

STUDIES ON THE FAUNA OF CURAÇAO AND OTHER
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H. E. VAN RIJGERSMA — A LITTLE-KNOWN
NATURALIST OF ST. MARTIN
(NETHERLANDS ANTILLES)

by

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In the second half of the nineteenth century an important contribution to our knowledge of the fauna of the Netherlands Antilles, and especially of St. Martin, was made by the medical officer of that island, H. E. VAN RIJGERSMA, whose name, however, has remained almost unknown to Dutch biologists. By assembling important zoological collections VAN RIJGERSMA enabled specialists to study the fauna of St. Martin and the neighbouring islands; as a result, this fauna was for a long time better known than that of many other West Indian islands.

From information kindly placed at my disposal by the Rijksarchief (Netherlands State Archives) and the Record Office of the Ministerie van Zaken Overzee (Netherlands Ministry of Affairs Overseas) it appears that HENDRIK ELING (or ELINGSZ.) VAN RIJGERSMA was born in 1834 or at the beginning of 1835, and was very probably of Frisian origin. It is not known where he studied; but he practised on the island of Marken, in the Netherlands, as doctor, surgeon and obstetrician, until the year 1863. By Royal Decree No. 60, dated 26 June 1863, VAN RIJGERSMA was appointed Government Physician on the Dutch West Indian island of St. Martin, where he went in the autumn of 1863 with his wife and two children. He filled this post on St. Martin until his death on 4 March 1877, only once returning on furlough to the Netherlands, from Spring 1873 till March 1874. He was married to MARIA HENRIETTA GRÄFING, probably from Amsterdam. At his death he left seven children. His widow continued to live on St. Martin until 1893, when she went back to the Netherlands with five of her children.

From his youth onwards, VAN RIJGERSMA was interested in natural history, and especially in molluscs. In a letter dated December 1868 to S. C. SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN, curator of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie at Leiden, he wrote: "eenige Oostindische soorten [Conchylien], doch weinig, kocht ik als

jongen van zeelieden tijdens mijn verblijf in Holland, en later praktiserende op het platteland was er geen gelegenheid Nederlandsche op te doen, eenige tellina's uitgezonderd" [as a boy, while living in Holland, I bought a few East Indian species of shells from seamen; later, when I was practising in a country district, there was no opportunity of getting hold of Dutch shells, apart from a few Tellinas]. Almost as soon as he arrived on St. Martin VAN RIJGERSMA began to collect natural history specimens; in a letter dated 8 August 1868, he mentioned his collection of insects, which "misschien niet onbelangrijk is daar ik er vijf jaaren over gegaard en gezogt heb" [is perhaps not unimportant, as I have been gathering specimens for it for five years]. Besides insects and molluscs VAN RIJGERSMA also collected other groups of animals, but kept only the molluscs for himself: "daar ik alleen voor eigen plezier de schelpen bewaar, doch andere natuurhistorische voorwerpen, als vogelhuiden visschen reptilen & insekten bij gebrek aan plaats moet verruilen" [I only keep the shells for my own pleasure, lack of room forces me to exchange other natural history specimens, such as birds' skins, fishes, reptiles and insects] (letter dated 8 August 1868).

