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John Michael Montias
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References to Archival Sources

The archival references in this book, unless otherwise specified, are to manuscript sources preserved in the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam (Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, abbreviated GAA, but generally omitted). Within the GAA, I make use exclusively of three archives: notarial (abbreviated NA), Orphan Chamber (Weeskamer, abbreviated WK) and Bankruptcy Chamber (Desolate Boedelskamer, abbreviated DBK).

Monetary Equivalents

17th century prices and values, throughout this book, are either expressed in gulden (abbreviated f), stuivers (20 to the gulden, abbreviated st.), and penningen (16 to the stuiver, abbreviated pen.), or in Flemish pounds (6 gulden to a pound). Prices are usually expressed as in the following example: f 10: 5: 3. This should be read as 10 gulden, 5 stuivers, 3 penningen. In some tables, to save space, the stuivers have been converted to fractions of a gulden, rounded off to the second decimal. Thus, f 10.26 is equal to f 10: 5: 3. Occasional reference is also made to schellingen, worth 6 st. and to rijksdaalders (or rycxdaelders), worth 2 f 10 st.

It is useful to remember that a semi-skilled carpenter was paid about 1 gulden a day and that a typical merchant’s house in Amsterdam cost anywhere from f 5,000 to 13,000 f (which was the price for which Rembrandt bought his large house on the Breestraat).

Notice

A reasonable attempt has been made to write the proper names in this book in a consistent manner. This means choosing one variant of each name as it was written in the 17th century and sticking through it. This standard has not systematically been achieved. However, the main variants of the “standard spelling” have been inserted in the index in parentheses wherever such minor inconsistencies have been detected.