



# **Commodities and Colonialism: The Story of Big Sugar in Indonesia, 1880-1942 (Verhandelingen Van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde)**

*G. Roger Knight*

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Sugar yesterday was what oil is today: a commodity of immense global importance whose tentacles reached deep into politics, society and economy. Indonesia's colonial-era sugar industry is largely forgotten today, except by a small number of regional specialists writing for a specialist audience. During the period 1880-1942 covered by this book, however, the then Netherlands Indies was one of the world's very greatest producer-exporters of the commodity. How it contrived to do so is the story presented in this book. Author G. Roger Knight, associate professor of history in the University of Adelaide, has researched the history of Indonesia's sugar industry for more than twenty-five years, using unpublished archival sources in both the Netherlands and Indonesia. His search has taken him into government records, family histories and above all the extensive surviving papers of the Dutch sugar companies who operated in Indonesia during the late colonial era. The result is a picture of the industry that offers important new insights into its history and its place in the framework of global commodity production over a period extending over three quarters of a century."

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