



The Diplomatic Correspondence between Asian Rulers and Batavia Castle during the 17th and 18th centuries: The Digital Reconstruction of a Lost Treasure.



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Hendrik. E. Niemeijer
Merle Ricklefs
Maarten Manse
Ruurdje Laarhoven
Leonard Andaya
Bhawan Ruangsilp
Dhiravant na Pombeijra
Simon Kemper
Rosemary Robson
M. Haris Budiawan
Beny Oktavianto
Marco Roling
Jelle Gerbrandy

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Colophon

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*The Diplomatic Correspondence between Asian Rulers and Batavia Castle
during the 17th and 18th centuries: The Digital Reconstruction of a Lost Treasure.*

Authors: Hendrik E. Niemeijer et al.

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Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI)
Jakarta, Indonesia

email: sejarah-nusantara@anri.go.id
website: www.sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id



The Corts Foundation (TCF)
The Netherlands

email: info@cortsfoundation.org
website: www.cortsfoundation.org

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The Diplomatic Correspondence between Asian Rulers and Batavia Castle during the 17th and 18th centuries: The Digital Reconstruction of a Lost Treasure.

Hendrik E. Niemeijer

Introduction: Multiple Missions, Changing Views

‘Trade, War and Diplomacy’ is an oft-cited triptych to explain the European presence in Asia in the early modern period (1600-1800). Whereas European military expansion as well as Asian-European and Intra-Asian trading activities have received extensive historiographical attention both in the colonial and post-colonial periods, from an archivally based historical analyses of Asian-European diplomacy are striking by their absence. Certainly, there are a number of monographs which describe individual embassies and diplomatic missions as well as source publications referring to contemporary historical accounts of such missions, all of which have their own value. One thinks here of Rijklof van Goens’ five-fold embassies (1648-1654) to the court of Sultan Agung (r. 1613-1646) and his successor Sunan Amangkurat I (r. 1646-77);¹ Johan Jurgen Briel’s account of Admiral Antonio Hurdt’s mission to the same Javanese court in 1678;² Joan Josua Ketelaar’s description of his December 1711 mission to the Mughal emperor and his subsequent visits to the Persian court in Isfahan 1716;³ the famous missions of Isaac Titsingh (1745-1812) to Japan (1779-1784) and China (1794-1796).⁴ These accounts can be considered as some of the highlights of early modern Dutch diplomacy in Asia.

Monographs dealing with one particular Asian court and Asian-European relations during the reign of a particular European monarch are still rare; there is Dirk van der Cruysse work which provides an able analysis of late seventeenth-century diplomatic and political relations between the Kingdom of Siam and Louis XIV’s (r. 1643-1715) France.⁵ Other monographs on European-Asian diplomatic encounters have tried to place these exchanges in

¹ H.J. de Graaf, *De vijf gezantschappen van Rijklof van Goens naar het hof van Mataram*. Linschoten-Vereeniging LIX. ’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff 1956.

² H.J. de Graaf, *De expeditie van Anthonio Hurdt Raad van Indië, als admiraal en superintendent naar de binnenlanden van Java, sept.-dec. 1678 volgens het Journaal van Johan Jurgen Briel, secretaris*. Linschoten-Vereeniging LXXII. ’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1971.

³ J.Ph. Vogel (ed.), *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar’s hofreis naar den groot mogul te Lahore, 1711-1713*. Linschoten-Vereeniging XLI. W.M. Floor, *Commercial Conflict between Iran and the Netherlands, 1712-1719*, Durham Occasional Papers 37. Durham, 1978b, pp. 58-60.

⁴ Frank Lequin, *Isaac Titsingh (1745-1812). Een passie voor Japan. Leven en werk van de grondlegger van de Europese Japanologie*. Alphen aan de Rijn: Canaletto, 2002.

⁵ Dirk van der Cruysse, *Louis XIV et le Siam*. Paris: Fayard, 1991.

the wider context of the early modern worlds of Europe and Asia respectively.⁶ In one publication exclusively devoted to Dutch diplomatic contacts with Asian courts, P.N. Rietbergen uses the term ‘double perspective’ to describe the nature of these relations. He recognizes that the ‘permitted presence of the Company – visually supported by the presence of its soldiers – legitimized indigenous power’. This is a different interpretation from the more usual one in which the western military presence at the Asian courts is seen as a form of ‘occupation’.⁷

The changing perspective in international scholarship relating to early modern Southeast Asian relations with the West is frequently presented with reference to new archival evidence. One thinks here of Johan Talens and Reinout Vos’s important studies of Banten and the Malay World.⁸ But what has been lacking so far is the proper elucidation of such relations through the publication of archival series focusing specifically on diplomatic correspondence and exchanges. The first – and until now only extant – publication of diplomatic sources remains the weighty six-volume *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, a compilation of all the political contracts and treaties concluded by the Dutch in Asia between 1596 and 1799. Published between 1907 and 1955,⁹ this compilation of documents from the old ‘*contractenboeken*’ of the colonial archive (now ANRI) in Jakarta were complemented by the addition of copies of extant contracts from the archives of the Amsterdam Chamber of the VOC not present in the colonial archive. However, the Corpus, as a source publication, contains no satisfactory systematic analysis of the diplomatic contracts themselves.

The correspondence between Asian rulers and Batavia Castle was systematically catalogued during the 17th and 18th centuries, likewise on the basis of the ‘*contractenboeken*’. The letters were not only archived in outgoing and incoming letter books, but also the Dutch translations of the original letters from Asian rulers, were inserted in the VOC’s principle chronicle: the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle.

Multiple Centres of Diplomacy

Looking at this previously hidden collection of letters in the Daily Journals of

⁶ A. Jackson and A. Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500-1800*. London: Victoria & Albert publications, 2004.

⁷ Pieter Rietbergen and Elsbeth Locher Scholten, “Een dubbel perspectief. Aziatische hoven en de VOC, circa 1620 – circa 1720”, in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Peter Rietbergen, *Hof en Handel. Aziatische vorsten en de VOC 1620-1720*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004, pp. 1-14.

⁸ J. Talens, *Een feodale samenleving in koloniaal vaarwater. Staatsvorming, koloniale expansie en economische onderontwikkeling in Banten, West-Java (1600-1750)*. Hilversum: Verloren, 1999. R. Vos, *Gentle Janus, Merchant Prince. The VOC and the Tightrope of Diplomacy in the Malay World, 1740-1800*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993.

⁹ Heeres, J.E. and F.W. Stapel, 'Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum. Verzameling van politieke contracten en verdere verdragen door de Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van privilegebrieven, aan hen verleend, enz.', in: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 57, 87, 91, 93 en 96 (1907, 1931, 1934, 1935 en 1938). In 1955, the sixth volume was published by the KITLV but not in their *Bijdragen* academic journal but in their *Verhandelingen* monograph series .

Batavia Castle from the perspective of the Nusantara [Indonesian Archipelago], it is clear that 17th- and 18th-century Southeast Asia was a region of 'Multiple Centers of Diplomacy'. In this context, it is highly unfortunate that hardly any of the many thousands of original diplomatic letters have survived. Known in Malay as 'Golden Letters' (Malay: "*Surat Emas*") with their own original seals, these were exchanged between the various Southeast Asian rulers, kings and sultans. Some of the original letters, still extant in a number of renowned international libraries, represent a high cultural value in terms of language and writing traditions. During the VOC period, which began with the foundation of Batavia in 1619 and ended with the Company's bankruptcy in 1799 and the subsequent root-and-branch reforms of Marshal Herman Willem Daendels (1808-1811), Batavia Castle was one of the most important Southeast Asian diplomatic centers. Thousands of incoming and outgoing letters to and from Asian rulers and dignitaries testify to the sheer volume of these epistolary exchanges as well as the elaborate system of gifts which underpinned them. Through a study of these exchanges, we can gain a better understanding of how Europeans adapted themselves to Asian diplomatic customs, how Asian courts adapted themselves to European presence, and how traditional Asian systems of gift exchanges functioned in diplomatic missions.

Diplomatic Protocol and Ritual

The VOC Supreme Government in Batavia Castle received letters from Asian rulers on a weekly basis. Its Translation Department was busy making translations from letters in Javanese, Malay, Bugis, Chinese and Arabic. Most of the letters were from Indonesian rulers. Diplomatic delegations from Banten or Ternate, Siam or Tonkin were all received with the appropriate honor, protocol and ceremony. High VOC officials welcomed the envoys on the quay of Sunda Kelapa harbor. The official welcomes over they were taken for a sightseeing trip through Batavia in horse-drawn carriages, passing along the most impressive streets and canals. During this welcoming tour, they saw the the Town Hall (Dutch: *Stadhuis*) and the imposing entrance gate of the Batavia Castle. Once received with the appropriate military salutes in Batavia Castle proper, the diplomats offered their monarch's beautifully decorated "Surat Emas" or "Golden Letter". According to Asian diplomatic custom, the letters were offered to the Governor-General in a yellow-silk envelope on a silver plate. All "Surat Emas" were read aloud in the audience room in the original Asian languages in which the missives had been composed be it Malay, Javanese, Buginese or Chinese.¹⁰

The formal public reading ceremony over, the diplomatic letters were sent to the Castle's Translation Department to be rendered into Dutch, the resulting translations then being inserted in the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle. This is how the content of the individual letters has survived for

¹⁰ See Leonard Blussé, 'Queen among kings; Diplomatic ritual at Batavia', in: Kees Grijns and Peter J.M. Nas (eds), *Jakarta-Batavia; Socio-cultural essays*, pp. 25-42. Leiden: KITLV Press. [Verhandelingen 187.]

posterity. Subsequently, the Dutch texts of the formal responses by the Supreme Government to the respective Asian rulers were also inserted in the Daily Journals.

The Mystery of the Originals

Unfortunately, the originals of these beautifully decorated “Surat Emas” and other diplomatic correspondence were not preserved at Batavia Castle during the 17th and 18th centuries. The reason for this is unclear: the originals may have lost their value once they were translated or they may have simply been discarded or given as a perk to interested individuals who profited from their gold leaf and other rich decorations. Exactly the same situation pertains in the English East India Company archives now kept in the India Office Records of the British Library, where there are almost no original Malay or other foreign correspondence from the region’s rulers. Even in the various collections of “Raffles letters” there are hardly any originals. The small collections of original letters sent to the VOC or EIC, which have survived, are found in individual rather than institutional collections.

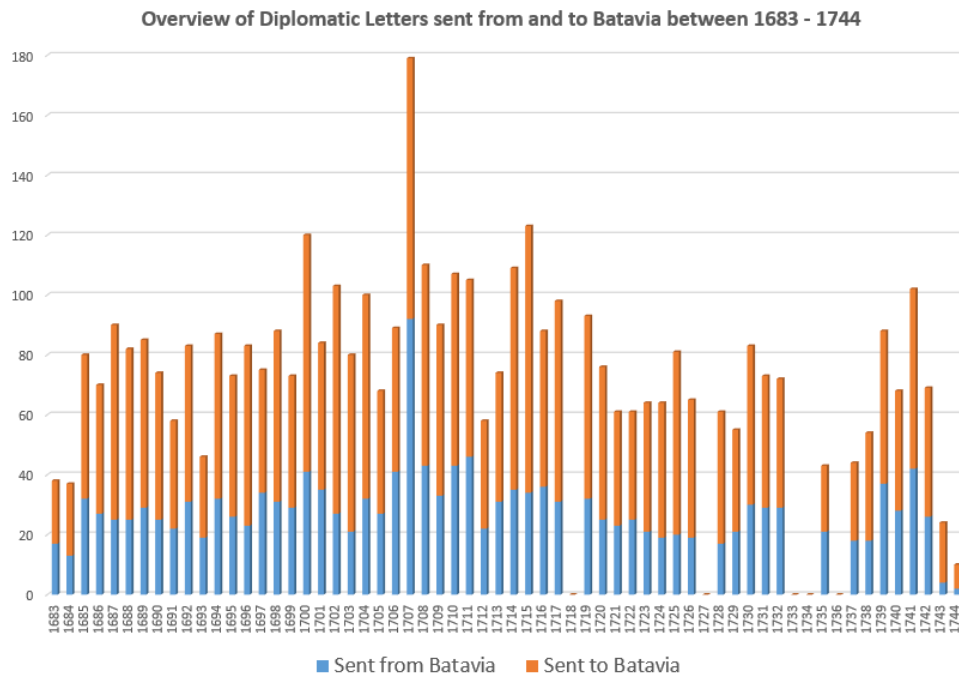
There are two major exceptions:

- 1.) Almost all the diplomatic correspondence in Malay – about 500 letters in all – which came to Batavia Castle during the 1790-1820 period, the era of transition from the VOC to the post-January 1818 Netherlands Indies state, is now kept in Leiden University Library and have been described in E.P. Wieringa (ed.), *Catalogue of Malay and Minangkabau Manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University* (Leiden: Leiden University, 1998).
- 2.) In 2015, ANRI and TCF intend to complete an additional database of all the incoming and outgoing letters from Southeast Asian rulers covering the periods 1750-1812 and 1750-1811 respectively. As a result of Governor-General G.W. van Imhoff’s (in office, 1743-50) administrative reforms in 1743-44, diplomatic letters were no longer included in the Daily Journals. But hundreds of original letters and their translations from the second half of the eighteenth century survive in ANRI.

The First Harvest of 4,300 Letters on a Special Web Page

At the end of 2014 young researchers and students from Leiden University and ANRI archivists completed a database of diplomatic letters referenced in the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle. The result of this database project has been truly astonishing: more than 4,300 letters were identified and published online.¹¹ The special web pages offers a complete entry to all translated incoming and outgoing diplomatic letters included in the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle. The graphic overview shows that the volume of incoming letters was always larger than the amount of outgoing letters.

¹¹ See: <http://www.sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/diplomatic-letters-1683-1744/>



Diplomatic Letters in the Netherlands

ANRI is not the only place where diplomatic letters may be found. The VOC archives in the Dutch National Archives or Nationaal Archief in The Hague also contain many copies of the incoming letters of Asian rulers. These letters are catalogued in the VOC databases of TANAP. Every one of the catalogued archives of the thirty-five former VOC establishments in Asia has a section called “*correspondentie met inbeemsen*” (correspondence with native [rulers]). Many letters – a calculation has not yet been made – in the Daily Journals can be found here as well. But the TANAP database offers much more, namely a listing of the many thousands of incoming and outgoing letters generated at the regional level.¹²

The ‘Diplomatic Letters Database’

The database of diplomatic letters inserted in the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle provides both the rulers’ names and the geographical locations of both senders and receivers. The rulers are mentioned by the names and spelling given in the Daily Journals as well as by their currently accepted orthographs. It was often difficult to trace and verify all of these last and many names still require further research. Many of these rulers were known by names that included the titles and royal styles of their ancestors while they also kept using birth names or other honorifics for different occasions, including the signing of letters. Many times these rulers were only known by their royal titles, while their birth names remain obscure or were rarely used.

VOC clerks were often inconsistent or careless in the use of the names and formal titles of the local rulers and dignitaries to whom letters were addressed;

¹² See: <http://databases.tanap.net/vocrecords/>

or they used names which are today either archivally untraceable or simply incorrect. Keeping track of who is who is thus at times confusing. To improve the traceability of the rulers cited, most of the royal names and titles from the Daily Journals are given in modern spelling in the letter database. It is thus advisable to search both under the names of individual rulers as well as the geographical locations to be sure that all the relevant sources are covered. Correspondents who changed their titles, and might thus have double entries, can still be traced geographically.

Diplomatic Letters Published by International Historians

For lecturers, students and others interested in Asian-European diplomatic history we have selected a very few samples from these 4,300 letters. This selection of eight letters includes three from the kings of the Siam. The letters show how a diplomatic text was written according to diplomatic customs as can be seen by the use of certain phrases and expressions. The contents show how an Asian ruler or (in the case of the letter to the Mughal) the VOC tried to accomplish business deals, favorable trading arrangements or political support. The introductions by international experts in the history of a particular region (Central Java, South Sulawesi, the Southern Philippines), kingdom (Siam) or empire (India) show how each one of the letters can be placed nicely in its own historical context.

Prof. Merle C. Ricklefs explains the historical context and the reasons behind a letter from 1697 from Batavia to Susuhunan Ambangkurat II (r. 1677-1703) and a letter from the same ruler back to Batavia from 1699 when he was in dire circumstances, and the control over his kingdom collapsing. The database makes it possible to trace much more letters from the Javanese rulers.

Maarten Manse, one of the Leiden University researchers which made the database, selected a small but crucial letter from 1709 from Batavia to the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707-1712). What followed after this letter was a long, painstaking and expensive diplomatic mission to please the emperor in return for new firmans or trading permits for the VOC's trade in the trading port of Surat. A resolution by the Supreme Government in Batavia Castle dated three years later (1713) clearly shows how the mission was considered a failure. The reports resulting from this diplomatic mission by Joan Josua Ketelaar and his men to the court – at that time situated in Lahore – offer important information about the Mughal court and its trading policies for historians.

Dr. Ruurdje Laarhoven deals in a very detailed way with a letter from Sultan Kuda of Maguindanao (r. 1699-1702). The letter reflects the political situation in this particular sultanate in the southern Philippines at that time, the leadership struggles and the independent position of Maguindanao between the expansionist European powers: Spain and the VOC (the Dutch Republic). Maguindanao appears to be an important trading hub between China and the Indonesian archipelago. Several small Chinese traders (mostly *peranakan* Chinese) were active in the regional trading networks.

Prof. Dr. Leonard Y. Andaya deals with the legacy of Arung Pelaka, the ruler of the kingdom of Bone in South Sulawesi. The famous Arung Pelaka, who joined forces with the VOC to defeat the ruler of the kingdom of Gowa and conquer the important port city of Makassar (the Makassar War, 1666-1669), died in 1696. His successor, La Patau (r. 1696-1714), led a campaign to defeat the Datu Soppeng (the ruler of the kingdom of Sopping), To-Ésang, who had deposed the previous, the Datu ri Watu, right after Arung Palakka died. The letter from La Patau Paduka Sri Sultan Idris Azim ud-din is an example of how the sultan of Bone sought to maintain Arung Palakka's legacy in the peninsula.

The last three letters are from the Siamese kings Narai (r. 1656-1688), Petracha (r. 1688-1703), Süa (r. 1703-1709) and the Phrakhlang. These letters are introduced by the Thai historians Dr. Dhiravat na Pombejra and Dr. Bhawan Ruangsilp; both experts in Siamese history and VOC-archives. From all these three letters it appears that Siam and the VOC profited from each other but at the same time always quarrelled over trading transactions, trading monopolies, quality of goods, prices, protocol and gifts. Owing to this profitable but quarrelsome relation, a constant stream of information about Siam's external trading relations, European presence at Ayutthaya (Siam's capital city), and court culture reaches us via the letters from the Siamese kings and their ministers.

Acknowledgements

The database of diplomatic letters was made by Leiden University's PhD and MA students Simon Kemper and Maarten Manse. Hendrik E. Niemeijer selected the letters and took care of the transcription and publication of the old Dutch texts. Tjandra Mualim and Rosemary Robson made excellent translations in Indonesian and English of the Dutch texts. Merle Ricklefs, Dhiravat na Pombejra, Bhawan Ruangsilp, Ruurdje Laarhoven, Leonard Andaya, Maarten Manse and Hendrik E. Niemeijer contributed to the introductions to the documents. ANRI's project team members M. Haris Budiawan and Beny Oktavianto helped with the technical realization, the illustrations and lay out. Marco Roling and Jelle Gerbrandy were responsible for the realization of the web publications.

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Illustration 1. Surapati kills Captain François Tack in Kartasura on 8 February 1686. Painting by Tirto on linen c. 1890-1900.

Letter of the Supreme Government to Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677-1703), 20 April 1697

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1 Introduction

M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter of the Supreme Government to Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677-1703), 20 April 1697”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta, document 13*. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY M. C. RICKLEFS

The late 17th century was a time of very considerable tension between the VOC and the court of Kartasura. The VOC had intervened in 1677, in the midst of the Trunajaya war, to support the Mataram dynasty in defending its hold on the throne. This intervention rested upon agreements, particularly in February and July 1677, by which the king was obliged to repay all of the costs of the VOC and to provide various commercial concessions to the benefit of the Company.

Amangkurat II (reigned 1677-1703) succeeded to the throne in 1677. At this time, he had been forced to flee the court with his father Amangkurat I (who died during the flight and was buried at Tegal Wangi). Therefore he was a new monarch who had no court, no kingdom, no treasury and no army. The VOC intervention was thus crucial in military terms and assisted the new monarch in the end to gather supporters and to defeat Trunajaya’s armies. Amangkurat II personally stabbed the captured Trunajaya to death at the end of 1679.

The king established a new court at Kartasura in 1680. By the end of 1681 most remaining opposition to him had been defeated. But the VOC now found that the agreements of 1677 were not implemented. The king evidently distrusted the Company and sought to limit its influence in his affairs. So the Company’s costs were not repaid and it was frustrated in implementing its commercial rights.

By 1685 the Company had decided that it needed to send a special emissary to Kartasura to attempt to settle all outstanding issues. The man chose to head this embassy was Capt. François Tack, whom Amangkurat II had already encountered in embarrassing circumstances. At the fall of Trunajaya’s capital at Kediri in 1678, the victorious Javanese and Company forces looted the place. This included the Mataram treasury, which Trunajaya had taken with him to Kediri and which, until it was looted by the troops, could have been the source from which Amangkurat II might have repaid the VOC. Amidst the looting, Capt. Tack discovered the ‘golden crown of Majapahit’ – a legacy from Java’s greatest pre-Islamic kingdom, which was treasured by the dynasty, although it was not one of the sacred holy regalia (*pusaka*) of the kingdom. Rather than returning this with appropriate dignity to Amangkurat II, Tack arrogantly told the king that he was prepared to sell him the crown for 1000 Spanish Real (a very large amount at that time). Amangkurat II agreed and thereby regained the golden crown, but later proved unwilling to pay this debt. (The crown was last seen in public in 1739, when Pakubuwana II wore it on a royal progress to Mataram. It was presumably lost forever in the double sackings of the court of Kartasura in 1742.) In 1682, Tack commanded the VOC force that conquered Banten, a role that also made him the object of suspicion in the court of Kartasura.

As tensions rose between Kartasura and Batavia, the latter faced other difficulties in the presence of robber bands that threatened the security of Batavia itself. Among these were escaped Balinese slaves; the most prominent was a man called Surapati, about whom many legends arose, many of them not to be trusted. He was to become the most hated and feared of all the Company’s



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Illustration 2. Remains of Keraton Kartasura, 2012. Photograph by Alexander Raf.

enemies. In 1683 Surapati was allowed to enter the VOC's military service, but the following year he and his followers turned on 39 Company soldiers and killed about half of them. A VOC force of 800 men was sent out to attack 'the murderous Surapati' and indeed inflicted heavy losses. Surapati and his surviving followers fled eastwards and found a welcome at Kartasura. There an anti-VOC party led by the *Patih* (chief administrative officer) Anrangkusuma saw in Surapati a useful tool for dealing with the Company and its unwelcome demands on the trade and finances of the kingdom. The Company insisted that the king capture Surapati but he refused to do so.

As various tales circulated, the court awaited the arrival of Capt. Tack at the head of a VOC mission. When he arrived at the court in February 1686, his party was attacked by Surapati's Balinese band and by Javanese disguised as Balinese. There

is much confusion in the records of the time, but it is reasonably clear that the king himself was party to this plot. Some 75 European soldiers, including Tack, were killed.

Surapati left the court and went east, establishing his authority over Pasuruan and later expanding his control westward into Kartasura territories. After a time, Anrangkusuma also left Kartasura. In March 1686, what remained of the VOC garrison at the court was withdrawn to the coast, taking Tack's body with them. There was now no VOC presence in Kartasura.

In the following years, the court of Amangkurat II gradually disintegrated, as did his influence over the outlying districts of the kingdom. By the 1690s, when the letter in the following document was written, the king had been forced to conclude that he might have need of VOC support – as he had at the start of his reign – and that therefore



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there would be benefit in ending the hostile relationship with the Company.

The king made some payments towards his debt to the Company in 1694, 1696 and 1699, and promised more. He also proposed that he should send an ambassador to Batavia, and the Company informed him that this would be welcome.

In October 1696, the king's uncle Pangeran Adipati Natakusuma, led such an embassy. He delivered a letter from the king which was submissive in tone, sought forgiveness for past wrongs and asked for a statement of what he still owed the Company. The letter, however, also emphasised that the kingdom and its people were poor and thus unable to pay large sums. Amangkurat II also asked for Company military assistance. (In late 1698 he wrote to the Company saying that Surapati had taken Madiun and was preparing to attack Kartasura itself.)

The letter which follows was the Company's reply – sharp, self-righteous and condemnatory.

The letter opened with a pointed version of the usual salutations and praise, expressing the hope that Amangkurat II would govern his good subjects in peace and justice, and drive away all evil persons from his court and kingdom – and the VOC was certain there were many in the latter category.

Natakusuma's embassy was then mentioned along with the contents of the royal letter it had brought.

Then the Company's letter proceeded to a long list of all of the king's failings and all that it righteously demanded of him. It repeated its demand for compensation of all of its costs in aiding the dynasty. Not only had this recompense not been received, said the letter, but to the contrary in 1686 Tack was murdered contrary to the standards of even 'barbarian and heathen' peoples. And instead of capturing Surapati, the king allowed him and Anrangkusuma to escape. The Company had also intercepted letters written by Amangkurat

II and Anrangkusuma a few days before the killing of Tack to a Minangkabau adventurer named Raja Sakti (Ahmad Syah ibn Iskandar), who was a pretender to the throne of Minangkabau. He had hoped to establish a widely based anti-VOC alliance. Raja Sakti was referred to also in this VOC letter, where he is called Yang Dipertuan.

The king was told that his disloyal officials were wresting control of his kingdom from his hands – a statement that was indeed true – and that some were in correspondence with Surapati. The time would soon come, warned Batavia, when these evil-doers would topple the king from his throne. All of the king's excuses for not dealing with this crisis were dismissed as 'frivolous and loose prattle'.

The Company was also in the midst of transferring its north coastal headquarters from Jepara to Semarang, and demanded that the king assist with that and transfer various areas to the authority of Semarang, so that the latter was endowed with sufficient resources. There was also trouble over the VOC garrison post at Surabaya, where Pangeran Lamongan of Keputren (in the letter called 'Pangeran Keputren') had closed off access to the interior and, thus, access to food and other supplies. The VOC thought better of the Surabaya lord Angabei Jangrana II who, along with Pangeran Cakraningrat II of Madura, was expanding control over areas of East Java.

As for the royal debt, the Company demanded 1,367,017 Spanish Real, an enormous amount, but offered to accept part of it in the form of rice and other crops.

This was, therefore, not a letter that was seeking reconciliation or compromise. It arrogantly demanded the complete submission of a king who was known to be hard-pressed from several sides, losing control of his court and of his kingdom, and with nowhere else to turn. While Batavia may have thought that Amangkurat II was desperate, it is still hard to imagine that Batavia really expect-



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ed him to give in. It seems more likely that the VOC felt that, since there was only a small likelihood that the king would accept all of the Company's demands, it might as well set out its manifold claims against Amangkurat II in extensive, uncompromising detail.

So this letter also reflected a bitter lesson that the VOC had learned – reluctantly – during more than two decades of direct involvement in the Javanese kingdom. That is, that it could cajole, complain, insist and threaten, but in the end, it had no means

by which it could, by itself, impose its will on the Javanese court. In reality, the Company could only achieve its aims in the interior of Java if it had local allies to work with.

Reference

- M. C. Ricklefs. *War, culture and economy in Java, 1677–1726: Asian and European imperialism in the early Kartasura period*. Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen and Unwin, 1993.



2 Transcription of the Dutch text

M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter of the Supreme Government to Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677-1703), 19 April 1697”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 20 APRIL 1697 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL. 285]

Missive van Haar Edelens de Hoge Regeringe van India aan den Soudouhounang tot Cartasoura Denigrat geschreven.

Dese brief werd geschreven uyt een goede genegentheyt door den Gouverneur Generael Willem van Outhoorn ende de Raden van Nederlants India, residerende in 't Cas-teel Batavia aan den Soudouhoenangh Ratou Mancourat Sinnepatty Ingalaga [fol. 286] Abdul Racham Mahamet Denil Coubra, jegenwoordigh sijn hof houdende tot Cartasoura de Ningrat, die God de Heere gelieve te geven verstand en wijsheyt om alle sijne goede onderdanen in vrede en met gerechtigheyt te kunnen regeren, mitsgaders een voorsightigh overlegh en beleyd om alle quade en boose menschen nevens sijne vijanden, uyt sijn hof en 't gansche rijk manmoedigh te verdrijven en sijn daervan allesins te ontlasten, opdat hij in sijne regering gedurende zijn leven in een gewenste rust en vrede mach continueren en sijne kinderen en kintskinderen nae zijn doot hem sodanigh ook mogen succederen.

De brief die de Soudouhounang Ratou Mancourat Sinnepatty Ingalaga met sijne gesanten, den Pangerang Adepatty Nata Cassouma, Angebay Nitinagara en Area Sou-ra Carama aan den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India heeft geschreven, is na gewoonte, en met het oude eerbewijs ontfangen: Inhoudende vooreerst een betuyging van sijn goede genegentheyt omtrent de Compagnie en omdat hij door deselve met grote moeyte in sijn koninklijk hof in een bloeyende staet en gerustheyt gestelt is, en tot nogh het rijk van Java blijft besitten, gelijk dat in Uw Mayesteyts vorig schrijven van den 6e van den maand december des jaers 1684, en meer andere brieven hier ontfangen, mede bekend wert, dienvolgens hij aan haer voor de voorsz. hulpe en bijstand in sijn ongelegen staet bewesen, ook in eeuwigheyt verpligt is, onder belofte met alle sijn vermogen sonder eenig versuym die genot en weldaden te sullen recompenseren, maer dat hij onvermogens soude wesen te volbrengen de saken die nogh ongetermineert sijn, waertoe U Majesteyt segt hem raet en gelegentheyt te ontbreken [fol. 287].

Den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India sullen aangaande 't eerste, te weeten de ronde bekentenis van de voorsz. diverse genote weldaden, en de verpligtingh daervoor niet anders antwoorden, als dat hetselve in allen deele de suyvere waerheyt, en de gehele werelt ook kennelijk is, dog daerbij ook voegen dat de bestelling daervan ook niet sonder grote kosten voor de Compagnie door haer volbragt is, sonder dat sedert Zijn Mayesteyt op sijn vaders throon weer is geseten geweest, nu 20 jaren geleden de behoorlijk[e] dankbaerheyt daervoor niet alleen niet gepresteert en is, waertoe anders geen occasie hem en heeft ontbroken, maer daerentegen in die tusschentijt in den jare



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1686, tegen alle, selfs barbarise en heydense volkeren, die van geen God en weten haer maxime Compagnies gesant de heer François Tak, wiens persoon uyt dien hoofde heyligh en onschuldigh selfs onder de wapenen van een vijant van voor lange eeuwen is geoordeelt te wesen, en voor alle moetwil en overlast, vrij en beschermt moet zijn, op soo een verradelijck en voor de geheele werelt verfoeyelijk[e] wijze, nevens meer andere gequalificeerde personen en mindere van sijn geselschap, voor off ontrent U Mayesteyts hof en genoegsaam in sijn en alle sijne groten haer gesicht heeft laten vermoorden en onbrengen, ten minsten 'tselfe gedooft is, en dat door de Balisen booswicht den bekenden Sourepatty, die met sijn schelmsen aanhang al langh bevorens door U Mayesteyt uyt sijn hoff niet alleen, maer ook sijn gansche rijk verdreven en verbannen had behoren te sijn geweest, omdat deselve soo verradelijck Compagnies volk en dienaren op 't Sicalon heeft helpen vermoorden in [fol. 288] plaets van tegen diverse vermaningen door den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India U Mayesteyt gedaen of ontrent sigh soo genegentlijck aan te houden en te koesteren, gelijk dat bij U Mayesteyt[s] brieff, dewelke tot Japara aan den Commandeur Sloot overgegeven en in de maand november des jaers 1691 herwaerts gesonden, en bij den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India ook hier ontfangen is, genoegh bekend werdt, dogh onder voorgeven dat sulx geschiedt is met die gedachten, dat wanneer Sourapatty op Cartasoura Diningrat bleeff woonen, dat men als men wilde sonder moeyten de Javanen en de Hollanders konde senden, om hem bij de kop te vatten, 'twelk wel anders gebleeken is, en dat hij sijn moordadigen aart ontrent onsen gesant en sijn verdere geselschap niet nagelaten heeft te betoonen, en sulx noch ten tijde dat door den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India, den voorsz. haren gesant, den heer François Tak, hadden laten afgaan en bij U Mayesteyt stondt te verscheynen, om over diverse punten in sijn brieff in den jare 1684 door de gesanten Area Sindouradja, de Tommagons Inga Wanghsa en Soura Wicrama, mitsgaders Soeta Djuwa en Nalla Diaja, aen den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India overhandigt, uytgedrukt, gelijk ook over meer andere saken, Zijn Mayesteyts belangen concernerende, ende welke tot nader confirmatie der vorens gemaekte contracten en zijn beloften zouden dienen, bij monde te spreken en te beraedtslagen gelijk daervan bij den brieff aan U Mayesteyt den 10e dagh van de maand february des jaers 1685 met den voorsz. gesant in geselschap van den oppercoopman De Hertogh afgegaan [fol. 289] geschreven en gesproken werd.

Wanneer de violatie na het algemene recht van een publicquen gesant vooral niet en behoorde gedooft te sijn geweest, sonder op deselve stondt, zooals het wel hadt behoort, daerover den verrader en schendingen moordenaer te laten vervolgen, en na verdienste te straffen, noch ook naderhant, sedert sooveel jaren, 'tselfe met de daadt getracht te hebben, gelijk mede niet geschiedt en is, aan den bekenden Amiran Cassuma daervan bij Compagnies brieff hiervoren geciteert, van den 1en april des jaers 1692 aan Sijn Mayesteyt gewach gemaekt is, die, als den Sousouhounangh niet onbekent is, de voorsz. moordt aan den ambassadeur met den verrader Sourepatty heeft bestooken en doen uytvoeren, niettegenstaande een geruymen tijdt daarna hij noch tot Carta Soura de Ningrat en sulx in U Majesteyts hoff geweest is, en dat daerom den Sousehounangh Amancourat Sinnepatty Ingalaga door den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India



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bij haer brieven, bijzonderlijk de twee van 12en der maandt July 1691, en eersten april des jaers 1692 soo ernstelijck is versocht en daertoe aangemaant geweest, 'twelk den gemelten Amiran Cassouma daerom niet alleen wel hadt verdient, maer ook omdat hij, sooals den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India bij haren brief van 1en July 1687 aan den Sousouhoenang Aman Courat Sinnepatty Ingalaga niet alleen bekent gemaekt, maer door sijn geintercipieerden en aangehaelde brief aan den rover en Manicaboesen oproermaker Jangh de Pertuan geschreven, welkers afschrift den Tommagon Soura Wicrama Angabay Nalladjaja en Angabay [fol. 290] Allat Allat medegegeven zijn om Sijn Mayesteyts te overhandigen, bewesen hebben, van denselven tegen de christenen bijstant en hulpe versocht heeft, ofwel eygentlijk bij de brief die door U Mayesteyt daernevens aan den voormelte oproermaker en bedrieger Jang de Pertuan geschreven soude wesen, op welke bekentmaking den Sousouhounangh Aman Courat Sinnepatty Ingalaga bij sijn schrijven van 13en december desselven jaers 1687 aan den commandeur Sloot tot Japara geen ander antwoord heeft toegepast, als dat hij hem versekerde, indien der eenige quade onderneminghen moghten kunnen te geschieden, dat hetselve t'eenemaal buyten sijn Majesteyts weten soude wesen, alsoo hem de Javaanse raedtslagen onbewust zijn, en sigh met hare vergaderingh niet en bemoeyt.

