

INTRODUCTION.

This volume contains the account of three journeys which have appeared in the second volume of Dr. Godée Molsbergen's *Reizen in Zuid Afrika*, a book which has long been out of print and is still in great demand. This is an initial justification for the reprint of some of the journeys which it contains and specially that of Wikar. Permission to do so has been kindly given by Dr. Godée Molsbergen and the republication has received his cordial assent.

They appear here for the first time in an English translation together with the original Dutch texts. Topographical notes precede all other notes, however necessary. It is the conviction of the present editor that the editing of a *journey* necessitates, in the first place, indicating as exactly as possible, and by present geographical designations, where the traveller went. This can most effectively be done by retracing, by means of the indications provided in the text, the itinerary followed by the traveller and by recognising personally its various stages. This method, incidentally, often leads to the identification of old and obsolete place names. It has been followed for the three above-mentioned journeys, which were, more or less, directed to the same part of the country. This is a second justification for their reprint. There is an additional reason for reprinting the journal of W. van Reenen which is mentioned below.

WIKAR'S BERIGT.

In Wikar's Report or *Berigt* we have an account of the daily life and adventures of the first European who is known to have journeyed along the Orange River.

Hendrik Jacob Wikar was a Swede born at Gottenberg, who took service with the Dutch East India

Company at Amsterdam and arrived at the Cape in 1773 as *soldaat* (soldier). This office did not necessarily imply military duties. For nearly two years he was writer (*schrijver*) to the Honourable Company's Hospital, a large building then situate between the present Wale and Church Streets at the upper end of Adderley Street in Cape Town. He earned nine gulden per month. Wikar took to gambling and card playing. He neglected his work and became indebted to various friends to the extent of one hundred Rixdollars.

By one of these friends, to whom he owed twenty-two Rixdollars, he was publicly insulted in the street. Overcome by shame, and desperate, he deserted from the Company's service on April 4th, 1775. He resolved to disappear inland, "not anticipating," he says, "all the peril and wretchedness I must encounter during the 4 years and 6 months that I remained undetected." He knew that no deserter was safe from the long arm of the D.E.I. Company, "so far as the Country was inhabited by Christians," and fled beyond the settled districts of the Kamiesberg. The well watered valleys of this fine mountain range were already becoming dotted with the farms of the early burgers. Of Wikar's adventures between April, 1775, and September, 1778, we know nothing; we meet him for the first time in his diary on the banks of the Orange River at or near Goodhouse, where to-day, in desert isolation, there is a flourishing citrus farm owned by Mr. C. Weidner. Only those who have travelled between Springbok or Steinkopf in Namaqualand and Goodhouse will be able to realise the waste of sand and stony mountain which Wikar must have traversed to arrive at this lonely place. It was then remarkable only as the site of a ford or drift used by the Hottentots for entering Great Namaqualand. An approach to the ford—wide, gently sloping, floored by deep red sand in which grows tufted Bushman grass—winds for miles through the clustering mountains and kopjes which jealously guard the Great River. This approach crosses the dead valley of Koa—

the name of which means sand dunes—and winds beside mysterious Vuurdood, a pyramidal peak on which there rests, owing to some peculiar composition of its rock, an eternal shadow though the sky be ever cloudless. The Hottentots called the ford *Gū-daos*, or Sheep Path, and Wikar on his map has noted this all-too-rare and easy approach to it as Goedous Opening.

So far as is known the Orange River before this time had been crossed by Europeans only twice. It was then known as the Eyn, Gariép or more commonly as the Groote Rivier. It was not until 1779 that it was named the Orange River by the Dutch Colonel of Scots descent, Robert Jacob Gordon.

At some time before Wikar set out upon his second journey along the river on April 1st, 1779, he had sent a petition (*smeekbrief*) to Governor van Plettenberg. He entrusted it to some Hottentots to give to the nearest European farmer. In his petition he asked humbly for pardon and forgiveness for his desertion. He told the Governor that, in his service, "he had made a collection of natural objects and rarities," and that during his wanderings he had kept a journal which contained notes of the ceremonies, customs and beliefs of three hitherto unknown tribes. These were the Eynicquas, who lived on the islands of the Great River and who have now disappeared or become absorbed, and the tribes now known as the Koranna Hottentots and the Briqua (BaThlaping) who are of Bantu origin.