VAN RIJGERSMA maintained relations with the Museum of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and with the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie at Leiden. It is not possible to say with certainty how his contact with Philadelphia came about, but it is quite likely that it originated via the well-known palaeontologist of that time, EDWARD D. COPE. On this head, COPE himself says (1883, p. 1): "Having learned that Dr. E. van Rijgersma, colonial physician of the Danish [sic] Island of Saint Martins, was interested in all departments of the natural sciences, I wrote asking him to make an examination of the deposit in question [a phosphate deposit in Anguilla, containing fossils], and to secure, if possible, all fossils discovered in excavating it." VAN RIJGERSMA complied with COPE's request, and sent him many fossils which he collected in the course of various visits to Anguilla, and also on St. Martin. At that time COPE was Corresponding Secretary of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and it is not impossible that VAN RIJGERSMA's good qualities as a collector induced COPE to propose him as corresponding member of the Academy. In any case, on 27 October 1868 VAN RIJGERSMA was elected Correspondent of the Academy (see *Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Phila. 1868*, p. 229, 393, in which his name is spelt H. Evan Rijgersma). If, by conferring this honour upon him, the Academy hoped to arouse VAN RIJGERSMA's interest in extending their collection, they were certainly successful. For the "Report of the Curators" of the Academy for 1869 mentions receipt of the following items sent by VAN RIJGERSMA: "a collection [of birds] from St. Martins"; "A small collection [of reptiles] from St. Martins"; "Two collections [of fishes], one of forty-one specimens of twenty-five species, and another of many specimens of sixteen species, from St. Martins"; "two species of cephalopods"; "Two collections, comprising seventy specimens of crustaceans, two jars of spiders and one of insects from St. Martins"; "A collection of twelve asterioids, six corals, a large Gorgonia and five species of sponges, from St. Martins"; "the jaw of a Dolphin and several teeth of the Sperm Whale"; "Nine jars of vertebrates from St. Martins" (LEIDY, 1870, p. 235-237). The collection of birds proves to consist of "6 mounted specimens (5 species) of birds from St. Martins", received in May 1869 (see HOOPER, TURNBULL & SHEPPARD, 1870, p. 237). In 1872 the Ornithological Section of the Academy obtained "*Pelecanus fuscus* and two *Querquedula discors*, from St. Martins, W.I., presented by Dr. R. E. Van Riggersma" (LEIDY, 1873, p. 283), while in

1873 the Academy received "A jar containing a collection of small vertebrates and some invertebrates, from the Isle Redowda, W.I. [probably the island of Redonda is meant, lying between Nevis and Montserrat] . . . presented by Dr. R. E. Van Riggersma" (LEIDY, 1874, p. 432).

The Rev. E. R. BEADLE, Corresponding Secretary of the Conchological Section of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, sent a letter to VAN RIJGERSMA on 21 May 1869, "soliciting collections" (cf. BEADLE, 1870, p. 240). In the annual reports for the following years no contributions by VAN RIJGERSMA are mentioned among the section's acquisitions, although the report for 1870 contains the following record (see NOLAN, 1871, p. 155): "From Rev. E. R. Beadle. Ten species of Mollusca, principally from St. Martin's, W.I." It is possible that VAN RIJGERSMA addressed his consignments to BEADLE personally, and that the latter then passed the material on to the Museum. The supposition that VAN RIJGERSMA presented more molluscs to the Academy, besides the two cephalopods of 1869, is strengthened by the fact that he was elected Correspondent of the Conchological Section on 2 February 1871 (cf. ROBERTS, 1872, p. 343). The letter in which he expressed his thanks to BEADLE for this token of distinction is still preserved in the archives of the Academy of Natural Sciences; however, no other correspondence from VAN RIJGERSMA can be found there.

I do not know whether the Academy received material from VAN RIJGERSMA after 1873; I have not been able to find any indications to that effect.

VAN RIJGERSMA probably received other material in exchange for his contributions. In a letter of December 1868 he wrote to SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN: "alleen Westindische conchylien (uitgezonderd *Spondylus*, *Conus admiralis*, *Pholadomya* die mij noch ontbreken) bezit ik, van America zullen zij mij zeker geworden, daar den Heer Edw. D. Cope ze mij heeft beloofd, en ik lid van the Academie of Natural Science te Philadelphia ben geworden" [I possess only West Indian shells (except for *Spondylus*, *Conus admiralis*, *Pholadomya*, which I still lack), but I shall certainly be able to get the missing ones from America, as Mr. Edw. D. Cope has promised me them and I have become a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia].