Uyt hetwelk wat gedachten den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India hebben kunnen formeren, en noch blijven behouden, kan den Sousehounangh Sinnepatty Ingalaga wel bedenken, ten besten, uyt de voorsz. nalatigheden en versuymenis door den Sousehounangh Sinnepatty Ingalaga op de voorsz. aanmaninge van den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India, om de voormelte twee booswighen Sourapatty en Amirangh Cassouma na verdiensten over hare misdrijven te straffen. Indien deselve met oogluysingh en voorkennis van U Majesteyt niet en zijn gepleeght, dat alsdan U Mayesteyt genoeghsaam door sijne mantris en groten aan 't hof, ten minsten de principaelste daarvan, de regeringh over sijne onderdanen tot Java uyt sijne handen ontwongen is, en sij hem buyten alle gesach houden; waarmede indien het sodanigh gelegen is, [fol. 291] soo kunnen den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India niet nalaten bij desen den Sousehounangh Amangh Courat Sinnepatty Ingalaga te voorseggen, dat het niet langh sal duren of den gemelte Sourapatty en de quade correspondenten die tot Cartasoura de Ningerat haar onthouden, sullen gesamentlijk den Sousehounangh van sijnen thron afsetten, en sijn wettigh successeur daarvan berooven, 'tgeen den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India eghter anders willen hoopen, en dat U Mayesteyt bij tijds, als een kloekmoedigh vorst betaemt, met den wijsen raad van sijn welmenende mantrys en eygen maght, die hem niet en ontbreekt, versterkt zijnde, 't voorsz. ongeval zal weren en voorkomen, kunnende de excusen en het voorwenden van U Mayesteyt dat hij geen raad noch gelegentheyt soude weten om de ordres, die den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India in 't lant van Java zouden hebben uytgegeven, te volbrengen, waerdoor zijn hert bedroeft en verduystert is, niet als voor een frivoool en losse praat, geen vorst van soo een groot vermogen en bestier voegende, aangenomen werden. Want bij aldien met die ongetermineerde saken gemeent werdt de oeffeningh van de straff aan voormelte Sourepatty en Amiran Cassouma 'twelk den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India van den Sousehounangh als hiervoren

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is geseght, hebben versocht, soo is 't immers bij niemant aannemelijck dat het daertoe U Mayesteyt aan macht en gelegentheyt, indien de wille daarmede vergeselschapt gingh, zal ontbreeken. En bij aldien 't selve meer andere saken is betreffende, soo hadden den [fol. 291] Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India wel gewenscht, dat die specificke en bijzonderlijk in U Mayesteyts voorgeciteerde jongst ontfange brief, waren aangehaelt en opgegeven, wanneer dierwegen met de voormelte gesanten soude hebben kunnen gesproken en gebesogneert werden, waervan dan den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India onkundigh zijnde, en de gesanten op de vrage aan haer door expresse commissarissen uyt de leeden van de vergaderingh van de Raden van India aan haer gedaan, off se noch yts buyten 't gene waervan in de Sousehounangh sijn brief geschreven was, hadden voor te dragen, verklaert hebbende niet met al meer, of daerbuyten haer gelast te wesen, soo kunnen den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India dierwegen oock Sijn Mayesteyt bij desen haren brief in sijn droefheyt en aan sijn verduystert hert geen andere verlichtingh laten toekomen, als met hem bekent te maeken, dat op de gedane versoeken en instantiën door den Sousehounangh, eerst aen den Commandeur Couper, en daernae bij sijn brief den 6e december des jaers 1684 hier tot Batavia ontfangen, aan den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India, geresolveert is de chrijghsmacht tot noch op den bergh van Japara geposteert sijnde, gelijk daertoe den gemelten onsen ambassadeur François Tak al gequalificeert is geweest U Mayesteyt te veraccorderen, van daer te lichten en na Samarangh over te brengen soodra onse vestingh ende woningen daerin tot haer lijfbergingh gereet en aldaer gemaekt zullen wesen, tot welck haer transport den Soesehouhangh soo verre [fol. 293] Compagnies opperhoofd daerom mochte benodight wesen, sijnen onderdanen hulpe versocht werdt hem te willen laten genieten, en 't kleene getal Compagnies bediendens dat aldaer den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India in een aparte woningh beneden den bergh, aan of omtrent de zeekant sullen laten verblijven onder sijne beschermingh te nemen en van alle overlant bevrijden, waarmede U Mayesteyt dan staet ontlant te raken van de onkosten waertoe bij het contract van den jaere 1677 articul 14 sich verbonden heeft aan de Compagnie uyt te keeren en te vergoeden, 'twelck bij aldien maer gerekent soude werden, sedert de maant november 1677 tot den dagh dat voorsz. Compagnies militaire posthouders gelijk geseght, van den bergh tot Japara na Samarangh sullen verhuysen, tot welkers voldoeningh Sijn Mayesteyt sich bij het hier even boven geciteert contract van 25e february artl. 14, en oock nader bij de acte obligatoir den 19e en 20e van de maent october desselven jaers, door hem en sijne mantrys tot Japara geteekent, verbonden heeft, zoo soude dat al een grote somme uytmaken.

Maer den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India insiende de klachten van den Sousehouhangh wegens den slechten toestand van sijn rijck en onderdanen, dewelke door de menighvuldige vijanden, die daerin hun onthouden maandelijx souden werden overvallen en geruïneert, hebben uyt een goede genegentheyt die se tot den Sousehouhangh sijn dragende, als van de voorsz. maant november 1677 tot november het jaer 1682 toe, en sulx maer voor 5 jaren dat den Commandeur Couper van Cartasoura de Ningrat tot [fol. 294] Batavia is geretourneert, en door den Sousehouhangh aan hem versocht is den bergh tot Japara van Compagnies besettelingen te willen ontlan-

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ten, waerom deselve dan maer komen te bedragen twaelf hondert duysent Spaense realen à 20,000 rxs yder maand volgens het 13e articol van het voormelte contract, waerbij noch gevoeght sijnde eenige andere posten die de Sousouhounangh mede volgens den inhoud van 't selve contract en acte obligatoir sich verbonden heeft aan den Compagnie te vergoeden, en 'tgeen waerin hij verder gehouden is, zoo volgens belofte, als wegens genote en onbetaelde goederen, en weer afgetrocken 'tgeen in diverse reysen aan de Compagnie met Spaense realen heeft laten betalen, als andersins bij haer voor sijn reequening ontfangen is, zoo sal Sijn Mayesteyt aan deselve noch schuldich blijven derthien hondert seven en sestich duysent een en seventich Spaense realen, 't een en 't ander uyt de bij Sijn Majesteyt versochte, en hiernevens gaande opgemaekte reequening nader en specificce te vernemen.

Van welcker voldoeningh, indien de middelen die sedert dien tijdt den Sousouhounangh niet en hebben ontbrooken, wel en na behoren bij der handt genomen en in 't werk waren gestelt, jegenwoordig Sijn Mayesteyt al bevrijdt zoude sijn geweest, gelijk noch binnen een kleene reekx van jaren daarvan ontslagen zal kunnen raken wanneer nevens een goede somme Spaense realen jaerlijx ook een duysent off meer lasten rijs, voorts peper en cattoene gaeren aan de Compagnie sal gelieven te laten leveren, sullende de rijs, wanneer deselve hier tot Batavia wert aangebraght, dat den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India liever hadden, alsdat se met Compagnies scheepen wierdt afgehaelt, omdat se [fol. 295] die op andere vaerwaters beter van noden hebben, na de prijs op de boom, en de suyvere peper tegen 4 1/2 rxs het picol van 125 ponden Hollants, maer het cattoene gaeren na hare waerde op Sijn Majesteyt reecq. altijdt goedt gedaan werden, welke betalingh in maniere voorsz. de Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India seer aangenaam zal wesen en den Sousouhounangh vrundelijk versogt en gerecommandeert werdt hoe eer hoe liever te willen laten volbrengen, opdat de Compagnie na verloop van sooveele jaren, eens vergoedingh van haer groote gedane onkosten tot behoudenis van des Sousouhounanghs rijk en persoon, mach erlangen, en sal buyten 't selve den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India veel genoeg en ook toebrengen dat Sijn Mayesteyt aan den Pangeran Capoetran na Surrebaya op den ontfangh deses, sijn ordre laet afgaan, dat hij de wegen, die door hem van de bovenlanden na beneden tot Compagnies vestingh aldaer, volgens de klachten van onsen capitain en gesaghebber, geslooten zijn, en waerdoor de posthouders te water noch te lande geen behoorlijke levensmiddelen kunnen bekomen, weer openstelt, sodanigh als se geweest zijn onder 't bestier van den Kiay Angeby d'Ziangrana alleen; kunnende de verdeling daarvan aan voormelte twee van sijn Mayesteyts bediendens, niet dan onderlinge onlusten en tweespalt veroorsaken, die bij dese tijden Sijn Mayesteyt niet dan bekommeringh kunnen toebrengen, daer hij sich niet verder in dient te wikkelen. Dienvolgens de Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India van gevoelen zijn, dat Sijn Mayesteyt wel sal doen den Pangeran Capoetran het bestier weer af te nemen, en aan gedachten Kiey Angebay Dziangrana alleen [fol. 296] laet overgeven, gelijk het voordesen geweest is, en waerbij de ingeseten aldaer haer wel hebben bevonden.

Ende dewijle (gelijk hiervoren geseght) Compagnies posthouders van Japara na Samarangh staan te verhuysen, en na haren ommeslach en om hare saken aldaer te

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verrichte, meer volk van noden zullen hebben als er nu resideert, zoo sal den Sou-souhounangh gelieven ten eersten ordre te stellen dat alle de negorijen en dorpen, nevens derselver inwooners en onder andere de negorie Gamyla en 't dorp Sittyrawa, met haer volk weer onder Samarangh gebracht en overgegeven werden, gelijk die van-outs en voordesen onder haer gebiedt sijn geweest, opdat de Compagnie de nodigen dienst van haer mach trecken, en sulx in voldoeningh en nakomingh van de speciale acte bij U Majesteyt op den 15e dagh van de maandt january des jaers 1678 aan de Compagnie verleent. Bij welkers prompte voldoeningh den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India sal komen te blijken dat de schriftelijke betuygenis van U Mayesteyt bij sijne brieven zoo menichmaelen, van dat hij in eeuwigheyt niet sal vergeten de weldaden die de Compagnie aan hem gedaan heeft, en genegen is, de contracten met deselve gemaect, altoos en onverbreekelijk te houden, met de daeden sijne werken overeenkomt, gelijk het betaamt en U Mayesteyt sich daertoe verbonden heeft.

Het geschenk van thien coyangs rijs, en twee paer peerden, is door des Sou-souhounangs voormelte gesanten den Gouverneur [fol. 297] Generael en raden van India tot Batavia wel overgegeven maer de vijftigh koebeesten zouden na het mondelingh rapport van deselve op Japara sijn verbleeven, 'tgeen evenwel aangesien wert, alsof se hiermede waren ontfangen. Dienvolgens sal Sijn Mayesteyt daerover en de rest tot een recompens gelieven aan te nemen dit volgende als:

- 12 ellen rood schairlaken
- 1 spiegel van 1 ¼ ellen, met vergulde lijsten
- 2 stux taatsen, een goude en een silvere
- 1 botidaer met goude bloemen
- 2 Persiaanse fluweelen
- 4 Gobars Mattaram
- 10 Tape gobars
- 6 Cassa Bengale
- 6 Adthays en
- ½ picol nagelen

Alles de voormelte gesanten nevens desen brief inhandicht, daerbij een silver signet, met een yvore hecht of ander greep gevoegt is, door den Radeen Area Sindouradja voor sijn Mayesteyt versocht, rontom welkers rand off boort met Duytse, en in 't midden met Maleytse en Javaanse letters ingegraveert is, *Sousouhounang Aman Courat Sinnepatti Ingalaga*, 'tgeen den Gouverneur Generael en Raden van India vertrouwen willen na Sijn Mayesteyts sindeljkheyt zal wesen, kunnende jegenwoordigh met geen Persiaans peerdt gerieft werden, waerom Radeen Area Sindouradja mede versocht heeft, dewijle de Compagnie geen op haer stal heeft, en van geen ingesetenen alhier ook te [fol. 298] bekomen is.

Geschreven in 't Casteel Batavia op 't eylant Groot Java den 19e april 1697, (onderstont) den Gouverneur Generael van Nederlants India (was geteekent) Willem van Outhoorn (ter zijde stond) Compagnies zegel in rode lacke gedrukt (en daeronder) Ter ordonnantie van gemelte Haar Edele Hoog Achtbare (was geteekent) C[ornelis] van Swoll, secretaris.

3 English translation

M. C. Ricklefs, "Letter of the Supreme Government to Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677-1703), 19 April 1697".

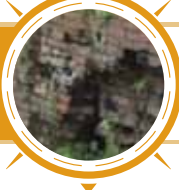
FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA, 20 APRIL 1697 [BEGINNING WITH FOL. 285]

Letter written by Their Excellencies the Supreme Government of Asia to the Susuhunan at Kartasura (Adi) ningrat.

This has been written in a spirit of friendship by the Governor-General Willem van Outhoorn and the Councillors of Asia, residing in Batavia Castle, to Susuhunan Ratu Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga [fol. 286] Abdulrahman Muhammad Zainulkubra, who at present holds his court at Kartasura (Adi)ningrat, to whom may God may grant the sagacity and wisdom to be able to rule over his all his good subjects in peace and justice, as well as a circumspect discretion and system of government which will give him the courage to expel all evil and iniquitous people, his enemies not just from his court but from his whole realm, thereby ridding himself of them for good and all, so that his reign may continue throughout his life in the desired law and order and also [in] that his children and his children's children may succeed him after his death.

The letter which Susuhunan Ratu Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga has written to the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia [and dispatched] with his envoys Pangeran Adipati Natakusuma, Angabehi Nitinagara and Arya Sura[wi]krama has been received with all the usual ceremony. It commences with a declaration of his devotion to the Company, because it was this same [Company] which took enormous pains to establish him in his royal court in a flourishing state and at peace. [Now] he still continues to reign over the realm of Java, as written in Your Majesty's earlier epistles of the 6th of the month of December in the year 1684 as well as sundry other letters received here, and he acknowledges that, as a consequence of the aforesaid help and assistance shown him in his unfortunate predicament, he is eternally obliged, promising everything within his power, without exception, to recompense these benefactions and the said munificence. However, [he says] that he is not in a position to be able to accomplish all those matters which are as yet outstanding, [to do the which] His Majesty claims he has neither the counsel nor the opportunity [fol. 287].

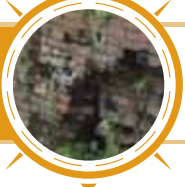
Concerning the first point, to wit the plain unvarnished significance of the aforesaid various benefactions [he has] enjoyed from the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia and the obligations hereby incurred but so far unfulfilled, the which is absolutely incontrovertible, as indeed it is [acknowledged] throughout the whole world, must be added that the execution of the same, [attained]not without great difficulty, was at great cost to the Company, and that since His Majesty was restored to his father's throne, twenty years ago, he has never offered the slightest token of decent gratitude, even though he has not lacked the opportunity to do so. Indeed, in the inter-



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

vening period in the year 1686, in contradiction to the custom even of all barbarian and heathen people who are ignorant of God, he had cut down and murdered the Company envoy Mr François Tak, whose person his role decreed to be sacrosanct and inviolable, even in the face of the weapons of a centuries-old enemy. He should have been free and protected from [all] danger and nuisance, [but was murdered] in a treacherous manner execrated throughout the whole world. The same fate befell the other delegated persons as well as those of lesser standing in his suite, either in front of or in the vicinity of Your Majesty's court and in full view of all the worthies of the realm. At the very least, he turned a blind eye to [this outrage], [perpetrated] by the Balinese renegade the infamous Surapati, who with his train of scoundrels should long ago have been expelled not only from his court but also banned from the territory of his whole realm [if only because] at Cikalong, that same did seditiously help murder [fol. 288], in spite of a number of warnings given Your Majesty by the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia to which he should have lent an attentive ear and taken to heart, as Your Majesty's letter, which was handed over to Captain Sloot in Jepara in the month of December of the year 1691 and forwarded hither, sufficiently acknowledges, was likely to happen, should Surapati continue to reside in Kartasura [A]diningrat, that should one has been really disposed [to do so], it would have been easy to send Javanese and Hollanders to tackle him. However, it seems matters took a different course, and that he did nothing to restrain his murderous nature towards our envoy and his entourage, and that at a time at which the aforesaid envoy, Mr François Tak, dispatched by the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia to present himself to appear before Your Majesty to discuss various points raised in [Your Majesty's] letter of the year 1684 handed over to the Governor-General of Councillors of Asia, by the envoys Arya Sindureja, Tumenggungs Inggawanga and Surawikrama, attended by Sutajuwa [probably Sutawijaya] and Nalajaya, as well as to talk over other affairs touching upon His Majesty's interests and to confirm in more detail the contracts concluded earlier and his [other] promises, as well as to deliberate on Your Majesty's letter of the tenth day of February in the year 1685, previously written and spoken about with the aforesaid envoy in the company of Senior Merchant De Hartogh [fol. 289]. Instead, he immediately launched into other matters to do with His Majesty's concerns which had to do with the further confirmation of earlier concluded contracts and his promises, orally and directly to deliberate upon in Your Majesty's letter of the 10th day of February in the year 1685 previously written about and discussed with the aforementioned envoy in the company of Senior Merchant De Hertogh [fol. 289].

Whenever the violation of the universal right of a public envoy has not as it should have been inviolable, indeed has not been honoured, as it should have been, and as a consequence [of his felony] the traitor and dastardly murderer should have been prosecuted and punished as befitted his crime, and later, even after the lapse of so many years, the same should still answer for his deed but this has not happened. As was drawn to Your Majesty's attention in the Company letter of 1 April of the year 1692, the infamous Anrangkusuma who, as the Susuhunan is not unaware, had connived at the aforesaid assassination of the envoy with the traitor Surapati and had it carried



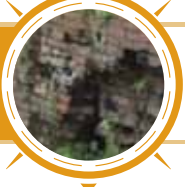
ENGLISH TRANSLATION

out, nevertheless a goodly time thereafter he was still in Kartasura Adiningrat and was even in attendance at Your Majesty's court. This is the reason that in their letters, particularly those of the 12th of the month of July 1691 and 1st of April of the year 1692, to Susuhunan Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia, so earnestly requested, indeed ordered is that which said Anrangkusuma had deserved.

Not only this, as the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia announced in their letter of 1 July 1687 to the Susuhunan Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga in a letter from the same, which was intercepted and cited, written to the robber and Minangkabau rabble-rouser Yang Dipertuan, a transcript of which was given to Tumenggung Surawikrama, Ngabehi Nalajaya and Ngabehi [fol. 290] Aladalad to hand over to Your Majesty, did [you]request help and assistance against the Christians. Indeed, in the letter mentioned above allegedly written by Your Majesty to the aforementioned rebel and traitor Yang Dipertuan, which, when this [allegation] became known, in his letter of 13th December of that same year 1687 to Commander Sloom in Jepara, Susuhunan Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga did not deign to touch upon, except to assure him that, if any sort of villainous undertakings should have been afoot, that this had been without His Majesty's knowledge because he had been ignorant of the Javanese deliberations and [consequently] had not dealt with it in their gatherings.

Therefore, the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia have drawn the conclusion, and it is one from which they will not be budged, that Susuhunan Senapati Ingalaga will have no difficulty understanding, on account of the aforesaid errors and omissions of Susuhunan Senapati Ingalaga with regard to what has been said above, the censure of the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia in urging him to deal out a punishment to the two villains, the aforesaid Surapati and Anrangkusuma, to fit their crimes. Should it have happened that these aforementioned (crimes) were not committed with the complicity and foreknowledge of Your Majesty, it is as clear as day that Your Majesty's rule over his subjects in Java has been wrested from his hands by his ministers and the notables at his court, at least those who are foremost among them, and that they have amputated him from all authority. If this interpretation is indeed correct [fol. 291], in this letter the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia cannot let the opportunity to slip to prophesy to Susuhunan Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga that it will not be long before the said Surapati and his evil conspirators who reside in Kartasura Adiningrat shall conspire to depose the Susuhunan from his throne, and rob his lawful successor of it. The Governor-General and Councillors of Asia most sincerely hope that this will not eventuate and that His Majesty will take timely measures befitting stout-hearted ruler, buttressed by the good counsel of his well-intentioned ministers and his personal power, in which he is not lacking, and that he will be able to avert the aforesaid calamity.

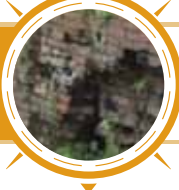
Furthermore that the excuses and pretexts of His Majesty that he has had neither the advice nor the opportunity to carry out the orders decreed by the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia in the land of Java, the which saddens him and overwhelms his heart with regret, might be assumed to be nothing but foolish and idle prattle, unwor-



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thy of a ruler of such great power with so much under his sway. Among the unfinished business referred to is the execution or the punishment of the aforesaid Surapati and Angrangkusuma, which as the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia as mentioned above have ordered. Nobody could take seriously [any claim] that Your Majesty lacks either the power or the opportunity [to effectuate this], if indeed the will [to do so] is likewise present. Furthermore, there are yet some other matters which the Governor-General [fol. 292] and Councillors of Asia wish to raise, specifically and particularly those cited in Your Majesty's most recent letter mentioned above, which could have been discussed and deliberated with the aforementioned envoys, and of which the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia have no knowledge. When asked by the commissioners expressly appointed from among the members of the assembly of the Councillors of Asia whether they had anything more to contribute other than what the Susuhunan had to say in his letter, the envoys said that they had nothing more to say, and carried no other orders. Therefore the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia can do nothing in this letter to alleviate the sadness and grief-stricken heart of the Susuhunan other to inform him that, with reference to the requests and solicitations which the Susuhunan expressed first to Commander Couper, and later in his letter to the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia of 6 December of the year 1684 received here in Batavia, [addressed to] the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia, are resolved to move the force which is still posted on the hill at Jepara, the which our aforementioned ambassador François Tak was [qualified] to come to an agreement with Your Majesty, to Semarang as soon as our stronghold and the barracks there have been constructed and made ready to accommodate it. For its transportation, the Susuhunan might [fol. 293] be requested by the Company man in authority there, should they require any help, to take its subjects under his protection and keep them safe from any harm. Also that he take a small number of Company servants whom the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia shall continue to leave posted there a separate dwelling at the foot of the hill, on or near the seashore, under his protection. Should Your Majesty agree to this he will be discharged and freed of the necessity to repay and recompense what he has incurred to the Company under Article 14 of the contract of the year 1677, as [this assistance] will be taken in lieu of the debt. [This will be reckoned] from the month of November 1677 up to the day on which as said the abovementioned Company military post-holders, as said above, will move from the hill of Jepara to Semarang, compliance in this would cancel that very large sum to which His Majesty under the terms of Article 14 the contract of 25th February cited above, and restated in the compulsory decree of 19th and 20th of the month of October in the same year, signed by himself and his ministers, has bound himself.

However, in view of the complaints of the Susuhunan about the impoverished condition of his realm and his subjects, precipitated by a horde of enemies who seek their livelihood there every month and so attack and ruin it, out of the affection which they bear towards the Susuhunan, from the aforesaid month of November 1677 up to the month of November of the year 1682, except for the five years since Commander Couper has returned to Batavia from Kartasura Adiningrat [fol. 294], and he was entreated

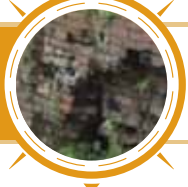


ENGLISH TRANSLATION

by the Susuhunan that he be relieved of the burden of the settlement of the Company on the hill of Jepara, even though the costs amount to the sum of only 112,000 Spanish *reals* or 20,000 Rix-dollars every month under Article 13 of the above-mentioned contract. Indeed under the content of neither that same contract nor the compulsory instrument was the Susuhunan in any way obliged to recompense the Company for any other item, than to which he further is obliged, according to promises made, for goods received but unpaid, and also deducting from the Spanish *reals* for which he has been recompensed by the Company for various journeys [undertaken], which would otherwise have been billed to his account, His Majesty is still indebted to the tune of 1,136,700 Spanish *reals*, the one and other of which is demanded of His Majesty, and can be seen in the enclosed further specified account.

This payment, if the means [to do so] which since that time the Susuhunan has not been lacking in the means to do so, should have been handed over in the appropriate manner and settled. [If this had been done] at this time His Majesty could be free of [this debt] or could discharge himself of it if within a smallish number of years were he would be pleased to deliver to the Company a goodly sum of Spanish *reals*, a thousand or so *lasten* of rice, as well as pepper and cotton thread. It would be more satisfactory to the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia if the rice were to be delivered to Batavia, rather than being carried on Company ships, because [fol. 295] these could be better employed on other trading routes, as the price pepper on the vine and pure pepper is around 4 and a half Rix-dollars per *picul* of 125 Dutch pounds, and the cotton thread on the order to His Majesty has always fetched a satisfactory sum. Payment in the aforesaid manner would be very acceptable to the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia, therefore the Susuhunan is amiable requested and advised to accede [to this proposal] as early as possible because, after the passage of so many years, at long last the Company look to some recompense for the huge costs it has incurred for the preservation of the Susuhunan's realm and person. Apart from this, the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia would be greatly please if, on receipt of this [epistle], His Majesty will dispatch an order to Pangeran Kaputren in Surabaya, [commanding] that he will once again open up the roads from the highlands to the Company settlement on the plain, just as they were under the government of KyaiNgabehi Jangrana. Our captain and man-in-charge there has complained that the post-holders can obtain no proper means of sustenance either by water or by land. The division between the two aforementioned servants of Your Majesty might like as not lead to disturbances and dissension, which can only burden Your Majesty with extra troubles, in which he would do best not to become entangled any further. Therefore the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia think that Your Majesty would do well to relieve Pangeran Kaputren of his duty and to let it be taken over solely by Kyai Ngabehi Jangrana [fol. 296], as was previously the case [restoring the former situation], under which the inhabitants enjoyed prosperity.

And, as [as stated above] the Company post-holders stand on the point of moving from Jepara to Semarang, to carry out all their business from there, they will require more people than are now resident there, would the Susuhunan most graciously con-



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sent to issue orders that all the *negeri* and villages, and their inhabitants, including the *negeri* of Gamyla and the village of Sitirawa [modern Ambarawa], should once again be placed under Semarang and handed over to it, as it was anciently and formerly under its territory. This is so that the Company can require essential services from them, in settlement of and in compliance with the special decree of Your Majesty given to the Company on the 15th day of the month of January in the year 1678.

When this has been promptly complied with, it will be made clear to the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia that the written affirmations given so often by Your Majesty, that he shall never ever, to the end of time, forget the beneficence the Company has shown him and that he is willing to honour the contracts made with it, forever and indissolubly, as it should be and as Your Majesty has pledged himself to do.

The gift of ten *koyang* rice and two pairs of horses were indeed presented to [fol. 297] the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia in Batavia by the above-mentioned envoys of the Susuhunan but, according to oral report of the same, the fifty head of cattle remain in Jepara, the which will be accepted as if they had been received here. Consequently in reciprocation would His Majesty be pleased to receive the following:

- 12 ells red scarlet cloth
- 1 looking-glass, measuring 1 and a quarter ells, with a gilt frame
- 2 pairs of scales, fone for gold, one for silver
- 1 *botidaer* with gold flowers
- 2 [pieces] or Persian velvet
- 4 *gobars Mataram*
- 10 *tape gobars*
- 6 *cassa Bengale*
- 6 *adthays* and
Half a *pikul* of cloves

All the above-mentioned as well as the letter handed over to the aforesaid envoys with a silver signet ring, set in an ivory clasp or some other shank, request by Raden Arya Sindureja on His Majesty's behalf, around the edge engraved in Dutch (i.e. Latin) characters and in the centre in Javanese and Malay script *Susuhunan Aman Kurat Senapati Ingalaga*, which the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia will afford Your Majesty pleasure. At the moment no Persian horse is available in the Company stable, the which Raden Arya Sindureja also requested, nor is it possible to purchase one from any resident here [fol. 298].

Written in Batavia Castle in the island of Java on 19 April 1697, under the Governor-General of the Netherlands India (signed) Willem van Outhoorn, sealed with the Company seal printed in red lacquer (below) On the order of the said Right Honourable Gentleman (signed) C[ornelis] van Swoll, secretary.



4 Colophon

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Title | M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter of the Supreme Government to Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677-1703), 20 April 1697”. In: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta</i> , document 13. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014. |
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5 Folio image

This is the first page of the original document. All folios may be viewed on the website via the Tab 'Images' in the Harta Karun section or in the Digital Archive Collections.

Archival Source, ANRI, HR 2517, fols. 285-298.

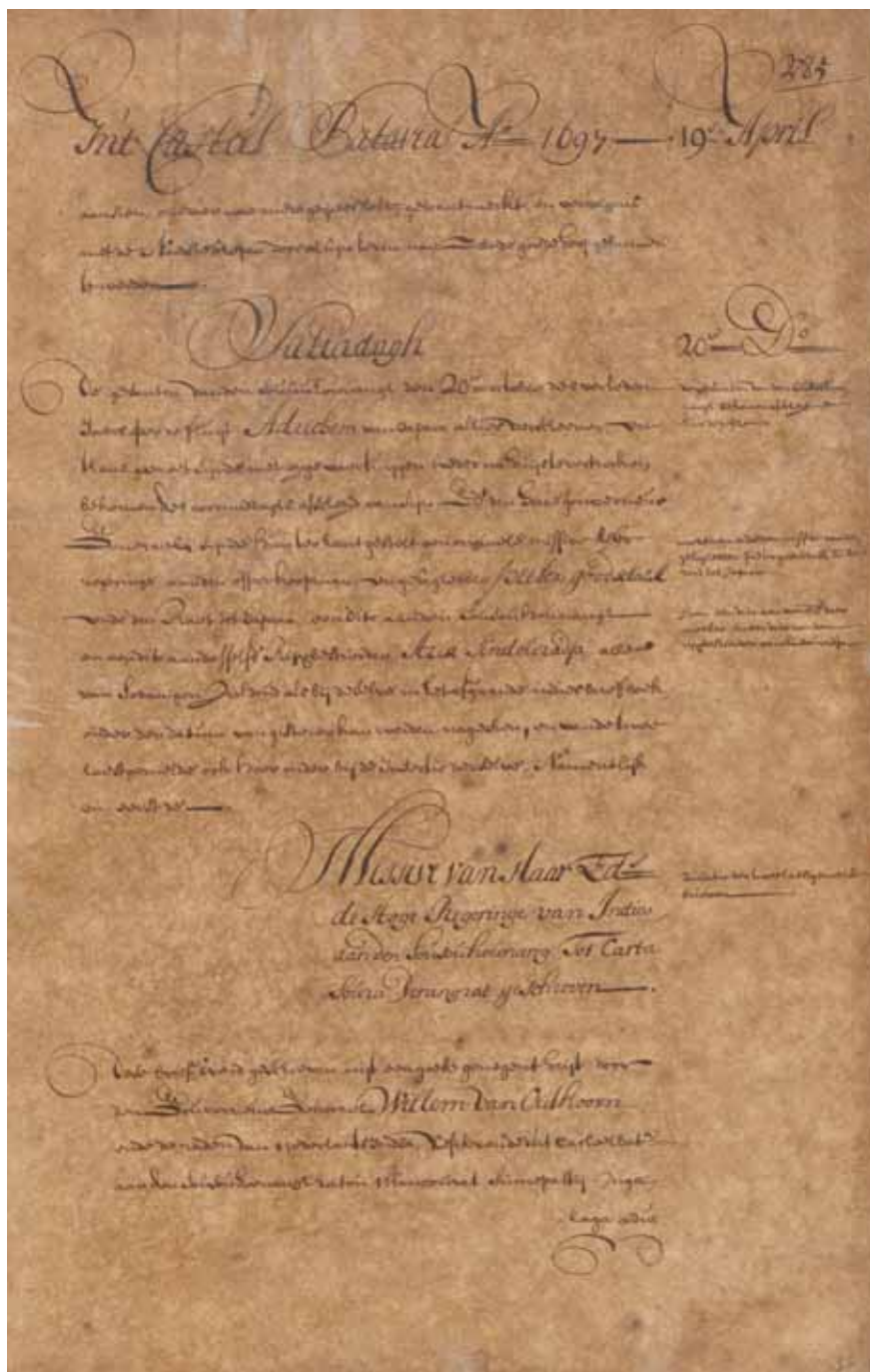




Illustration 1. Javanese cavalerie drawing by Jan Brandes. c. 1779 – 1785.

Letter from Susuhunan Amangkurat II in Kartasura to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 18 December 1699

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1 Introduction

M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter from Susuhunan Amangkurat II in Kartasura to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 18 December 1699”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 14. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY M. C. RICKLEFS

This letter was written by Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677-1703) in dire circumstances, his control over his court and kingdom being in an advanced state of collapse. As indicated in Harta Karun document 13, the hostility and diplomatic impasse between the VOC and the court of Kartasura were almost total; of reconciliation there was little hope and, from the VOC side, probably no real expectation.

Within the court, cliques and rivalries were increasingly bitter and dangerous. In the east of the kingdom, Surapati had carved out an independent domain centred on Pasuruan. In 1698-9 he was able to raid as far west as Madiun and Ponorogo. Farther east, the once-independent kingdom of Balambangan was conquered by the Balinese lord Gusti Panji Sakti of Buleleng in 1697, evidently in alliance with Surapati. In Surabaya, the local lord, Angabei Jangrana II, was operating largely independently and repairing the city’s defensive walls in case of attack. The Madurese lord Cakraningrat II’s loyalty to Kartasura was doubtful, and at best limited.

It was in this context that Amangkurat II wrote the following letter to the Governor-General of the VOC and the Council of the Indies in Batavia in December 1699.

Here the king wrote of the threat of Surapati – whom the VOC had been trying to get Amangkurat II to capture or kill since he had murdered some seventy-five VOC soldiers including Captain François Tack at the court in 1686.

Amangkurat II’s letter claimed that Surapati had 800 soldiers armed with *snapphaenen*. This was the latest form of musket which was being introduced into Java in this period – the English term is snaphance. It used a flintlock firing mechanism rather than the older matchlock. This new firing mechanism, along with pre-packaged paper cartridges (also introduced in this period), significantly increased the reliability, rate and accuracy of infantry fire. It is highly unlikely (as the Company would have known) that Surapati already had 800 such weapons. They were occasionally presented as gifts by the VOC, as shown in this letter, in which the king acknowledged receiving a gilded pair of *snapphaenen* (probably in the form of pistols rather than muskets).

It is not clear how much of this story about the threat of Surapati was true. The VOC was disinclined to give any credence to whatever was said by Amangkurat II. And, in fact, Surapati never attacked either Kartasura or Surabaya.

The king sought VOC military support and said that, after the impending conflict was over, he would send a negotiator to Batavia. The Company was accustomed to such promises and had no interest in responding to the king’s requests.

Throughout 1700 and 1701 the diplomatic impasse continued with various promises of negotiations or embassies, but nothing happened. According to another VOC source, among the gifts that the Company sent to the king at this



INTRODUCTION



Illustration 2. Surapati kills Captain François Tack in Kartasura on 8 February 1686.

time were some portraits, which inspired a joke among Kartasura courtiers that instead of soldiers the VOC was sending puppets. One difficulty in the way of any real negotiations may have been a fear among the king's dignitaries that, if they were sent as emissaries to Batavia, they might be murdered in revenge for the killing of Tack in 1686. No real negotiations took place down to the death of Amangkurat II in November 1703.

Reference:

- M. C. Ricklefs. *War, Culture and Economy in Java, 1677–1726: Asian and European Imperialism in the Early Kartasura period*. Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen and Unwin, 1993.

2 Transcription of the Dutch text

M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter from Susuhunan Amangkurat II in Kartasura to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 18 December 1699”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 18 DECEMBER 1699 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL. 855]

Translaat Javaanse missive door den Sousouhounang Aman Courat Sena Patty Ingalaga aan Haar Edelens de Hoge Regeringe tot Batavia geschreven.

Desen brief, verciert met veel heylwenschingen mitsgaders lang leven en gezondheid, komt van den Sousouhounang Ratoe Amangkoerat Senapaty Ingalaga Abdul Ragman Mohamed Dinil Koebra, houdende zijn hof op het land van Karta Soura Adiningrat, en onder sijne regering heeft de stranden en het geheele land Java, aan zijn vader den Heer Gouverneur Generael, dewelcke etc.

Wijders zijn mijne gesanten genaamt Tommagon Marta Poura, Pospa Troena en Derma Soeta, dewelcke ik naer Batavia sende om voor sijn Hoog Edele te verschijnen, mits bekendmaeking vanwegen den vijand Sourapaty, dewelcke tegenwoordig naar Sourabaya wil trekken [fols. 886] om 'tselve in te nemen soo mij gesezt is, door de lieden die op het huys passen van den Angaby Jangrana. Ook is den vijand nu op het land genaamt Pakattingan, en het getal van deselve sijn 800 met snaphanen, en nog 800 met ander geweer. Ook isser nog een ander partij vijanden die hij gecommandeert heeft om Panaraga, Madiyon, en Kannagattar in te nemen, 'twelck zij tegenwoordig ook hebben gedaan. Ook is den vijand nu op Wolak Walikan aan de rivier van Kiping, en mijn gewapende volck van Cartasoura hebben haer pagger ten oosten van den oever en bewesten van het land Wolak Walikan. En omtrent de helft van mijn lijfknegten heb ik met haer geweer op de passabaan gestelt, want den vijand omtrent drie uren gaans naebij Karta Soura is. En daerom is het dat ik den Tommagon Marta Poura weder sende om de hulpe van Uw Hoog Edelheyt te versoeken, doordien de Javaanse kinders het niet gaande konnen houden om den vijandt Sourapaty wederstant te doen.

Ook versoek ik aan Uw Hoog Edelheyt als dat den Tommagon Marta Poura op 't spoedigst door Uw Hoog Edelheyt mogte geholpen werden, want mijn hert van gevoelen is buyten Uw Hoog Edelheyt[s] hulpe en bijstant mijn lant niet wederom sal krijgen. En daerom verlange ik na de kragten en bijstant van d'Compagnie want ofter al veel waren die mij helpen wilden, en met Uw Hoog Edelheyt[s] sin niet en ware, soo soude ik het niet willen doen.