In June, 1779, Wikar returned from his second journey along the Orange River to his "house," which we are only told was "down along the river" (*onderaan die rivier*), and he there received the Governor's permit or pass authorizing his return to the Cape. This had reached him through the good offices of the Heer Oloff de Wet, Landdrost of Stellenbosch, who later helped Wikar to produce for the Governor's perusal an "improved" edition of his diary which is now preserved in the Cape Archives. Wikar set out on his return to the Cape on July 11th, 1779, and signed at "Cabo"

on September 18th, 1779, the Report which forms the substance of this book. Seven days later he was pardoned and reinstated in the Company's service at his former wage by a Resolution of the Council of Policy¹⁾ which includes the remarkable statement that Wikar, although absent from his post, had not been out of the territory of the Honourable Company. This statement is remarkable because it was not until 1805 that the Buffels River or Koussie of Namaqualand was made the northern boundary of the Colony. The research made in tracing Wikar's route has, however, revealed the surprising fact that even before Wikar's journey the D.E.I. Company had granted to burgers at least three cattle stations (*leg-plaatsen* or more correctly, *leenings-plaatsen*) upon the banks of the Groote (Orange) River in Namaqualand. One of these was the present site of Pella, which Wikar calls Kamas Rivier. The Dutch text of Wikar's Berigt has been to ethnologists an important source for the customs, ceremonials and *rites de passage* among the Hottentots, and to philologists of great interest as a source from which to study a facet of the development of Afrikaans, but it has not hitherto appeared in English. No previous account of his journey has been published which explains to the reader *where* Wikar went. No

¹⁾ *Resolution, D'Anno 1779, Vol. 71, pp. 387—389, Cape Archives.*

Saturdag den 25 Sept. . . . „en dus niet uyt het territoir der E.Comp.^{ie} geweeken is.” Wikar and twenty-nine other deserters were summoned, during their absence, to appear before the Council of Justice on Jan. 4th, 1776. A month later the Council banished for ever the accused from the Cape and its dependencies. On Sept. 9th, 1779, his petition for pardon was considered by the Court which referred the matter for legal opinion to the Independent Fiscal, W. C. Boers, and ordered Wikar to appear for judgment at the next sitting. Judgment was given in Wikar's favour on Sept. 23rd, after the arguments advanced by the Independent Fiscal had been heard. The Council of Policy presided over by the Governor J. van Plettenberg met two days later and re-appointed Wikar as a “soldier” in the service of the Honourable Company. A transcription of the original documents will be found in Appendix B., p. 210.

study of the numerous names of places and plants, mentioned in his journal, has hitherto been made. The Hottentot place-names were believed to have fallen into disuse and become lost. Tribal names appear in his journal which are only recognizable with difficulty. To know that Wikar's *Kamingou* are so well known a tribe as the Bondelswarts (!*Gami#nun*) or that his *Chabou#* are the Bushmen (!/!*Habu*) lends interest to his story and makes it read in an intelligible form. Journeys made, sometimes through almost inaccessible country, with the object of tracing Wikar's route along the Orange River, have established the facts that :

1. Wikar travelled approximately three hundred miles along the river from Goodhouse in Namaqualand to Koegas, which lies between Upington and Prieska. See map at the end of book.

2. A few of the place-names in his narrative are even now known to Bastard Hottentots along the river, e.g. Wikar's *Kougaas* is the well at Zeekoesteek, and Zeekoesteek is still known to some of the Nama speaking natives as !*Kao#as* ("Abundance of hippopotami") from !*Kaos* (hippopotamus).

3. On September 25th, 1778, Wikar wrote: "We have left the river and trekked from Kaykoop to Hougay because the stream took a turn to the north and our course must lie east." To decide where Wikar had left the river, and to trace his cross-country route to rejoin it near Aughrabies Falls, presented the most difficult topographical problem in his journal. He did not leave the river at Coboop. Coboopfontein is Wikar's *Chabous*. His point of departure was at Beenbreek, the only place, other than Coboop, at which the Orange "takes a turn to the north"; and Beenbreek was Kaykoop or *Gei-//#* meaning Great Death. Between Beenbreek and Gamceip near the Falls, for approximately 70 miles it is a physical impossibility to follow, for any distance, the banks of the Orange River. It is here shut in by mountains which are terrible in their lonely ruggedness and the surrounding