The contact between VAN RIJGERSMA and the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie at Leiden was evidently likewise of rather short duration. It was established via Mr. T. VAN STOLK, a lawyer from The Hague, who saw VAN RIJGERSMA's collection while visiting St. Martin, and advised him to get into touch with S. C. SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN, Curator of the Division of Entomology of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie. The records of the Leiden Museum contain four letters from VAN RIJGERSMA addressed to SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN: they are dated 8 August 1868, December 1868, 26 March 1869, and 25 August 1869. Apparently SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN reacted to VAN RIJGERSMA's first letter with a request for Microlepidoptera, for in his second letter VAN RIJGERSMA wrote: "ik mij vroeger zelden met de kleine candle moths bezig hield, alleen de verschillende soorten, en hunne levendige bewegingen gaande slaande, maar ze als dingetjes ongeschikt om te verzamelen liet loopen. Thans zal ik ze ijverig in peperhuisjes doen" [I never paid so much attention to the small candle moths before; I only observed the different species and their lively movements, but I always left them alone as little things unsuitable for collecting. But now I shall start putting them into paper cornets]. According to the Museum registers three consignments were received from VAN RIJGERSMA: "550 Insecten uit allerlei orden, waaronder vele

Microlepidoptera" [550 insects of several orders, including many Microlepidoptera] in June 1869 (this is evidently the "kerosine blik vol insecten van het eiland Guadeloupe" [kerosine tin full of insects from the island of Guadeloupe] which VAN RIJGERSMA speaks of in his third letter); "een blikken doos met eene menigte Zeer kleine Insecten" [a tin box with a multitude of very small insects] on 28 December 1869; and "60 soorten van zeer kleine Insecten, meest Coleoptera" [60 species of very small insects, mainly Coleoptera] on 16 September 1870. In exchange for these VAN RIJGERSMA received "523 Conchylien bevattende 111 species" [523 shells covering 111 species], which were sent to him on 15 January 1870.

The fact that the Museum received other material from VAN RIJGERSMA besides these insects is proved by the presence, in the collection of the Division of Reptilia and Amphibia, of a lizard (No. 3863, *Ameiva corvina* Cope) from the island of Sombrero, and of a snake (No. 3864, *Alsophis rijgersmai* Cope; recently studied by BRONGERSMA, 1958, p. 53) and a frog (No. 3895, *Hylodes* spec.) from St. Martin, which were presented (or given in exchange) in 1872. However, no entry concerning these animals can be found in the registers of material received for 1872.

VAN RIJGERSMA also had a "contact" with whom he exchanged specimens on St. Martin itself. At Marigot, in the French part of the island, lived a French priest, who gave him a collection of insects from Guadeloupe (evidently the first consignment that VAN RIJGERSMA sent to the Leiden Museum) in return "voor de helft mijner Conchylien" [for half of my shells] (letter dated December 1868). VAN RIJGERSMA called this priest "Abbé Kolkmann" or "mijn vriend Koklmann, die lid van de Entomologische Vereeniging in Frankrijk is" [my friend KOKLMANN, who is a member of the French Entomological Society] (letter dated December 1868). He undoubtedly meant the Abbé KOHLMANN, at one time "professeur de sciences au séminaire-collège de la Basse-Terre, à la Guadeloupe", who became a member of the Société entomologique de France in 1858, but was struck off the list of members in 1869 "comme n'ayant pas satisfait à [ses] engagements" (1869, *Ann. Soc. entom. France* (4) 9, p. cxxxii).

VAN RIJGERSMA's collecting activities were not restricted to St. Martin. He also got together collections from Anguilla (fossils), St. Eustatius (among others, reptiles), and Redonda (see LEIDY, 1874, p. 432). He obtained material from Guadeloupe by exchange, as we have seen; and in his letter of 25 August 1869 to SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN he mentions "een ongeschonden exemplaar (op rum) [van] *Ameiva corvina* Cope, van het eiland Sombrero" [an undamaged specimen, in rum, of *Ameiva corvina* Cope from the island of Sombrero], which he was willing to exchange for shells, and which, as has been shown above, was actually sent by him to the Museum.

Various zoologists — almost all Americans — have studied the material collected by VAN RIJGERSMA and discussed it in a number of scientific papers. These publications, in so far as they are known to me, will be considered below, along with the most important of VAN RIJGERSMA's collections.