Wijders ben ik al van sints geweest, eer den Tommagon Marta Poura herwaarts was gekomen, om den Tommagon Souma Brata naer Uw [fol. 887] Hoog Edelheyt af te senden, maer doen quam den vijand soo sterk om Pannaraga en Madiyon in te nemen, en daerom is hetselve in gebreeke gebleeven, maer als het werk eens over is, soo sal ik den Tommagon Souma Brata senden om voor Uw Hoog Edelheyt te verschijnen.



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

Eyndelijk wegens het geschenk dat door Uw Hoog Edelheyt aan mij is gesonden, te weten:

- 1 paer vergulde snaphanen
- 2 zeytgeweer met souwasse gevest
- 2 spiegels
- 2 verlakte kisjens
- 2 verlakte schilden
- 2 dito beteldoosen
- 2 dito ander slag dito
- 2 dito schotels
- 1 stuk Hollandse phelp
- 2 bodidaers met goude bloemen
- 4 gobaars Mataram
- 4 gobaars Sarassa
- 4 gobaars tape
- 2 hammans
- 6 kassen rosenwater
- 1 kelder Hollants gedistilleerde wateren
- 1 vat mom
- 1 vat boter [fol. 888]
- 2 vaten biscruyt
- 2 kaasen, en
- 3 Persiaanse paarden

Deselve hebben wij wel ontfangen waervoor ik mijn vader hertelijck bedanken. Ook versoek ik aan mijn vader om een trommel en dat deselve mij mogt toegesonden werden.

Alle hetgeene nog te seggen hebbe, is aan mijn gesanten gedefereert.



3 English translation

M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter from Susuhunan Amangkurat II in Kartasura to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 18 December 1699”.

FROM: THE DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 18 DECEMBER 1699 [BEGINNING WITH FOL. 885]

Translation of the letter in Javanese written to Their Excellencies the Supreme Government in Batavia by Susuhunan Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga (*Sousouhounang Amancourat Sena Patty Ingalaga*).

This letter replete with many salutations and [wishes] for a long life and good health comes from Susuhunan Ratu Amangkurat Senapati Ingalaga Abdulrahman Muhammad Zainulkubra, who holds his court in the land of Kartasura Adiningrat, and rules over the coasts and the entire country of Java, to his father the Lord Governor-General, and so forth and so forth.

It is accompanied by my envoys named Tumenggung Martapura Puspatruna and Dermasuta, whom I send to Batavia to appear before His Illustrious Excellency in order to inform about the enemy Surapati [Soerapaty] who at this moment is about to depart to Surabaya [886] to capture the same, as I have been told by those people who are taking care of the residence of Ngabehi Jangrana. The enemy is now in the district named Paketingan, with 800 men armed with snaphances and 800 with other weapons. There is also another enemy group which he commanded to capture Panaraga, Madiun and Kannagattar, the which they have already achieved. The enemy is now in Wolak Walikan on the Kiping River, and my armed men from Kartasura have their palisade on the eastern bank to the west of the district of Wolak Walikan. And I have now posted around half of my men with their arms on the Paseban, as the enemy is around three hours distant from Kartasura. And this is the reason why I have again dispatched Tumenggung Martapura to entreat the help of Your Illustrious Excellency, because the Javanese children have difficulties to offer resistance against the enemy Surapati.

I also request Your Illustrious Excellency that Tumenggung Marta Pura may be assisted as speedily as possible by Your Illustrious Excellency, because I fear in my heart that without the help and succour of Your Illustrious Excellency my country will be lost and this is why I so greatly desire the power and assistance of the Company because, although there might be many who would be prepared to help me, and Your Illustrious Excellency would disapprove, I would not be prepared to tackle it.

Furthermore, before Tumenggung Martapura has returned from his embassy, I was planning to send Tumenggung Sumabrata to Your [887] Illustrious Excellency, but then the enemy arrived with the strength to capture Panaraga and Madiun, and therefore [my intention] has been more honoured in the breach than in the observance, but once the matter has been settled, I shall indeed dispatch Tumenggung Sumabrata to appear before Your Illustrious Excellency.



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Finally, on account of the gift sent to me by Your Illustrious Excellency, to wit:

- 1 pair of gilded snaphances
- 2 side arms mounted with *suwasa* (pinchbeck)
- 2 looking glasses
- 2 lacquered caskets
- 2 lacquered shields
- 2 lacquered betel sets
- 2 ditto of another sort
- 2 lacquered dishes
- 1 piece of Dutch velvet
- 2 *bodidaers* with gold flowers
- 4 double pieces of Mataram cotton cloth (used for curtains)
- 4 double pieces of Sarassa (silk cloth from the Coromandel Coast)
- 4 double pieces of *tape* cloth
- 2 *hammans* (thick cloths used for shawls)
- 6 coffers of rosewater
- 1 cellaret of Dutch spirits
- 1 keg of beer
- 1 cask of butter [fol. 888]
- 2 barrels of gunpowder
- 2 cheeses and
- 3 Persian horses

We have received the same for which I heartily thank my father, and I also ask my father for a drum and that it might be sent to me.

All which remains to be said has been delegated to my envoys.



4 Colophon

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Title | M. C. Ricklefs, “Letter from Susuhunan Amangkurat II in Kartasura to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 18 December 1699”. In: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta</i> , document 14. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014. |
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5 Folio image

This is the first page of the original document. All folios may be viewed on the website via the Tab 'Images' in the Harta Karun section or in the Digital Archive Collections.

Archival Source, ANRI, HR 2519, fols 885-888.

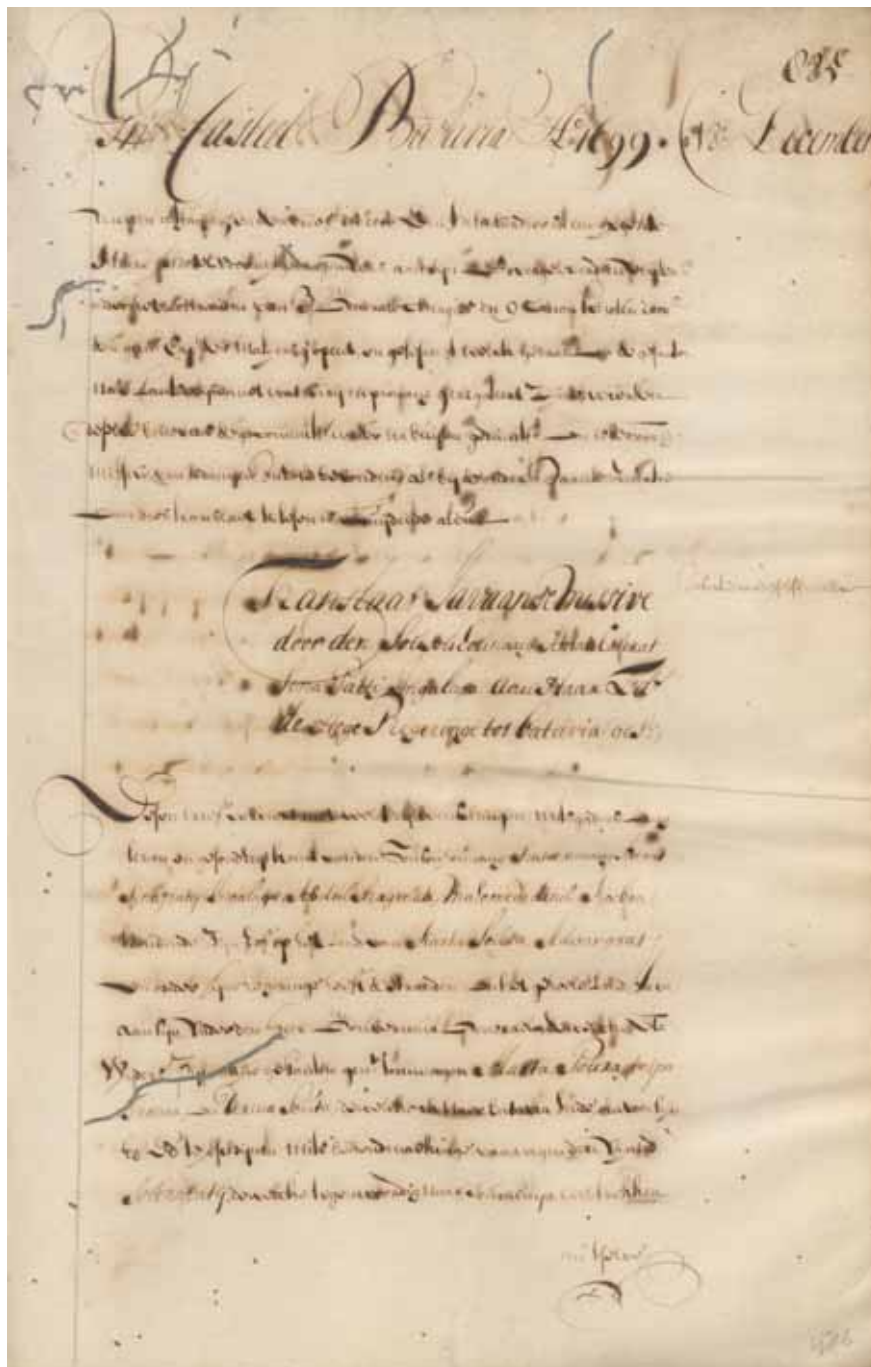




Illustration 1. The emperor Bahadur Shah (reign 1707-1712) mounted on an elephant.

Letter from the Supreme Government to the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707 – 1712), 4 October 1709

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1 Introduction

Maarten Manse, “A Letter for the Great Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707 – 1712): Courtesy and Coalition forming at an Islamic Court, 4 October 1709”, in : *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC-archives in Jakarta*, document 15. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY MAARTEN MANSE

The death of Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1685-1709) marked the end of an era for the Mughal empire, after a reign of 49 years. It also initiated a renewed attempt of the VOC to reestablish their trade in India after it had suffered a major setback following Aurangzeb’s death when the trade rights, which he had personally approved, were withdrawn by his successor, Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707-1712). In this letter of 4 October 1709, Governor-General Joan van Hoorn (in office 1704-1709) requests new *firman*s or trading letters signed by the new emperor carrying his personal seal of approval. Such *firman*s were essential in guaranteeing safe passage for trade in and around the Mughal empire and they solicited immediate respect from local officials and merchants.

On 5 October 1709, two ships, the *Jerusalem* and the *Noordbeek* sailed for Surat from Batavia. They carried Van Hoorn’s letter and detailed instructions for Cornelis Bezuyen, the recently appointed director of the Dutch trading post at Surat (in office 1707-1709) who was subsequently tasked

with leading an embassy to the Mughal court in Delhi, 1711- 1713 (see the Resolution of 18 July 1713), to obtain the favor of the new emperor.

The VOC had maintained a factory at the Gujarati port of Surat since 1618. After falling under Mughal influence in 1573, it had become the chief commercial city of the entire west coast of India. Not only was it a port of embarkation for Mecca, but also a key entrepot for overseas trade in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf linking the Ottoman and Safavid empires.¹ By establishing a factory in Surat and outposts in neighboring Ahmadabad and Agra, the VOC had secured its access to Gujarati textiles and indigo. But maintaining such commercial relations with the local Gujarati authorities proved difficult. Company servants constantly had to deal with corrupt and malign officials, while the local Indian merchants themselves were often irritated by intermittent European support for piracy and illegal trade.²

In 1699, a so-called *muchalka* or obligation to pay for collateral damage caused by piracy on the high seas was imposed on the Europeans. After yet another incidence of piracy in 1702, a quarrel erupted between the Europeans and a prominent Indian merchant by the name of Mulla ‘Abdul Ghafur about compensation for damage caused by piracy. Ghafur appealed to the Mughal imperial authorities, who ordered the VOC to pay compensation but they refused to do so. In 1703, the Indian authorities reacted by imprisoning all European personnel, including director Hendrik Zwaarderoon (director of Surat, 1699-1703). The Dutch

¹ A. Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, c. 1700-1750* (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1979), pp. 3-4.

² Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, pp. 85-94.



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Illustration 2. A view of Agra by Zacharie Chatelain, Amsterdam, 1732 (first ed. 1705-20).

responded by sending a powerful squadron and hijacking a ship with a 'Moorish priest' on board.³ It took two years for the impasse to be resolved by the withdrawal of all VOC-personnel from Surat. The VOC factory was then closed. However, the Dutch blockade of Surat was not lifted until 1707.⁴

In order to escape from the clutches of these local merchants and governors as well as guaranteeing safe access to the Mughal trading network, VOC servants actively sought support of the Mughal emperor, the highest and most respect-

ed authority on the Indian subcontinent. In 1662, an embassy had already been sent to the Mughal court under Dircq van Adrichem (director of Surat, 1662-1665), to gain the favor of Emperor Aurangzeb, and obtain firmans.⁵ The dispatch of such embassies to obtain imperial favor was common practice: in the seventeenth century both Aurangzeb and his predecessors had received missions from a number of European trading companies including the French and the British. Such missions were especially ubiquitous

³ J.Ph. Vogel (ed.), *Journal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis naar den groot mogul te Lahore, 1711-1713* (Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten-vereeniging 41, 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1937), p. 11.

⁴ Om Prakash, 'The Mughal Empire and the Dutch East Indies Company in the Seventeenth Century', in: E. Locher-Scholten and P. Rietbergen (eds.), *Hof en Handel. Aziatische vorsten en de VOC, 1620-1720* (Leiden: KITLV Press 2004), pp. 181-200, 197.

⁵ See: A.J. Bernet Kempers (ed.), *Journal van Dircq van Adrichem's hofreis naar den Groot-Mogol Aurangze-b, 1662*. (Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten-Vereeniging 45, 's-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1941).



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after the in the aftermath of a royal succession. Van Adrichem's embassy was highly successful and received firmans that were declared valid for Dutch trade in Surat, Patna (Bengal) and Orissa.⁶ In 1689, a second embassy under Johannes Bacherus focused on Dutch trade in Coromandel, for which new firmans were needed. Although issued by the Mughal court, these firmans were not, acknowledged by the Mughal emperor's officers in Masulipatam whence the Dutch ambassador had returned, and they were eventually declared invalid.

The installment of the new emperor thus opened the door for new negotiations, hence the embassy lead by Bezuyen.⁷ He was assisted by two deputies: *Koopman* Rogier de Beerenaard, who spoke Persian (the official language of the Mughal court), and *Opperkoopman* Joan Josua Ketelaar, renowned for his long experience in India and Batavia and known for his expertise in 'Moorish' languages and customs.⁸ Ketelaar was fluent in Hindi, about which he wrote a grammar during his time as company servant in Surat in the 1680s. The immediate aim of the Bezuyen embassy was to obtain the favor of the new emperor and acquire new firmans, granting the VOC permission to build a new factory or *logie* in Surat. The cost of the embassy was projected to be high by VOC standards, but this was deemed acceptable as handing out valuable gifts to the court was essential in order to gain the favor of the emperor.

Bezuyen's first concern in Surat was thus to compile and collect the necessary *schenkagie goederen* or gifts. However, in October 1710, Bezuyen died

after a long illness, and he was succeeded by Ketelaar, the latter's appointment already having been envisaged in the embassy's original procedures. Ketelaar's embassy to the Mughal court of the new emperor, Bahadur Shah I, provides an insight into the encounter of late seventeenth-century Dutch merchants with the world of high diplomacy and Mughal court culture. It was both an exotic and bewildering encounter. After an exceptionally tough and difficult journey overland via Agra and Delhi, the embassy finally arrived at Lahore in December 1711, where the Emperor, had recently moved to visit his botanical gardens. The Dutch ambassadorial caravan contained sizeable amounts of high value goods, including gold bars, European art and curiosities, firearms, elephants, horses and other gifts. Upon his arrival, Ketelaar was warmly welcomed by two people he had been in contact with before and whom he knew he could rely on. One of them was Donna Juliana Dias da Costa, a Portuguese lady born in India, who had ended up in the harem of Bahadur Shah as one of his favorite and most devoted wives. She had become the mainstay for European envoys at the Mughal court. The other was a very powerful and high-ranking noble named Zulfikar Khan. Ketelaar carefully picked these people, as he was all too well aware of the dangers posed by the factional politics between the various Mughal princes and their supporters. These would often erupt into open violence at the death of an emperor such as had happened after Aurangzeb's death in 1707.

The embassy was officially received by an Amīr styled 'Hattumbeeckchan' (most likely Khadim

⁶ F. Bernier and V.A. Smith, *Travels in the Moghul Empire A.D. 1656-1668* (translated according to Irving Brock's version and annotated by Archibald Constable. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1994 reprint of 1934 second revised edition), p. 127; O. Yasuyuki (Kanagawa), 'The French Travelers and the Mughal Empire in the 17th Century', in: M.M. Takahito, *Cultural and Economic Relations between East and West: Sea Routes* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz: 1988), pp. 82-88.

⁷ The news was received in Batavia on June 2, 1707, and because these embassies were so expensive it took the two years before Amsterdam and Batavia agreed on sending a new embassy. See: Daily Journals, file 2530 folio 349-50 and Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*.

⁸ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, pp. 10, 25.



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Beg Khan) who was ordered to take care of the embassy. On 14 December, the Dutch embassy made their official entry into Lahore, the site of the temporary Mughal court. This was a real show: all members, soldiers and the carriages with gifts as well as the elephants decorated with flags, cloths and gold brocade passed through the camp and were officially inspected by Donna Juliana.⁹ Ketelaar's preference for Zulfikar Khan and Donna Juliana as well as other key Mughal nobles could be discerned from the manner of the distribution of the ambassadorial gifts, a key element of any court appearance.

Francois Bernier, the celebrated French visitor to the Mughal court in the late seventeenth century, had already commented on this issue of the distribution of gifts. They were of essential importance at the Mughal court, as Bernier had written in 1668 to his superior Intendant-General Jean-Baptiste Colbert, founder of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, that "in Asia, the great are never approached empty-handed".¹⁰ This sound advice came too late: the French Company had already dispatched a mission to the Mughal emperor, which arrived without the appropriate gifts. Arriving empty-handed, they were immediately rejected as lightweights by the Mughals.¹¹ It was thus crucial to create the impression of liberality and generosity through the distribution of valuable gifts. Only in this way could an embassy

be assured of some success at the Mughal court.

The Dutch were only too well aware of this: in the Ketelaar embassy's letter of instruction, it was advised to be sparing but not too greedy, for that 'would lead to contempt by the Moors',¹² Therefore, the whole month of December was spent on sending gifts to the emperor, his sons and other important nobles.

Bahadur Shah himself, of course, received the most valuable gifts (valued at more than 130,000 florins, (the equivalent to about 1.61 million USD anno 2014 in Purchasing Power Parity [PPP]).¹³ Zulfikar Khan was second in line, receiving gifts valued in sum at more than 92,000 florins (the equivalent to about 1.14 million USD in PPP), containing amongst others a valuable horse.¹⁴ Particularly striking was the value of the gifts presented to Bahadur Shah's second son 'Azim-ush-Shan (1664-1712), who also received more than 90,000 florins (the equivalent to about 1.12 million USD in PPP) in gifts.¹⁵ This prince was much more assertive and powerful than his brothers, but he was known to be very hostile towards Christians.¹⁶ He was also described as being very greedy, and it was believed that by sending extra gifts, done on the advice of Donna Juliana, his goodwill could be brought.

Usually, a gift was refused one or two times, depending on its value, before it was officially 'gratefully accepted'. Ketelaar appeared to be well

⁹ See for a more detailed description: W. Irvine, *The Later Mughals* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal 1903, reprint New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers 1991), p. 148.

¹⁰ Bernier and Smith, *Travels in the Moghul Empire*, p. 200.

¹¹ A. Jaffer, 'Diplomatic Encounters: Europe and South Asia', in: A. Jackson and A. Jaffer (eds.), *Encounters: the meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500-1800* (London: V&A publications, 2004), pp. 74-87, p. 76.

¹² 'Instructie voor den heer directeur en ambassadeur Cornelis Bezuyen, om te dienen tot narigt in de ambassade ofte bezendinge vanwegen de Generale Nederlandse Oostindise Comp. en dese regeringe aen den tegenwoordige Groten Mogol ofte Koning Badursjah [...]', in: Vogel, *Journal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*: pp. 289-308, p. 306.

¹³ Calculated using the website of IISG (International Institute of Social History), *Historic Prices and Wages, Value of the Guilder*: <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate.php> (27 October 2014).

¹⁴ 'Instructie voor den heer directeur en ambassadeur Cornelis Bezuyen': pp. 367-8; a long list of all awarded gifts is included in Vogel. See: Bijlage VI: 'Specificatie van onkosten der ambassade en lijst van geschenken', in: Vogel, *Journal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, pp. 357-93.

¹⁵ 'Specificatie van onkosten', p. 370.

¹⁶ Irvine, *Later Mughals*, pp. 151-2.



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aware of this tradition and the pecking order of how and to whom the gifts should be distributed. Thanks to Ketelaar's prior contact with Donna Juliana and Zulfikar Khan, the enormous value and amount of the gifts distributed, he attracted the attention of the emperor, and Ketelaar received that most coveted diplomatic prize: an invitation to an audience.

This audience took place on 3 January 1712. After three hours of waiting, Ketelaar was guided into the emperor's tent by 'Hattumbeeckchan' (Khadim Beg Khan).¹⁷ He presented the *nesser*, the gift-offers consisting of gold and silver in cash, together with the *credential*, the letter of the Governor-General.¹⁸ These were handed to a high Amir, who handed them to the emperor, seated on his high throne with his two sons ranged slightly below him.¹⁹ Ketelaar and his assistants then each received a *khilat* or robe of honor, in gold for Ketelaar and silver for his assistants and a *patka*, a headband, both traditional gifts.²⁰ Ketelaar and his assistants thanked the king by performing an imperial *kornus* or traditional bow, four times. This was highly appreciated by the emperor; saluting an Asian ruler in the appropriate, native manner was an important way to show respect. After the first meeting, Ketelaar sent the elephants, horses and his other valuable presents to the emperor.²¹ Suitably impressed by these gifts and Ketelaar's performance during his first meeting, Bahadur Shah invited the Dutch embassy for a second audience on 24 January.

Again, Ketelaar received a *khila*, and two other traditional gifts: a betelnut and a *khandjar*, a traditional dagger or poker, for which Ketelaar

again thanked the emperor by performing a *kornus* three times.²² The ambassador also organized a musical intermezzo at the emperor's request and a military exercise for 'Moisuddien' (Mu'izz-ud-Din, Bahadur Shah's first son).²³ Meanwhile, Ketelaar paid a visit to Zulfikar Khan to whom presents were sent on 12 January. Ketelaar 'paid him a few compliments in the Hindu [Hindi] language', expressing his hope that Zulfikar Khan would favor the Company's interests at court, a request which was immediately acceded to by the Khan, although he objected to the construction of a new factory in Surat. Ketelaar did not insist on this issue during this first meeting, as he knew that this would be deemed very impolite according to the 'Moorish habits', as only pleasantries were usually exchanged at a first meeting.²⁴

Still, Ketelaar was extraordinarily successful in his first month at the court. He showed the necessary knowledge and *savoir-faire* regarding the traditions and values of Bahadur Shah's court. In so doing, he worked his way into the circle of noblemen close to the emperor. Unfortunately, for the Dutch, this would not provide lasting benefits for in late February 1712; Bahadur Shah suddenly died aged 59. Ketelaar now had to start negotiations all over again with his successor, Jahandar Shah, the former Prince Mu'izz-ud-Din (r. 27 February 1712-11 February 1713). The bad luck did not end there. After finally receiving the *firman*s of Jahandar Shah in August 1713, Ketelaar returned to Surat, only to learn even before he arrived there that Jahandar Shah had been overthrown by his nephew, rendering the *firman*s useless.

¹⁷ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, pp. 142-3.

¹⁸ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, p. 144; F.W. Buckler, 'The Oriental Despot.' in: M.N. Pearson (ed.), *Michigan papers on South and Southeast Asia 26: Legitimacy and symbols. The South-Asian writings of F.W. Buckler* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1985), pp. 176-89, p. 182.

¹⁹ Irvine, *Later Mughals*, p. 151.

²⁰ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, pp. 144-5; Buckler, 'The Oriental Despot', pp. 178-9.

²¹ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, p. 146.

²² Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, p. 150.

²³ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, pp. 151, 156.

²⁴ Vogel, *Journaal van J.J. Ketelaar's hofreis*, p. 149.



2 Transcription of the Dutch text

Maarten Manse, “A Letter for the Great Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707 – 1712): Courtesy and Coalition forming at an Islamic Court, 4 October 1709”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 5 OKTOBER 1709 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL. 518]

Desen brief van eerbiedt en genegentheyt komt van Joan van Hoorn, gouverneur generaal over den Nederlandsen staat in India, ende werd gesonden aan den grooten ende alderwijtberoemste Coning Badursjah die regtveerdelijk den troon van het Groot Mogolse Rijk bekleet en wiens glans en mayesteyt zoo helder als de sonne schijnt zoodat daarin alle coningen der werelt overtreft.

Grootmagstigsten Coningh,

Zoo haast wij verstonden dat het den Almogenden Godt behaagt hadde Uwe Coninglijke Mayesteyt te verheffen en te doen succederen op den throon van dat grootse en magtige Coningrijk in plaatse van Uwe Mayesteyts overleden vader den Coning Orangseeb, is niet alleen ons herte in ons ontstoken van vreugde maar hebben wij het ook van onsen schuldigen pligt g’oordeelt Uwe Coninlijcken Mayesteyt te moeten naderen en met onse zeer eerbiedigen begroeting Uwer Mayesteyt in dien hoog verheven staat, gelijk wij dat bij desen doen met desen hertelijken wensch en dat den Heere des Hemels en der Aarde Uwe Coninglijcken Mayesteyts persoon en regeringe overvloedelijk gelieve te zegenen met alle soorten voorspoed, ook zulx te bestendigen voor veele jaren, tot genoege [fol. 519] van Uwe Coninglijke Mayesteyts welstand van het coningrijk, mitsgaders Uwe Mayesteyts goede onderdanen.

Maarom dese toewensinge een volmaakte aansien te geven, hebben wij nodig g’oordeelt desen brief tot Uwe Coninklijke Mayesteyt te laten afgaan in handen van den Commandeur Cornelis Bezuyen, die wij op het aldereerbiedigste versoeken dat Uwe Mayesteyt de eere believe te laten genieten, om te mogen verschijnen aan de voeten van Uwe Mayesteyts heerlijken troon, mitsgaders dat ook Uwe Mayesteyts na Zijne Hoogberoemde Goedertierentheyte gelieft te verleen een gunstig gehoor aan alle hetgene den gemelte Commandeur Bezuyen Uwe Coninglijke Mayesteyt van onsentwegen sal komen voor te dragen en te versoeken, omme daarop van Uwe Mayesteyts loffelijke mildadigheyde een favorabele dispositie en gunstig antwoord te mogen erlangen, teneynde de Generale Nederlandsch Oost-Indische Compagnie mag continueren onder de schaduwe van Uwe Coninklijke gunste, in alle desselfs landpalen en gebied harer handel zo vrij en liber te mogen drijven als haar nu zoo veele jaren door Uwe Mayesteyt hoogstloffelijke voorouderen is toegelaten ofte vergunt geweest onder derselver hooggeagte zegel en brieven ofte firmans, waarmede wij op het allereerbiedigste versoeken dat Uwe Mayesteyt den gemelten Commandeur Besuyen gelieft te begunstigen in de beste en kragtigste forme, daarvoor wij dan niet zullen nalaten altoos onse dankbaarheyt te betoonen, terwijl wij wenschen dat God Almagtig Uwe Mayesteyt



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

veele jaren zal gelieven te sparen bij gezondheid, I ook alleUwe Mayesteyts doen en laten strecken tot vermeerdering van Uwe Mayesteyts glorye, en welstand van alle desselfs coningrijken.

Geschreven in 't Casteel Batavia op 't eylant Groot Java den 4en October 1709. (onderstond) door de Gouverneur Generaal van India (was getekent) Joan van Hoorn (ter zijde) ter ordonnantie van gemelte Hoog Edelens) getekent Isaac Garsin secretaris.

Bijlage

De goedkeuring door de Hoge Regering van de diplomatieke missie van ambassadeur J. Ketelaar naar het Mogolse hof.

UIT: NA, 1.04.02 VOC 729 (KOPIE RESOLUTIES VAN GOUVERNEUR-GENE-RAAL EN RADEN, 1713)

Translaat.

[De verrigtingen van den Ambassadeur Ketelaar, met desselfs adjuncten aan 't Mogolse hof, werden g'approveert. 18 Juli 1713]

[fol. 440] Dinsdag den 18en Julij anno 1713 voor de middag extraordinaire vergadering absent den heer directeur generaal Abraham Douglas door indispositie

Weder gebesoigneert sijnde over de saken van Souratte op d'ingebachte notulen door de heer Christoffel van Swoll, soo is verstaan in de verrigtinge van den ambassadeur Joan Josua Ketelaar en desselfs adjuncten in de ambassade aan het Mogolse hof, voor soo verre sijlieden aan het oogmerk van die besendinge na den teneur onser instructie van den 5en October 1709 voldaan en verkregen hebben, niet alleen de gerequireerde nieuwe firmans en andere koninklijke bevelschriften voor Choromandel, Bengale, en Souratta [fol. 441] breder vermeldt bij haar daarvan overgelevert rapport, maar [fol. 441] ook alle hetgeene men verder heeft te versoeken gehad; excepto dat men geen bequame plaats buiten de stad Souratte tot een nieuwe logie heeft kunnen bedingen, dog daartegen verkregen een altijd duurende vrij gebruyk van het huys van den gewesen Ettabaarchan binnen Souratta, alsook van het huys dat in Patna veele jaren door d'E. Compagnie in huure beseten, en evenals het huys van Ettabarchan door het overlijden der eygenaers aan den koning vervallen was, genoeg te nemen, en zulx bij onsen nu af te sendene brieff aan gemelte directeur en ambassadeur nevens den raed te betuygen.

Dog wegens de lasten deser besendinge die over de twaalff tonnen gouds belopen, en daarvan ruym ses tonnen aan afgegeve geschenken, soo aan de overlede koningen Badurshah en Jehandaarshah als hare kinderen en de voornaamste ministers en hovelingen van dat rijk, is ten aansien soo een kostbare ambassade in 's Compagnies dienst nog niet is voorgevallen, en hetselve niet alleen alle voorgaande besendingen aan ditselfste Mogolse hof en andere voorname hoven, maar ook selve de verwagtinge



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

en calculatie der Souratse ministers bij haren brief van den 4en april 1708 te boven gaan, verstaan, de dispositie over de voortz. onverwagte [fol. 442] sware en exorbitante lasten en geschenken aan de heeren meesters gedefereert te laten, hoewel ons in het resumeeren van die papieren geen reden ter contrarie voorgekomen sijn, waarvan in der tijd van voormelte heeren meesters kennis sal gegeven werden. Evengelijk ook de dispositie op het versoek van den ambassadeur nevens desselfs adjuncten Berenaard en Huysinkvelt om de inlandse sijd-geweiren en hooftcieraden, waarmede den koning Jahaandaersjah haarlieden op haar afscheyt vereert heeft om deselve tot een gedagtenis te mogen behouden, als strijdig tegens 's Compagnies ordre, en den generalen articul-brief, aan haar Eden. hoogagtb. overgelaten werd: dog is verstaan de ceerpauwen of eerekleederen, haar van diverse beschonken, te laten behouden als sijnde volgens het gemelte rapport van geen groote waardije, en in het gebruik eenigermaten afgesleten, soodat voor d'E. Compagnie van geen nut souden kunnen wesen.

Ook is als een dependentie der ambassade en desselfs lasten verstaen niet te disponeeren over de sware uytgiften en geschenken die ter somma van ropia 13664 1/2 (hoewel met voorkennis en op ordre van den ambassadeur) sijn gedaan, aan den Sourats gouverneur Mameth Beekchan en de andere, om de overgifte en inruyming van het gemelte huys van Ettabaerchan te verwerven maar de dispositie [fol. 443] hierover mede aan onse heeren meesters gedefereert te laten; dog egter te verklaren dat het ons seer oneygen en ontijdig is voorgekomen, dat men heeft gaan kopen de uytvoeringe van een positive ordre van den keyser, welke gunste door den ambassadeur van dien vorst verkregen, en ook ordre tot het inruymen van dien afgesonden was; met verder aanschrijven aan den directeur en raad, dat soowel die saek als de gedane pompeuse intrede en genome possessie van dat gebouw ons gansch onbehaaglijk te voren is gekomen.

Onaangesien ons niet ongefondeert voorkomen de gedagte van den directeur Keteelaar en de verdere Souratse bediendens, dat het dienstig soude sijn hoe eer hoe liever tot het ratificeeren der jongst verkregene nieuwe firmans en andere gunstgeschriften te doen een nadere besendinge aan den tegenwoordigen koning Farochier, en dat hetselve ook na verloop van tijd sal moeten geschieden. Dewijl den handel alomme in het rijk van de mogul op de firmans van den overleden Jahaandaersjah en die van de voorgaande koningen sonder een ratificatie van den tegenwoordig regeerenden prins, niet sonder gestadige beletselen en sribbelingen om grote geschenken te verkrijgen, sal konnen werden voortgeset, soo is ten aansien van de sware lasten die d'E. Comp. [fol. 444] jongst daarin heeft gedragen, en in dien gevallen nu wederom (hoewel juist sooveel niet) soude moeten supporteeren verstaan, daartoe niet te treden, maar met sodanigen nader besendinge te temporiseeren en deselve uyt te stellen, totdat men deswegen sal gesterkt sijn met het oordeel en goedvinden der Hoog Edelen heeren principalen, ten ware de volgende advysen uyt Souratta alsook van Bengale, en Choromandel een absolute noodzakelijkheid daartoe mogten aanwijzen en zulx temeer omdat de Souratse advysen wegens den presenten twijffelagtigen en waggelende toestand van het Mogolse rijk, en de harde regeringe van den presenten koning Farochier sodanigen naderen ambassade voor tegenwoordig niet schijnt aan te raden.



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

Dog is verstaan te approbeeren de ordre door den ambassadeur Ketelaar aan den resident Huysinkvelt tot Agra afgegeven om den prins farochier met sijn overwinninge op den koning Jehaendaershah, wanneer binnen die stad quam te verschijnen, te begroeten met het voorleggen van een noembaer sigt-offer in contanten na 's lands wijze, en hem over sijne geluckige successen, en de komste tot den Mogolsen throon te feliciteeren, hoewel daartoe de gelegentheynt niet is voorgekomen.

Item de gegeve ordre aan gemelten resident om bij navrage na een [fol. 445] missive of nadere ambassade, daarop niet als in onsekere off twijffelagtige teneur te antwoorden, om ontijdig ongenoegen voor te komen.

Voorts is verstaan de bediendens in Souratta aan te schrijven, dat het nodig sal wesen, dat den gem. resident in Agra niet alleen den radja Tsjiewiekam, dewelken de ambassadeur noteert een goed vriend van d'E. Compagnie te sijn, en bij den vorst Farochier in goot vermogen souden wesen, na vermogen te complaceren, sonder eenig ongenoegen over des princen Farochiers verheffinge te betoonen, om alsoo in der tijt desselvs hulpe omtrent gemelte vorst te kunnen genieten; maar ook aan het hoff met 's Compagnies gewesen volmagten en andere bekende daar het van nutte wesen en de sekerste berigten te bekomen sullen zijn, correspondentie te onderhouden, om niet alleen kennisse te erlangen van de gesteltheyt van 't hof, maar ook wat bij hetselve ten opzigte van d'E. Compagnie soude mogen passeren, om er de bediendens in Souratta op Choromandel, en in Bengale telkens na vereysch van te informeeren.

Batavia in 't Casteel, datum als vooren (getekent) Abraham van Riebeeck, Christoffel van Swoll, Cornelis Chastelein, Mattheus de Haan, Frans Castelijn, Lauren Tolling, Hendrick [fol. 446] Zwaardecroon, Pieter Roselaar, Theodorus de Haek, Samuel Timmerman, Jacob Faas, Joan Cornelis d'Ableing en Joan van der Nipoort secretaris.



3 English translation

Maarten Manse, “A Letter for the Great Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707 – 1712): Courtesy and Coalition forming at an Islamic Court, 4 October 1709”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 5 OCTOBER 1709 [COMMENCING AT FOL. 518]

Translation. This respectful letter of friendship comes from Joan van Hoorn, Governor-General of the Dutch state in India, and is sent to the great King Bahadur Shah, who fame is most widely renowned, who lawfully occupies the throne of the Great Mughal Empire, whose splendour and majesty outshine the sun, so that he surpasses those of all the kings of the Earth.

Omnipotent King,

As soon as we learned that it has pleased Almighty God to raise Your Royal Majesty to succeed to the throne of that great and mighty kingdom in the place of Your Majesty’s late father King Aurangzeb, not only is our heart overcome with joy, but we have also deemed it to be our binding duty to approach [you] bringing most respectful greetings to Your Royal Majesty in this most exalted position, the which we do in this [letter] with the heartfelt wish that the Lord of Heaven and Earth will generously bestow upon Your Majesty’s person and government abundant blessing granting them all manner of prosperity, and keep them in this state for very many years, to the benefit of [fol. 519] the increase of Your Majesty’s kingdom, as well as that of Your Majesty’s good subjects.

