveert waren aan de eylanden van Tristan d'Acinha, leggende op de hooghte van 37 graden 14 minuten, verdeelt in verscheyde eylanden ontrent een mijle meer en minder van malcanderen, dat men de twee grootste door de sterke brandinge niet² hebbende konnen aandoen, alleen maer aan eene der kleynste te lande was geweest, sijnde bewassen met halm of lang gras, voorsien van goet drinkwater en veel [fol. 232] peguwyn vogels, mitsgaders de zee daeromtrent seer visrijk 'twelk nae hun meyninge alleen waart was in de somer die eylanden aan te doen, alsoo sulckx alsdan met minder gevaer en met meerder gemak dan in de voorschreve tijd soude konnen geschieden, hebbende nu aldaer swaare kouw en ruw weer moeten uytstaan.

Sijnde voorts den 21e ditto daer vandaan vertrocken, ende den 7e september aan Cabo de Goede Hoop verscheenen, mitsgaders den 27e october van daer geseylt.

Inmiddens soo daer te lande, als op andere schepen overgegaan zijnde 6 zeevarenden, en 1 militairen, dog daerentegen weder bekomen hebbende 5 zeevarenden, 1 militairen en 3 inlanders, de laestgemelde om aan 't Suytland bij ontmoetinge van menschen omtrent de spraek te passe te komen. Dat men verders den 29e november de eylanden St. Paulo en Amsterdam gelegen op 38 gr. 31 minuten Z. breete belopen, het laeste omgeseylt, mitsgaders aan het eerstgemelte soo bequamen rhee off ankerplaats gevonden had als aan Cabo de Goede Hoop in de Tafelbaay; dat dese eylanden veel bosschagie en boomen voortbraghten van de dikte van een man om de middel, en dat men er oversulx een seer groot getal scheepen met branthoud soude connen gerieven. Ook had men op hetselve niet alleen gevonden verscheyde spruyten vers water, maer ook

¹ G.G. Schilder, *De ontdekkingsreis van Willem Hesselsz. de Vlamingh in de jaren 1696-1697 met inleiding, journaal en bijlagen uitgegeven door G.G. Schilder*, 2 volumes. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1976.

² Er staat: 'in'.



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

een waterwel uyt de gront opkomende, soo heet, dat men vissen in andere niet verre van daer gelegene binnenwateren ofte poelen, gevangen sijnde, daerin gaar hadde konnen kookken.

Dat men den 5en december wijders van daer vertrocken was nae het Suytlant, en het-selve den 29 dito op de hoogte van 31 gr. 17 minuten aangedaan hebbende, waren langs geseylt tot op 21 gr, en onderentusschen soo naauwkeurigh doorsoght en bekruyst had, als mogelijk was geweest, hebbende hun eerste leghplaets aldaer begrepen [fol. 233] aan het misteyland voorsien van veele wilde dogh riekende boomen en aan de vaste wal gevonden, en met kleen vaartuygh ten eynde toe opgevaren een revier wel 10 mijlen landwaert in streckende, maer daerontrent niet van aanmerkinge vernomen, dan een oude plank gelijkende voor 't naest³ van de verdubbelingh van een schip te wesen, en verre op 't land twee swarte menschen, ook eenige seer kleene hutjes met riet overdekt, dogh vervallen en daer niemant in was.

Buyten dien had men de kust al langs stevenende na de gelegentheynt presenteerde, verscheyde malen te lande geweest, 5 à 6 mijlen weegs gemarcheert, en hier en daer wel eenige vuuren ontmoet, maer ook al niemant daerontrent, dogh op de hoogte van 28 graden 10 minuten waren aan strant gesien 10 swarte menschen van gemene stature, geheel naekt, en sonder geweer, maer door de branding belet sijnde daer aan lant te komen, had men haer niet konnen begaan, behalven dat se oock seer schuw ten eersten wegh gelopen waren.

Hebbende voorts aldaer op de hoogte van 25 graden 37 minuten gelegen op Dirk Hertogsrheede, een seer bequame plaets voor schepen om te ankeren, en daer aan land op een heuvel ofte hoogte gevonden een neer- ofte omgevalle paal, met een tinne schootel, volgens hetgeen er op gegraveerd stond door de overheden van 't schip *Den Eendraght* in hunne uytreyse na dese gewesten in den jare 1616 aldaer opgeregt; sijnde in plaetse van deselve, die men herwaerts heeft gebragt, aldaer in gelijker voegen weer gestelt een andere tinne schotel met het vereyste opschrift en notitie ten belange van gemelte schip *Den Eendraght* en de voyagie van dese dry scheepjes, te weten de name derselve en dies overheeden, den datum der aancomste en vertreck waer vandaan, en herwaerts heenen etc., wesende verders buyten 'tgeene [fol. 234] verhaelt is aldaer ter kuste niet voornaems ontdekt, insonderheyt niet eenigh mensch, teeken of overblijfsel van het vermiste schip *De Ridderschap*.