The groups, the knowledge of which has been considerably extended thanks to the work of VAN RIJGERSMA, are the following:

I. Fossils. As has been said, VAN RIJGERSMA came into contact with Professor EDWARD DRINKER COPE, the famous American palaeontologist, ichthyologist and herpetologist of the second half of the last century, owing to the fact that the latter asked VAN RIJGERSMA to collect fossils for him on the British island of Anguilla. In 1868 a manufacturer of fertilizer in Philadelphia drew COPE's attention to

the presence of fossils in a cargo of rock and soil that had been brought from Anguilla to Philadelphia for examination there to ascertain its possible value as fertilizer. These fossils proved to be so interesting that they led COPE to communicate with VAN RIJGERSMA with the object of obtaining additional material. At the meeting of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, on 1 December 1868, COPE gave a report on the fossils found on Anguilla and described from among these a new genus and new species of a large chinchilla-like rodent, *Amblyrhiza inundata*. This report was published on 6 February 1869 (COPE, 1869a, p. 313). COPE omitted to give the name of the collector of his material, but it is probable that his communication was based not only on the fossils obtained from the manufacturer of fertilizer, but also on what VAN RIJGERSMA had already assembled. For, in a letter to SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN dated 26 March 1869, VAN RIJGERSMA wrote: "Ook zal het u misschien niet ongevallig zijn te vernemen dat ik in de Phosphate of Lime groeve van Anguilla eenige fossils heb gevonden als ook in een grot aldaar, welke volgens prof. Cope behooren to a large rodent animal nearly related [sic] to the Chinchilla tribe but as large as a deer, hij heeft het dier genoemd the *Amblyrhiza inundata* Cope. Alle de beenderen en bijna van ieder lichaamsdeel, zullen zeker het geheele geraamte goed doen kennen, ik denk dat er zoo wat de overblijfselen van een dozijn verschillende individuen zijn. Allen heb ik ze naar Philadelphia opgezonden, omdat ik tot de Naturkundige Academi aldaar behoer" [Perhaps it will please you to learn that I have found some fossils in the phosphate of lime pit on Anguilla, and also some in a cave there, which, according to Professor COPE, belong to a large rodent animal nearly related to the Chinchilla tribe but as large as a deer, he has named the animal the *Amblyrhiza inundata* Cope. All these bones, coming from almost every part of the body, will certainly give us an opportunity of getting a good idea of the whole skeleton. I think that there are the remains of about a dozen different individuals. I have sent them all to Philadelphia, because I belong to the Academy of Natural Sciences there]. On 20 July 1869 COPE (1869b, p. 92) published another note on fossil material from Anguilla, and named a new species, *Loxomylyus longidens*, which he alleged to be closely related to *Amblyrhiza*, but of which he gave no description. COPE also mentioned the presence of an artifact in these phosphate deposits. Finally, on 18 February 1870, he published detailed descriptions of *Amblyrhiza inundata* and *Loxomylyus longidens* (see COPE, 1870b, p. 183-188). In the paper containing these descriptions VAN RIJGERSMA is mentioned for the first time as the collector of *Amblyrhiza*: "Having requested Dr. Rijgersma to make further search in the localities . . . , that gentleman made a special trip to Anguilla" and "On a third examination of the locality Dr. Rijgersma found . . ." (p. 185). From this publication it is also seen that it was VAN RIJGERSMA who found the material of *Loxomylyus* and the artifact (a long oval knife made of a piece of mollusc shell), in a cave on Anguilla. At the meeting of the American Philosophical Society on 18 November 1870, COPE (1871b, p. 608) announced that, as a result of VAN RIJGERSMA's investigations, fossils belonging to 11 species of vertebrates had become known from the Anguilla caves; these species included one crocodile, two birds, one deer and five rodents. COPE gave a brief description of a new species of *Loxomylyus*, *L. latidens*, while a third species of that genus, *L. quadrans*, which had also been found on Anguilla by VAN RIJGERSMA, was later described by COPE in a footnote (COPE, 1871c, p. 102). Finally, COPE summarized the results of his examination of all the fossils collected by VAN RIJGERSMA on Anguilla and St. Martin in his

great work of 1883. This publication contains a description of one reptile, two birds, three species of rodents of the genus *Amblyrhiza*, a smaller rodent, and a ruminant resembling a goat. Here the genus *Loxomylus* was synonymized with *Amblyrhiza* by COPE, while he also regarded *Loxomylus longidens* as identical with *Amblyrhiza inundata*. Later authors (among them SCHREUDER, 1933, p. 252, 254) go so far as to consider all four of the forms of *Amblyrhiza* and *Loxomylus* described by COPE as belonging to one and the same single species (vide also WESTERMANN, 1957, p. 191).

