Renzo S. Duin, *The Humble Ethnographer: Lodewijk Schmidt's Accounts from Three Voyages in Amazonian Guiana*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2020. xiii + 205 pp. (Cloth US\$153.00)

Lodewijk Schmidt's "Verslag van drie reizen naar de Bovenlandse Indianen," "*bewerkt*" by Gerold Stahel, was published in 1942. Dutch anthropologist Renzo Duin, a specialist on the Wayana, now offers an English translation with extensive commentary.

An introductory chapter explores whether Schmidt, a literate Christian Saamaka from the large town of Ganze, or the better educated Stahel (head of Suriname's agricultural experiment station) was actually the author of these accounts, as well as the political/power issues raised by this question. Although no original manuscript has been found, and it is possible that Schmidt transmitted his account to Stahel only orally, Duin—reasonably, I think—opts for considering Schmidt the primary author of the text. And he makes the intriguing argument that the three voyages (*reizen*) were not intended as "scientific expeditions," but rather as top-secret missions to explore Nazi emplacements near the Suriname-Brazil border that were being set up by the German military at the beginning of World War II—which is why Stahel so heavily monitored what was published in this politically fraught period.

Schmidt's reports themselves which, along with Duin's supporting footnotes, make up less than half of the book, will be useful to specialists of Suriname's Indigenous Peoples, providing data on everything from historical demography and migrations to rituals, and from crops and village layouts to disease. Duin's various mini-chapters, before and after these texts, add considerable context to what are essentially travel journal entries by Schmidt.

Not surprisingly, my criticisms of Duin's contributions concern Maroons. One issue concerns his choice to suppress contemporary terms that were used throughout the original but are now "politically incorrect." For example, he replaces *bosneger* (which he says includes "the n-word" and which he sees as "laden with colonialism and racism" [p. 86]), with "Maroon." But I wonder whether keeping *bosneger* might not have better captured the spirit of the 1942 report. More importantly, Duin, whose ethnographic work has centered on Indigenous peoples, is on shaky ground in his more general understandings of Maroons. He speculates, without having consulted key resources, that "The fact that Lodewijk Schmidt had taken on a Western name and sang the Dutch National Anthem and Christmas songs is indicative of an assimilationist gesture, either forced, voluntary, or complexly both" (p. 4). But we know a great deal about German Moravian attempts to convert Saamakas beginning in 1765, including the founding of the village that became Ganze, and the people who

lived there. The book explicitly devoted to these subjects (my own *Alabi's World* [1990]), which Duin doesn't mention, would have provided significant context about Schmidt's worldview, for example his feelings of superiority regarding the "heathen" Okanisi he interacted with on his voyages, of whom he wrote, "The Indigenous communities already knew me from my earlier expeditions and know that *I* am not a cheap Maroon who attempts to obtain everything of value they possess" (p. 110). Surprisingly, Duin himself seems to share this view, writing that "The humble nature of the Saramaka, and of Lodewijk Schmidt in particular, is in sharp contrast to the rather conceited nature of the Ndyuka [Okanisi]" (p. 4).

He also writes that "In the Saramaka language the 'r' is silent, and therefore the modern spelling is Saramaka"—I assume he meant to write "Saamaka" here. "Yet," he continues, "I maintain the spelling Saramaka, which should be pronounced 'Sa'amaka'" (p. 11). What nonsense! One can't speak of a "silent 'r'" in Saamakatongo when that phoneme is simply not in the language. And I would have expected a 2020 book to respect the request of the Saamaka People (since 2010) for scholars and other outsiders to spell their name as "Saamaka." Duin discusses the death of explorer Eilerts de Haan, far upriver in 1910 during the Corantijn Expedition, reporting that, years later, Schmidt "shed a tear" over his tombstone (p. 12); he also claims that "the Saramaka had refused aid to the Corantijn expedition" (p. 13). But he seems unaware that a Saamaka guide actually led that pioneer expedition and that his account of De Haan's death is readily available (my *Travels with Tooy*, pp. 112–14). Duin also writes that "In 1964, Gansee and about two dozen other Saramaka villages ... were flooded" by the construction of Alcoa's hydroelectric dam (p. 13), but the correct count is 43.

Duin plans English-language translations of other early twentieth-century Dutch and late-nineteenth-century French expedition reports on the Indians of the Guianas. Some of these indeed contain useful snippets of amateur ethnography for future researchers to build on. But they deserve more straightforward and better-organized presentation than in this first volume.

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