country is a part of that great finger of desolation which the Kalahari has pointed across the river towards the heart of the Cape Province. The half-a-score of humble dwelling houses, farmsteads of the enormous farms which abut on the river, do not lie upon its banks. They are as a rule situated beside springs, four, six or even ten miles from the Orange River to which there is access through the mountains by defiles or kloofs which descend sharply riverwards. Descending from the high plateau through these hot defiles to the low-lying river is both fatiguing and unpleasant. The grassy flats described by Wikar are knee high in grass only after the rare rains, and for the greater part of most years are a desolation of red Kalahari sand. East of these flats upon the high plateau there runs a chain of mountains which lie at a right angle to Wikar's route. This range is marked *Koning Hendrik de IV Berg* upon the map of the Gordon Collection, a part of which is here reproduced; in 1826 it was named the Morpeth Hills by the English traveller George Thompson. Both these names have fallen into disuse and the chain as an entity appears to be nameless at the present day. Its higher peaks, however, have names attached to them which they in turn have given, or perhaps received from, the large farms on which they lie. These are Ariams (Hot Water), Witwater, IJzerberg (Iron Mountain), Schuitleip (Boat Rock), and at the southern extremity, Tafelkop and Praamberg (Breast Mount). This was the "mountain" which Wikar crossed on September 25th when on his way to the spring at Hongais (now, Lower Swartmodder). In the opinion of the editor there is little doubt that he crossed it at the IJzerberg, a mountain of black ironstone and manganese ore which lies a few miles south of the farmstead now called Zwart Oup, where graphite has lately been discovered.

4. Buffelskop, marked upon his map (see Wikar's Map, p. 192) but not mentioned in his narrative, was identified as the kopje at Eenduin (Enkeleduin) whose

krantzes resemble the buttressed and curving horns of a buffalo. Locally this kopje is now nameless; it lies half a mile east of Enkeleduin Station beside the narrow-gauge railway, which of late years has been constructed from Upington to supply the needs of the growing and flourishing settlement at Kakamas. It is probably not a mere coincidence that the adjacent farm is to this day called Kousas, a name like Koussie, derived from /Gaob, buffalo.

Wikar's *Berigt*²⁾ appeared in print for the first time in 1916 in Dr. E. C. Godée Molsbergen's *Reizen in Zuid Afrika in de Hollandse Tyd. Deel II. pp. 78-138*. For a considerable time this fine volume of the Linschoten Society has been out of print and is now almost unobtainable. Contemporary accounts of Wikar's wanderings exist in three Dutch manuscripts in addition to the one transcribed by Dr. Godée Molsbergen. Two similar books in manuscript were prepared by Wikar with the assistance of Landdrost Olof de Wet, one was sent to Holland, is now in the Hague Archives and is referred to by Dr. Godée Molsbergen as the "Editio ad usum Gubernatoris."³⁾ Its companion, a manuscript of 26 folios with a folded map, is preserved in the Cape Archives. This journal, "enlarged and brought into orderly style," is written in High Dutch which lacks the freshness and originality of language of Wikar's personal narrative as printed in *Reizen in Zuid Afrika*.⁴⁾ Its importance to the South African is that in it Wikar's map, here reproduced for the first time, has been preserved, and that it contains information, obtained by de Wet from Wikar, which does not appear in the *Berigt*. When mention in this

²⁾ Rijksarchief, 's Gravenhage. Kol. Aanw. 1914. Van Plettenberg Archief No. 29.

³⁾ This has appeared in a German translation, not annotated topographically, in *Die ältesten Reiseberichte über Deutsch-Südwestafrika* by Prof. Dr. Eduard Moritz. (*Mitteilungen aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten. Bd. 31. Berlin 1918.*)

⁴⁾ The difference in style and language is discussed by Prof. Franken. See p. 239 et seq.

book is made of the "Editio ad usum Gubernatoris" now preserved in the Cape Archives it is referred to as A.