Besides vertebrates, VAN RIJGERSMA probably also collected fossil invertebrates on Anguilla. In his letter to SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN dated 26 March 1869, he wrote: "In Anguilla zijn ook schoone verzamelingen te maken van fossielen uit het tert. tijdvak. Ik vond daar *Pygaulus* en *Clypeaster*, benevens zoo honderd soorten hoorens en schelpen. Als het Leidsche Museum er iets voor overheeft, dan wil ik er wel weer naar toe gaan, en denk dat met een paar sterke negers en mijzelf het niet meer dan honderd guldens zal kosten" [In Anguilla, fine collections can also be made of fossils from the tertiary period. I found *Pygaulus* and *Clypeaster* there, as well as something like a hundred species of shells. If the Leiden Museum feel inclined, I am quite willing to go there again, and I think that, with myself and a couple of strong negroes, it will not cost more than a hundred guilders]; an offer which was apparently not accepted.

Opinions differ as to whether VAN RIJGERSMA also collected fossils on St. Martin. In his papers of 1869 (a and b), 1870 (b), and 1871 (a and b) COPE mentioned only Anguilla as the source of the fossils studied by him. In 1883 (p. 9), however, he observed with reference to *Amblyrhiza inundata*: "The remains of this large rodent were found in a mass of breccia, which was thrown out in the excavations made in a cavern in the Virgin Island [sic] of St. Martins, W.I." It is obvious that a clerical error has been made here: for in 1870 COPE (1870b, p. 183) begins his description of *Amblyrhiza inundata* with exactly the same sentence, but in this case it ends, not with "the Virgin Island of St. Martins, W.I.", but with "the small Island of Anguilla, W.I." The other papers by COPE, and VAN RIJGERSMA's above-quoted letter of 26 March 1869, also clearly indicate that the fossils discovered first, at any rate, came from Anguilla and not from St. Martin. RUTTEN (1931, p. 669) was quite convinced — and rightly so in my opinion — that we have to do here with a slip of the pen on the part of COPE. But SCHREUDER (1933, p. 260, 261) did not agree with RUTTEN, because COPE (1883, p. 15), in considering *Amblyrhiza latidens*, said that "A number of bones and teeth from Simson's Bay came associated in one package, and agree in having a paler color than the specimens contained in other packages". SCHREUDER is perfectly right in thinking that there can be no possible doubt that the material from the first-mentioned package came from St. Martin, for Simson's Bay is a well-known place in the Dutch part of that island. It seems most probably, therefore, that all the fossil material collected by VAN RIJGERSMA came from Anguilla, except for the package containing remains of *Amblyrhiza latidens*, which was labelled "Simson's Bay". The fact that this last material was lighter in colour than the rest also indicates that it might have come from another locality. Probably COPE did not realize that Simson's Bay lies not in Anguilla but in St. Martin, and for that reason always treated the collection as coming entirely from Anguilla. The mistake made on p. 9 of his publication of 1883 rendered the situation still more confusing, and so it is understandable that SCHREUDER (1933, p. 261) concurred in the certainly erroneous conclusion of MOLENGRAAFF that "it is certain that Dr. Rijgersma, colonial physician on St. Martin, obtained

remains of *Amblyrhiza* there, and went afterwards, at Cope's request, to Anguilla." As VAN RIJGERSMA's letter conclusively shows, his first discoveries were made on Anguilla.