However, to imbue these wishes a consummate appearance, we have adjudged it necessary to dispatch this letter to Your Royal Majesty [entrusted to] the hands of Commander Cornelis Bezuyen, whom we most humbly beseech that Your Majesty will grant the honour of allowing him to enjoy an audience at the foot of Your Majesty’s lordly throne, and also that in his Wide-famed Graciousness Your Majesty will be pleased to lend a benevolent ear to all that the said Commander Bezuyen will communicate to and request of Your Royal Majesty on our behalf, so that thereupon [we may] expect from Your Majesty’s most praiseworthy generosity a gracious response and benevolent reply, so that the General Dutch East India Company may continue, under the protection of Your Royal beneficence, to pursue its trade as free and untrammelled within the same boundaries and territory as it has been allowed and permitted to do now for so many years under Your Majesty’s most praiseworthy forbears, under the same greatly esteemed seal and letters or *firmans*, the which we most humbly beseech that Your Majesty will be pleased to bestow upon the said Commander Besuyen [sic] in their best and most efficacious form, [in return] for this [honour] we shall never at any time neglect to show our gratitude, while we shall pray that Almighty God will be pleased to spare Your Majesty many years in health, also that everything Your Majesty might choose to do shall wax to the expansion of Your Majesty’s glory, and the pros-



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perity of all the kingdoms of the same.

Written in Batavia Castle on the island of Great Java [Java Maior] on the 4th October 1709. [below] by the Governor-General of India (Asia) (was signed) Joan van Hoorn (in the margin) on the orders of the said High Excellency (signed) Isaac Garsin, Secretary.

Appendix

The approval by the Supreme Government of the diplomatic mission of Ambassador J. Ketelaar to the Mughal Court.

From: NA, 1.04.02 VOC 729 (COPY RESOLUTIONS OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND COUNCILLORS 1713)

Translation.

[The Transactions of Ambassador Ketelaar, with his deputies at the Mughal Court, approved 18 July 1713]

[fol. 440] Tuesday 18 July *anno* 1713 extraordinary meeting in the fore-noon, absent because of indisposition the Director-General Abraham Douglas.

Being again deliberated about the affairs in Surat on the memoranda brought by Mr Christoffel van Swoll, from which it is understood that the transactions of Ambassador Josua Ketelaar and his deputies in the embassy to the Mughal Court, concerning to what extent these people have achieved and affirmed the purpose of this embassy according to the tenor of or instructions of 5th of October 1709. In the report it has submitted, not only have the requisite new *firmans* and other royal decrees of the Comandél, Bengal and Surat [fol. 441] been granted to them in a more expansive form than before, but also the rest which had been asked for [has been granted]; with the exception that it has been impossible to negotiate a suitable place outside the city of Surat for a new factory, but instead [they] have had to be satisfied with the free use in perpetuity of the house of the former/late Eattabaarchan within Surat, as well as of the house in Patna of which the Honourable Company has enjoyed rental occupation for many years, and just as in the case of the residence of Ettabaarchan had fallen to the king after the decease of the owners. The such is to be affirmed by us in a letter to be sent to the said director and ambassador as well as the councillors.

However, concerning the matter of the costs of this embassy which have exceeded twelve barrels of gold, a good six barrels of which was spent on gifts, both to the late kings Bahadur Shah and Jahandar Shah as well as their children and the most prominent ministers and courtiers of that Empire, never in the service of the Company has there been such an extravagant embassy, not even all the previous dispatches to this same Mughal court and other prominent courts, which has even exceeded the expectations and calculations of the Surat ministers in their letter of 4th of April 1708, it has



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been decided to defer the disposition of the earlier mentioned unexpectedly [fol. 442] heavy and exorbitant expenses and gifts to our Lords and Masters [the Board of Directors] to deal with, even though in our recapitulation of the papers no egregious reason has emerged of which the aforesaid Lords and Masters should be informed. Likewise, it has been decided to leave the decision about the request of the ambassador and his deputies Berenaard and Huysinkvelt to be able to keep the native side-arms and decorative headdresses, with which these people were honoured by King Jahandar Shah as a memento upon their leave-taking, which is contrary to the Company orders and the general regulations, to these Honourable Gentlemen: nevertheless it is approved that they may retain the *ceerpauwen* or robes of office given to them by various people because, according to the said report, these are of no great value, and also somewhat worn through use, so that they would not be of any use to the Honourable Company.

Concerning the annex to the embassy and the costs of the same, it has been decided not to deal with the heavy expenses and gifts, to the sum of 13,664½ Rupees (even though this was incurred on the orders and with the foreknowledge of the ambassador) paid to the Surat Governor Mameth (Muhammad) Beekchan and others in order to acquire the conveyance and furnishing of the said house of Ettabaerchan, but also to leave the decision [fol. 443] about this to our Lords and Masters; but nevertheless to declare that it has struck us as improper and untimely that people have bought the execution of a positive order from the Emperor, which benefit the ambassador had received from this ruler, and also that an order that it should be made ready had also been sent by the latter; with a further note to the Director and Councillors that both this affair and the pompous entrance and occupation of that building has seemed extremely excessive.

In view of the fact that we foster some not unfounded suspicions about Director Ketelaar and the other Surat servants, it would be advisable, the sooner the better, to ratify the most recently granted *firman*s and other beneficial documents and to send another dispatch to the present king, Farruksiyar, and this same must take place within an short while. Although the trade everywhere in the empire of the Mughals can still be carried out using the *firman*s of the late Jahandar Shah and those of the former kings without [requiring] the ratification of the incumbent ruling prince, this does not happen without constant impediments and quarrelling in order to procure large gifts, in view of the enormous [financial] burdens recently incurred by the Honourable Company [fol. 444], and now yet again (although this time so much) which will have to be borne, it is decided not to essay this, but to temporize with any such post dispatches and to postpone the same, until we have been strengthened by the judgement and the approbation of the Most Noble Gentlemen Principals, unless the following recommendations from Surat as well as from Bengal and Coromandel should point to the absolute necessity of doing this, all the more so because the Surat advice about the present dubious and tottery situation in the Mughal Empire, and the harsh government of the present king, Farruksiyar, make it very inadvisable to dispatch such a future embassy for the present time.

Nevertheless, it has been decided to approve the order passed on to Resident Huy-



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sinkvelt by Ambassador Ketelaar to journey to Agra to congratulate Prince Farruksiyar on his victory over King Jahandar Shah, when he happen to come to that city, by presenting him with an impressive gift in ready money according to the custom of the country, and also with his opportune successes and his accession to the Mughal throne, although [so far] this opportunity has not presented itself.

It has been noted to write to the servants in Surat, [saying] that it will be necessary that in Agra the said Resident should not only be pleasant to Raja Tsjiewiekam, whom the ambassador has noted is a good friend of the Honourable Company, and also stands in high favour with the ruler Farruksiyar, as far as his [financial] situation will allow him, without displaying any dismay about Prince Farruksiyar's accession, so that [we] in time might also be able to enjoy the help of the same in dealing with said ruler; but also [when] at the court with the plenipotentiary of the Company and with other acquaintances there pick up useful and secure reports, keep up a correspondence, not just to find out knowledge of the court, but also what might happen to pass in relation to the Honourable Company, so that the servants in Surat, Coromandel and in Bengal can be kept constantly supplied with fresh information.

In Batavia Castle, date as noted at the beginning (signed) Abraham van Riebeeck, Christoffel van Swoll, Cornelis Chastelein, Mattheus de Haan, Frans Castelijn, Lauren Tolling, Hendrick [fol 446] Zwaardecroon, Pieter Roselaar, Theodorus de Haek, Samuel Timmerman, Jacob Faas, Joan Cornelis d'Ableing and Joan van der Nipport, secretary.



4 Colophon

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Title | Maarten Manse, “A Letter for the Great Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah I (r. 1707–1712): Courtesy and Coalition forming at an Islamic Court, 4 October 1709”, in: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC-archives in Jakarta</i> , Document 15. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014. |
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5 Folio image

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Archival Source, ANRI, HR 2533, fols. 518-519.

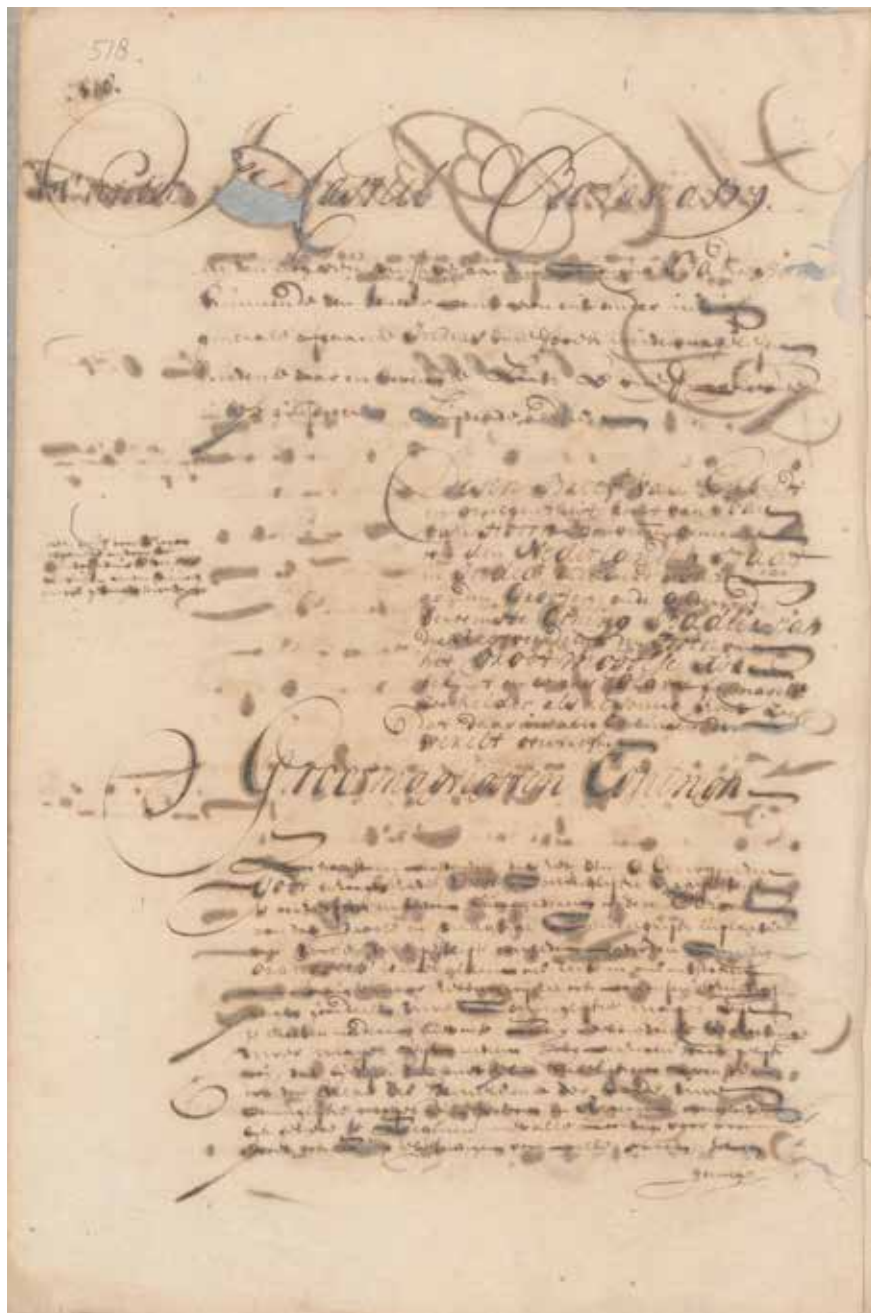




Illustration 1. An Illanun Sulu pirate carrying a kampeli sword in his hand, a spear and a kris.

Letter from Sultan Kuda of Manguindanao (r. 1699-1702) concerning the trading activities of Chinese nakhoda and the need for military support, 21 July 1700

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sejarah
nusantara



1 Introduction

Ruurdje Laarhoven, “Letter from Sultan Kuda of Manguindanao (r.1699-1702) concerning the trading activities of Chinese nakhoda and the need for military support, 16 November 1699”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 17. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY RUURDJE LAARHOVEN

At present Maguindanao is one of the provinces located on the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. The majority of the population in this province is Muslim.

Maguindanao, as a sultanate, had its glory time during the 17th century when two successive sultans, Sultan Kudarat (1619-1671) and Sultan Barahaman (1671-1699) ruled with a firm hand. They were leaders with the necessary diplomatic skills to use and manipulate the Europeans expansionists: Spanish, Portuguese, English and Dutch, and traded lucratively with the help of their following. They expanded their sphere of influence through building alliances with the *datus* or local chiefs and increase their following. Through this network of alliances they received tributes in the form of agricultural-, forest-, and sea products as well as slaves which allowed them to build up their wealth and prestige.

The coming of Islam

From the *tarsilas*, the written genealogical accounts of the Maguindanao ruling clans, it is known that Islam had been introduced to the regions of southern Mindanao by Sharif Muham-

mad Kabungsuwan who arrived with the help of Samal boat people from Johore in approximately 1515. His father was a Sharif from Arabia who had married a royal princess of Johore.¹ Sharif Kabungsuwan is given credit for establishing and spreading Islam in Mindanao although other ulama preachers from Ternate might have been there earlier. He married into the established local royalty. By the time the Dutch East India company interacted with the dignitaries of Mindanao starting with Matelief in 1607, it was noted that Islam was professed from Sibugay to Sarangany and around to the Davao Gulf and the islands further south.

Contenders to the sultan's throne

When Sultan Barahaman died on 6 July 1699 he was succeeded by his ambitious younger brother, Sultan Kuda (r. 1699-1702). Sultan Kuda wrote a letter to Batavia dated 16 November 1699. This letter was signed by two of his ministers and included as a diplomatic letter in the Daily Journals on 21 July 1700. Sultan Kuda, as can be read in the letter, claimed to have stepped in his brother's footsteps after Sultan Barahaman's death on July 6, 1699. The raja muda, the sultan's heir apparent, had unfortunately died on June 18, 1699, just a few weeks earlier.²

Five brothers of the raja muda, sons of Sultan Barahaman, were all contenders to the ultimate ruler's position. Although Sultan Kuda had lived in discord with his brother most of the time, it had been anticipated that upon his brother's death, he would cease his unreasonableness and mellow down, but to the contrary of expectations, he

¹ Majul, Cesar Adib, *Muslims in the Philippines*, pp. 25-27

² National Archives (NA) at The Hague, 1.04.02, VOC 1614, 104-5, 1090-96v.



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Illustration 2. Chinese Trading Jung at Maguindanao Water.

became impatient, temperamental, and monarchical. He made a political mistake of introducing “a new invention to raise money” by having his people pay for a *pascedule*³ to leave his town. The people refused his self-serving strictness and the panditas, ulamas, datu, shabandars, and all their following left him and set up a new political unit with some of the sons of the late Sultan Barahaman.⁴ Datu Bayan ul-Anwar, the eldest and in reality the next in line after Sultan Barahaman’s death, had opposed his uncle’s usurpation and refused to pay tribute to him. One of his wives being the daughter of the brother-in-law of the Sultan of Sulu and another wife the daughter of the raja of Buayan, Sultan Bayan ul-Anwar activated his connections to harass his uncle which eventually led to Sultan Kuda being krissed by the Sultan of Sulu.⁵

Through the external contacts, the Maguindanao datu had become significantly more pow-

erful. Inland Buayan and coastal Maguindanao had contrasting albeit complementary and symbiotic ecologies. Their families intermarried in every generation and as Sultan Kudarat once said, “the two kingdoms are like husband and wife.” When one or the other ruler died the succession often gave rise to strife. This had been the case in 1699, above and again in 1702. Sultan Kuda was unsure what the Company had been told. Whoever could control the bio-network of *sa-roya* (Buayan) and *sa-ilud* (Maguindanao) would be at the apex of a very powerful socio-economic political system.

Sultan Kuda was a smart and learned man who spoke Chinese and Spanish fluently and a little Dutch and English. As a Kapitan Laut he was in charge of all matters pertaining to the sea during Sultan Barahaman’s lifetime and in this function he was able to enrich himself. VOC Captain de Roy verified his bragging about having many

³ From Spanish *pase* and *cedula* (a piece of paper with authorization).

⁴ Laarhoven, Ruurdje, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy*, p. 138.

⁵ Majul, Cesar Adib, *Muslims in the Philippines*, p. 185.



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brass cannons hidden in Zamboanga. The messenger that de Roy sent out had found seven iron cannons and one metal piece along the quay and in trenches along the river, altogether close to 100 more brass cannons.⁶ Obtaining hardware wherever they could, had always been a priority for the Maguindanao rulers. Hence the request for two more cannons and muskets in the document.

Mindanao as a Buffer Zone

Throughout the 17th century, Dutch officers and representatives of the VOC had visited Maguindanao rather frequently. The Dutch came to trade, but with a secondary motive to spy and evaluate the situation from a socio-political perspective. They did not trust the sultan and vice versa. Until 1663, the Spaniards occupied a fort in Zamboanga on the most western side of Mindanao. They vacated it when they were called back to Manila because the Spaniards were in danger of an attack by a fleet of the renowned Chinese pirate Coxinga. They returned in 1718. The Spanish presence had always been perceived as a threat and danger; A threat for the Maguindanaos that they would be subjugated like the people in the islands north of them; A danger in the eyes of the VOC who fought tooth and nail to guard its spice monopoly in the Moluccas.

It was in the interest of Maguindanao to keep the Dutch at bay in Ternate and protect their independence from any Spanish or Dutch incursions. For the Dutch, Mindanao functioned as a buffer between “Spanish” Manila and the “Dutch” Moluccas. It should therefore be stressed that Sultan Kudarat did his people and the generations

to come a great favor by having all the spice trees found in his domains extirpated and forbade his people to cultivate them.⁷ The Dutch regularly checked out the presence of nutmegs and cloves and under some pretense made excursions inland or rowed out on small boats while questioning the people. Their fears were ungrounded for it was confirmed that none were to be found.⁸

Dutch observations on Maguindanao

The Dutch Captain Cornelis Claasz Silver witnessed several events when he was moored before the Sultan’s house in the Simuoy River from June to November, 1699.⁹ He was invited to witness the installation of Sultan Kuda, a ceremony he described to be with much pomp and circumstance. To have this foreign captain attending must have given the event more prestige and hence the fondness by Sultan Kuda expressed for Capt. Cornelis Claasz in the letter to Batavia.

During a following visit by some VOC officials, Captain Paulus de Brieving and Ensign Jacob Cloeck, more observations were sent to Batavia. These two were in the Maguindanao harbor from 6 July 6 to 1 October 1700 and they thoroughly investigated the area. They listed 43 *datus* who paid tribute to the sultan or were beholden to him. They counted a force of 59,650 able bodied men that the sultan could draw from in times of need.¹⁰ Maguindanao also offered a safe haven to deserting soldiers and runaways from ships and tried to keep visitors from leaving. Foremost, the Chinese were subject to being enticed into marrying the local women which added to the increase of the population.

⁶ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1483, No. M. de Roy, 25-26.

⁷ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1437, 196.

⁸ Laarhoven, Ruurdje, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy*, 158.

⁹ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1637, 96-126 is a daily record of Captain Claasz Silver’s stay.

¹⁰ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1641, fol. 76ov-776v.



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The best informants for the Dutch were indeed the Chinese who lived in Maguindanao. They often complained that they were subject to strict rules and regulations and not permitted to trade with the Dutch. However the Chinese were risk takers and disobeyed the rules. Illicit trade by the Chinese was very common. They came to trade in secret at dusk. When they were suspicious of a person hailing from Maguindanao aboard ship who could tell on them, they insisted to exchange the wax for the cloths through the cabin ports.¹¹

Harbour and Trade

The harbor principality of Maguindanao was ideally situated at the mouth and tributaries of the largest river of Mindanao, the Pulangi River. It allowed for shipping and shipbuilding, fishing and many water resources. Products from the rich Pulangi agricultural valley inland, which consisted predominantly of rice, tobacco, wax, and victuals were brought down by small and large traders. From the mountain areas south of the river and foremost from the Davao Gulf region thousands of pounds of wax and bundles of tobacco were collected annually through tribute payments or exchanged for imported cloth and other foreign objects obtained through trade. For a large part of the 17th century annual trading expeditions were undertaken by the sultan himself and with his permission, the members of the royal family and datu clans sent their junks on missions to as far as India, Malacca, Siam, Johore, Java, Sumatra,

Borneo, and Sulawesi. Many smaller vessels sailed annually to Manila and Ternate as well, often with the assistance of nakodas, ship captains, from the Chinese community.

The shipments from Maguindanao to the larger regional trade centers included, besides wax and rice in large quantities, thousands of bundles of tobacco, second grade cinnamon, coconut oil, clove bark, tortoise shell, sea cucumbers, seaweed, bird's nests, and slaves¹². They brought back predominantly all sorts of Indian cloths such as guinees lywaet, bafta, salempuri, muri, chintz, betille, chelas,¹³ etc. Iron objects, brass, scrap metal, cannons and weapons were sought after and often included. Junks from China brought silks and earthen wares.¹⁴ There was heavy traffic between China (Ch'uan Chou, Hokkien), Manila and Maguindanao every year.¹⁵ By 1700, the Chinese community at Maguindanao had grown considerably after the Dutch had started to enforce the monopoly on spices in the Moluccas. Many Chinese had left Ternate for Mindanao.¹⁶

The wax monopoly and Chinese traders

Sarangani was a central trading place in beeswax where the Sultan of Maguindanao had imposed strict rules and regulations. No outsiders were allowed to go there to trade. Since the 1660s the Maguindanao sultanate had exerted a monopoly on wax, which was still in effect in 1699.¹⁷ Only the Chinese, who were known to the sultan and the Saranganies, were allowed to trade 500 kati¹⁸

¹¹ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1554, No 12, Logbook Alsteyn and Haak, fol. 123.

¹² Laarhoven, Ruurdje, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy*, pp. 213-221.

¹³ Laarhoven, Ruurdje, "A Passion for Plaids", in: Roy W. Hamilton (ed.), *From the Rainbow's Varied Hue*, pp. 138-144

¹⁴ Fox, Robert B., "A consideration of Theories Concerning Possible Affiliations of Mindanao Cultures with Borneo, the Celebes, and Other Regions of the Philippines", in: *Philippine Sociological Review*, January 1957, pp. 2-12;

¹⁵ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1483, No. M, de Roy, 60; VOC 1641, Brieving and Cloeck, fol. 724, 765v-766.

¹⁶ Laarhoven, Ruurdje, "The Chinese at Maguindanao in the Seventeenth Century", in: *Philippine Studies*, vol. 35 (1987): pp. 31-50. This article has a complete story of the Chinese in Maguindanao and a follow up on Tuwanko alias Loanko after he left Maguindanao, never to return [Letter].

¹⁷ Dagregisters van het Kasteel Batavia, vol. 14, p. 247.

¹⁸ One *kati* is equivalent to 1/100 *picul* or 1.25 pound.



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of beeswax and no more.¹⁹ Trading without the sultan's permission would be punishable by death, that is beheading. Sarangani was the Sultan's granary and a warehouse for his trade goods.

In Maguindanao it was also customary for all nakodas, ships' captains, to pass by the sultan before leaving and receive instructions to run errands for him or other members of the household such as delivering letters or messages and bringing gifts. If that was neglected, one could expect to be killed, which luckily did not happen to the Chinese mestizo Loanko, mentioned in our document, who was forgiven.

Adventures of a peranakan Chinese

Despite all regulations imposed by the Minguindanao sultans, incidents appeared at a frequent basis. According to our document, an incident happened in July or early August 1688. By the time the sultan wrote his letter to Batavia in 1699, it was still remembered and not solved yet. A *peranakan* Chinese from Jepara named Tuwanko (Loanko in the letter) had left in a *gonting*, a small Javanese cargo vessel, with a pascedule from the Company in Semarang to sail to Pasir, Southeast Borneo to collect wax. The vessel belonged to the Chinese captains Pinco from Jepara and Kohanco (Concua in the letter) from Semarang. The crew consisted of eight Chinese: Saowanko, Ompo, Tsjonko, Tjeiwko, Tiepkko, Inko, Hayko, and Tsjin and two Javanese: Aowangsa and Marompang. Strong contrary winds and a possible lack of a sense directions, Saowanko, the navigator, brought them ashore in Manguindanao after more than two months.

When the Sultan Barahaman learned about the trespass, he ordered the crew of the *gonting* to come to Simuay and asked them for their pas-

cedule, but theirs was for Pasir, so Hayko, who could write, prepared a different one that applied to Sarangani. The sultan accepted it and this guaranteed the safety of the Chinese. In the meantime Tuwanko had already collected 100 pikul of wax, and 3 pikul of tortoise shell. He invested half his capital of approximately 15-1600 rixdollars in this purchase. The sultan took possession of all the Indian types of cloths that were left at a value of 727 1/4 rixdollars. His brother the later Sultan Kuda borrowed the wax that Tuwanko had brought and lent him a boat, a *korakora*, for Tuwanko to go to Manila where he had to sell the wax. The price of a pikul wax in Sarangani was much lower than in Manila, so the sultan pocketed the profit. He told Tuwanko to collect some debts for him in Manila which were to pay for the wax that Tuwanko had initially paid for in Sarangani. Tuwanko left for Manila, but refused to say farewell to the sultan who was offended and angry about that. He confiscated all Tuwanko's tradegoods. Tuwanko stayed for one month in Manila where he bought leather, gold and reals-of-eight from the Spanish from Sultan Kuda's money and some leather for himself.

While Tuwanko was gone, five of his crew, Tsjonko, Tjeiwko, Tiepkko, Inko, and Hayko had married. Saowanko, Tsjin and the two Javanese: Aowangsa and Marompang died at Maguindanao. Tuwanko settled down and began to ingratiate himself with the Maguindanaos. He married and inspired the trust of the sultan. He is known to have said to the Sultan "we have no other faith except in the Sultan, and whatever the Sultan wishes to command we shall obey".²⁰ Thus in 1691 Tuwanko managed to leave with permission from the Sultan. Ompo, another crew member who never married went with him. The crew also

¹⁹ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1637, fol. 91.

²⁰ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1516, fol. 505.



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included a Ternatan Chinese, named Hieuwko, his slave, and two Muslims from the Coromandel coast in India. All were debt free, otherwise one could not receive permission to leave Maguindanao. The five married surviving Chinese were “kept by the sultan”.²¹

The information provided in the sultan’s letter shows how existing trading networks, from Mindaguidanao to Java, functioned only with the support and interference of a local ruler. It also shows how individual participants, like the *peranakan* Chinese Tuwanko from Jepara, operated in those networks. Only these concrete stories bring us closer to the fascinating world of Southeast Asia, in this case the southern Philippines.

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²¹ NA 1.04.02, VOC 1503, III, Interview Notes, fol. 563.



2 Transcription of the Dutch text

Ruurdje Laarhoven, “Letter from Sultan Kuda of Manguindanao (r. 1699-1702) concerning the trading activities of Chinese nakhoda and the need for military Support, 21 July 1700”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 21 JULI 1700 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL. 381]

Translaat Spaanse missive van den Coning van Mangindanao aan sijn Edelheyt den Heere gouverneur generaal Willem van Outhoorn geschreven.

Dese brief schrijft den Siry Sultan Amirol Amra Zhumra Alam Abnu, Sultan Sayaso Drascha Abnu, Sultan Zala Ima Nasirodin, tot Fuhul Lahu Bihie Val musulimin, Conink van de coninkrijcken en landen van Mangindanao, en gaet aan mijn vrund en broeder de heer generaal van Batavia. Naer voorgaande compliment stondt:

Mijn Heer ik geef U Edele kennis dat op den 6 July deses jaers 1699 overleden is mijn oudste broeder Carnal Groot Sarry Snu Jamodsa Brahaman Abnu Sultan Sayefo Dra-sha.

Soodat al de saecken van 't rijck in mijn handen sijn vervallen, en besid nu de plaets van Sarry Sultan van dit rijck als de landen van Mindano, 'twelck niet heb connen naer-laten U Edele te communiceren om de grote liefde die aan ons volck werd gethoondt, 'twelck mij soo veel te meer verpligting daertoe geeft. [382]

Van al welke saken mijn gemelte oudste broeder in sijn testament kennisse heeft gegeven behelsende ook wel te observeren de vrindschap en goede correspondentie die tusschen ons en de Ed. Hollandse Compagnie was gehouden, ten tijde van mijn grootvader, als mijn vader, dewelcke nog soo vast en volständig sullen blijven als den dagh van heeden, sonder dat bevonden sal werden iets aan te ontbreken, daerom of er iemant anders 't contrary wilde aan U Edele seggen is niet waer, en gelieft sulx geen geloof te geven, want onse vrundschap Uw Edele Hollandse Compagnie sal soo vast en volständig duuren als son en man.

Ik geef Uw Edele ook kennis dat in de maand juny op strande van dit coninkrijk is gearriveert een galjoot genaamt Lasdragh waerop schipper was Cornelis Claesz. Selver en stuurman Pieter Bolarte, comende uyt de havenen van Molucos om naar Manados haer reys te nemen, dog door 't harde weer

en contrarie winden sijn in dit rijck vervallen sonder brief of pas van d'E. Compagnie naer dit mijn rijck. Ik heb aanstonts belast dat se maer binnen soude komen omdat het in de wintertijd was, en dat se anders mogelijk een ongemak soude comen te lijden, soo datse in deese revier van Sumuay sijn binnen gekomen, sijnde veel aan mijn huys geweest, haer wel getracteert en gehandelt, gelijk aen U Ed. self sullen kunnen seggen.

Gemelte schipper en stuurman met haer volck hebben wij wel geholpen en dienst gedaan, blijvende U Ed. hertelijck dankbaer voor soo veel ontfange beleeftheden.



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

En versoek bijaldien den gouverneur van de stad Moluco met de aanstaande goede mousson een vaertuyg naer dit mijn rijck mogt komen te senden, U Ed. geliefde te ordonneren gemelte schipper Cornelis Claasz. en stuurman Pieter Bolarte daermede quame, waermede mij grote vrundschap sou geschieden, sijnde haer seer genegen omdat sij mij soo veel geholpen hebben.

Waerom nogmael versoek en bidt aan U Ed. dat gemelte schipper mag verhoogt werden, dewijl 't een man van eer en wackerheyd is.

De reden dat voornoemde galjoot soo lang agter gebleven en niet eerder t'zee gestoken sij, is veroorsaekt dat de contrarie en variabele winden en weer soo lang geduurt, en dewijl meer bevinding van ongelucken daerdoor in zee veroorsaekt, waer 't beter, sij soo lange hier vertoefde, sijn nu in de maand september vertrocken, wanneer de vaste doorgaande winden wayen en de rechten tijd is geweest, 'twelck soo 't beste heb geoordeelt omdat de saeken van de E. Compagnie als mijn eigen estimeer.

Ik bidde Uw Ed. mede dat geordoneert mag werden aan den gouverneur van de stad Maluco dat hij mij één hondert goede musquetten om voor mijn paggers te dienen verkoopt voor sijn waerde, sodanig als aan den Conink van Ternaten sijn verkogt, sullende 't bedragen van gemelte musquetten aanstaande jaer met alle puntualiteyt werden voldaan.

Nog versoek soo 't U Ed. mogt gelieven mij te verkopen twee stuckjes metael canon van vijf â 600 ponden yder eguael en wat lang, opdat van goet effect mogen sijn en soo 't met U Ed. goetheyd waer, mij dese vrundschap te bewijzen, connen aan den gouverneur der stad Maluco gesonden om [383] verder aan mijn geadresseert te werden, sullende de waerde aanstaande jaer mede promptelijck overgemaekt werden.

Ik senden U Ed. twee picols wax welke beuseling versoek gelieft aan te nemen en de vrijpostigheyt pardonneren dewijl soo gering en van weynig waerde sijnde alleen om een teken van liefde te thonen en dankbaerheyt van soo veel weldaden alreets genoten hebbe en nog sal ontfangen.

En dewijl anders niet offereer, soo wil ons Heer U Ed. nog lange jaren sparen in vrede en gewenste gerustheyd, 'twelke van harte ben wenschende.

(Onder stont) Semuay den 16 november 1699, vrund en broeder van Uw Hoogheyt heel vaste, trouwe, en toegenege dienaar (was geteekent) Humxra Alam en Dayyo (ter zijde stond 's Conings schiap).

Ik geef U Edele mede kennis dat in den jaere 1688 in de havenen van Sarangam gecomen is een vaertuyg waervan den schipper was een Chinees masties van Japara genaamt Loanko waervan mijn broeder den Heere Keyser kennisse gekregen hebbende, sond vier van sijn volck derwaert om haer af te vragen wat se quamen doen, gaven tot antwoord dat het vaertuygh was toekomende de Capitains der Chinesen Pinco en Concuca, comende met een pas van de Compagnie naer dit mijn rijck van Mindanao om te handelen en negotie te doen, connende door de contrarie winden hare rijse niet volbrengen, waarop het volck van mijn broeder haer seyden dat niet mogte handelen, copen of vercopen met het volck van Sarangam. En bijaldien haer goederen wilde verkopen, sulx aan ons volck souden doen, soodat het volck van gemelte mijn broeder



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

de goederen en coopmanschappen daeruyt gelost en ontfangen hebben ten bedrage van sevenhondertsevenentwintigh rxs en een quart. En soo sijn se weder hier terugh gecomen met den schrijver van gemelte vaertuygh van Loanko. En naer drie maanden quam gemelte vaertuygh geladen met wax waervan se over de hondert picol gecogt hadden en drie picol *tartaruga* soodat het quaed haer eygen schult is, want het is een gewoonte onder ons dat de Chinese vaertuygen die in de havenen van Sarangame comen geen wax mogen copen als vijffhondert catty. Haer nu gevraegt hebbende of se geen brieven van de Capitans Pinco en Concua hadden, antwoorden van 'neen'. En de pas van de E. Comp. dicteerden niet naer mijn rijk maer na Passick. Daerna is Lieanko met vijf van sijn confraters naar de Manilhas vertrocken, hebbende daer al haer wax verkogt voor goud, realen van agten, en leer, comende soo weder naar dit rijk en is Leanko binnengekomen en getrouwt, blijvende schuldig volgens huwelijxcontract vier thijlen goudt en een slaef, waervoor ik borg ben gebleven, soodat mijn broeder haer pardonnerden van de begane misslag en overtreding van 't wax tot Sarangam gecogt.

Maer tot de 727 $\frac{1}{4}$ rds te vereffenen waer 't noodsaeckelijk brieven van de E. Comp. Capitans Pinco en Concua gerechtvaardigt door de Justitie en de E. Comp. want als recht redelijck en gepermitteert hebben se bovengemelte penningen ontfangen, waermede Leanko is vertrocken met een brief van mijn broeder den Keyser aan Uw Ed., hebbende hem sedert hier niet meer vernomen.

Daernaer in den jare 1695 heeft mijn broeder den Keyser een vaertuygh afgesonden met een schipper sonder ambassadeur, alleen brieven voor [384] Batavia aan de Ed. Compagnie dog door horibele sterke tegenwinden is gemelte vaertuyg vervallen in de havenen van Caily en willende den schipper sijn reyse weder vervolge naer Batavia, soo wasser een Chinees tot Caily genaamt Luanco die hem tegenhield met drijgement soo hij 't deed, dat hem eenig ongemak soude overcomen om een schuld van een masties Chinees in mijn land genaamt Najoda Sandit, aan een vendrig op Malacca, ik weet niet van hoeveel rxs soodat den schipper in die haven bleef, en cogt den Chinees al haer effecten die mede hadde ter waerde van éénduysentvijfhondert rxs. Als nu den schipper wilde vertrecken en met sijn vaertuygh herwaart aankomen, eyschende sijn uytstaande penningen, heeft gemelte Cuancko maer betaelt vijfhondert rxs onder sig behoudende duysent rxs dewelcke hij weygerde te betalen om de schult van meergemelde Leanko die in mijn rijk was gebleven.

'Twelck bekend maeck, opdat U Ed. soude weten met wat bedriegerijen en chinistre streecken de Chinesen omgaan, sullende den schipper Cornelis Claasz. en stuurman Pieter Bolarte, mondeling beeter en breeder connen rapporteren, want heb haer de papieren en brief van den Chinees Cuancko laeten sien.



3 English translation

Ruurdje Laarhoven, “Letter from Sultan Kuda of Manguindanao (r. 1699-1702) concerning the trading activities of Chinese nakhoda and the need for military support, 21 July 1700”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 21 JULY 1700 [BEGINNING WITH FOL. 381]

Translation of a letter in Spanish addressed to His Excellency the Lord Governor-General Willem van Outhoorn by the King of Manguindanao

This letter is from Sri Sultan Amirol Amra Zhumra Alam Abnu, Sultan Drascha Abnu, Sultan Zala Ima Nairodin, to Fuhul Labu Bibie Val Musilmin, Kings of the realms and lands of Manguindanao, and is addressed to my friend and brother the Lord [Governor-]General of Batavia.