A fourth manuscript is also known. Three months after Wikar's reinstatement in the service of the D.E.I. Company he wrote a *Relaas* or Relation of his adventures for Hendrik Cloete, of Nooitgedacht, Stellenbosch. This is dated December 31, 1779, and is a short, racy resumé of his longer *Berigten* or Reports, but it contains some valuable information about Wikar's reasons for desertion. Cloete sent the manuscript to the son of the Cape-born Governor, Hendrik Swellengrebel, who had retired in 1751 and died in 1763 at Utrecht in Holland. In 1926 Eerw. A. Dreyer, Archivaris Synodi of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Province, while at Arnhem, was shewn this manuscript which had been preserved by the Swellengrebel family. Recognizing its value and interest to South Africans, Mr. Dreyer published the *Relaas* under the title "'n Interessante Reisverhaal" in *Het Zoeklicht Deel iv.* 1926. When mention in this book is made of Eerw. A. Dreyer's publication, it will be briefly called the *Relaas*.

In addition to the assistance which Wikar's map provides, light is thrown upon his journey by a study of Map 3 from the Collection made by Col. Gordon between 1777 and 1790. (*Gordon-verzameling, Ryks Prentenkabinet te Amsterdam.*) That portion of this map which shews the course of the Orange River is here reproduced.

During Wikar's lifetime an English gentleman toured throughout England; wrote a journal of his travels in twenty-four manuscript volumes; became (for two weeks) the Fifth Viscount Torrington, and then died. In the first six of his volumes, which have now been printed, he succeeded in making an observation which bears repetition here. He wrote, "all diaries, let them be ever so bad, will be read with avidity hereafter."

Wikar's keen insight and interest in all he observed

led him to write a good diary in language so quaintly his own, that a mere translation cannot hope to reproduce its nuances. There is food for reflection in the fact that what was written by this obscure clerk is of greater importance to posterity than all that has been preserved of the writings of the august and kind-hearted Governor, who pardoned him.

THE RELAAS OF JACOBUS COETSE JANSZ : 1760.

This is the narrative of the first European who is officially known to have crossed the Orange River. No contemporary copy of this Narration has been preserved in the Cape Archives. It was first published by Dr. Godée Molsbergen in 1916 in *Reizen in Z.A.*, Deel II, p. 18-22.⁵) It is at the present day possible to explore with ease Coetsé's route in South-West Africa by following the //Houm River (called by Coetsé the Leeuwen Rivier) from its Orange River junction to a little north of Warmbad, S.W.A. Coetsé could not write, but despite the stilted language in which his journey is reported by the Secretary of the Council of Policy, it is one of great interest. His report that he had heard of a people with long hair and wearing linen clothes gave rise, a year later, to the expedition of Hendrik Hop. The translation of this journal is topographically annotated.

THE JOURNAL OF MR. WILLEM VAN REENEN : 1791.

In 1889 there appeared in *Het Zuid-Afrikaansche Tijdschrift* two unsigned and unannotated articles entitled "*Uit de Archieven*" (From the Archives). The first of these was the Journal of Mr. Willem van Reenen. The document or manuscript in the Cape Archives, from which this journal had been transcribed, has been unknown for many years to those interested, in spite of

⁵) Transcribed from the contemporary copy in the Hague Archives (*Kol. Arch. No. 4206, fol. 236—241*).

searches made for it. In 1932 it was re-discovered by Prof. Dr. J. L. M. Franken of the University of Stellenbosch,⁶⁾ who compared this manuscript with the Journal as printed in *Het Zuid-Afrikaansche Tijdschrift*, from which it was reprinted in the second volume of *Reizen in Zuid-Afrika*. He found that many fundamental errors of transcription and omission had occurred in the *Tijdschrift*.⁷⁾ The journal is here reproduced from the original manuscript in *Bylagen: verslag van Nederburgh en Frykenius, Deel II, pp. 1041—'61, Vol. 696*, Cape Archives. Sentences omitted in the *Tijdschrift* account have been enclosed in brackets; for reasons of space the notes appear in English only, as in the case of Wikar's Report and Coetsé's Narrative.

Mr. W. van Reenen, of Rondebosch, and his brothers Sebastiaan Valentijn, Dirk and Jacob were well known figures at the Cape towards the end of the eighteenth century. Jacob in 1790-91 took part in the search for survivors of the wreck of the *Grosvenor* on the coast of Pondoland. In 1793 Dirk accompanied Sebastiaan Valentijn on the *Meermin* to Walfisch Bay, Willem and Sebastiaan Valentijn had been with the botanist William Paterson on his well-known journey inland. After Paterson's return and departure to Europe there were rumours current at the Cape that gold in vast quantities was to be found in South-West Africa. Mr. W. van Reenen at his own expense, but with the permission of the authorities, made a journey which lasted for nine months, from the Cape, across the Orange River, to a mountain or mountain range in Damaraland, and back. Near this mountain, which he named Rheniusberg, was welling up a "valuable hot spring," and in the neighbourhood there was a copper mine.