't Voornaemste oogmerk der heeren principalen ontrent dese besendinge, sijnde het land in sigh selfs, voor sooveel men had konnen bespeuren, woest, sandigh en van weynigh vruchtbaarheid, sijnde wel eenige gom- en lakboomen gesien en monsters daarvan medegebragt, maer deselve van geen beduyden ofte waarde bevonden wesende, geen ontdekt dan seeker soort van bruyng gepluymde swanen, mitsgaders kasuarisse, en tijgers, dogh de twee laeste maer bij presumptie uyt de poot-teekens, gemerkt eygentlijk geene daarvan sijn gesien.

³ 'Nog het meest'.



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

Hebbende in het oversteken van 't Zuydland op de hoogte van 21 graden nae 't eyland Java den 21e february deses jaers nae 't gene hiervoor reets is vermeld van 5e deser op 10 graden 57 minuten ontmoet het eyland Mony, 'twelk en passant aangedaan en beset bevonden wierd met veelerley geboomte, waeraff men oordeelde eenige bequaam om masten van gemaekt te connen werden, nevens veel palmytboomen, sonder evenwel ten belange van de eerste soort yets speciaels te noteren wegens hare hooghte, dikte, aart en eygenschappen van hout en 't gene men om over haer bequaamheyt tot voorsz. gebruyk te oordelen alvorens soude behoren te weten.

Sijnde wijders op dit bodempje gedurende de reyse overleden 11 zeevaarende, sulx alhier nogh te lande brengt 89 zeevarende, 33 militairen en 3 inlanders ofte in alles 125 zielen.



3 English translation

Roelof van Gelder, “Brief Account of the Principal Events on the Voyage of the Frigate *De Geelvink* to the Southland (Australia), 20 March 1697”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 20 MARCH 1697 [BEGINNING WITH FOL. 231.]

Around midday on the 17th of this month, the frigate *De Geelvink* arrived here in the roads [of Batavia] from our beloved fatherland. On 3 May of the previous year 1696, she had set sail with the hooker *De Nijptangh* and the galliot *De Weseltje*, under the auspices of the Amsterdam Chamber, under the command of Commander Willem de Vlamingh and his second-in command, First Mate Joannes Bremer, with a crew of 101 sailors and thirty-three soldiers. Noted here in brief are the principal events which came to pass on this voyage, from the log kept by the aforesaid Commander De Vlamingh.¹ On the following 17 August they arrived at the island group of Tristan de Cuñha, situated at 37 degrees 14 minutes South Latitude, composed of various islands separated from each other by approximately a mile of sea. They were unable to reach the two largest because of the pounding surf but they did visit one of the smallest which was covered with long grass, supplied with good drinking water and many penguins. The sea there teems with fish, a reason which would make it worthwhile to visit the islands only in the summer as this would be less dangerous and could be done more easily than at the time of their aforementioned attempt, because they had to brave severe cold and rough weather.

They left there on the 21st of the same month and appeared off the Cape of Good Hope on 7 September and sailed again from there on 27 October.

At that time, on the other ships also, embarked six sailors and one soldier (who had been there on land). But those who joined us were five sailors, one soldier and three natives, the last-mentioned could be useful as interpreters in meetings with people in the Southland. Then on 29 November they reached the islands of St Paul and Amsterdam situated at 38 degrees and 31 minutes South Latitude. They sailed around the last-mentioned but at the aforementioned there was a suitable roadstead or anchorage like that in Table Bay at the Cape of Good Hope. These islands are rich in shrubs and trees as thick as a man's waist, which would make it possible to supply a great many ships with firewood. Also on these same islands various fresh water springs can be found, not to mention a well of water surging up from the ground so hot that it is possible to cook fish caught in inland waters or pools properly in it.

They departed from there again on 5 December to sail for the Southland, and made landfall at 31 degrees 17 minutes on 29th of the same month. Then sailing up to 21 degrees, they meticulously explored and investigated as far as this was possible and

¹ G.G. Schilder, *De ontdekkingsreis van Willem Hesselsz. de Vlamingh in de jaren 1696-1697 met inleiding, journaal en bijlagen* uitgegeven door G.G. Schilder, 2 volumes. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1976.