The above exordium is followed by:

My Lord I inform you that on the 6 July of this year 1699 my eldest brother, Carnal Groot Sarry Snu Jamodsa Brahaman Abnu Sultan Sayefo Drasha passed away.

As all the business of the realm has devolved into my hands, and I have now acceded to the position of Sri Sultan of this kingdom and of the lands of Mindano, it behoves me to inform your Excellency of the great goodwill shown to our people which only augments my [sense of] obligation [382].

In his testament my said eldest brother acknowledged such matters, not least that the friendship and correspondence which was current at the time of my grandfather and of my father should be kept up, and that it shall continue to be as steadfast and as regular as it is at that moment, and that there should not be any interruptions. Therefore should anyone else who wishes to deny this say to Your Excellency that this is not true, you should attach no credence to this, as our amity shall be as fixed and constant as the Sun and the Moon.

I also inform Your Excellency that in the month of June a galiot called the *Lasdragh* arrived here on the shores of this kingdom. Her skipper was Cornelis Calesz. Sekver and the first mate Pieter Bolarte. She came from the harbour of the Moluccas on her way to Menado, but heavy weather and contrary winds stranded her in this kingdom without any letter or pass from the Honourable Company [addressed] to this my kingdom. I immediately gave orders that they should come in because here it was winter, and otherwise they might possibly have found themselves in difficulties. Hence they sailed into this Sumuay River and often frequented my house, where I entertained and treated them as I would have done Your Excellency yourself.

We have helped and assisted the said skipper, his first mate and their crew, as we remain indebted to Your Excellency for the many courtesies we have received.

And, in the event of the Governor of the town of Molucca (Ambon) sending a ship



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

to my realm in the forthcoming good season, we would prefer that Your Excellency to order said skipper Cornelis Calsesz. and First Mate Pieter Bolarte to sail on her, this would be a [gesture] of great friendship to me, as I have great affection for them as they were a great help.

For this reason I entreat and prevail upon Your Excellency that the said skipper may be promoted, as he is a man of honour and astute.

The reason the afore-mentioned galiot tarried here so long and did not put to sea ear-lier was that, as the variable and contrary winds persisted so long and there were more reports of disasters at sea, it seemed more sensible to wait. Now in the month of Sep-tember he has departed as the prevailing winds are blowing and the right season has arrived. I arranged matters so as the affairs of the Honourable Company are as dear to me as my own.

I also entreat Your Excellency that orders may be given to me at the price for which they were sold to the King of Ternate. Payment of said muskets will be handed over punctually next year.

I also request that Your Excellency sell me two metal 500 or 600 pounder cannon of equal size with a rather long barrel so that they might be used effectively and should it please Your Excellency to demonstrate your friendship, they can be dispatched to the Governor of Molucco [383] and from there be sent on to my address. Their value will be promptly recompensed. I send Your Excellency two piculs of wax, entreating that you graciously accept this and will pardon the impertinence that they are so few and of such little value, being no more than a token of the affection and gratitude of the many benefactions we have already enjoyed and shall still [continue] to receive.

And though I offer nothing else, I wish that the future will still bring Your Excellency long years of peace and beneficial law and order, which I wish from the bottom of my heart.

(Dated) Semuai 16 November 1699, most faithful friend and brother of Your High-ness, [your] affectionate servant (was signed) Humrxa Alam and Dayyo (the royal seal affixed to the side).

I inform Your Excellency that in the year 1688 a vessel arrived in the harbour of Sarangam [Island] whose skipper was a mestizo Chinese from Japara named Loanko. My brother informed the Lord Emperor of this and the latter sent four of his people there to discover what they had come to do. They answered that the vessel was the property of the Chinese Captains Pinco and Concuca, sailing to my realm of Mindanao with a pass from the Company to trade and do business as contrary winds had meant that they were unable to make their destination. Whereupon my brother's people told them that they were forbidden to trade or buy or sell with the people of Sarangam. Should they wish to dispose of their goods they should do this to our people. Conse-sequently the people of my afore-mentioned brother unloaded and took possession of goods and wares to the value of 727 $\frac{1}{4}$ rix-dollars. Thereafter we returned here with the clerk of the afore-said vessel of Loanko. Three months later the vessel put in here laden with wax of which they had purchased more than 100 *picul* as well as 3 *picul tartaru-*



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

ga (tortoiseshell), therefore they have brought their troubles on themselves, because it is our convention that Chinese vessels which put in at the harbour of Sarangam may purchase no more than 500 *catties* wax. When they were asked if they were carrying letters from Captains Pinco and Concua, they answered 'No'. Moreover, the Company pass did not specify my realm but [that of] Passick. Later Lianko and five of his associates departed for Manila where they sold all their wax for gold pieces-of-eight (gold reals) and leather and, upon returning to this kingdom Leanko settled down and married, under the terms of his marriage contract incurring a debt to the tune of 4 gold thalers and one slave, for which I stood guarantor, until my brother pardoned him for his offence and infringement of the [allowed amount of] wax bought at Sarangam.

However, to settle up the 727 $\frac{1}{4}$ rix-dollars, it was necessary to have the letters from the Honourable Company Captains Pinco and Concua, authorized by [the department of] Justice and the Honourable Company because, [designating them] qualified and sanctioned [to do so], it was they who were the recipients of the money with which Leanko departed with a letter from my brother to the Emperor to Your Excellency, and nothing more has been heard of him since then.

Afterwards, in the year 1695, my brother the Emperor dispatched a vessel to Batavia with a skipper but no ambassador only letters for [384] the Honourable Company, but on account of terribly strong contrary winds said vessel fell apart in the harbour of Caily. The skipper wanted to continue his journey to Batavia but there was a Chinese in Caily whose name was Luanco who obstructed him with threats, declaring that should he do so he would run into considerable difficulties on account of the debt of a mestizo Chinese in my country by the name of Najoda Sandit who owed a subaltern in Malacca I do not know how many rix-dollars. Hence the skipper remained in the harbour and sold the Chinese all the effects he had with him, which were worth 1,500 rix-dollars. Since the skipper has departed and arrived here in his vessel demanding his outstanding dues as said Chinese has paid only 500 rix-dollars, retaining 1,000 rix-dollars for himself and refusing to pay them on account of the debt of oft-mentioned Leanko who had settled in my realm.

This information has been passed on so that Your Excellency will be aware of the threats and sinister tricks the Chinese employ. Skipper Cornelis Claasz and First Mate Pieter Bolarte will supply you with better and more detailed oral reports, as I have shown them the papers and the letter of the Chinese Cuanc[k]o.



4 Colophon

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Title | Ruurdje Laarhoven, “Letter from Sultan Kuda of Manguindanao (r. 1699-1702) concerning the trading activities of Chinese nakhoda and the need for military support, 21 July 1700”. In: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta</i> , document 16. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014. |
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5 Folio image

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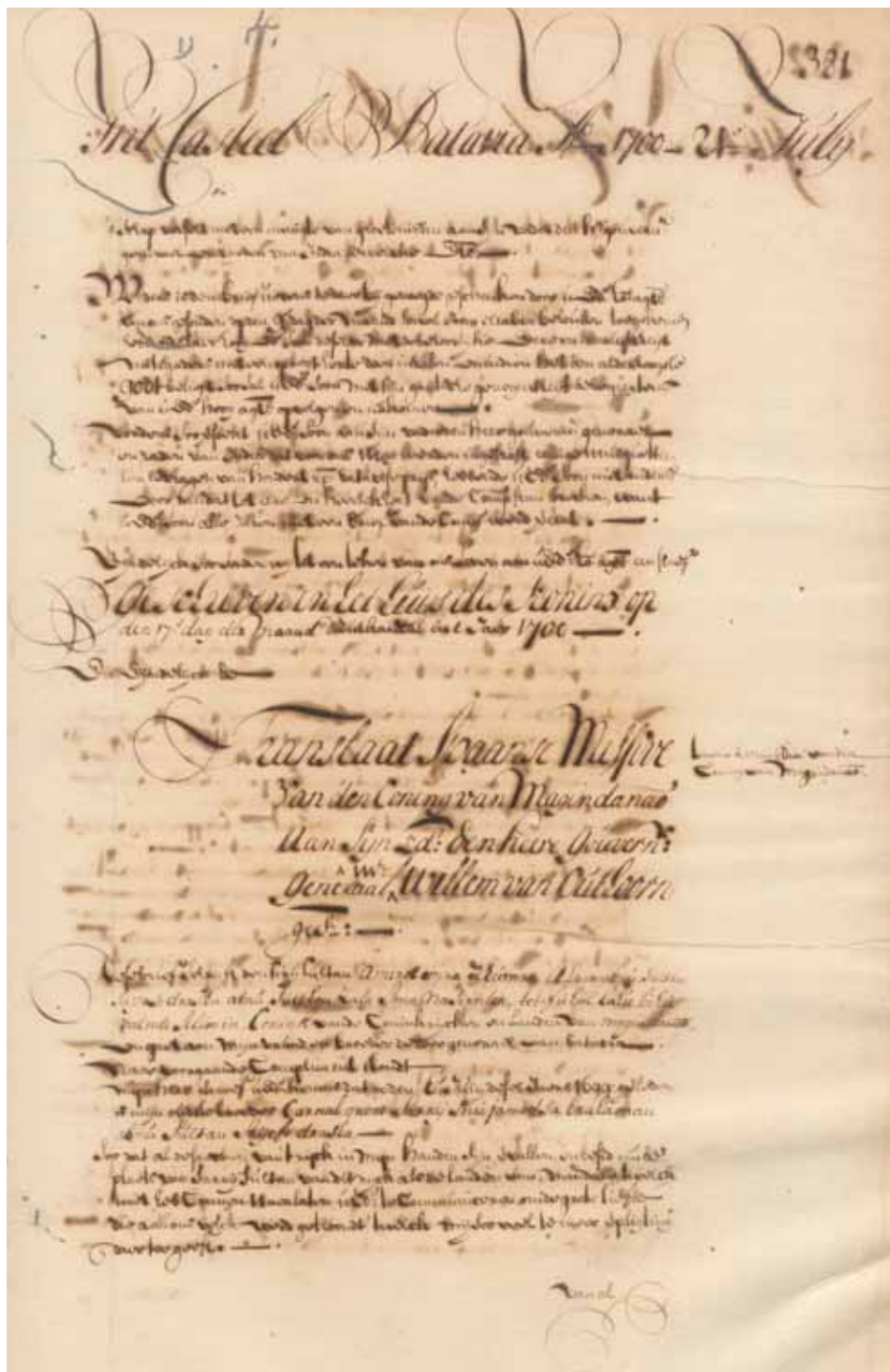




Illustration 1. Map of Makassar, with two-way left and right view of Fort Rotterdam. Date unknown.

Letter of the King of Bone La Patau Paduka Sri Sultan Idris Azim ud-din (r. 1696–1714) and Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa to the Supreme Government, 1697

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1 Introduction

L.Y. Andaya, “Letter of the King of Bone La Patau Paduka Sri Sultan Idris Azim ud-din (r. 1696–1714) and Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa to the Supreme Government, 1697”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 17. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY L.Y. ANDAYA

Letter from La Patau and Daeng Talele to the Supreme Government, 1697.

Background History

This letter was written by the nephew and successor to the famous Arung Palakka La Tenritatta, Matinroé ri Bontualak (r. 1672-1696), La Patau (Matinroé ri Nagauleng, (r. 1696-1714), and Arung Palakka’s primary wife, the Makassarese princess Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa. Written shortly after the death of Arung Palakka, it refers to an old conflict between the Datu Soppeng To-Ésang and Arung Palakka. After the death of the old Datu Soppeng La Tenribali in 1678, his second son, To-Ésang succeeded to the throne because of the untimely death of his elder brother and heir to the throne in 1669 at the very end of the Makassar War. La Tenribali had grave doubts of the abilities of this second son, and Arung Palakka did everything to prevent his exercising power in Soppeng. To-Ésang took advantage of Arung Palakka’s death in 1696 to depose the current Soppeng ruler, the Datu ri Watu (in the letter called “Dato Dijwasoe” and “Dato Dijwatoe”), and raise himself as ruler of Soppeng. The letter then recounts the events leading to La Patau’s campaign which defeats To-Ésang and restores the Datu Riwatu on the throne of Soppeng.

Arung Palakka and the Bugis

In the late sixteenth century, the Makassar kingdom of Gowa located in the southwest peninsula of the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia became a major force in the region. By the first half of the seventeenth century, it had brought many of the kingdoms in eastern Indonesia under its influence and had gained dominance over the lucrative trade in cloves, nutmeg, and mace from northern Maluku. After Gowa adopted Islam in 1605, it embarked on what is known as the “Islamic Wars” that resulted in the forced Islamization of the non-Muslim kingdoms in the peninsula, ending with the conquest and conversion of the dominant Bugis kingdom of Bone in 1611. The Makassarese people of Gowa came to be regarded by the Bugis people as their oppressors, and in the mid-seventeenth century many Bugis from the kingdoms of Bone and Soppeng were brought to the city of Makassar to build fortifications in preparation for a feared attack by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The harsh treatment of these Bugis forced laborers, coupled with the stigma associated with the forcible conversion earlier in the century, aroused among the Bugis the well-known phenomenon of *sirik*, a South Sulawesi concept that is usually defined as “shame”. In this concept, only the recovery of one’s self-respect often by force would remove this shame. Among the Bugis brought to labour in Makassar was Arung Palakka, a high-born individual from Soppeng. He and his followers were able to flee Makassar, first to Buton before finally seeking refuge in Batavia, the Asian headquarters of the VOC, where they were welcomed and given a place to settle in a suburb called Angké, hence the reference to the Bugis there as *To-Angké* or the “people of Angké”. While in exile in Batavia, Arung Palakka and his



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Illustration 2. Map Bantimoerangse mountains and mineworks in Celebes, east of Macassar. By T.J. Steinfeld, 1735.

Bugis followers were employed as Dutch auxiliary troops in the campaign in west coast Sumatra that resulted in the removal of Acehnese control over the Minangkabau settlements in 1666. The bravery and loyalty of the Bugis were noted by the Dutch, and so when they planned another siege of the port of Makassar in the kingdom of Gowa, their principal rival in the spice trade, they sought and received the cooperation of Arung Palakka. Arung Palakka was highly respected among the Bugis people, and when he arrived back with the Dutch fleet, he was able to attract numerous Bugis fighters to his side that turned the tide in favour of the invaders. Despite strong resistance by the Gowa defenders and their allies, they were eventually defeated for the first time in 1667 and finally for the second and last time in 1669, thus ending the protracted Makassar War (1666-1669).

Background to the Letter's Contents

In this letter, reference is made to the Treaty of Bungaya, which ended the first phase of the Makassar War in 1667, when the Bugis were restored their dignity and self-worth, hence removing the burden of *sirik*. This priceless gift to the Bugis people from the Dutch sustained an unwavering loyalty to the Company shown by Arung Palakka and his successor, La Patau, throughout their lives. When Arung Palakka ascended the throne of Bone in 1672, he became the undisputed leader of the whole of the southwest peninsula of Sulawesi and was assured of total support from the Dutch. Any considered to be disloyal to him was removed from power, forced to flee abroad, or punished. This resulted in a large exodus of people from Sulawesi and their involvement in the affairs of other kingdoms throughout the archipelago. The reference



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to the deposing of To-Ésang as ruler of Soppeng by Arung Palakka was one example of the situation in this period. The death of Arung Palakka in 1696 provided the opportunity for those who had been exiled or deposed to seek reinstatement. The effort by To-Ésang to gain the throne of Soppeng is the subject of this letter, and the long explanation given by La Patau and Daeng Talele, the people closest to Arung Palakka, can be seen as an example of the manner in which they both sought to maintain Arung Palakka's legacy in the peninsula. Throughout La Patau's reign, he was confronted by such challenges as explained in this letter, which he was able to surmount with the unquestioning backing of the Dutch garrison and administration stationed in Casteel Rotterdam in Makassar.

Suggested Readings

- Andaya, Leonard Y. *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981.
- Andaya, Leonard Y. *Warisan Arung Palakka: Sejarah Sulawesi Selatan Abad Ke-17*. Makassar: Innawa, 1st printing 2004, 2nd printing 2006.
- Cummings, William (tr. & ed.). *The Makassar Annals*. Leiden, KITLV Press, 2010.
- Gibson, Thomas. "The Sea King and the Emperor". Chapter 7 in Gibson, *And the Sun Pursued the Moon: Symbolic Knowledge and Traditional Authority Among the Makassar*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005

2 Transcription of the Dutch text

L.Y. Andaya, “Letter of the King of Bone La Patau Paduka Sri Sultan Idris Azim ud-din (r. 1696–1714) and Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa to the Supreme Government, 1697”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 29 JUNI 1697 [COMMENCING AT FOL. 484]

Translaat Maleytse missive door Radja Bony, en Dain Telille aan Haar Edelens de Hoge Regering tot Batavia geschreven. [fol. 485]

Dese brief van opregte en suyvere genegentheyt des herte, verseld met hartgrondige salutatie van Paduka Radja Bony en Paduk Bonda Poetry Daing Telille wil den Almogende laten toekomen aan Sijn Edelheyt den heere gouverneur generael Willem van Outhoorn en de heeren raden van India, dewelcke den hoogh verheven God heeft volmaekt in haer vermogende en hoogaansienelijke waerdigheden etc.

Wijders wanneer U Edele Hoog Agtbare voortreffelijcke missive, benevens de daerbij gevoegde ongemeene schenkagie alhier wierd aangebraght soo belasten wij deselve met alle statieusheyt op het aansienlijkste nae de maet van ons vermogen in te halen. Doen wij dien brief lasen soo versprijde uyt alle hare regels paerlen van onwaerdeerlijkheyt en dat vanwegens de Hoog Aansienelijke, en voortreffelijke woorden van Uw Edele Hoog Agtbare, sijnde wij ten hoogsten verheugt en wel vergenoeght doordien U Edele Hoog Agtbarens gonstelijck hebben gelieven aan te nemen onser aller Bonesen woorden en versoek, en is ons vertrouwen grootelijx vermeerderd, doordien wij hebben gesien U Edele Hoog Agtbares geschenck en weldaden aan ons bewesen, hebbende wij met alle eerbiedigheyt op het volmaekste opgevolght den inhoud Uwer Edele Hoog Agtbares missive, alwaer van het Bangayse contract werd gementioneert, want dat contract alleen stelt ons in vrijheyt waerdoor wij Bonesen en Sopingers weder de exercitie van ons recht en eygendom hebben bekomen, konnende wij klaerlijck sien, dat het de Compagnie alleen is door wien God Sijne goedertierentheyt aan ons heeft blijckaer gemaect, waerdoor Bony en Soping weder haer naam [fol. 486] hebben bekomen, hebbende wij daerom een groot vertrouwen op de Compagnie en sijn eeuwig dankbaer niet alleen voor de redenen die in U Edele Hoog Agtbare missive werden gementioneert, en welcke ons tot lessen en onderwijsingen strecken, maer ook dat U Edele Hoog Agtbare gelieve meldinge te doen, wegens de goede diensten die onsen overleden heer aan de Compagnie heeft bewesen, en dat daerom U Edele Hoog Agtbare genegentheyt en liefde groot was, over alle die van onsen overleden heer nagelaten, en weder door U Edele Hoog Agtbare tot de vrijheyd hersteld zijn, hetwelcke zekerlijck de oorsake is, dat U Edele Hoog Agtbare hare heylsame onderwijsinge aan ons gelieven te doen, waerdoor wij vermeerderinge van vreugde en eere genieten.

Voorts hebben U Edele Hoog Agtbare haer over ons gelieven te ontfermen wegens



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

het examineren der beginselen van de Sopingse saken over hetwelcke wij seer dankbaer sijn, alsoo U Edele Hoog Agtbare niet onbekend is, hoe dat degenen die buyten ons zijn haer uytterste vlijt aanwenden, om de Compagnie onbehoorlijcke dingen wijs te maken want bij aldien U Edele Hoog Agtbare van die saak geen mentie hadden gemaekt, soo waren wij in dit labirint gebleven zonder dat de Compagnie kennisse soude hebben gehad van het bedrog en arglistigheyt onser wederparthije, daerom sijn wij ten hoogsten dankbaer en verheugd, dat U Edele Hoog Agtbare begeren te weten en in waerheyt te verstaen, wat eygentlijck van het Sopingse gedoente is, waerop wij dan aanvankelijck seggen, wanneer Toysangh blijken van sijn onbehoorlijck comportement gaf, tot groot miscontentement van onsen overleden heer Radja Sopingh, die aan onsen heer, den overleden Paduka Bony, tot Bontouwala testament hadde gemaekt soo geschieden [fol. 487] het dat den overledenen Radja Bony, ordonneerden dat er een vergadering der Bonese en Sopingers in de negorij Sopingh soude gehouden worden om malcanderen te indagtigen de redenen en woorden waerdoor ons den Admirael Speelman heeft aangenomen en ook om gesamentlijck te beraaden wegens de executie van het testament door den overleden Radja Sopingh aan Radja Bony gemaect, als wanneer de Bonesen en Sopingers, in een goede hermonie tredende, zeyden dat haer welvaren en levensonderhoud principelijck bestont in het nacomen van het testament van haren heer, ter welcker oorsake die van Sopingh, en Bone, met eendragtigheid, tot Coning van Soping vercoren Dato Dijwasoe, en voorts met gemeender stemmen besloten, Toysang te verstoten, gelijk sulx de heer commissaris Dirk de Haas, oock is aangediend, doe Sijn Edele van Ambon tot Macasser aanquam, waeraan wij ons vasthouden en daerbij blijven persisteren.

Wijders aangaande de oorsaken, ofte eerste beginselen van onse Sopingse saken zoo is 't sulx, doe wij wierden verlaten van onsen heer den overleden Paduka, zoo maakten wij hem een graff tot Goa, en wij bewaakten dat graf, ook wordende ik door Radja Goa, bij hem in sijn Hoff ontboden, en zijde Radja Goa tot mij, ik heb een brief aan Toysangh gesonden, hem aanseggende, ghij sult uw eerst niet bewegen soo lange mijn woorden tot uw niet gecomen sijn, seggende Radja Goa wijders bij aldien Toysangh op dese mijne woorden niet antwoord, soo is het seker dat sijn bedrijf niet goed is. Onderwijlen begeerden ik op dit seggen van Radja Goa, niet te repliceren. Doe nu 20 dagen verstreken waren dat [fol. 488] onsen heer in het graf hadde gelegen, zo weken wij terugh na Boutowala etc. alwaer wij den 29e dagh der maand july aanquamen. Wanneer Dayangh Balykangh uyt ordre van Radja Goa bij ons quam, seggende tot ons heeft Radja Bony oock wetenschap dat Toysangh weder tot het rijck van Sopingh is gekeerd? En dat Dato Dywatoe uyt sijn rijck is verdreven geworden? Horende wij Bonesen doe eerst het bedrijff van Toysangh dat hij het volck van Sopingh belast hadde, hem aan te nemen uyt Menpoe, en met de wapenen te adsisteren.

De veldoversten, ofte de voorgangers der Sopingers waren Ladayang en Toubaky, dewelke haer met de wapenen in onse negorij hadden begeven, terwijl wij daer niet present waren, en deselve ledigh was, hetgene ons geadviseert wierd, door een Bonees man, van Boegis comende, waerdoor ons herte seer beroerd wierd, en hebben dierhalven alle de volckeren van Bony tesamen vergaderd in Bantowala, om haer te indagti-



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gen het testament van onsen heer den overleden Radja Sopingh, aan den Paduka Radja Bony gemaect, zijnde wij met Arong Itoe overeengekomen, om ons benevens alle de coningtjes van Bony na Sopingh te begeven, alle de volckeren van Sopingh bijeen te roepen, en 't gementioneerde testament nader te overwegen, dewijle sulx ons leven en welvaren concerneert, want doe wij binnenquamen, en aan de gouverneur Isaek van Thije versoghten dat wij nae 'Tsiennana wilden, sonder hem iets verders te seggen, soo hadden wij in ons herte gantschelijk niet besloten om Bony met Sopingh in misdaad, off overhoop te helpen. Na 'Tsiennana vertreckende, ontmoeteden wij onsen affgesondene, die [fol. 489] tot ons zeyde, dat sij Sopingers, niet het alderminst hadden geantwoord. Tot Tanete comende belasten wij dat hij weder na Soping zoude keeren, om onse vorige reden aldaer de novo te repeteren, daerop ook niets ter wereld is gereplieert geworden.

Wij onderwijlen voortmarcherende, geraackten tot zeeke rustplaets genaamt Tou-dangang, van waer een afgesonde tot ons quam, zeggende dat Radja Bony Sopingh dogh niet soude aangieren, siende onse volckeren inmiddens de wapenen van de Sopingers etc. Eyndelijck quamen wij tot 'Tsiennana, alwaer wij doe hoorden dat de Sopingers onse Touradjase volckeren hadden ontboden, ordonnerende haer een vastigheyd te maken, begerende dat die van Mandar haer met deselve soude conjungeren, soomede die van Wadzio, Sedinre, Sowyto, Mohyna, Maichyna, Hyryna, Manpoe, en den ouden Arong-Tenete, Arongh Oudziongh, mitsgaders de volckeren van Patan Panoya, zijnde wij alle dese dingen in waerheyt te weten gecomen, alsoo een ygelijck deser volckeren, het geschrift verthoonden, dat de Sopingers aan haer gesonden hadden.

Op den 2oe dagh der maand september quam Dyangh Mambany, gesonden zijnde door Toysangh, en seyde dat Toysangh met Dato Dijwatoe, eene residentieplaets tesamen hadden, en dat hij (Dajangh Mambany) herwaerts gesonden was, om te seggen het goed soude wesen dat Radja Bony bedagt, om de broederschap te maken met het land van Bony en Sopingh, gelijk voordesen is besloten geworden, daer wij op antwoorden hetselve ons principael oogmerk te wesen, en daerom onsen gesant soo dickwils hadden afgevaardigt, begerende die van Bony en Soping [fol. 490] tot een stantplaets te hebben, hoewel ghijlieden sulx niet hebt gewild.

Op den eersten dag van october Radja Sopingh tot 'Tsiennana comende en alleen verseld zijnde met twee personen van coninglijken afcomst, en eener zijnder slaven, soo vraagden ik hem is het waeragtigh dat mijn heer met Toysangh een besit heeft? En Dayang Mambany herwaerts gesonden hebt? Daar Radja Soping op dienden, ik hebbe geen eene besittingen met hem, seggende hij Radja Sopingh wijders, O vader! Ik ben om geen andere oorsaeke herwaerts tot uw gecomen, dan om mijn toevlugt bij uw te nemen, en mijn selven aan uw over te geven, dewijle ik door de Sopingers uyt mijn coningrijk ben verdreven, alsoo Toysangh sikh selven tot Coning van Soping heeft verheven, zijnde ik sulx te weten gecomen, omdat ik gehoord heb 't geluyt der trommelen en 't gerugt der volckeren die den eed van getrouwigheyt, aan hem gesworen hebben, hebbende hij mij ontnomen hetgene waermede uw heer vader mij beweldadigt heeft.

Op den 2 october verrigten de volckeren van Bony, hetgene sij van dien gouver-



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neur Van Thije hadden versogt, doe wij na Boegis wilde vertrecken, te weten, dat sij volgens de oude gewoonte Radja Bony tot conink van sijn rijk verheften, en het goude sondeck des rijx boven hem openden en uytspreyden. Doe dit ons werck g'eyndig was, soo belasten de Bonyse volckeren dat men eenige presenten, en goederen aan die van Soping soude laten toecomen, en wij haer doen te binnen brengen, het testament van den overleden Sopingens coningh aan Paduka Radja Bony gemaakt ('tgeen wij deden). Dogh de Sopingers wilden sulx niet aannemen, maer vielen op de negorij [fol. 491] van onsen heer Dat Datsyta aan, beroofden en ruïneerden alle de inwoonders van deselve, soomede de negorij Wato, als wanneer een afgesondene van Marobo bij ons quam, en ons om adsistentie versoght, seggende wij moesten haer ook te keer gaan, hetwelcke ons een groote hertseer veroorzaakten, dewijle wij dese twee saken van haer Sopingers niet conne verdragen, als eerstelijk dat yemand veranderinge maakt in de woorden die wij van den Admiraal Speelman hebben aangenomen, en ten tweden dat ymand verandering maakt, in hetgene onsen overleden Heer heeft gedaen. Want wij zijn ten hoogsten gebelgt over het bedrieff van Toysangh, die in de vastgestelde saken van onsen overleden heer veraderinge heeft gemaect, agtende ook, bij aldien wij dit ons niet aantrocken, dat de Compagnie misschien daerom hare genegentheyt tot ons zoude intrecken.

Wij dan wijders de mars na Soping nemende, quamen den 11e october tot Tanatenga, passeerden aldaer de groote revier en bevolen doe weder goederen aan de Sopingers te brengen met recommandatie, het verhaelde in agth te nemen, dogh sij wilden sulx niet aanvaerden, begevende ons vorders na de negerij Mare-Mare als wanneer Dayang Malaba, tot ons quam, seggende wij hebben in opmerkinge genomen het testament van onsen heer den overleden Sopingens coningh aan Paduka Radja Bony Marhoem gemaakt, daer wij op antwoorden, wij sijn wel vergenoegt van herte dat ghijlieden het testament van onsen heer in agt en waerde hout, en het een goede zaek soude wesen dat die van Bony en Soping een besit hadden, en met eendragt tesamen spanden om [fol. 492] na te comen en te volbrengen de uytterste wille van onsen heer daer Dayangh Malaba op antwoorden, laat ik eerst terugh keren om in dit regard, met alle de Sopingers te beraadslaan, waerop Dayangh Malaba na Sopingh vertrock, comende hij des morgens daaraen weder, zeggende het goed, morgen sullen wij die van Bony en Sopingh in eene besittinge stellen ter welcker oorsake wij ook agtelooos sijn geworden.

Marcherende alleen des avonds. Onderwijlen quamen de Sopingers op de been, vatteden het geweer aan, en dreven ons nederwaerts, dog wij wederstonden haer, maer doe de Bonesen zagen dat wij van de Sopingers wierden afgewesen, zoo grepen zij met hevigheyt de wapenen ook aan, en quamen ons bij. En wij benevens haer sloegen er wacker onder, en dewijle wij zeer vergramd waren, vielen wij haer des morgens op het lijf, vegtende met haer tot den avond toe, verliesende sij den slag, en vlugtende om een goed heencomen.

Wanneer Dayang Malaba weder bij ons verscheen, zeggende ik geringe ben hier gecomen, om het testament van onsen heer aan te vaarden, brengende meteen-



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en mede Arang Saloutango en Toubagy, dewijle zij de oorszaak van alle dese differenten zijn, waerop wij antwoorden O Dayangh Malaba, wat is er dogh bij mij? Ghijlieden sijt het testament van onsen heer ongehoorsaam geweest en hebt de eerste beginselen voortgebraght om ons te attaqueren, dat ghij nogh versch cont heugen, 't is dan wel, wij willen morgen een aanvanck maken van eene besittinge.

Des morgens dan vergaderden wij de volckeren van Bony en Sopingh [fol. 493] opdat wij tesamen met eendragtigheyt de uytterste wille van onsen heer, den overleden Conink van Soping, aan den overleden Radja Bony bevolen, zoude volbrengen, waerop wij eenparigh hebben verclaard, dat sulx een saek was, die ons heyl en welvaren raakten, en met gemeender hand besloten om Arongh Saloutongo, en Toubagy te laten doden, dewijle het den wegh ter dood van des conings kinderen van Bony en Sopingh is, bij aldien deselve schelmagtigh tegen de usantie en wetten der negorijen comen te doen. En alsoo dese twee persoonen de wetten der negorijen hebben gebroken en geschonden, zoo sijn se ook daerover gestorven.

Dit verright zijnde, weken wij weder na 'Tsiernana en wierden van de Sopingers gevolght, om onsen heer (Dato Dywatoe) den Coning van Soping bij te comen, en hem weder in sijn rijk te herstellen. Wanneer wij tot 'Tsiernana quamen, zoo keerden den vorst Dato Dywatoe tot zijn Soping's rijck gelijk voordesen, zonder datter eenige moeyelijheden door ons aan hem sijn veroorsaekt en wierd er een eenigheyt tusschen die van Bony en Soping besloten. Aldus is het kenbaer geworden met alle waerheyt en sinceriteyt, den staat en de saken van Soping. Finis.

Eyndelijck het gering present dat dese missive vanwegen Paduka Radja Bony aan den heer gouverneur generael ende raden van India, bestaet in thien slaven, en van Paduka Poetry Dayingh Telille twee slavinnen. Dit is hetgene dat na ons vermogen is gesonden, hoewel het met de waerde van het gesondene niet overeen comt. Finis.

Geschreven in de negorij Bantawalo in het Coningrijk Bony. Den 4e dagh der weke, en den 29e der maand Majus in dit jaar.



3 English translation

L.Y. Andaya, “Letter of the King of Bone La Patau Paduka Sri Sultan Idris Azim ud-din (r. 1696-1714) and Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa to the Supreme Government, 1697”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA, 29 JUNE 1697 [BEGINNING WITH FOL. 484]

This sincerer letter of unblemished, genuine affection carries with it the most heartfelt salutations of Paduka Raja Bone and Paduka Bonda Petry Daing Telille who hope that the Almighty shall allow to arrive in the hands of His Excellency the Lord Governor-General Willem van Outhoorn and the Gentlemen Councillors of Asia, whom the sublime God has set in their mighty and most highly esteemed dignities etc.

Moreover, when Your Most Highly Honoured [Gentlemen’s] excellent letter, and the extraordinary [large] gifts which were sent with it were brought hither, we ordered that these same should be received with all the pomp and ceremony we could muster.

As we read the letter, from every line it exuded pearls of wisdom of inestimable value, and on account of the eminent and most excellent words of Your Excellency, we are greatly delighted and competely satisfied to be able to take cognizance of Your Excellencies’ favourable response to the words and petitions of all of us, the people of Bone.

Furthermore, our trust is immeasurably increased because we have seen this made manifest by Your Excellencies’ gift and benefactions. With the greatest respect, we have obeyed to the very best of our abilities the contents of Your Excellencies’ letter, in which the contract with Bungaya is mentioned. It is this Contract and it alone which gives us our freedom, in which we the people of Bone and Soppeng can once again administer our law and [govern] our property. God in His Compassion has made most explicitly clear to us that it is the Company [and it alone] which has restored our good name to us, the people of Bone and Soppeng [fol. 486].

Therefore our trust in the Company is great and are eternally grateful, not only for the reasons Your Excellencies have mentioned in your letter which serves us as lessons and instruction, but also because Your Excellencies have graciously condescended to mention the good services which our late Lord rendered the Company. Therefore Your Excellencies’ affection and love great for all [the people] who have been bequeathed by our late Lord, and [who] have had their freedom restored to them by Your Excellencies must be great. This is surely the reason that Your Excellencies have been pleased to pass on your salutary lessons, which have only augmented our joy and honour.

Furthermore Your Excellencies have been pleased to pay us your attention by examining the ins and outs of the Soppeng affair, for which we are very grateful, as Your Excellencies are not unaware, that there are those outside us who have been doing their utmost best to misinform the Company, so that had Your Excellencies not mentioned this matter, we had been trapped in this labyrinth and the Company would have remained ignorant of the deceit and guile of our opponents. Therefore, we are deeply



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

grateful and most content that Your Excellencies desire to know more about and get to the heart of the matter of the causes of the Soppeng affair. To [comply with] this we shall commence by stating that, when Toysangh revealed evidence of his unseemly behaviour, to the great distress of our late lord Raja Soppeng, who had made his will at Bontoala in the presence of our overlord the late Paduka Bone, as a consequence [fol. 487] it happened that the late Raja Bone decreed that a meeting of the people of Bone and those of Soppeng should be convened in the *negorij* (chiefdom) Soppeng so that they could remind each other of the reasons and words by which Admiral Speelman took us under his protection, as well as to consult each other about the execution of the will drawn up in favour of Raja Bone by the late Raja Soppeng.

Thereupon the people of Bone and those of Soppeng met [together] harmoniously. They asserted that their prosperity and means of livelihood stemmed principally from the fact that they had honoured the testament of their lord, as a consequence of which those of Soppeng and of Bone had unanimously chosen Dato Diwasu as King of Soppeng, and had then voted in common to depose Toysangh. This [decision] was also announced to the lord commissioner Dirk de Haas when His Excellency arrived in Makassar from Ambon. To this we hold fast and continue to insist [that this is the truth].

Moreover, as concerns the causes or the fundamentals of our Soppeng affair, this is what happened. When we were bereft of our lord the late Paduka, we prepared him a grave at Goa, and we guarded that grave. Also I was summoned before Raja Goa and his court, and Raja Goa said to me, 'I have sent a letter to Toysangh, saying that you are not to make any move before you acquiesce in my words'. And Raja Goa went on to say 'Should Toysangh send no reply to these my words, then there is no doubt that what he is up to bodes no good.'