⁶⁾ In „*Bylagen: verslag van Nederburgh en Frijkenius, Tweede Deel, 1041—'61 (Kaapse Argief 696)*).

⁷⁾ Some of these are only differences in spelling and are possibly intentional, e.g. *nagt, plaats, met* for *nagd, plaads, med*. Others are of importance, e.g., *Gammoysrivier* for *Gammoprivier, Sougays of Asrivier* for *Sougap of Asrivier*; some disturb the sense of sentence, e.g., *vaartje Eyseloor* for *voorsz: Eyseloor*.

Commenting on this journey the historian Theal^{*)} says of this mountain: "In the diary of the expedition there are no indications by which the locality can be identified except those here given; but from an observation in another document, it is found to have been within easy reach of Walfisch Bay." The "other document" referred to by Mr. Theal was probably the journal kept by Sebastiaan Valentijn on his voyage in the *Meermin*. In this we are told that one of the party, the elephant hunter Pieter Pienaar, had landed at Walfisch Bay and for twelve days had followed the valley of a river inland, at first in a South-Easterly and East-South-Easterly and then in N.N. Easterly direction. Pienaar was then told by Hottentots whom he encountered that the mine for which he was searching was known to them; it had been visited by Christians the previous year, and it lay twelve or fourteen "schoften" away in a South-Easterly direction. The dry river bed which Pienaar followed can be unmistakably identified as that of the Swakop and not the Kuisib. The directions given him by the Hottentots indicate that the mine was situated in the direction of Rehoboth rather than of the present site of Windhoek. In tracing Willem van Reenen on his journey it will be seen that the evidence points also to the spring and mine being situated at Rehoboth, and that consequently the *Rhenusberg* of van Reenen's journal must be identified with the Siebels rather than with the Auas Mountains. The question is further dealt with in footnote 37, p. 310. Mr. van Reenen travelled by cape-cart to his farm Seekoevlei near the present Graafwater, and thence proceeded by ox-wagon. He brought back ore which was proved to contain copper. An analysis of this ore was made for the authorities by Bernardus von Dhen, Major of the Wurtemberg Regiment; his report made on January 4th, 1793, is contained in *Bylagen*, Vol. 696, pp. 1063—'65, in the Cape Archives.

^{*)} *Hist. of South Africa 1652 to 1795. Vol. II, p. 235.*

The editor wishes to express his gratitude to friends who have assisted him in the task of elucidating Wikar's Journal. Without their assistance the work could not have been completed.

Dr. H. Vedder, of Okahandja, South-West Africa, whose years of missionary labour have made him an expert scholar of the Hottentot (Nama and Kora) languages, has freely placed his great knowledge of the language, and early history of the tribes north of the Orange River, at the editor's service. Dr. Vedder generously did this at a time when he was engaged in completing his *Das Alte Südwestafrika* which appeared in print last year. Mr. H. J. C. Krapöhl, of Abbasas, Namaqualand, from his oasis in the desert which encloses the Lower Orange, has been indefatigable in procuring for identification botanical specimens which are mentioned by Wikar in his journal under their Nama names. Mr. Krapöhl's intimate knowledge of hundreds of miles of the course of the Orange River assisted in the identification of place names mentioned by Wikar which were hitherto quite forgotten. Prof. Dr. J. L. M. Franken has added a chapter on the language employed by Wikar. To Mr. I. M. Murray, Hon. Secretary of the Van Riebeeck Society, I am grateful for his careful revision of the translations of Coetsé's Narrative and Van Reenen's Journal. Dr. J. A. Engelbrecht of Stellenbosch University has assisted with a contribution on the ethnographical significance of Wikar and has revised the spelling of Kora words occurring in the footnotes. Thanks are due to Dr. J. Muir, of Riversdale, who read my manuscript and made valuable suggestions on botanical points; to Prof. R. H. Compton and the staff of the Bolus Herbarium for the identification of botanical specimens; and last but not least to my friend Mr. A. L. W. Hofmeyr, who accompanied the writer on many occasions through good and bad country when tracing the routes of these early African travellers.