II. Birds. Not much is known about the birds collected by VAN RIJGERSMA. As already stated above, LEIDY (1873, p. 283) mentioned the species *Pelecanus fuscus* (= *P. occidentalis occidentalis* L.) and *Querquedula discors* (= *Anas discors* L.) as having been collected on St. Martin by VAN RIJGERSMA. This statement was published in such an obscure place that it has escaped the attention of ornithologists, and it is, accordingly, not cited by Voous (1955). In Voous's publication, *Anas discors* is not even mentioned among the birds of the three northern Netherlands Antilles (St. Martin, Saba, and St. Eustatius). However, Voous (1955, p. 3) does name three other species of birds, specimens of which were collected on St. Martin by VAN RIJGERSMA: *Podilymbus podiceps antillarum* Bangs, *Phaeton aethereus mesonauia* Peters, and *Sterna sandvicensis acuflavida* Cabot. These specimens are still present in the collection of the Museum of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, and are evidently the only specimens left of VAN RIJGERSMA's collection of birds. The statement that they arrived at the Museum before 1861 is, of course, wrong.

III. Reptiles and Amphibia. The reptiles and amphibia collected by VAN RIJGERSMA were examined by COPE, who mentioned them in some of his publications. In 1870 COPE (1870a, p. 154, 158, 159) discussed a collection of six species from St. Martin, two of which proved to be new to science. COPE named one of these new species *Alsophis rijgersmaei*, after VAN RIJGERSMA, the other was named *Ameiva analifera*. The rest of the material was assigned to the species *Iguana nudicollis* Cuv., *Anolis gingivinus* Cope, *Mabuia aenea* Lacep., and *Hylodes martinicensis* Dum. & Bibron. In the introduction to a paper of 1871 COPE (1871a, p. 553) announced, incorrectly, that in that same paper a collection of reptiles brought together by VAN RIJGERSMA on the island of St. Eustatius would be discussed; however, this first took place in a later publication (COPE, 1871d, p. 220, 221). VAN RIJGERSMA's herpetological collection from St. Eustatius comprised five species, of which one was new to science. To this new species COPE evidently gave a name which VAN RIJGERSMA had suggested, for he designated it "*Amiva erythropros*, Rijgersma, MS., sp. nov." The other four species were *Hemidactylus mabua* Cuv., *Anolis sagrae* Dum. & Bibron var., *Anolis gingivinus* Cope, and *Anolis leachii* Gray.

IV. Fishes. The collection of fishes presented by VAN RIJGERSMA to the Philadelphia Museum was probably more important, and certainly larger, than the collections of any other group. COPE's (1871e) "Contribution to the Ichthyology of the Lesser Antilles" for a great part is based on VAN RIJGERSMA's collection. In this paper COPE mentioned no less than 86 different species from St. Martin which had been collected by VAN RIJGERSMA; of these he described thirteen as new, and claimed that two of them represented a new genus. In this publication COPE named another new species after VAN RIJGERSMA, *Ocyurus rijgersmaei*; it is, however, noteworthy that this new species was not based on material collected by him. The collection described by COPE proves not even to comprise all species sent by VAN RIJGERSMA to the Philadelphia Museum. FOWLER (1903, 1905, 1907, 1908, 1911, 1912, 1916, 1919) described or named several species from VAN RIJGERSMA's collection which COPE (1871e) had not dealt with; these included four species which FOWLER described as new. Finally, in 1919 FOWLER gave a comprehensive survey of all the species of fishes which VAN RIJGERSMA presented to the Museum

of the Academy of Natural Sciences, with the names under which they were known at that time. The total collection then proved to consist of specimens of exactly 100 species, but a number of these could no longer be found in 1919, and have evidently got lost or been removed from the Museum collection.