I, meanwhile, had no wish to respond to what Raja Goa had to say. After twenty days had passed that [fol. 488] our lord had lain in his grave, we returned to Bontoala etc. where we arrived on the 29th day of the month of July. When Daeng Balykangh came to us on the orders of Raja Goa, enquiring of us, 'Does Raja Bone know that Toysangh has once again returned to the kingdom of Soppeng? And that Dato Dywatu has been driven from his kingdom?', this was the first inkling of what Toysangh had undertaken and that he had commanded the people of Soppeng to submit themselves to him at Menpu, and to lend him armed assistance.

The generals, or the leaders of the people of Soppeng, who had proceeded to our kingdom with weapons while we were absent and it was empty, as we had been advised by a man of Bone who came from Bugis, were Ladayang and Toubaki. This [attack] caused us much heart-ache. As a consequence we gathered all the peoples of Bone together at Batoala, in order to inform them of the [contents of the] will drawn up by our lord the late Raja Soppeng in the presence of the Paduka Raja Bone.

We reached an agreement with Arung Itu that we and all the petty kings [chiefs] of Bone would go to Soppeng, to summon all the peoples of Soppeng together, pay greater attention to the said testament, all the more so as it concerned our livelihood and prosperity. Because, when we entered [Fort Rotterdam, Makassar] and asked permis-



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sion of the governor, Isaek van Thije, to proceed to 'Tsiernrana, without informing him of the rest of the story, we had absolutely not resolved in our hearts to commit any crime or to launch into any conflict between Bone and Soppeng. After we had departed to 'Tsiernrana, we met out envoy, who [fol. 489] who told us that the people of Soppeng had not answered with a single word. Once we had arrived at Tanete, we ordered him to go back to Soppeng, in order to repeat our words once again, to which again not a word was given in reply.

In the meantime, we continued our advance and reached a certain halting place called Toudangang, where an envoy came to say that Raja Bone would not deign to visit Soppeng, seeing our people the arms of the people of Soppeng. Eventually we arrived at 'Tsiernrana, where we heard that the people of Soppeng had summoned our Toraja people, ordering them to construct a redoubt, desiring that they should join up with the people of Mandar, as well as those of Wadzio, Sedinre, Sowyto, Mohyna, Maichyna, Hyryna, Manpu, and the old Arung Tenete, Arung Oudziongh, plus the people of Patan, Panoya, thereby discovering the truth about all these matters, as one of these peoples showed us the document which the people of Soppeng had sent them.

On 20th of the month of September, Syangh (Daeng) Mambany, [who] had been dispatched by Toysangh, announced that Toysangh was sharing a place of residence with Dato Dijwatu, and that he (Daeng Mambany) had been sent hither to say that it would be good if Raja Bone were to enter into an alliance between the countries of Bone and Soppeng, as had been decided earlier. To this we replied that this was also our principal goal, and it was for this very reason we had so often dispatched an envoy [to him], desiring that those [people] of Bone and of Soppeng [fol. 490] should share one place of residence although you people have never wanted anything of this sort.

On the first day of October, Raja Soppeng came to 'Tsiernrana, accompanied only by two people of royal descent and one of his slaves. On this occasion I asked him if it were true that my lord shared property with Toysangh and had sent Daeng Mambany hence? To this Raja Soppeng averred, 'I share in no common property,' and Raja Soppeng went on to say, 'O Father! I have come hither to you for no other reason than to seek refuge with you, and to surrender myself to you, because I was driven out of my kingdom by the people of Soppeng, and thereafter Toysangh proclaimed himself King of Soppeng. I was informed of this same by hearing the beating of drums and the acclaim of the people who have sworn an oath of fealty to him, as he has robbed me of that with which you My Lord Father gladdened my heart.

On 2 October the people of Bone accomplished what they had sought of Governor Van Thije, when we planned to depart to Bugis, namely that they would raise Raja Bone to be king of his realm according to the ancient customs and [they] unfurled and spread out the golden parasol of the realm above him. As this signalled the end of our task, [the king] commanded the people of Bone to send some presents and goods to those of Soppeng. And we carried them thither with the will of the late King of Soppeng, drawn up in the presence of Paduka Raja Bone (the which we did). Nonetheless, the people of Soppeng would have none to do with this, and instead attacked the *negorij* [fol. 491] of our lord Dat Datsyta, robbing and ruining all the inhabitants of the



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same, and also perpetrated the same on those of the *negorij* Wato.

When a messenger from Marobo came to us, and asked for our help, saying that we must also help protect them, which greatly grieved us, as we could not tolerate these two Soppeng affronts, first because somebody had made changes in the words by which we been accepted [under his protection] by Admiral Speelman, and secondly because somebody had tried to undo what our late Lord had achieved. As we were extremely indignant about the business of Toysangh, who had made changes to the settled affairs of our late lord, also fearing, if we did nothing about it, that perhaps for this reason the Company would withdraw its favour from us.

Thereupon, having resumed our march to Soppeng, we arrived at Tanatenga on 11th October, where we passed [through] the great hunting reserve and once again ordered that goods be taken to the people of Soppeng, with the recommendation that they should accept that which had been brought, but they refused these point blank. We then moved on farther to the *negerij* Mare-Mare where Daeng Malaba came to us, 'We have taken note of the testament drawn up in the presence of Paduka Raja Bone al-Marhum by our Lord the late King of Soppeng.' To which we answered that we were glad that you (the people of Mare-Mare) respected and appreciated our Lord's will, and it would be a good thing were the people of Bony and Soppeng to be united, joining together [fol. 492] in order to honour the [terms of the] testament, and to comply with the very last wish of our Lord. To this, Daeng Malaba answered, 'Permit me to return first to discuss this reply with all the people of Soppeng.' Thereupon Daeng Malaba departed for Soppeng, from where he returned again in the morning, saying it was good, tomorrow shall we the people of Bone and Soppeng make a united front.

For this reason we became careless, only marching that evening. In the meanwhile, the people of Soppeng were afoot, and taking up their arms, and [attempted to] drive us off, but we withstood them, but when the people of Bone saw that we were being driven onto the back foot by the people of Soppeng, they also took up their arms with great ferocity, and came to our assistance. And we fell on the people of Soppeng ferociously, because we wanted to get our own back, we attacked them in the morning and fought with them until evening, [when] they lost the battle and fled seeking shelter.

When Daeng Malaba reappeared before us [he said], 'I have come here with no other purpose than to submit to the will of our Lord', bringing with him Arung Salutanggo and Toubagi there and then, as they were the cause of these differences. To this we replied, 'Daeng Malaba, what do you want of me? You have disobeyed the will of our Lord and you began the whole affair by attacking us, as must surely still be fresh in your memory, if this is so, tomorrow we shall make a beginning to become one unified whole.' On the morrow, we assembled the peoples of Bone and Soppeng [fol. 493] together as we wanted them to be unified so as to fulfil the last wish of our Lord, the late King of Soppeng, as [he had] recommended to the late Raja of Bone. Thereafter we have as one man declared that such an affair was one injurious to our weal and prosperity, and we with joined hands had decided to execute Arung Saloutongo and Toubagy, despite the fact that the path to the death of the royal children of Bone and Soppeng is tantamount to villainy, going against the custom and laws of the *neorijen*. Therefore as



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these two people have broken and abused the laws of the *neogrijen*, so have they died.

When this had been accomplished, we returned to 'Tsiernrana whither we were followed by some people of Soppeng, who wanted to assist our lord (Dato Dywatu), and to restore him to his kingdom. Afterwe arrived at 'Tsiernrana, so did the ruler Dato Dywatu as before return to his Soppeng realm, without us causing him the slightest difficulty and unity was settled between Bone and Soppeng. Thus is made known in all truth and sincerity how matters stand in Soppeng. Finis.

In conclusion, the humble present for the Lord Governor-General and the Councilors of Asia which accompanies this letter on the orders of Paduka Raja Bone consists of ten [male] slaves, and from Paduka Putri Daeng Telille two female slaves. This is what is in our capacity to send, although it does not match the value of what was sent to us. Finis.

Written in *negorij* Bantoala in the Kingdom of Bone. The 4th day of the week, and the 29th day of the month of May in this year.



4 Colophon

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Title | L.Y. Andaya, “Letter of the King of Bone La Patau Paduka Sri Sultan Idris Azim ud-din (r. 1696-1714) and Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa to the Supreme Government, 1697”. In: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta</i> , document 17. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014. |
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| Indonesian translation | Tjandra Mualim |
| English translation | Rosemary Robson |
| Introduction | Leonard Y. Andaya, Professor of Southeast Asian History at the University of Hawaii at Manoa |
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5 Folio image

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Archival Source, ANRI, HR 2517, fols. 484-493.

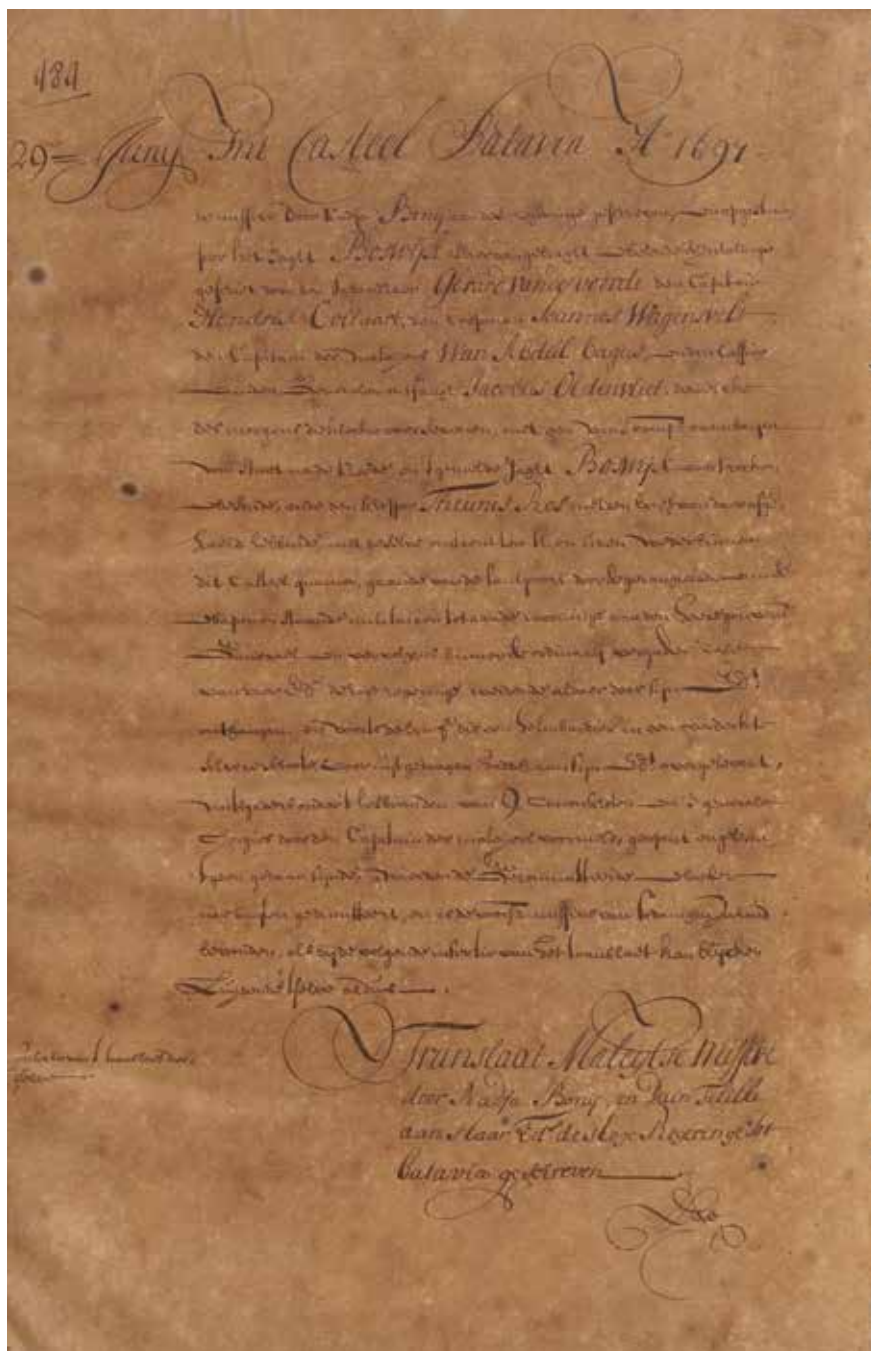




Illustration 1. View of Judea, the Capital of Siam, attributed to Johannes Vinckboons, c. 1662 - c. 1663.

Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Narai (r. 1656-1688) to the Supreme Government, 27 January 1683

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1 Introduction

Bhawan Ruangsilp, “Letter from the Phrakhlung on behalf of the King of Siam Narai (r. 1656-1688) to the Supreme Government, 27 January 1683”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 18. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY BHAWAN RUANGSILP

Political relations between Siam and the Dutch Republic started as early as in the 1600s when the first VOC representatives visited the royal court of Ayutthaya and established the first Dutch trading post in the kingdom. At the same time the first Siamese embassy was sent to The Hague and Europe.¹

The Dutch involvement in Siam was initially motivated by its significance in the Company’s scheme of East Asian trade. Initially, the VOC hoped to make use of the commercial links between Siam and China based on Ayutthaya’s tributary relations with the Manchu court. It soon found out, however, that Thai products, especially animal skins and sappan wood, could be used to barter for Japanese silver and red copper which the VOC needed to purchase Chinese silk and Indian textiles. From the start, the Company tried to obtain exclusive rights to buy and export

these Thai goods by presenting itself to the Siamse court as a worthy trading partner, diplomatic counterpart and political ally. The Dutch business pattern, which included acquiring exclusive monopoly rights, led to frequent commercial conflicts between the Company and the court. In the context of modern historiography. This might be called a ‘clash between two monopolistic powers’.²

Siam’s fixation on state control of foreign trade expressed itself in the creation of an extensive bureaucratic apparatus, the *Phrakhlung Sinkha*, “Ministry of External Relations and Maritime Trading Affairs”. This was responsible for foreign trade, foreign affairs, and the regulation of foreign trading communities.³ Its minister, Okya Phrakhlung, often spelled as Oya Berquelangh in Dutch records, was responsible for exchanging state letters and gifts with Batavia on the king’s and his own behalf. During the seventeenth century, this took place on an almost annual basis involving an intense correspondence between the two sides dominated by trade issues in which both the VOC Governor-General and the Phrakhlung sought to maximise their respective commercial advantage.

The reign of King Narai (r. 1656-1688) was characterized by an avid interest in the outside world. This was expressed in many forms: the trinity of trade, war and diplomacy were crucial here but

¹ For more details of the founding phase of the Siamese-Dutch relationships and the overview of the VOC presence in Ayutthaya, see Han ten Brummelhuis, *Merchant, Courtier and Diplomat: A History of the Contacts between The Netherlands and Thailand* (Lochem-Gent: De Tijdstroom, 1987).

² Dhiravat na Pombejra, ‘Crown Trade and Court Politics in Ayutthaya during the Reign of King Narai, 1656-1688’, in: Kathirithamby-Wells, J. and Villiers, John (eds.), *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), pp. 127-42, here p. 133.

³ For the history, structure and personnel of the Phrakhlung Sinkha, see Kennon Breazeale, ‘Thai Maritime Trade and the Ministry Responsible’, in idem (ed.), *From Japan to Arabia: Ayutthaya’s Maritime Relations with Asia* (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbooks Project, 1999), pp. 1-54.

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Illustration 2. King of Siam (Thailand) observes moon clips from his palace,
Drawing by Jan Luyken, Aart Dircksz Oossaan, 1687

so too were more personal aspects such as King Narai's keen interest in foreign knowledge and material culture. The monarch's personality and the influence of other foreigners at court, especially the Moors, Chinese and French, posed a threat to the hitherto privileged position of the Dutch.

During Narai's reign, disagreements between the two powers became ever more evident, as the VOC tried to exert their diplomatic and political influence throughout Asia and impose restraint upon Siam's seaborne trade. This mounting commercial competition over control of the East Asian trade eventually resulted in a Dutch naval blockade of the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. This also involved the selective capture of junks sail-

ing to Siam from China and Japan. The blockade was eventually settled by the conclusion of the 1664 Trade Treaty between the Siamese court and the VOC ambassador, Pieter de Bitter.³ This first Dutch-Siamese Treaty defined the VOC's commercial privileges and introduced new concepts of immunity and extraterritoriality for Company subjects in Siam.⁴ These, however, ran counter to Siamese perceptions that all the lands and people in Siam were subject to the king's authority. The privileges of the Dutch were, in reality, far from absolute, and they repeatedly complained about Siamese breaches of their exclusive trading rights. This frequently resulted in shortages of trade goods to meet the quotas they claimed to be entitled to under the 1664 Treaty.

³ For details and debates of the incident of the Dutch naval blockade and the following signing of the 1664 Treaty, see Dhiravat na Pombejra, 'The Dutch-Siamese Conflict of 1663-1664: A Reassessment', in: Blussé, Leonard (ed.), *Around and About Formosa: Essays in Honor of Professor Ts'ao Yung-ho* (Taipei: Ts'ao Yung-ho Foundation for Culture and Education, 2003), pp. 291-306.

⁴ The original Dutch text of the 1664 Treaty is in *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, 6 vols., ed. J. E. Heeres and F. W. Stapel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1907-1955), II, 280-5. (Hereafter: *Corpus Diplomaticum*.) The English translation of 1886 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Siam has been published in George Vinal Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand* (Illinois: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies Special Report 16, 1977), pp. 138-41.



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The VOC's naval capacity and control of sea routes in many parts of Asia made the Siamese court dependent on VOC co-operation. At the same time, the company had to contain the maritime ambitions of Siam. As we have seen, the Dutch had successfully used their naval superiority to force commercial concessions from King Narai. Both they and the other Europeans in Narai's Siam had enforced control over Asian waters which challenged existing indigenous Asian notions of *mare liberum* or freedom of the seas and navigation. Besides concessions to allow passage to certain areas, Siam often needed the Company's ships to connect it to the outside world.

The contents of the 27 January 1683 letter show that the Dutch lost no opportunity to tell to the Siamese about the extensive areas of the Indonesian Archipelago under their influence or direct control, such as Mataram, Cirebon, Jepara, Jambi, Palembang and Banten. The Siamese court also recognized that the Company and no other foreign merchants had the privilege of trading in certain commodities like textiles, opium and spices in these areas. The only exception was Jambi which the Phrakhlung diplomatically argued should be recognised as a Siamese vassal by virtue of its voluntary submission to Ayutthaya. The case of Jambi was complicated, however, for it pledged allegiance to both the VOC and the king of Siam.

Two further incidents addressed in this letter highlight the conflicted nature of Dutch policy towards Siam, suspended as it was between the Company's discriminatory measures designed to curb Siam's maritime activities and its support for the court's overseas enterprise. First, the VOC complained about the damage to its textile trade in Cirebon caused by one of Narai's emissaries selling large quantities of fabrics while actually on a mission to procure Javanese horses. Having

long been acquainted with the use of horses for transportation, warfare and ceremonial purposes, the Siamese court had started purchasing these mounts from Java during King Narai's reign. Buying horses from Java became an issue that made the Siamese court dependent on the VOC because it needed the Dutch to grant their ships access to Javanese ports where they could procure the horses and transport them to Siam.⁵

Secondly, the VOC trading post in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) had provided material and financial assistance to the crew of King Narai's royal junk which had been wrecked on the Ceylonese coast on a trading voyage to Persia. Following this accident, the Dutch complained that the Siamese cargoes bound for Persia were injurious to the Company's business. As with the case of the purchase of Javanese horses, they asked the Siamese to rely on their service for all destinations east of Burma such as Surat, Persia, Bengal, Masulipatnam, and Mokka.

It is apparent that the VOC was attempting to fight off competition from Asian traders, including Siam. This can be seen from the instructions drawn up in 1685 by the outgoing Trade Director, Aarnout Faa, reveal how much control the VOC believed it had over Siamese shipping in areas outside those parts of the archipelago which it claimed were under its direct or indirect control: thus the *Opperhoofd* (trade director) instructed his successor to grant a pass to the Siamese King to enter Northern Luzon, Cambodia, Cochin China, Tonkin, Canton, Japan, Pahang, Riau, Johor, Malacca, Coromandel, Bengal, Surat, and Persia. The King's ships to West Java had to call at Batavia and were not allowed to take in textiles to sell there. Significantly, the Company barred him passage from Coxinga's Formosa, as well as from Indragiri, Jambi, and Palembang, with which the Dutch claimed they were the sole trading partner

⁵ Dhiravat na Pombejra, 'Javanese Horses for the Court of Ayutthaya', in: Greg Bankoff, et al, *Breeds of Empire: the 'Invention' of the Horse in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa 1500-1950* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007), pp. 65-81, here 72-74.



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by virtue of their treaties with these places.⁶

Against such Dutch discrimination veiled in ostensible offers for help, the Phrakhlang argued for Siam's rights to enter these regions in its own right, insisting on the inability of the Dutch to select appropriate goods for the Siamese market due to cultural differences. In return, the Siamese court also tried to discourage the Dutch, claiming concerns for their safety from the malice of the locals, from trading in its southern territories: Thalang, Bangkhli, and Takuathung. Earlier in the 1640s, the VOC had tried to monopolize the tin production in the Malay Peninsula by signing treaties with the heads of these tin-producing places including Phuket and Bangkhli. The tin trade in this region had a violent history and the Dutch were forced to respond to strong challeng-

es from all parties from the local elite, the Malays, the Moors, the Chinese and, later in King Narai's reign, both the English and the French, all of whom were bent on resisting Dutch monopolistic practices.⁷

The 27 January 1683 letter gives a good insight into the complex relationship between the VOC and the Siamese court both during King Narai's reign and those of his successors. Despite the fact that both sides were sporadically engaged in commercial conflicts, the VOC remained the most regular European trade partner and diplomatic counterpart for Siam. Although the Dutch sought to limit Siam's maritime trade for their own benefit, they still played a vital role in contributing to the expansion of King Narai's world.

⁶ VOC 1407, *Memorie van Faa zaliger aan Keijts* [Memorandum left by the late Faa to Keijts], 15 Jan. 1685, fo. 3215^{r-v}. Actually, Zheng Jing, the grandson and successor of Zheng Chenggong, had already been defeated in 1683.

⁷ Dhiravat na Pombejra, 'Towards a History of Seventeenth-Century Phuket', in Sunait Chutintaranond and Chris Baker (eds.), *Recalling the Local Pasts: Autonomous History in Southeast Asia* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002), pp. 89-126.



2 Transcription of the Dutch text

Bhawan Ruangsilp, ““Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Narai (r. 1656-1688) to the Supreme Government, 27 January 1683”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 27 JANUARI 1683 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL. 141]

Volgt nu de translaat missive van den Oya Berquelangh in Siam aan Sijn Edelheit de heere gouverneur generael geschreven. Bovenaan stondt (O verthoonder van de gebeden)

Dese brieff komt aff van Tsjauparaje Seri Derma Rava [fol. 142] Detsieh Tsjada Amataja Ratsjet Pipid Ritanrata Kosa Ribaedi Apie Piri Aer Germa Pahak Tsjauparaja Bergalang aan den gouverneur generael Cornelis Speelman, raet van India, en capiteyn van Jacatra.

Voorts den gouverneur generaal heeft Nerikpi gesonden met een brieff en een schenckagie bestaande in een comptoir van caneelhout, 2 lange roers die ingeleyt sijn, nevens 2 korte, alsoock 2 piecken en een rol van goude gefigureerde damast Japansch werck, met 4 stucken goude en silvere kant, ende een kist met papier, om daarop te schrijven off schilderen; een stuck root laken met een stuck fluweel, hebbende ick al hetselve naar de gewoonte ontfangen, en den inhoud van hetgeen in die brieff vervat is, wel verstaan alsdat den gouverneur generael de stad en 't lant van Jaccatra in gesontheyt en welvarentheyt regeerde, waarover ick dan oock uyttermaten verblijd en verheugt ben geweest, alsmede dat in die brieff gemelt staat aangaande de gelegenthey van het schip off schepen die naar Siam vertrecken, dat wanneer hare coopmanschappen reeds ingeladen hebben om te verseylen dan nogh lange opgehouden werden om te wagten naar de brieven, versoeckende aldus, dat de missiven in het toekomende spoedigh wilden vervaardigen, sonder eenige tardance opdat het schip off de scheepen oock in haast seyl mogen maecken.

Voorts wat belangt het schip dat in dit mouson hier gecomen is, wanneer den brieff stonden te beantwoorden, en dien bodem spoedigh wilde laeten vertrecken, soodanigh als in den brieff van den capiteyn vervat staet, soo seyde den capiteyn van de logie dat dit schip nogh niet naar Batavia vertrock, maar eerst naar Japan varen soude, en aldus is het dan oock bijgekomen dat die brieff niet beantwoort is geworden, dogh hiernaer en zal hierontrent geen veragteringh meer gepleegt maar alle spoedigheyt bijgebracht werden.

Voorts dat de Compagnie den zoon van den coninck van Mataram geassisteert had om hem tot coninck te helpen, en 't land van Tseribon en Japara weder in stant te brengen, alsmede dat hare hulpe oock bewesen had aan den coninck van Jambi en Palimbangh, en de Compagnie daar een groote somma zilver aen te kost geleyd en gegasteert had, en dat in alle die landen een zoodanigh contract gemaackt had, dat aan geen [fol. 143] andere coopliden den handel aldaar souden mogen laeten genieten, als alleen aan

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

de Compagnie, ende dat Bantam nu oock door de Compagnie veroverd was, sullende de Compagnie bij dese avançe in alle die landen oock groote profijten en winsten hiernae opsteken, wesende ick oock over het verstaan van dese tijdingh bovenmaten seer verheugt geweest.

En wat aangaat des conings jonck dat naar Tsjerebon gesonden was, hetselve is voor Batavia verscheenen en van daar voorts naar Tsjerebon geseyd, en naardat 2 dagen op reys was door Javanen ontmoet, geattacqueert en verbrand geworden, daar dit nogtans een jonck van den coningh was, sullende het nu hiernae oock seer beswaerlijck vallen om 's conings joncken te senden naar de plaatsen die digt aan de gouvernije van het Jaccatrasede lant leggen, dogh den gouverneur generael weet best hoedanigh [hij] dit accomoderen en remediëren sal.

Voorts werd in die brieff oock gewagh gemaect hoe dat een slaaff van den coning een Hollantse pascedul versogt had om op Tsjerebon paarden te mogen coopen, dog dat naar dit versoeck niet te werck gegaan [was] en die reyse ten eersten ondernomen [had], maar sigh naar Bantam en Palimbangh begeven had, en van daar weder op Jaccatra geretourneert was, versoeckende doen weder een licentie acte van den gouverneur generael om op Tsjerebon sijne kleeden te mogen verhandelen, dat hierop den capiteyn uyt een extraordinaire gunste en faveur hem oock een soodanig licentieschrift verleend had, brengende aldus een groote quantiteyt kleeden op Chirrebon aen, waardoor Compagnies doecken die op Chirebon lagen dan oock aan de hand¹ gebleven, en de Compagnie aldus daarbij schade geleden heeft gehad, en dat aldus geene soodanige acten meer voortaan passeeren souden.

Dat nu dese nachoda een Hollants pas verkregen hebbende om op Chirrebon paarden te mogen koopen, ende niet ten eersten derwaerts maar naar een ander lant vertrocken is, hetselve is qualijck van dien nachoda gedaan, en [hij] sal op sijn wederkomst daarover oock gecorrigeert werden, en [het] is een groote gunst en courtosye van den capiteyn geweest dat hem een soodanige acte geaccordeert heeft gehad, en [dat] comt oock overeen met de wegh van een onderlinge vruntschap en genegentheyd. En wat de kleeden belangt, dewelcke dien nachoda [fol. 144] medegenomen heeft, [deze] sijn door hem versogt en aan paarden besteet, hebbende de kleeden oock geen groote quantiteyt uytgemaect, bedragende naar gissingh aan capitael niet meer als 9 off 10 cattis silver. En wanneer [hij] gesonden wiert om paarden op de Cust van Java te coopen, soo was het nogh de regte tijt van het mouson niet, off het mousoun was doen niet ten eynde, en [het] was het oock maar een enckele bodem die inmiddels somtijts wel elders heenen senden, en somtijts oock wel niet. En aldus is het dan hiermede gelegen.

Voorts den capiteyn van de logie heeft geseyd dat wanneer [wij] paarden willen koopen dit dan maar aan den gouverneur generael wilde bekend maken, [en hij dan] daarvan den inkoop soude laten doen. Dit is wel goet, dogh de Hollanders hebben een andere keur en zinlijckheyd, en die van Siam weder een andere ontrent de paarden ende daarom soud'et oock niet wel gaan, dat de Hollanders die opkogten, omdat die [paarden] dan soodanigh niet souden wesen als deselve van de Siammers begeert werden.

¹ Onverkocht.

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Den capiteyn van de logie heeft mede geseyd van een conings slaaff met de Hollanders mede te senden, en dat denselven dan weder met een Hollants schip terugh bestellen souden, dogh de Hollanders en hebben geen eene spraack² met de Siammers en souden misschien malckander niet wel verstaan, en daardoor in questie en verschil geraecken, en de onderlinge vrundschap en genegentheyt tusschen beyde [zou] daardoor een krak en breuck lijden.

Voorts dat het coninx jonck 'twelck naar Persia gestevent is, op Ceylon is komen te vervallen, hebbende den gouverneur generael van Ceylon in silver 7200 stucken daaraan verschooten³ en sijne vordere hulpe daarentrent betoond, sijnde daarvan een hantschrift aldaar gepasseert om dit silver aan den capiteyn van de logie weder uyt te keeren, en is daarop dien bodem naardat deselve wat verholpen en gerepareert was, voort naar Coetchin geraeckt⁴ alwaar den capiteyn hetselve oock met touwerck⁵ en ander scheepsgereetschap versien heeft gehad, sonder nog regt te weten, hoeveel de oncosten aldaar gedaan wel belopen sullen, die naar gissingh al een goede somme silver te sullen bedragen. En wanneer daarvan seeckere [fol. 145] kennisse hebben, soo sullen [wij] die somma dan weder aan den capiteyn van de logie in de groote stadt van Siam restitueeren, en accordeert dese hulpe van de Hollanders aan 's coninx slaven oock met de cours van vrundschap en genegentheyt, die van den beginne en van de oude tijden af onderhouden is geworden.

Voorts dat het ondernemen van soodanige besendingen naar Persia aan de Compagnie groote schaede toebragt en dat⁶ [wij] dit voortaan wilden nalaten. Ende soo⁷ wanneer [wij] iets van Souratta, Persia, Bengale, Masulipatnam en Mocha, daar de Compagnie haere scheepen send, begeerden, dat⁸ [wij] dit aan den capiteyn van de logie wilden bekend maecken en hierop dan voorts belast souden werden, om dit zoodanigh te laeten maecken als het soude willen hebben tot voorkominge van de groote schaede en nadeel, die de Compagnie bij die equipagie leedt en aldus oock niet meer voor dat vaarwater souden behoeven Hollandse paspoorten te versoeken.

Dit seggen van den gouverneur generael quadreert⁹ wel met de wegh van de onderlinge vrundschap alhier, dogh het lant van Persiën, en van Hederabath (dat is Golkonda) corresponderen mede in een soodanige harmonye en sijn aldus gewoon over en weder besendingen aan malckanderen te doen en 'tgeen te laten maecken dat [wij] begeren. Hetselve is wel waar, dogh misschien soud'et dan soodanigh niet bekomen werden als de intentie en de zinlijckheyt soude vallen, gelijk het stuck root laken dat voorleden mousoun hier gelast is aan te brengen in couleur niet overeenquam soals het gaarne

² Hebben niet dezelfde taal.

³ Uitgegeven.

⁴ D.w.z. gevaren.

⁵ Touwwerk.

⁶ Of.

⁷ Indien.

⁸ Of.

⁹ Is overeenkomstig met.

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hadden, dat daarom oock wederom laten geven hebbe, seggende den gouverneur aengaende dit laken dat geen coopliden in die couleur behagen hadde, en derhalven aan de hant gebleven was tot schaede van de Compagnie. En soude wel eenige slaven van den coningh met de Hollantse scheepen kunnen overvaeren, gelijk eens gecontracteert, off geacordeert is geweest dat te geschieden had, dog wanneer nu ingevolge van dit eenige goederen bijbragte, om in het Hollantse schip te laden, doen seyden de Hollanders dat er al teveel goederen en kisten waren en dat deselve niet innemen konden, en soo is 't hiermede dan oock [zodanig] gelegen [als hiervoor].

De Hollanders in Siam en kunnen oock de tael niet, om anders de Siammers in die voyagie [fol. 146] te versellen want anders misschien eenige misverstanden soude kunnen ontstaen, die de goede vrundschap van wedersijden krencken mogte, oock schoon of^o nu al kennisse gaven, van de benodigde goederen die uyt alle die landen komen moesten, en dat de Compagnie deselve mede al liet aanbrengen en bestelden, wie weet off deselve dan oock niet verschillen mogte van het monster, en soude men die weder moeten geven, en dit soude aldus sonder eynde en altijd weder aen te doen, ende over en weder te gaan wesen. Maer de goederen die de Hollanders alleen maecken kunnen, daarover soude men naar Hollant [een bericht] kunnen stueren, om die daar te vervaardigen, dogh het senden van een coningxschip naar Persiën, en kan nog proffijt nog schaede bijbrengen, alsoo het senden over en weder maar alleen specteert tot onderhouding van de vrundschap die van voorige tijden af al gecultiveert is geweest.

Voorts wert daar oock aangehaelt van het contract van sijn beginne af tot nu toe dat het volck van de Compagnie daarbij gequalificeert is om de hartevelen en koehuyden op te koopen, dogh dat deselve jegenwoordigh niets en kregen soowel als voordesen omdat de joncken van Siam alle mousons naar Japan vertrocken, en de Hollanders daardoor geen genoegsame procure hiervan konden doen, en aldus de Compagnie daarbij seer groote schaede leet, dat dan bijaldien [wij] konden, aen geen anderen wilden toelaten om die op te koopen, en dat bijaldien de coopliden in de groote stad van Siam deselve quamen in te coopen en naar Japan te vervoeren om aldaar te verhandelen, dan in dit geval wanneer iemant hierin quamen te aghterhaelen ofte rescontreren, aen deselve mogten die waerdije doen betaelen tot soodanigen prijs als die in Japan sal vercoft hebben, opdat de Compagnie hierontrent van schaede mogten vrijblijven.

Hierop dient dat ontrent het contract ten tijde van De Bitter aangegaan niets verandert is geworden, werdende in schriftelijcke tractaet vooraan geseyt, dat aan de Hollanders de hartevelen en koehuyden uyt een koninglijke genade vergunt, en aan andere coopliden verboden waer, en bijaldien er vele geprocreert werden, dat dan van de gecogte door de Hollanders 10000 stux vellen, voor de prijs van den inkoop mogten nemen [fol. 146] en met 's coninx jonck of joncken naar Japan senden, en soo wanneer den inkoop schrael en de vellen in quantiteyt niet [te] bekomen sijn, dat dan van de Hollanders maar 7000 vellen zouden nemen, in 4 jaren niet meer genomen, en met 's coninx joncken versonden als naar reequening maar 2135 stux vellen, hebbende de Hollanders aldus 18725 stux minder geleverd als het contract hout, en oock wanneer

¹⁰ Ofschoon, hoewel.

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gesien hebben dat de Hollanders weynig vellen magtigh wierden, soo is aan het volck van de thresorye oock verboden geworden om gene vellen van de Hollanders af te halen, die inmiddens in de tijt van 11 jaeren een getal van 128725 stux souden belopen hebben.

En ingevalle nu naar dese reequening de vellen van de Hollanders genomen, soals het contract luyd, mitsgaders deselve naar Japan vervoert en aldaar verhandelt hadden, soo souden daarbij een soo notable somma van 1059 cattys, 12 thails en een maas geprofyteert hebben, en is dan aldus het voorige hooge faveur nogh soo veel te grooter en overvloediger geworden door het verbod dat er gedaan is, om van de Hollanders geene vellen meer te nemen, om die naar Japan met joncken te vervoeren, laetende deselve door de Hollanders alleen bemagtigen en houden, en is aldus de uytsteekende gunst van Sijn Mayesteyt hieruyt klaar genoegh blijckende, alhoewel misschien den capiteyn in de groote stad van Siam dit aan den gouverneur soo duydelyck niet en verthoont, en aanwijst, en kan de mindere bekoming van de vellen oock voor geen veranderingh van het contract getaxeert werden, want het in den coophandel gemeenlijck soo toegaat, dat de whaaren in meerder en minder quantiteyt te krijgen sijn, naardat de koopers en verkoopers sijn, off sien aanstellen, sullende lieden van kennisse wel een groote quantiteyt kunnen bemagtigen want ten tijde van den capiteyn Enogh Poolvoet aff, tot aan capiteyn Johannes off Jansen toe, dogh men wil in 't verhandelen te naeuwen prijs op het proffijt van de Compagnie sien, gelijk oock aan den capiteyn van de logie in de groote stad van Siam wel te verstaan gegeven hebbe, met een duydelycke vertooning, [fol. 147] hoedanigh het hiermede eygentlijck gelegen zij.