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

anchored first at *Misteyland* (Fog/Rottneest Island), mainly covered with trees growing wild but pleasantly scented. Reaching the mainland, they sailed along a river in a small craft going at least 10 miles inland, but saw nothing of interest, other than an old plank, closely resembling a plank from the double inner skin of a ship's hull, and in the far distance two black people and a few tiny huts covered with thatch, but ramshackle and unlivable.

Then, while sailing along the coast whenever the opportunity presented itself, they landed and marched hither and thither five or six miles, coming across some fires but nobody in the vicinity. However, at 25 degrees 10 minutes ten black people were seen on the beach. They were of medium build and stark naked and unarmed, but as the surf prevented any landing and they were unable to go ashore there, so the [black people] could not be followed and they were also extremely timid and fled away at the first opportunity.

They then reached Dirk Hartog's Roads (Cape Inscription on Dirk Hartog Island off Shark Bay) at 25 degrees 37 minutes, a very suitable harbour in which ships could anchor. When they landed they found on a hill or mound a fallen stake on which was a pewter plate, which according to what was engraved on it had been erected there by the officers of the ship *De Eendragt* on her outward-bound voyage in 1616. In the place of the one which had been brought there, they set up another pewter plate with an appropriate inscription and a note about the significance of the said ship *De Eendragt* and of the voyage of these three small vessels, to wit, their names and their officers, the dates of their arrival and departure. Furthermore, apart from those mentioned on the coast no apparent trace, in particular of people, signs or wreckage of the missing ship *De Ridderschap*, was found.

The main concern of the voyage dispatched by the Gentlemen Seventeen was the country itself, which as far as could be discerned was deserted, sandy and not very fertile. Some resinous and lacquer-bearing trees were observed and samples of these were brought back, but were not found to be of any [commercial] significance or value. A certain swan with brown plumage was discovered as were cassowaries and tigers [sic!]. The latter two are only assumptions as only their pug marks were seen, not they themselves.

Having set course from the Southland to the island of Java at 21 degrees on 21 February this same year, after what is mentioned above, on 5th of this month, at 10 degrees 57 minutes they came across the island of Moni, where they put in and found that it was covered with forest. Some trees were judged suitable for masts. There were also plenty of palm trees, but [they are] not as important as the aforementioned sort, without noting anything special about their height, thickness, nature and the characteristics of their wood, which should permit men to judge their suitability for the use for the aforesaid masts.

During the voyage on this small vessel eleven sailors died, and hence eighty-nine crew members, thirty-three soldiers and three natives, or 125 souls in all landed here.



4 Colophon

Title	Roelof van Gelder, "Brief Account of the Principal Events on the Voyage of the Frigate <i>De Geelvink</i> to the Southland (Australia), 20 March 1697". In: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta</i> , document 2. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2013.
Editor-in-chief	Hendrik E. Niemeijer
Project coordination	Yerry Wirawan, Muhammad Haris Budiawan
Document selection	Hendrik E. Niemeijer
Archival Source	ANRI HR 2517, fols 231-234
Illustration selection	Muhammad Haris Budiawan
Illustration sources	1. Willem de Vlamingh's ships with black swans at the entrance to the Swan River, Western Australia, coloured engraving by Johannes van Keulen, 1726. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vlamingh_ships_at_the_Swan_River,_Keulen_1796.jpg 2. The (VOC) sailors meet the residents of New Holland (Australia), Caspar Luyken, 1698. Collection Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Object Nr. RP-P-1896-A-19368-1316. https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/search/objecten?q=Ontmoeting+van+matrozen+met+de+inwoners+van+Nieuw-Holland+&p=1&ps=12&ii=0#/RP-P-1896-A-19368-1316,0
Transcription	Risma Manurung
Indonesian translation	Tjandra Mualim
English translation	Rosemary Robson
Introduction	Roelof van Gelder
Final editing	Peter Carey, Hendrik E. Niemeijer
Layout	Beny Oktavianto
Release Date	September 2013
Harta Karun Category	3.2 Ships, Crews, Voyages and Wrecks
ISBN	xxx-12345678910
Copyright	Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia and The Corts Foundation

5 Folio image

This is the first page of the original document. All folios may be viewed on the website via the Tab 'Images' in the Harta Karun section or in the Digital Archive Collections.

Archival Source, ANRI HR 2517, fols 231-234.