V. Crustacea. The crustaceans collected by VAN RIJGERSMA on St. Martin have also been mentioned in a number of publications. STREETS (1872) even devoted a special article to VAN RIJGERSMA's collection of specimens of that group. He referred to seven species, three of which, *Gelasimus affinis*, *Petrolisthes nodosus*, and *Petrolisthes jugosus*, were new to science. The other species were *Pericera cornuta* H. Milne Edwards, *Calappa galloides* Stimpson, *Dromia lator* H. Milne Edwards, and *Palaemon jamaicensis* (Herbst). SHARP (1893) mentioned three species of shrimp from VAN RIJGERSMA's collection. Of these only *Palaemon jamaicensis* (Herbst) (p. 122) had been mentioned by STREETS; the others were *Penaeus brasiliensis* Latreille (p. 109) and *Palaemon acanthurus* Wiegmann (p. 121). HOLTHUIS (1952, p. 51, 52, 125), after examining VAN RIJGERSMA's specimens of the two above-mentioned *Palaemon* species, dealt with them under their modern names *Macrobrachium carcinus* (L.) and *M. acanthurus* (Wiegmann), respectively. In the course of a recent visit to the Philadelphia Museum (29 April to 1 May 1957), I found that material of 15 species of decapod crustaceans of the VAN RIJGERSMA collection from St. Martin is still there, viz., the shrimps *Penaeus brasiliensis* Latreille, *P. aztecus* Ives, *Macrobrachium acanthurus* (Wiegmann), and *M. carcinus* (L.), the hermit crab *Coenobita clypeatus* (Herbst), the porcelain crab *Petrolisthes nodosus* Streets, and the true crabs *Dromia erythropus* (Edwards) (= *D. lator*), *Calappa gallus* (Herbst) (= *C. galloides*), *Callinectes marginatus* (A. Milne Edwards), *Eriphia gonagra* (Fabricius), *Carpilius corallinus* (Herbst), *Mithrax caribbaeus* Rathbun, and three species of the genus *Uca* (= *Gelasimus*), which have still to be further studied. The specimens of *Pericera cornuta* and *Petrolisthes jugosus* mentioned by STREETS (1872) seem to have been lost.

It is possible that publications have also appeared concerning material of other groups collected by VAN RIJGERSMA, and that, in addition to the papers named here, there are others that mention fossils, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes or crustaceans collected by him. However, the results of his collecting activity described above show sufficiently clearly how much our knowledge of the fauna of St. Martin and the surrounding islands was increased owing to him. This is all the more to be esteemed if it is borne in mind that such work must have been rendered far from easy by all kinds of difficulties which are nowadays hardly conceivable. For instance, the primitive nature of the postal communications with St. Martin in VAN RIJGERSMA's time can clearly be seen from the directions as to the sending of mail to that island which Mr. T. VAN STOLK gave to SNELLEN VAN VOLLENHOVEN in a letter dated 13 May 1869: "Wanneer gij direct naar St. Martin schrijft moet gij uw brief frankeren en gij moet op het adres zetten per stoomschepen via Southampton en St. Thomas . . . Op het adres mijner brieven naar St. Martin zet ik nog altijd aux soins du consul français à St. Kitts. — Gij moet weten dat er volstrekt geen officiele post gelegenheid naar of van Philipsburg bestaat. Er is noch postkantoor, noch brievenbus, noch brievenbesteller. Een eenvoudigen brief kost f. 0.70— maar zooals gezegd, zonder dat iemand voor de verzending van St. Kitts uit zorgt, komt de brief toch niet teregt. Een ieder te St. Martin draagt doorgaans zorg dat de brieven voor hem te St. Kitts in ontvang worden genomen. Deze postregeling van Philipsburg kan gerust op het museum van oudheden geplaatst

worden" [When writing direct to St. Martin one must pay the postage in advance, and must add to the address "By steamer via Southampton and St. Thomas". In addressing my letters to St. Martin I always put as well "Aux soins du consul français à St. Kitts". You know, I do that because there is absolutely no official postal service to or from Philipsburg, St. Martin. There is neither post office, nor letter box, nor postman. An ordinary letter costs fls. 0.70 but, as I say, unless somebody forwards it from St. Kitts it still will not arrive. Generally speaking, everyone on St. Martin makes sure that letters for him are received on St. Kitts. You can safely say that the postal arrangements of Philipsburg should be put in a museum of antiquities].

VAN RIJGERSMA did not allow his work as a doctor to suffer as a result of his interest in biology. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that, when the physician to the then Swedish colony of St. Bartholomew fell ill, VAN RIJGERSMA treated the patients of that island in his stead, and refused to take any payment for it. Mr. GUSTAV SJÖBERG (Riksarkivet, Stockholm) informed me that the Swedish Government considered this a reason for conferring a gold medal, "Illis quorum meruere labores", on him by Royal Decree of 21 December 1871.

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