Voorts heeft den capiteyn van de logie oock bekent gemaect dat de Chinese cooplieden de vellen te sluycx opkogten en naar Japan bragten, en is daarop dan oock aan de sabandhaar gelast geworden, om dierwegens een verbod aan alle de Chinesen te doen, alsmede aen den capiteyn van de logie te notificeren dat wanneer het zaysoen sal wesen om de vellen op te kopen, dan oock een persoon sal hebben te stellen om daar op te passen, en dat den capiteyn dan oock iemant van sijn volck wilden ordonneren om daar op te waacken, en toesigt te nemen dat geene vellen ter sluycx mogten bemagtigt werden en dus is 't dan hiermede gelegen.

Nog soo wert in die brieff mentie gemaect van Hollanders tot den handel te willen plaetsen op Salang Bangirei en Tokoet, dogh bij een brieff hebben [wij] reeds de gelegentheyte en hoe het gestelt is, bekent gemaect, soodanigh dat de Hollanderen aldaar in gerustheyt en volkomentheyt geen thin soude kunnen negotieeren, alsoo het lant aldaar in geen esse is en de inwoonders boosaardigh en oock nogh met volck van andere landen in verstant sijn, en corresponderen, ja selffs aan het hoofd van dat lant hare wreedelijckheyt toonen, soodanigh als de vreemde handelaars aldaar oock dickmaals te kennen gegeven hebben. En soo men nu de Hollanders daar liet resideren, om te handelen, soo soude het ligt kunnen gebeuren, dat trouwlooslijck en schelmaghtigh met de Hollanders omgingen, ende deselve daardoor schade aan haar goet leden, 'tgeen dan niet de wegh die tot een goede vrundschap leyd, en tot de onderhoudingh van dien streckt, soude komen te strijden, en deselve misschien daardoor oock een krack leyden off gebroocken werden. En aldus is het hiermede dan inderdaet gelegen, en hebben nu

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hiervan oock kennisse gedaan aan den capiteyn die in de logie van de groote stad Siam resideert.

Aangaande de quaedaardigheyt en de schelmagtigheyt van de luyden op Salang, Banggirei en Takoet, sijnde oock aan den capiteyn haare [fol. 149] boose dadelijkheden van den beginne af in schrift opgegeven om hetselve aan den gouverneur bekent te maecten, wesende voorts het gebruyck en de stijl van alle landen wanneer een onderlinge vruntschap aangegaan is, dat men alles moet contribueeren om die te onderhouden ende sijn overlegh en sijne gedagten daartoe leyden en de saken en actiën daarnaer stieren dat er geen verschil en onlusten tusschen beyde komen te spruyten ende t'ontstaan. En nu ben ick met den generael in vrundschap verbonden, en daarin oock van den beginne gebleven ende continuere daar noch in. Ende met het land van Salang, Banggirei en Takoet staet het soodanigh als hiervooren verclaart is. Soo dit nu niet bekent maecten, en aldus de Hollanders aldaar residentie lieten nemen, ende aldus dit quaat slagh van volcke iets aan de Hollanders mogt komen te misdoen, soo soude dit met onse vruntschap strijdigh wesen, en t'eenemaal van die wegh afleyden. En om dese reden doen dan dese notificatie opdat de Hollanders hierontrent niets quaats mogten ontmoeten.

Voorts soo werd oock gesproocken wegens het goude koffertje dat gesonden was om te esmaileren, seggende dat [jullie] dit naar Hollant geschickt hadden, om dat daar te laten doen, dogh dat het groote schip, waarmede dit kofferken weder terugh gevoert werd in sijne herwaerts reyse vermist en nogh niet op Jaccatra te voorschijn gekomen was, werdende vertrouwt, dat deselve in zee sal gebleven wesen, waarbij de Compagnie dan oock 2100 kattis soude komen te verliesen, en dat den generael hierover seer bedroefft was, alsmede dat dit kofferken daaronder oock quyt geraeckt soude wesen. Dog wat reat is hiertegens, alsoo dit de fortuyn van de zee is, hebbende de Compagnie daarbij oock soo veele goederen te missen, willende den generael dit oock niet al te seer ter harte nemen.

Vorders werd oock in die brieff aangehaalt dat den generael verheugt was, over dat den esmalleerder aangenomen hadden, dogh dat een weynigh bedroefft was, doordien den metselaar en den beelthouwer weder terugh laten gaen hadden, seggende mede dat op Batavia geen fortificatiemeester, nogh de andere werckmeester waren, alsoock dat de modellen van alle de goederen die overgesonden waren, om het werck daernaer te maecten reeds al voortgeschickt waren, hadden hetselve oock [fol. 150] herwaerts te bestellen, wanneer al dit goet met de scheepen uyt Holland soude aangebragt wesen, en dit correspondeert oock met de goede vrundschap die onder ons is, en wanneer dan aldus al het voorsz. uyt Hollant met de scheepen komt, soo wil togh die aanbesteden goederen, met den eersten nae de groote stad van Siam doen transporteeren alsmede de Hollanders die kennisse en practijcq hebben om fortificatiewercken, casteelen en bolwercken te leggen en op te bouwen, gelijk oock soodanige Hollanders die in groff en fijn smeden ervaren sijn, en uyt Hollant daar komen aen te landen.

Eyndelijck werd aan den gouverneur generaal bij dese oock kennisse gedaan dat in dese tijt den coninck van Jamby in onderdanigheyt eenige bloemen van goud en silver opgeoffert heeft gehadt, met versoeck dat voor een slaaff van Sijn Mayesteyt erkent en



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sijn lant oock voor onderdanigh aan de groote stad van Siam mogt gereeckent en aangenomen werden, biddende seer instantelijck om de aelmoesse van Sijne Hooge Genade, en om hem oock een goede somma te leenen en heeft Sijne Hooge Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt hem oock met barmhertighe oogen aengesien en aldus sijn begeren genadelijck toegestaen, en wil den gouverneur generael hierontrent oock onse mutuele vruntschap die van den beginne aan tot nu toe geduurt heeft, in aanschouw nemen, en sigh daarnaar oock voegen. En ingevalle aan den coninck van Jamby iets mogt overkomen, dat den gouverneur hem daarin oock behulpsaam wil wesen, aangesien nu in dese tijt het lant van Jamby onder de groote stad van Siam geoorigh is.

Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt, mijn heer, schenckt aan den gouverneur uyt een goedertierenthey 32 bharen thin in de negorije van Ligoor, en send ick aan den gouverneur generaal oock 7 bharen thin toe. Voorts de onderlinge vruntschap en genenthey blijve onafscheydelijck tusschen ons beyde, tot den dagh der opstandinge toe, soo lange als de maan en son sullen schijnen, en dit wil den gouverneur generael sigh oock soodanigh ter herten laeten gaan.

Dit is geschreven den 22 dagh van de 11 maant op een vrijdagh in het hondenjaar. Eynde.



3 English translation

Bhawan Ruangsilp, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Narai (r. 1656-1688) to the Supreme Government, 27 January 1683”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 27 JANUARY 1683 [COMMENCING AT FOL. 141]

Below follows a translation of the letter written by the Oya Berquelangh in Siam to His Excellency the Lord Governor-General. Above was a presentation of the salutations).

This letter comes from Tsjauparaje Seri Derma Rava [fol. 142] Detsieh Tsjada Amataja Ratsjet Pipid Ritanrata Kosa Ribaedi Apie Piri Aer Germa Pahak Tsjauparaja Bergalang to the Governor-General Cornelis Speelman, Councillor of Asia and Captain of Batavia.

The Governor-General has dispatched Nerikpi as messenger to Siam with a letter and gifts consisting of a writing-slope of cinnamon wood, two long inlaid muskets, as well as two short side-arms of the same, and also 2 pikes and a bolt of damask embroidered with gold thread Japanese work, four pieces of gold and silver lace, and a chest of paper, on which can be either written or painted; a piece of red broadcloth with a piece of velvet, and I have received these same in the customary fashion. From the content of what is written in the letter, [I] understand that the Governor-General rules the city and countryside of Jaccatra in health and prosperity. I am greatly delighted and pleased with this. As well as with the contents of the letter about the opportunity for a ship or ships to depart for Siam, [namely] that when their cargoes have been loaded to sail will be yet longer delayed in order to await letters, [and I] request that the letters will swiftly be composed, without further delay, so that the ship or ships will be able to make sail right soon.

Now, concerning the ship which has arrived on this monsoon. As we were on the point of answering the letter, and wished that the ship might depart with all speed, as has been noted in the letter of the captain, the captain of the trading-post said that the vessel would not yet sail to Batavia, but would depart for Japan first. This is the happenstance whereby that letter has not been answered. Nevertheless, after this there will be no longer any such delays but all will be expedited with the utmost speed.

Furthermore, that the Company has assisted the son of the king of Mataram in his efforts to become king, that peace has been restored to the countries of Cirebon and Jepara and that the Company has also lent its assistance to the king of Jambi and Palembang, and [that] the Company had spent and bestowed a large sum in gold [on this enterprise] and that a contract has been drawn up with all three countries, so that [fol. 143] no other merchants might enjoy the privilege of trading there, but the Company alone, and that Bantam has now also been conquered by the Company and this development foreshadows that in all these places it will be able to make great profits



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and gains in the future. I desire to state that I have been greatly delighted to have taken note of these tidings.

And now concerning the royal junk which had been dispatched [from Siam] to Cirebon, the same put in to Batavia, whence it sailed on to Cirebon, but two days into her voyage she was met by Javanese, attacked and burned, even though it was a junk which was the property of the king. After this [incident], it will be extremely problematic to send royal junks to places which lie in close proximity to the governorship of the country of Jaccatra. Nevertheless, the Governor-General knows best how he will deal with and remedy this [problem].

Furthermore, this letter also announces that a servant of the king had requested a Dutch licence to buy horses in Cirebon, but when this request was disallowed and he could not undertake his first voyage, he had journeyed first to Bantam and Palembang, and had returned to Jaccatra and from there once again submitted a request to the Governor-General for a licence [to trade] which would enable him to trade his textiles in Cirebon. Whereupon displaying extraordinary favour and goodwill the Governor-General had granted him such a licence. Wherefore he took large quantities of textiles to Cirebon, as a result of which the Company textiles which were in Cirebon remained unsold, and therefore the Company suffered great damage, and that henceforth [the Company] will no longer grant any more such licences.

That now that this sea captain had been granted a Dutch pass to enable him to sell horses in Cirebon, and did not go there directly but first sailed to another country is the fault of the captain himself. And upon his return [he] will also be punished for it and it was a great favour and courtesy of the captain of the lodge that [he] had granted him this licence, and is also in accordance with the path of reciprocal friendship and amity. And as far as the textiles which that sea captain [fol. 144] had brought with him, [these] were sold by him and spent on horses. These textiles did not amount to any great quantity, being worth at an estimate a capital of no more than 9 or 10 *catties* silver. And, when he was sent to purchase horses on the Coast of Java, it was not yet the right monsoon season, and the West monsoon had not yet ended. [It] was also only rarely that [we] sometimes send a few vessels elsewhere in the middle of the monsoon, but again sometimes do not. And therefore the matter is now closed.

Furthermore, the captain of the trading-post in Cirebon has said that if [we] wish to purchase horses [we] should make this known to the Governor-General, [and then he] will order that they be bought for us. Although this is a good way to arrange matters, nevertheless the Hollanders have a different choice and taste than the people of Siam and yet another in the purchase of horses and hence it will not be a success should the Hollanders buy them because [the horses] would then not be same as those the Siamese desired. The captain of the trading-post has said that he would send a royal servant with the Hollanders, and that that same [the servant] would then be brought back on a Dutch ship. However, the Dutch have no common language with the Siamese and therefore they might not be able to understand each other, and hence will fall into disputes and quarrels, and the reciprocal friendship and amity between both [peoples] will therefore be dented, even breached.



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Furthermore, about the royal junk which set sail for Persia had foundered in Ceylon, the Governor of Ceylon has spent 7,200 silver pieces on her and also shown proof of other services to do with her. A decree has been passed here by which this silver will be repaid to the captain of the trading-post [in Siam]. Thereafter this vessel, when she had been rescued and repaired, sailed to Cochin where the captain was supplied with cordage and other nautical requirements, but we do not know precisely how many costs were incurred, but which can be estimated to amount to a goodly sum in silver. When we have exact [fol. 145] knowledge of this, [we] shall reimburse that amount to the captain of the trading-post in the great city of Siam, and repay this help from the Hollanders to the king's servant with the same friendship and amity, as it has flourished since the beginning and in yesteryear.

Furthermore, the enterprise of the dispatch of such cargoes to Persia has been highly injurious to the Company and that in future [we] should like to abandon [it]. Therefore, whenever we desire anything from Surat, Persia, Bengal, Masulipatnam and Mokka, whither the Company dispatch its ships, henceforth we shall make this known to the captain of the trading-post. And that the in the wake of this Company will arrange these matters as the King of Siam would like them to be, so as to prevent any great damage or detriment to the Company were the Siamese themselves to dispatch ships and that then these Siamese ships would no longer be required to submit a request for Dutch passports for these waters.

What the Governor-General says accords with the path of true friendship in our country and also because the country of Persia, and of Hyderabad (which is Golkonda) also relate to each other in such harmony and have therefore agreed to engage in reciprocal trade with each other and to demonstrate it, so that we also desire the same. This is in accordance with the reciprocal friendship, but perhaps it will transpire to that we shall not receive a cargo corresponding with our preferences and taste, such as the piece of red broadcloth which last monsoon did not correspond in hue to that which we had really wanted, and therefore once again [we] had returned it. Therefore [the message] is passed on that this colour pleases none of the merchants and therefore has remained unsold to the detriment of the Company. If indeed several of His Majesty's subjects might sail on the Dutch ships, as it was once agreed and set down in a contract. And indeed, even if [they, the servants] in fulfilment of this agreement be able to sail on the Dutch ships and had gathered together some goods to be loaded into the Dutch ship as a consequence [of this agreement], the Hollanders said that there were too many goods and chests and that [they, the Hollanders] could not take them on board, and so the matter was left [as it was before].

The Hollanders in Siam are also unacquainted with the [Siamese] language and are therefore cannot accompany the Siamese on the voyage [to Persia] [fol. 146], as various misunderstandings could arise, which might sour the friendship between both parties. Even though we might now pass on the knowledge of the goods required from those lands [and] even though the Company itself might carry them and order them, we do not know if these might deviate from the sample, and once again might have to be given back. And this [situation] might endure, [going] back and forth endlessly



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and always. However, as for the goods which only the Dutch can produce, [a message] about them could be sent to Holland, that they be made there. The dispatch of a royal ship to Persia, would bring us neither profit nor loss, as the sending of such a ship there and back is only intended to maintain the friendship which was cultivated in former years.

Furthermore, in the letter [from the Supreme Government] the subject of the contract which has existed from the very beginning up to the present time, under whose terms the people of the Company are granted permission to buy up deer skins and cattle hide has been raised, however these same are no longer be obtained [in such quantities] as once [was the case], because junks from Siam sail to Japan irrespective of the monsoon, and consequently the Hollanders are unable to purchase them in sufficient [quantities] as they once were, whereby the Company suffers great [financial] damage. Therefore, if [we] were able permit no other [traders] to participate in the purchase, and that if the merchants from the great city of Siam came to buy these same and send them to Japan in order to trade them there and if we were to grant anybody [permission] to take over and carry on, that same would have to [be prepared] to pay that sum which is the same as the price against which they would have been sold in Japan, to ensure that the Company will suffer no loss.

In this respect, the contract drawn up in De Bitter's time has not changed, being said at the beginning of [this] written document that the Hollanders have been granted a royal warrant for deer skins and cattle hides, and that other traders are forbidden [to buy up] these wares, and that should a great many of them be procured, that the Hollanders can have 10,000 pieces for the purchase price [fol. 146] and they might send [these] to Japan with the royal junk or junks. Conversely, when the hides cannot be got in any quantity, the Hollanders will take no more than 7,000 skins. [In view of the fact that we] during the last four years have taken no more, and have sent [to Japan] an estimated 2,135 hides on the royal junks, therefore we have supplied the Hollanders with 18,725 fewer hides than the contract specifies. And when we realized that the Hollanders could procure so few hides, the treasury forbade the people to take any hides whatsoever from the Hollanders, who in the meantime have been able to procure the sum of 128,725 pieces in the space of eleven years.

And should this be the case that according to this calculation the skins taken by the Hollanders, as specified in the contract, and moreover transported to Japan and traded there, so will [it, that is, the Company] will have made the very notable profit of 1,059 catties, 122 taels and 1 maas profit. Therefore the previous high profit has become so much greater and more generous because the ban was put in place, namely not to take [parties of hides intended for] the Hollanders, to transport to Japan on junks, leaving these same for the Hollanders and they alone to procure and keep, and this [gesture] is more than enough to display the extraordinary favour of His Majesty. Although it might be that the captain in the great city of Siam has not explained this clearly enough to the Governor, the weaker supply of the hides cannot be interpreted as a change in the contract. Because, generally speaking, in trade it is usual for wares to be obtainable in greater or lesser quantities, depending on the numbers of buyers and



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sellers, and skilled people will certainly be able to procure a larger quantity. Because since the time of Captain Enogh [Enoch] Poolvoet, to that of Captain Johannes or Jansen, people have sought too great a margin on the profit of the Company, and will have informed the captain of the trading-post in the great city of Siam of this, adducing the unequivocal argument [fol. 147] of how matters really stand.

Furthermore, the captain of the trading-post will have also passed on the information that Chinese traders have bought up hides illegally and taken them to Japan, and that for this reason a *shah bandar* [harbour master] has been ordered to place a ban on all Chinese, and to notify the captain of the trading-post that when the season will have [arrived] to buy the hides, he will also have to have appointed a person to purchase the hides, and will also have installed a person to keep an eye on the contraband trade. Moreover, that the captain will also order someone among his personnel to stand guard and take care that no hides are procured illegally, and this is what has happened.

Also in the letter there was some mention that the Hollanders want to trade in the places Salang, Bang[g]erei and Tokut, therefore in a letter [we] have already given notification of the situation and what it is like [in these places], which is such that the Hollanders will not be able to trade for tin peacefully and undisturbed, because in those areas there is no tranquillity and the inhabitants are vicious and are also allied to people of other countries and correspond with them, yea even display their cruelty to the head of that country, and this is what foreign traders there have also often said. And should the Hollanders be permitted to reside there to trade, it could perhaps very well happen that they will be treated treacherously and villainously, and through this they will suffer damage to their goods, the which [would not be in agreement with] the path which leads to good friendship, and the relationship which corresponds with this, and indeed that same could also cause a breach or be broken off. And therefore for this reason, knowledge of it has been passed on to the captain who resides in the trading-post in the great city of Siam.

In relation to the viciousness and villainy of the people of Salang, Banggirei and Takut, from the beginning their [fol. 149] evil deeds have been told to the captain in writing so that he could make them known to the Governor, being again the usage and style of all countries in which mutual friendship has been made, that one must contribute to maintaining it and their discussion and thoughts lead to this and all affairs and actions are directed by it, so that no dissension and troubles will take root between them both and grow. And now I am bound to the [Governor-]General in friendship, and have remained in this from the beginning and shall continue in it. And in the countries of Salang, Bang[g]irei and Takut the situation is as has been declared above. Were [we] not to make this known, and thereby allowed the Hollanders to take up residence there, consequently this pernicious sort of people might have caused the Hollanders some harm, this would be contrary to our friendship, and at once stray from the path. This is the reason we pass on this notification, so that no harm might befall the Hollanders.

[—]



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Finally in this [letter] the Governor-General is also informed that at this time the king of Jambi has offered some gold and silver flowers as sign of his tributary status, requesting that a servant of His Majesty recognize and shall also count his country as a vassal of the great city of Siam, praying most fervently as the gift of recognition of a tributary from His Illustrious Graciousness that he be lent a goodly sum and His High Illustrious Majesty has also cast his merciful eye upon him and has graciously granted him all he wished. Therefore, in this matter, will the Governor-General take into consideration our mutual friendship which has endure from the beginning up to the present, and concur with this. Should anything befall the king of Jambi, will the Governor-General also lend his aid, in view of the fact that now at this time the land of Jambi is subject to the great city of Siam.

In his graciousness, His Most Illustrious Majesty, My Lord, presents 32 *bhaar* of tin from the *negeri* of Ligor as a gift to the Governor, and I also personally send the Governor-General 7 *bhaar* of tin. Furthermore, may the mutual friendship between the both of us remain indestructible, until the Day of the Resurrection, as long and the sun and moon shall shine, and that the Governor-General will accept this in the spirit in which it is given.

This is written on 22nd day of the 11th month on a Friday in the Year of the Dog. Finis.



4 Colophon

| | |
|------------------------|---|
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5 Folio image

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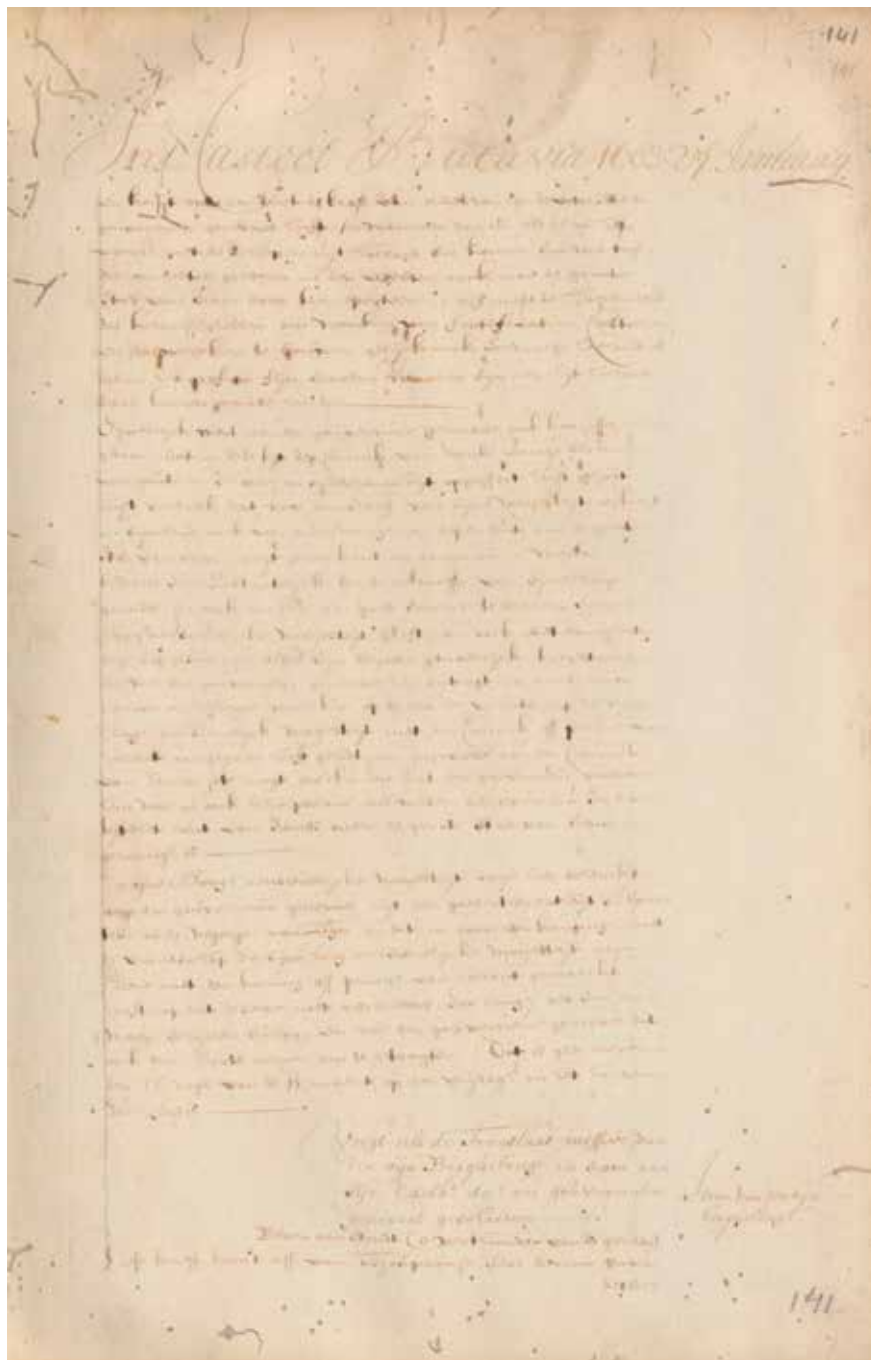




Illustration 1. Landscape in Siam (Thailand) with boats. Jan Luyken, Aart Dircksz Oossaan, 1687.

Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Phetracha (r. 1688-1703) to the Supreme Government, 12 February 1689

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1 Introduction

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BY HENDRIK E. NIEMEIJER

When the Siamese King Narai (r. 1656-1688) died during the night of 11 July 1688, it had become clear at the court of Ayutthaya, the capital city of the Kingdom of Siam, that one of the king’s highest officials, Phra Phetracha, had seized power. The “Palace Revolution of 1688” is one of the most well-known events in early modern Siamese history, marking as it did a fundamental shift in the Siamese court’s foreign policy. The French, as well as the English, were either expelled from Siamese territory or ended up in grievous circumstances in jail.

The immediate loser was the Greek adviser to the former king, Constantine Phaulkon, who was promptly executed. Born in Kephallonia (Greece) in 1647 Phaulkon had worked for the English *East India Company* (EIC, 1600-1874) before settling in Ayutthaya in 1678. Following his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1682, he had become closely associated with the French. During the last year of Narai’s reign, the French monarch, Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715) had dispatched two diplomatic missions to Ayutthaya, the first in 1685 led by the Chevalier de Chaumont and accompanied by the famous Jesuit missionary, Père Guy Tachard (1651-1712), and one in 1687 led by the experienced French diplomat, Simon de la Loubère (1642-1729)

and the French East India Company (*Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes Orientales*, 1664-1794) director Claude Céberet du Boulay (1647-1702). The French king, meanwhile, received three Siamese diplomatic missions at his court at Versailles in 1684 and 1685. This extraordinary, but short-lived, Siamese-French diplomatic engagement, aroused the suspicions of France’s principal European competitors, in particular the Dutch and the English. According to the VOC’s representative in Ayutthaya, Joannes Keyts, both Phaulkon and the French missionaries were playing on King Narai’s desire for international recognition, particularly from leading European, Indian and Persian powers. Gifts of luxury goods presented during these diplomatic missions, such as clocks, sculptures, glasswear, books, and hundreds of glass mirrors, which graced his palace, were a way of advertising Narai’s new-found prestige. But the court élite grew weary of the king’s expensive diplomacy and Phaulkon was arrested in the palace coup and put to death.

Several leading international historians of early modern Siam, including Dhiravat na Pombejra, Bhawan Ruangsilp, Dirk van der Cruysse and Remco Raben, have debated whether the usurping Phetracha’s reign ushered in a new isolationist era in Siam’s foreign policy with regard to the West. Another obvious question is what Siam might have had to gain from a renewed treaty with the VOC. A more difficult question is how the 1688 Siamese “Revolution” might have influenced the relationship between Siam and the other Southeast Asian powers around the Sunda Shelf and Java Sea.

In September 1688, just a few months after Narai’s death, Joannes Keyts was able to renew



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Illustration 2. The ruin of Wat Borom Phuttharam, The north-facing temple built during the reign of King Phetracha (ca. 1688 – 1703).

the quarter century old 1664 VOC-Siam contract.¹ This is remarkable, as the news of Narai's death only reached Batavia via a Chinese vessel from Melaka on 9 December.² Only on 2 January, with the arrival in Batavia's road of the ship, *De Vrijheyd*, did more detailed news from Siam finally reach the Supreme Government. This news was inserted in the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle.³ Just a month later, on 12 February, the official Siamese diplomatic letter was received and the accompanying Siamese diplomats treated to the requisite official carriage tour through Batavia to celebrate the original 1664 "Treaty of Renovation".⁴

The renovation of this outdated contract meant the resumption of "business as usual" between the VOC and the Siamese court. The usurping king realized that the contract did not cover all business arrangements. So offers were made in his official letter to provide help in matters omitted in the original contract. The VOC was permitted to import textiles from India and act as a local supplier, thus maintaining its privileged position as the premier exporter of deer skins and tin. Just how far VOC-Siamese business dealings during King Phetracha's reign remained mutually profitable is moot as Siam seems to have maintained strong business ties with textile producers in India to

¹ This was signed on 14 November 1689, see *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. 3 (1676-1691), pp. 473-479.

² ANRI, *Daily Journals of Batavia Castle*, file 2503, folio 563.

³ ANRI, *Daily Journals of Batavia Castle*, fil. 2504, folios 2-8.

⁴ ANRI, *Daily Journals of Batavia Castle*, file 2504, folios 125-153.



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avoid dependence on VOC and other monopolist trading companies. It also kept a critical eye on the quality and prices of Dutch imported goods.

This crucial 12 February letter has been identified and summarized by Bhawan Ruangsilp, who terms it the first letter from Phetracha and the new Phrakhleng or Minister of the Royal Treasury and Foreign Affairs, Kosa Pan, formerly King Narai's first Ambassador to France in 1686-7.⁵ This proves that there was substantial continuity in foreign policy at Phetracha's court. Certainly, existing experts on European politics continued to be consulted. The Siamese foreign policy experts probably had a good knowledge of the continuous crises in Europe and were also able to follow these at a distance. Ayutthaya, like other Southeast Asian kingdoms, had become an integral part of the emerging global order of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Franco-Dutch War of 1672-1679, a conflict waged to ensure the incorporation of the southern Netherlands in Louis XIV's burgeoning European empire, directly influenced European positions in Asia. Siamese politicians may have known about Dutch military weakness and may have betted on an alliance with what they considered the strongest European power (although the secret Anglo-French alliance negotiated by Charles II's ministers was terminated in 1674). The French could demonstrate their full power to the Siamese diplomats in Versailles in the mid-1680s, this displaying the Sun King's model of Absolutist royal rule to their astonished Asian guests.

Siamese court advisors could certainly not have foreseen the major events in Europe which were just then unfolding: in September 1688, the very month when the new King Phetracha concluded a deal with Joannes Keyts, Louis XIV invaded the Rhineland-Palatinate and in November 1688,

the Sun King's ally, King James II of England, was dethroned, and the Dutch Stadholder William III placed on the English throne, ushering in what became known as the Glorious Revolution. At the end of the subsequent Nine-Years War (1688-1697) France lost her seaborne hegemony to the newly revived English navy. As a consequence of these developments, the Dutch in Batavia had fewer concerns about a possible French naval expedition to the Sunda Straits. But more gallingly, they now had to treat their arch-rivals, the English, as a friendly nation, and this just a short five years since they had successfully helped the Sultan of Banten to expell the English from that strategic pepper port.

Another strategic consideration behind Phetracha's letter concerned Siam's place in relationship to the Malay kingdoms in the south. It was in the interest of the Siamese kings to make a display of their traditional influence in these southern Malay regions: Patani, Phatthalung, Kedah and Cambodia were at this time all vassal states of Ayutthaya. Contemporary diplomatic letters indeed refer to the Siamese sphere of influence in this wider Southeast Asian region, in particular the Malay kingdoms of Johor and Jambi. Phetracha wrote that he had sent two diplomats to the Johor-Riau Sultanate where Mahmud Shah II (r. 1685-1699) was ruling. The "city and the land of Johor", Phetracha's official letter to the Supreme Government declared, "is subject to the Reign of Siam since time immemorial". Indeed, in his letter King Phetracha presents himself as the neutral mediator between the Governor of Melaka and the Sultan of Johor, who had written to Siam that he expected an attack from Melaka. This statement is similar to the one in King Narai's letter received in Batavia on 27 January 1683. In this earlier letter, King Narai gives notice to Batavia that the ruler

⁵ Bhawan Ruangsilp, *Dutch East India Company Merchants at the Court of Ayutthaya: Dutch Perceptions of the Thai Kingdom, c. 1604-1765* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 156-157.



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of Jambi, Duli Sultan Ingalaga (i.e. Sultan Abdul Muhyi, r. 1679-1687), had sent the requisite gold and silver flower offerings (*bunga mas dan perak*) to Siam as an official request to become a vassal of the King of Siam (and seeking at the same time the loan of a sizeable sum of money). King Narai had accepted this and informed Batavia that Jambi was now subject to Siam.⁶

The diplomatic contacts between Siam and the Malay kingdoms are perhaps the most intriguing part of the present letter. The world of Southeast Asia was one of “multiple centres of diplomacy”⁷ Unfortunately, most of the diplomatic letters of exchange between Malay, Javanese, Siamese and other kingdoms have not survived. That makes it impossible to estimate, let alone visualize using modern digital technology, the frequency and nature of these contacts. It may seem from the “Diplomatic Letters” project of the Sejarah

Nusantara website that Batavia was always at the centre of diplomatic activity. But actually Batavia should best be seen as just one of the main diplomatic centres albeit a very important one.

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⁶ See Harta Karun document 18 introduced by Bhawan Ruangsilp.

⁷ This is my (H.E. Niemeijer's) paraphrasing of Barnard's concept of “multiple centres of authority”.

2 Transcription of the Dutch text

Hendrik E. Niemeijer, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Phetracha (r. 1688-1703) to the Supreme Government, 12 February 1689”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 12 FEBRUARI 1689 [BEGINNEND BIJ FOL.127]

En vooreerst de translaet Maleytse missive door den Oya Bercquelangh ter ordre van den Siamsen Coninck aan Haar E. Edelen de Hoge Regeringh tot Batavia geschreven.

Bovenaen stont die is een teken van vruntschap.

Dese missive komt van Tsjau Pija Sirderma Ratditsjah Tsjadiamata Taya Noetsjit Pipid Zadua Koesa Tiboedi Oepi Piri Iber Akramma Pahokh Tsjau Kija Pakelangh aen de heer gouverneur generael die de saeken van de Compagnie en ook alle de Hollanders in de stadt van Batavia bestiert en regeert.

Voorts zoo is den brief dewelcke den gouverneur generael ende raden van India geschreven hebben met zijne schengaie door den schipper Windjen en het opperhoofd Pieter van den Hoorn ons wel toegebracht die ook naar de gewoonelijke coustume ontfangen hebben, sijnde ons in 't lesen van 'tselve den inhoud van dien volkomentlijk gebleken.

Hebbende ik daaruyt met groote blijtschap vernomen dat den gouverneur generael nog in volle vigeur en kragt het gebiet over het lant van Jaccatra voerde en beheerschte, wenshende ik daarvan voor altoos de continuatie (aan Sijn Edelheyt) toe nevens een accressement van alle verdere prosperteit en een gewenste staat.

Vorders zoo is Zijn Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt die het Rijk van Ziam bestierde in dese tijt een swaare [fol. 128] kranckheyt overgekomen en eenige tijt daernaer ook overleden zoodat desen jegenwoordige Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt in het Rijk van Ziam gesuccedeert is, in plaetse van den overledene Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt invoegen altans dit bevelschrift van Sijn Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt alleen sijn reflexie op mijn heeft en van mij affdaalt.

Wat belangt nu het gedoente van Constant in 't reguart van alle coopluyden die in 't lant van Ziam om te handelen quamen off waren, zoo heeft aan haar alle overlast en onredelijkheid aangedaan mitsgaders zoodanig onderdruckt, geïntimideert en kleynhartig gemaakt dat niemant eens heeft durven kikken en sijn mont opendoen. Ook heeft dese Constant alle de goederen die in de thresory ende maguasijnen van Sijn Mayesteyt waeren nae sijn genomen en daarvan een groote quantiteit verdaen en 't zoek geraakt behalven dat nog veele andere fauten en misdrijven vlak tegens het oude gebruyck ende usantie aan begaen heeft gehad die in dese brief niet gespecifi-



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

ceert werden vermits den Lowang Feiwari¹ nu selver in persoon vertreckt aan wien alle de gelegenheden en saaken van dien persoon ten tijde van de overledene Zijne Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt gepasseert seer wel bewust sijn, die dan alle deselve aan Sijn Edelheyt in onderdanigheyt te vertoonen heeft tot al hetwelcke verste² dien Constant gelegentheyth gehadt heeft om 't selve in 't werck te stellen vermits dien Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt hem uyttermaten zeer beminde en ongemeen gesint hadt.

Voorts zoo is het tijde van den capiteyt Enogh Poolvoet wanneer Lowang Feiwari geworden en het bestier van de E. Compagnies affaires in haar logie tot Siam waarnam gebeurt dat eenen Abdul Vrerzaaken³ een soon van een mogul off een mogul selver Feja Felatis⁴ geworden en aldus een bewint van gebiet in de stad van Ziam gekregen [fol. 129] hebbende aan den Capitein van de Hollanders veele onredelijke proceduren en vexatiën toegebracht heeft gehadt haar niet toelatende dat haar verkoop en inkoop sooals vereyste konden doen, hebbende den jegenwoordigen Sijne Hoog Aensienelijke Mayesteyt in die tijt dese saeken geacomodeert gehadt, en is daarop ook Feja Felatib door den overledene mayesteyt uytgestooten geworden, waarna dan ook alle de vreemde coopluysden en de Hollanders haare negotie in Ziam (een seer lange tijt) met rust en vrede gedreven hebben. Dog wanneer daerna dien Constant is Felja Witsieym en raadsheer geworden zoo heeft dese weder veele quellingen en onredelijkheden aan alle de vreemde coopluysden ende Hollanders laten wedervaaren, sijnde alle wel geïnklineerd geweest om hetselve aan den overleden mayesteyt in eerbiedigheyt te representeren, maar alsoo hij zoo diep bij dien Mayesteyt in sijne gratie en gunst stont, veel meer als wel Feja Felatib oyt voordesen geweest was, soo vont men niemant om 't selve in onderdanigheyt aan Sijn Mayesteyt te vertonen, maar wagteden alle maar alleen totdat daartoe een bequame wegh en gelegentheyth souden open ...⁵ en zoodanig dat hij daarover ook zijn straff erlangen mogt. Alsnu dan overledene Sijne Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt seer swaarijck kranck lag soo spande desen Constant met de Franse, Engelse, Chinesen en ook met eenige militaire grooten van Siam die aan sijne sijde gekregen hadt tesamen, al hetwelcke dan aan den jegenwoordigen Zijne Conincklijke Mayesteyt ter ooren gekomen sijnde, zoo heeft desen Constant laten vatten en ook belast hem om 't leven te brengen, en is dit dan nu aldus het wedervaaren van dien persoon.

Voorts zoo is het bevel van den jegenwoordige Sijne Hoog Aensienelijke Mayesteyt om alhier te verklaren dat de Hollanders in alle dien tijt dat in het rijk van Siam gesideert hebben noyt eenige quaade practijqen en machinatiën tegens dit rijk ondernomen en in 't werck gestelt hebben, maar hebben altoos met ons een goede eendragt,

¹ Marginal note: "Dit is de titul die aen een opperhoofd van de E. Compagnie gegeven wert wanneer die bij Sijn Mayesteyt wel gesien is ende een van sijne genegentheyth heeft"; *Luang Aphai Wari*, rang en koninklijke titel verleend aan het Compagnies opperhoofd in Ayutthaya, in dit geval Joannes Keyts.

² Reading unclear.

³ Reading unclear.

⁴ Marginal note: "Dit is een titul van honeur die aen een seker charge geapliceert wert".

⁵ Illegible word.



TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

verstant en overeenkomst onderhouden gehad. Het is dan nu ook behoorlijk die goede genegentheyt en wille van de Hollanders te recompenseren en agten het betamelijck hare intentie in [fol. 130] dese tijt te accomplisseren, vermits er nu niemant meer en geen verder obstacul is die daarentrent hinder geven kan en werden nu alle saaken die bedongen en gecontracteert sijn g'observeert en nagekomen in soodaniger voegen als beslooten en overeengekomen is, sonder in het minste daarvan aff te wijken, en ingevalle er nogh iets mogte wesen dat bij het contract niet gestipuleert is 'tgeen de Hollanders souden mogen begeeren, zoo sullen wij haar in alles nae de reeden en billickheyt daeromtrent accomoderen en behulpsaam sijn. Dit is mijn voornemen ende intentie bijaldien de Hollanders aan mij de effecten van een opregten ende ware vruntschap ende genegentheyt betonen om selfs haar daarenboven in haare affaires nog meer te favoriseren en te beneficeren, hebbende ik in het minsten geensints de gedagten nog het voorneemen om aen de Hollanders eenige schade te laeten toekomen en soo sij ergens bij schade komen te lijden, zoo willen het maar te kennen geven wanneer ik hetselve aan haar niet sal laeten wedervaren maar beletten.

Voorts ingevalle elders onder het resort van het Rijk Ziam een schip van de E. Compagnie komt te blijven zoo sullen in alle billickheyt en naar behooren haar daaromtrent behulpig wesen, ja selfs die accomodatie mede presteren aan alle vreemde handelaars die in 't rijk van Ziam comen negotiëren, dog alle die lieden zijn nog onkundig van die overvloedige genade en goedertierenheyd die Sijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt aen alle die vreemdelingen wil bewijzen en bij aldien nu niemant en gedenckt en geen sentiment nog extime heeft van een soodanige vruntschap zoo is men ook ongenegen cortoisye te betonen off van haar eenig werck te maaken, maar ingevalle hij ter contrarie sinceer en opregt handelt mitsgaders daar [fol. 131] aan gedagtig zijn, zoo is men ook prompt en gereet om denselven door courtoisyen te obligeeren, dog bijaldien sijne proceduren niet opregt en suyver sijn, soo en heeft men ook gene inklinatie om met deselve eenige vruntschap t'onderhouden.

Wat nu het jegenwoordige belangt, soo en heeft Sijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt voor althans nog geen negotie hier bij desen voor, maar versoekt alle de volgende kleeden alleen om daarmede de lijkceremoniën en -statie van den overledene Zijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt te celebreren, en bestaan de kleeden die daartoe dienen en bequaam sijn in twintig soorten, monterende de quantiteyt daarvan 1032 corgies nevens nog 10 stux. Ingevallye dan den gouverneur generaal aan mij eenige genegentheyt en liefde toedraagt soo believe hetselve tot die lijkstatie spoedig te laten vervaardigen.

Voorts zoo werden nog zodanigen kleden g'eyst als de monsters aanwijzen die in de nevensgaande lijst gespecificeert staan teneynde om die kleden uyt te delen aan alle degeene die zig wel gedragen hebben en omtrent Sijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt van een opregt en suyver herte sijn, bestaande in drie en vijftig⁶ sorteringen maakende uyt een quantiteyt van 1616 corgies. Bijaldien nu den gouverneur generaal mij gene-

⁶ Marginal note: 'De monsters van deese 53 soorten manqueeren, seggende de heer Keyts dat deselve aan Sijn E. niet ter hant gestelt zijn'.



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gen is, zoo willen tog alle die kleeden met den eersten herwaarts bestellen om deselve mede ten tijde van de lijkceremoniën hoe eer hoe liever te employeren.

Verders bijaldien d'E. Compagnie een schip off scheepen naar Siam wil senden zoo brenge daarmede soodanige kleden aan die met hoofden en geschildert zijn in conformite van de monsters⁷ die hiernevens gevoegt gaan, en ingevalle de E. Compagnie die waren begeert dewelke in het lant van Siam vallen, zoo moetse aan degeene die harentwegen op de Cust van Cormandel [fol. 132] resideren gelasten om sulcke doeken en kleeden te bestellen, die met en ook sonder hoofden sijn om deselve dan in Siam aan te brengen teneynde om die altijt uyt te venten en bijaldien eenige daarvan ons dienstig mogten sijn, soo zullen aan de bediende van de tresorye dan gelasten, om deselve aan te slaan en te ruylen tegens andere zoodanige coopmanschappen die van der Hollanders gading sijn.

Bijaldien ook er iets van Sijn Hoog Aansienlijcke Mayesteyts begeerte zij en hetselve off op Jaccatra off in eenig ander lant daar de Hollanders resideren off wel buyten hetselve elders anders extere daar de Compagnie sijn voyagiën om te handelen maakt, soo willen dan tog dien eysch van Sijn Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt voldoen, gelijk mede aan deese kant alle 'tgeen dat de Hollanders hebben willen en onder het resort van Siam valt off te krijgen is zeekerlijck staat besorgt te worden sonder aan de Hollanders daaromtrent eenig verlies maar wel profijt toe te brengen.

Voorts ingevalle d'E. Compagnie nu een schip sent om coopmanschappen bij inkoop te bemagtigen soo neemt dit schip een gedeelte van die waren mede, blijvende de rest leggen, en derhalve zoo stiere dan (in plaats van dat eene) 2 à 3 scheepen af om alle de restanten van de coopmanschappen te kunnen laeden vervullende de rest met andere waaren aldus leyt eygentlijck mijn intentie en had ik het oock zoo gaarne. En aldus sent nu den opperste thresorier 200 picols sapanhout, 200 potten oly en 100 bharen thin, mitsgaders 20 volle groote koyans rijs welckers vliessen off basten affgestampt sij off wit gestampte reys nevens nog 40 zoodanige koyangs rijs daar het vliessen aan is, alsook 100 picols root cooper met 's Compagnies bodem onder versoek dat de Hollanders daaromtrent haare hulpe willen bewijsen om daarvoor soodanige kleeden te coopen als in de lijst van den Maleytsen tock g'exprimeert staan [fol. 133] en bijaldien de Compagnie gunst wil betonen zoo vervaardighe hetselve tezamen met de andere kleeden die tot de lijkstatie gehooren en ingevalle de kleden aldaar voormelt op Jaccatra niet te bekomen waaren, zoo willen dan zoo veel doen om die op andere plaatsen daar deselve vallen te bemagtigen.

Indien nu dese overvoerde coopmanschappe op Batavia haar prijs niet behalen mogten, soo houden die op om off deselve op de plaatsen daar de Compagnie haare residentien heeft off daar maar alleen om te negotiëren varen voor de behoorlijke prijs konden gedebiteert werden, willende de Hollanders daaromtrent zoo veel behulpig

⁷ Marginal note: 'De monsters ontbreken mede zoo wel als de Maleyts liyste waarvan hier agter gemelt en aan deselve ook gerefereert wert die aan de heer Keyts mede niet toegebragt zouden sijn, dog in plaats van alle dese lijsten heeft men [fol. 132] een Persiaanse rol van de gantsen kleedenlijst voor coning en nog 3 distincte notitiën uyt die generale getrocken met aenwijsing welke doeken daarvan in de quartieren van Bengalen, de Cust Cormandel en Souratta respectievelijk vallen off geprocuereert dienen te werden'.



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weesen om die waeren op de beste wijze aan de man te helpen, en wanneer die dus tot een goede prijs omgeset sijn, zoo willen voorts haar ajude verder betonen met het inkopen van die kleeden die in de Maleytse lijst gespecificeert staan.

Voorts zoo wert in de missive van den gouverneur generaal geseyt hoe dat den Lowang Feiwari sijne verlossinge verkregen en in desselfs plaats nu eenen Pieter van den Hoorn gesonden wiert om hem te vervangen. Wat nu den Lowang Feiwari belangt, deselve is kundig in de regeringe en de coustumen van het Siamse Rijk vermits een geruymen tijt alhier geresideert ende saaken en affaires van de E. Compagnie waargenomen heeft gehad, behalven dat ook weet op wat wijze men sig tusschen de 2 lantschappen (van Ziam en Batavia) gouverneren moet, hebbende hij zig in alles volcomen wel gedragen en uyt dien hoofde ook Sijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt hem in deese tijt met een Eernaam en een goude doose gehononeert. En naedat desen Pieter van der Hoorn alhier tot vervanger van den andere g'arriveert was, soo heeft den Lowang Feiwari hem in alle zaaken men omtrent dit rijk waar te nemen g'instrueert en voorts onderrigt wegens de coopmanschappen die in Siam om te verhandelen dienden aan te brengen alsmede in hetgeen hem nog verder om te weeten nodig was. En ingevalle nu aan desen Pieter van den Hoorn [fol. 134] eenige swaarigheid off moeyelijkheid mogt voorkomen soo en zal ik geensints hem daarin laten blijven ende sijne saaken dus laten drijven. Aan den Lowang Feiwari is mijne hulpe en accomodatie omtrent d'affaires van de E. Compagnie genoeg bekend, zullende hij al hetselve aan den gouverneur generaal ook wel weeten te vertonen.

Voorts soo wert in den brief van de gouverneur generaal geseyt dat ten tijde als Lowang Tsjoela⁸ derwaarts vertrocken was sijn seggen en voordragen voor haar wat duyster was, en niet wel begrepen hadden, dog dat nu uyt den brief van Lowang Feiware hetselve eerst verstaan, waarop dan dienen dat de gunsten en faveuren van Sijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt aan de Compagnie betoont extraordinair groot⁹ en seer overvloedig zijn.

Nog soo wert in de missive van de Compagnie voorgehouden dat ingevalle ymant iets mogt aanbrengen 'tgeen onlusten en misverstant soude kunnen verwekken dat Sijne Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt hetselve eerst wilde onderzoeken en zulx zeggen niet ligt beliefd aan te nemen en daarnae te luysteren.

Ook soo wert geseyt dat den Coning van Dzjohor en den gouverneur van Malacca van den beginnen ende voorledene tijden aff tot nu altoos goede vruntschap met den anderen gecultiveert gehat hebbe, voorts dat een sekeren Chinees over Malacca op Batavia g'arriveert wesende aldaar verhaalt had dat 47 vaartuygen van Padoeka Radzjas volcq omtrent Poelo Pandzjang gerecontreert had die hem geseyt hadden dat den Paducca Radia aan den coning den oorlog aan doen wilde. Het is een observantie in het Rijk van Siam, wanneer imant iets aanbrengt off iets valsch voorgeeft dat tot

⁸ Marginal note: 'Dit is de naam van de Ziamsen ambassadeur die tevoren met de heer Keyts op Batavia geweest is'.

⁹ Marginal note: 'Sijn Mayesteyt schijnt hiermede bedeckelijck te willen verstaan geven dat dese zoo ongemene gunsten van Sijn Mayesteyt aldus de versogte accomodatie aan haar Hoog Edele met de vergunning van haare vaart op Java geen 't subject van dit point is wel gemeriteert hadden'.



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quaatstooking dient, dat daarop niet haastig te werck gaan maar hetselve eerst wel ondersoeken wat daarvan de waarheyt off de leugen sij om daarop dan sijn oordeel te vestigen ende de straffe te exerceren in maniere als de coustumen en usantiën medebrengen. En dit is dan aldus de practijque in het [fol. 135] lant van Ziam en behoort dierhalven ook al hetgeen dat de heer gouverneur na Siam aankundigt mede volkome waaren waragtig te wesen, doordien de regte en seekere waarheyt een onderlinge goede vruntschap best past. En bijaldien dan aldus iemand aan den gouverneur generaal iets aanbrengt, dat strecken kan om onlusten en misverstanden te causeren hetselve en believe niet ligtelijck aan te nemen, maar wille daarnaer eerst terdegen inquireren ende een volkomen ondersoek doen opdat de vruntschap tusschens ons bijde ewig en bestendig blijve, ende dus betoont het ook te sijn.

Voorts soo hebbe Kon Sorserit en Monrat Pitsji die naar de negerij van Riau gegaan waaren, op haar wederkomst in Siam, die op den 9e maant voorgevallen is, gerapporteert dat Padoeka Radzja mitsgaders sijne zoonen den tommagon en Siri Bidziji Deradzja de spraek hadden laten gaen alsdat de Hollanders van Malacca voornemens waren om die van Johor te beledigen en quaat toe te brengen, dat hierop nu Padoeka Radzja den Tommagon Siri Bidziji Derardzja de sakis van de zee (dat is de zee inwoonders) ter getalle van ontrent 400 man en 29 zoo groote als kleyne vaartuygen alle met haar toegehooren versien en g'armeert versamelt hadden, met intentie om den Coning van Johor daartoe te disponneren en te brengen dat zig naar Taranganoe wilde transporteren. En wanneer nu in ruyme zee quamen zoo hadden voor om den bendahara en de verdere rijxministers van Johor te masacreren. En naardat dit volbragt soude wesen, zoo wilden den Coning van Johor naar het lant van Tsiampa voeren, dog de sakis van de zee approbeerden dit beslyt en desseyn van den Paducca Radzja niet meer, waaren hiertegens, invoegen aldus deesen saak aan den bendahara ter kennisse gekomen sij, hetwelck dan Panducca Radia vernemende, zoo heeft hij het op een vlugten aangestelt, waarop dan den bendahara hem 5 bodems naegesonden [fol. 136] heeft gehadt waartegens hij Paducca Radzja dan ook tekeer gegaen is bestrijdende deselve, maar de affgesondene van den bendahara kregen hem en bragten hem uyt met sijn zoon Siri Bidji de Radzja om wesende nog 4 zoonen van deesen Panducca Radzja ontsnapt, als namentlijck den eerste den Lakchsamana, den 2de den Tommagong, den 3den Sri Nara Diradzja en den 4den den Paradara Menteri, die alle naar Patani gevlugt sijn.

Hiernaer heeft den Coning van Johor met den bendahara ende verdere rijxgrooten sig op Djzohor weder ter neder geset en sijn residentieplaats aldaar genomen, en is de stat en het landt van Johor al van oude tijden aff van het Rijk van Ziam onderhorig geweest, gelijk dat ook aan den gouverneur generael door Lewang Tsjoela ten tijde als op Batavia was klaarlijck geremonstreert is geworden, hebbende den Koning van Johor mede na Ziam aan Sijn Hoog Aansienlijcke Mayesteyt in eerbiedigheyt geschreven dat de Hollanders van Malacca van sins waren om het lant van Johor te attaqueren, dog hadt den gouverneur generael aan de regeringe van Malacca gelast geen quaat aan die van Johor nog ook aan desselfs onderhorige te doen ofte haar te beledigen, gelijk ik mede bij een missive aan die van Johor bevolen heb gehadt om geen hostiliteyten nog offensiën aan die van Malacca te plegen. Zoo wanneer nu die van Johor sig daarvan tegens



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die van Malacca onthouden, soo laten die van Malacca ook aan haere kant nae om die van Johor te beledigen en quaat te doen. En ingevalle dan die van Johor iets tegens die van Malacca mogten misdoen, zoo believe de Hollanders bij een brieff naar Ziam aan den capitein aldaar daarover te schrijven opdat die van Johor gelast mogt werden in Ziam te verschijnen om aan wedersijden behoorlijcke informatie dienaangaande tusschen haar beyde te nemen.

Voorts [fol. 137] soo maeken die van de Compagnie bekent hoe de 11 personen die derwaerts gesonden sijn om eenige hantwerken te leeren sig vrij qualijck comporterende ende zeer op den arack en het spelen verslingert sijn, dog dat den E. Compagnie hetselve niet agtende, haar egter eveneens als het eygen volcq van de Compagnie aangemerckt ende gehouden en aldus gelast hadt yder sijn ambagt te laeten volleren, hetwelck altemaal een klaarblijckelijck teken van een opregten onderlinge vruntschap tusschen beyde is. Voorts zoo wanneer dese jongens nu volleert sijn en yder sijn ambagt wel verstaat, zoo willen deselve dan ten spoedigsten herwaerts senden.

Verders (melden haar Edele) wegens den slaaff van den coning die na Portugaal affgeschikt was dat het schip daar hij op was omtrent de Cabo gebleven, mitsgaders hij weder op Jaccatra aangekomen was en door die van de E. Compagnie naar Siam overgevoert wiert. Alsmede dat van des coninx slaven, die met elifanten en rinoceros naar Vranckrijk gesonden waeren twee personen overleeden en de andere mede op Batavia aengelant waeren, alsmede naar Siam getransporteert wierden, wesende alle 't selve een saak van seer goede overleg ende een effecte van een volkomen rijp verstant.

Voorts aangaande de vaartuygen met rijs geladen nevens last om daarvoor inkoop van paarden op Jaccatra te doen, dat den gouverneur generael haar met penningen g'acomodeert had zooveel als daartoe benodigt hadden, hetselve agte voor een teeken van vruntschap tussen bijde nog vaster te willen maaken.

Verders dat des coninx slaven die naar de oostcust van Java vertrocken waeren om daar paarden in te coopen nog niet weder gekeert waeren, en soo die op Jaccatra voor het mousson retourneerden dat die hier zoo lang te houden hadden totdat het mousson blies om haar dan met een Compagnies schip naar Ziam te voeren. En wat belangt nu het verstreckte aan des coninx slaven om daarvoor paerden in te koopen, zoo is aan de bediende van de thresorye gelast geworden hetselve aan den [fol. 138] Lowang Feiwari en Pieter van den Hoorn in conformite van den gouverneur generaals reequening die in handen van den Loewang Feiwari was te voldoen.

Nog zoo wert in den brieff van den gouverneur generaal geseyt dat men ontrent de gevorderde vier en sestig soorten van medicinalen niet wel teregt konde geraken vermits dezelve in de Brachmaniese taal uytgedrukt wierden, waernae dan nu ook aan de Brachmanies laeten vragen hebben, die daarop seyden dat alle de medicamenten in de leyste voormelt in Bengalen en ook in Souratte wel te becomen waeren, hebbende alle deselve weder in de Braminese taal laeten opstellen. Ingevally nu de Compagnie mij de vruntschap wil doen, soo believe aan degene die harentwegen in Bengalen en in Souratte resideren te ordonneren dat dese leyst aan de apothekers aldaar willen inhandigen met versoeck om de namen van de medicinalen te lesen en wanneer die daar exteren dat dan deselve kopen en herwaerts in Ziam willen oversenden.



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Item dat van 's coninx schip 'twelck in Souratta gebleeven en verongelukt is, 30 stucken kannon, 50 musquetten en 806 stucx kanon cogels, 5000 musquet cogels, 39 bogen, 364 pijlen, 2 picol en 3 cattys bedorven boskruyt nevens eenig scheepsgereetschap en tuyg bekomen waeren en alle 't selve naar Ziam gesonden wiert, schrijvende den gouverneur generaal verders dat den stiermeester Ali die op dat gebleve schip beschijden is geweest, wegens de gelegentheyten en de hoedanigheyt daarvan voornemens was te ondervraegen, dog dat denselven nog zieck was en daarom dese verneming ook nog niet gedaan en aldus de constitutie daarvan doen met nae Ziam g'adviseert hadt, vermits sijne siekte nog continueerde, en is dit een zeer goede overleg van den gouverneur generael. Voorts wanneer den stiermeester Ali gereconvalesceert is, zoo wil dog dan die ondervraging bij hem doen ende wegens de gelegentheyten en de toedragentheyten van het blijven dier bodem naar [fol. 139] Siam advys geven mitsgaders hem daarna ook in persoon en al hetgeen hij daarvan verklaart herwaarts in Ziam overstieren.

Voorts hebben den gouverneur generaal ende de raden van India een caros met 6 paarden in eerbiedigheyt ter schencke gepresenteert nevens nog verscheyde andere goederen meer, die alle op die tijt door den gouverneur generaal aen mij toegeschickt zijn. Dog al dit is door practijcq van Constant bestelt, die hetzelve uyt eygen motieven en voor zig ontboden heeft gehad, waarop dan den gouverneur generael die gedagten heeft geformeert, dat die wagen aan Sijn Hoog Aansienlijke Mayesteyt seer aangenaam wesen en heel wel aanstaan soude, gelastende dan aldus om deselve ter schenk aan Sijn Maeyesteyt op t'offeren. Wanneer nu alle die presenten hier aen mij in eerbiedigheyt toegebracht wierden, zoo sijn deselve ook door Sijne Hoog Aensienlijke Mayesteyt aangevaert geworden, die daarop voorts aen den oppersten thresorier gelast heeft deselve met 1650 picols sapanhout te reciproqueren. Dog de caros is hier in Ziam t'eenemael onnut en van geen dienst en daarom heb ik bevolen deselve weder aen den gouverneur generaal ter schenk toe te laten komen. Alle de andere presenten buyten de karos heb ik belast te recompenseren met thin in de negorij van Ligor ter quantiteyt van 57 bhaar, sendende ik hiernevens van dat minerael nog 15 bhaar. En is mijn intentie en voornemen voorts om steeds een goede vruntschap onder malkanderen te onderhouden tot in eeuwigheyt toe, zoolang de zon en maan haar omloop zullen hebben opdat deselve voor alle dagen en nagten onverbrekelijck en oneyndig blijve, gelievende den gouverneur generael (aan zijn kant) dit mede zoodanig te betragten,

Geschreven op een dingsdagh in de maant Safar des jaars 2232 nae de reequening van Ziam finis.



3 English translation

Hendrik E. Niemeijer, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Phetracha (r. 1688-1703) to the Supreme Government, 12 February 1689”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA, 27 JANUARY 1683 [COMMENCING AT FOL.141]

Doc 19

“Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Phetracha (r. 1688-1703) to the Supreme Government, 12 February 1689”.

From: *Daghregisters van Batavia*, 12 February 1689 [commencing with fol. 127]:

To commence with the translation of the Malay letter written by Oya Bercqulangh at the command of the Siamese King to the Most Excellent Supreme Government in Batavia.

(The opening sentence says this is a token of friendship.)

This letter is from Tsjau Pija Sirderma Ratditsjah Tsjadamatata Taya Noetsjit Pipid Zadua Koesa Tiboedi Oepi Piri Iber Akramma Pahokh Tsjau Kija Pakelangh¹ to the Lord Governor-General² who governs and rules all the affairs of the Company and of all the Hollanders in the city of Batavia.

Furthermore, the letter which was written by the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia and the accompanying gifts were indeed conveyed to us by the Skipper Windjen and the Chief Merchant Pieter van den Hoorn, [these] we have received with all due custom, and when we read it, its contents were completely comprehended.

From it I learned with great joy that the Governor-General still rules and governs the country of Jaccatra in full vigour and power, and I wish (His Excellency) that the same may long continue and that all further prosperity and everything desired may flourish.

Furthermore, His Most Illustrious Majesty who governed the Kingdom of Siam was in this time assailed by a grievous [fol. 128] illness and a little while later he also passed away, so that the present Most Illustrious Majesty in the Kingdom of Siam has succeeded [him] to the throne, assuming the place of his Most Illustrious Majesty and add that this order from His Most Illustrious Majesty is nothing more than his reflection cast upon me and on my position.

What has to do with the attitude of Constant[ine Phaulkon] in relation to all the traders who came to the country of Siam to trade or were [already] here, he caused them

¹ This should read: Chao Phya Si Thammaracha Thirat Amatya Nuchit Phiphit Ratanarat Kosa Thibodi Aphai Phiriya Bara Kromma Phahu Chao Phya Phrakhlang.

² GG Joannes Camphuys (in office 1684-1691).



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

the greatest trouble and unreasonableness, as well as so oppressed, intimidated and cowed them that not one ever dared say anything and open his mouth [to complain]. This Constant also laid personal claim to all the goods in the Treasury and in the store houses of His Majesty and embezzled a large quantity of them and [hence] they have been lost. Besides this [felony] yet many more other offences and crimes have been committed against the ancient custom and usage which will not be specified in this letter, because the Lowang Feiwari is now on the point of departing himself.³ He has a very sound knowledge of all the events and matters to do with that person at the time of the demise of His Most Illustrious Majesty. He will humbly inform His Excellency of all the same, about all the opportunities the Constant has had to perpetrate all his felonies, on account of His Most Illustrious Majesty being extremely besotted with him and uncommonly favouring him.

Furthermore, it happened at the time, Captain Enogh Poolvoet, when he was Lowang Feiwari and placed in charge of the affairs of the Honourable Company in its factory in Siam, that a certain Abdul Vrerzaaken,⁴ a son of a Moghul or himself a Moghul, was appointed Feja Felatis.⁵ And in this function he was given supervision over a part of the city of Siam [fol. 129] and subjected the Captain of the Hollanders to a host of absurd procedures and vexations, not permitting that buying and selling could proceed in the manner that might have been expected. Now, at this time, the present Most Illustrious Majesty resolved these matters, and as a consequence the Feja Felatib was dismissed by His Late Majesty, since which time all the foreign merchants and the Hollanders have been able to pursue their commerce in Siam undisturbed and in peace (for a very long time). However, after this Constant became Feja Witsieym⁶ and royal councillor, then did this man again inflict a great many harassments and injustices on all the foreign traders and the Hollanders, being inclined to represent that he did that same as if in all respect they had been issued by His Late Majesty, but as he was so deeply in the favour and grace of His Late Majesty far more so than any Feja Felatib ever was for this time, no one took it into their head to appear before His Majesty in all humility, but all just waited until an appropriate path and opportunity should present itself, so that therefore he would receive his just deserts. And just now, when His Most Illustrious Majesty lay grievously ill, this Constant consorted together with the French, English, Chinese and with a few high military men in Siam whom he had lured to his side, the which came to the ears of His Present Royal Majesty, so he had this Constant arrested and ordered that he be executed, and this is now what has happened to this person.

Furthermore, it is so ordered by the Present His Most Illustrious Majesty to declare here that in all the time they have resided in Siam the Hollanders have never plotted

³ In the margin: This is the title which is given to the chief merchant of the Honourable Company when His Majesty has been seen [that is, has been granted an audience] and enjoys his approval. *Luang Aphai Wari*, rank and title royally conferred on the Dutch *opperhoofd* in Ayutthaya, in this case Joannes Keyts.

⁴ Reading uncertain.

⁵ In the margin: This is an honorific title given to a certain man-in-charge; a reference to Abdur Razzaq Mazandarani, a Persian raised to the position of Okya Phichit.

⁶ I.e. Phya Wichayen.



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

any evil deeds or machinations against the kingdom or tried to perpetrate the same, but have always behaved with concord, sense and agreement. Hence, it is now appropriate to recompense the amicability and good will of the Hollanders [and] we consider that now is the appropriate time [fol. 130] to accomplish this intention since there is no longer anyone nor any obstacle which might stand in the way of this. And now all the affairs which were stipulated and contracted have been dealt and complied with in such a manner as was decided and agreed upon, without deviating in the slightest from this [intention]. And should there yet be something not stipulated in the contract and of which the Hollanders might be desirous, so shall we accommodate and be of assistance to them in this in all which is fair and reasonable. This is my intention and resolve. Should the Hollanders demonstrate towards me an attitude of sincere and true friendship and amity, then I shall favour and benefit their affairs even more. I do not by any means foster either the thought or the intention of allowing any harm to befall the Hollanders. And should they happen to suffer damage anywhere, they only have to make this known and I shall not allow the same to happen, but shall prevent it.

Furthermore, should anywhere within the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Siam a ship of the Honourable Company happen to founder, we shall in do everything in reason to help the Company with this and do everything which is fit and proper, yea even offer this assistance to all foreign traders who come to do business in the Kingdom of Siam. However, all these [people] are as yet ignorant of the boundless grace and beneficence of His Most Illustrious Majesty will show all these foreigners. And should there be anybody who does not think or is aware of such amicability, so will these people be disinclined to display courtesy or to do anything about it. But should to the contrary any person make a true and sincere effort and bear this [fol. 131] in mind, one will be prompt and ready to oblige these by showing courtesy, however, should his manner of doing things be devious and tarnished then one would have no inclination to maintain a friendship with the same.

Now, as far as the present time is concerned, His Most Illustrious Majesty does not yet foresee any trade, but requests all the following cloths only to celebrate the funeral pomp and circumstance of His Late Most Illustrious Majesty. There are twenty sorts of cloths which will serve this purpose and which are appropriate, amounting to the quantity of 1,032 *corgies* (a bundle of twenty textiles) plus ten pieces more. Should the Governor-General look upon me with any favour and amity, please have these same made for the funeral ceremonies.

Furthermore, yet other textiles, as the samples indicate, and as are specified in the list below, are requested, in order that cloths may be distributed to those who have behaved with due respect and [serve] His Most Illustrious Majesty with an unblemished and sincere heart, consisting of fifty-three⁷ different sort amounting to a quantity of 1,616 *corgies*. Should the Governor-General wish to please me now, then all the textiles will be dispatched hither immediately so that they can be used the earlier the

⁷ In the margin: The samples of these 53 sorts are missing. Mr Keyts says that these same were not handed over to His Excellency.



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

better during the funeral ceremonies.

Furthermore, would the Honourable Company send a ship or ships to Siam, bringing with them the cloths with the borders and painted in conformity with the samples⁸ which have been added hereunder. And should the Honourable Company happen to desire wares which are produced in the country of Siam, then it must order those who reside in its service [fol. 132] on the Coast of Coromandel to order such textiles and cloths, both with and without borders and to bring these same to Siam for the purpose of always finding a market for them there. And should any of these cloths come into our hands, then shall we order the official of the Treasury to accept these same and exchange them against other such commercial wares which might happen to be please the Hollanders.

Should something be desired by His Most Illustrious Majesty, and that same is made in Jaccatra or in any country in which the Hollanders reside, or indeed originate elsewhere beyond these same whither the Company voyages to trade, that will satisfy the demand of His Most Illustrious Majesty. Exactly the same as anything the Hollanders want and this should grow or be available within the jurisdiction of Siam, this will certainly be delivered without the Hollanders incurring the slightest loss to do with it, but indeed will instead make a profit.

Furthermore, if the Honourable Company now sends a ship to obtain wares by purchasing them, and the ship can only take some of these purchases with her, the rest remaining behind. And for this reason then sends (instead of that one) two to three ships to be able to load up the remainder of the wares, filling the rest with other wares. This is also my intention and I would also like to do the same. And therefore the head of the Treasury is now dispatching 200 *pikuls* of sappan wood, 200 pots of oil and 100 *bahar* (roughly 500 Amsterdam pounds) of tin, plus 20 full, great *koyan[g]* (roughly 23 *pikuls*) of rice from which the husks or outer shells have been stamped off, in other words white polished rice, and yet another 40 *koyangs* of unhusked rice, as well as 100 *pikuls* of red copper with the Company vessel, with the request that the Hollanders will lend a helping hand with this by buying such cloths as are set out in the list of the Malay interpreter. [fol. 133] And should the Company wish to show itself willing to prepare the same together with the other cloths which are part and parcel of the funeral ceremony, and if the cloths which are mentioned there cannot be procured in Jaccatra, will it do its utmost to procure these same in other places.

Should these wares which have been sent to Batavia not fetch their price, then [you] should store these in places in which the Company maintains residences, or there whither you just sail to trade, so that they can be sold for a reasonable price. In this matter will the Hollanders be so helpful to sell these wares for the best price, and when these have been sold for a good price, will it then once more show willing by buying up the cloths which have been specified in the Malay list.

⁸ In the margin: The samples are missing as are the Malay list which is mentioned hereafter and the same is referred to was also not brought with him by Mr Keyts, but in the place of these lists a [fol. 132] Persian roll containing the complete list of textiles for the king and three distinct notes extracted from the general [list] with notes on which cloths on it can be found or procured in the quarters of Bengal, the Coromandel Coast and Surat respectively.



ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Furthermore, it is said in the letter of the Governor-General that the Lowang Feiwari has been relieved of his duties and in the place of the same one Pieter van den Hoorn has been sent to replace him. Now as far as the Lowang Feiwari is concerned, the same is knowledgeable about the government and customs of the Kingdom of Siam, since he has lived here a goodly while and taken care of the business and affairs of the Honourable Company, and besides this is also aware of how people should conduct matters between the two countries (Siam and Batavia), as he has behaved himself in an exemplary fashion in everything and for this reason His Most Illustrious Majesty has honoured him this time with an honorific title and a golden box. And since this Pieter van den Hoorn has arrived here as the successor to the other, the Lowang Feiwari has instructed him in all matters which should be observed to do with this realm, and also taught him about the sorts of wares which should be brought to Siam to be traded, as well as anything else which it was necessary he should know. And should this Pieter van den Hoorn [fol. 134] now ever find himself in heavy weather and difficulties, I shall not leave him [floundering] there and let matters run their course. The Lowang Feiwari is sufficiently well aware of my help and accommodation in the affairs of the Honourable Company, and he will make the same quite clear to the Governor-General.

Furthermore, it was said in the letter of the Governor-General that at the time at which Lowang Tsjoela⁹ had departed thither, both what he had to say and his behaviour remained somewhat of a mystery, and as a consequence were not properly understood. But that now from the letter of the Lowang Feiwari this is understood this has become clear, to which should be answered that the grace and favour His Most Illustrious Majesty displays towards the Company are extremely great¹⁰ and most abundant.

Even so, it was still mentioned in the letter to the Company that should anybody stir up disturbances and misunderstanding, His Most Illustrious Majesty would investigate this matter first and say that he would not take what was said lightly but would listen to it [properly].

So was it also said that, from the beginning and up to this very day, the King of Johor and the Governor of Malacca have always cultivated a good friendship with the others. Furthermore, that a certain Chinese having passed through Malacca and arriving in Batavia had reported that there forty-seven vessels of the people of the Paduka Raja had been concentrated around Pulau Pandzjang and he had been informed that the Paduka Raja wished to declare war on the king. It is the rule in the Kingdom of Siam that whenever anybody gossips about something or spreads false tidings this [offence] counts as rumour-mongering, and that [we] do not immediately take steps to do something about it, but will first look into the matter to discover whether it be the truth or a falsehood, and only thereafter pass judgement and then administer the punishment in the manner and custom demanded. And this thus is the practice in the [fol. 135]

⁹ In the margin: This is the name of the Siamese ambassador who earlier visited Batavia with Mr Keyts.

¹⁰ In the margin: It seems that by this His Majesty is probably trying to tell him that such uncommon favours on the part of His Majesty that the accommodation sought from His Excellency about permission for the Thai to sail on Java should not have been ranked as a subject for this point.



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country of Siam and therefore falls under what the Governor-General] should report to Siam, especially if it should prove to be true, correct and certain truth is appropriate to [our] mutual good friendship. And therefore indeed, should someone inform the Governor-General of something that might lead to the outbreak of disturbances and misunderstandings, do not take such matters too lightly but first institute a proper enquiry and [carry out] a complete investigation, so that the friendship between us both can endure and be abiding, and this is what has happened.

Furthermore, on their return to Siam, which occurred in the ninth month, Kon Sorsorit and Monrat Pitsji who had journeyed to the *negeri* of Riau reported that Paduka Raja and his sons the *Temanggung* and Sri Bidziji di Rajahad spread the rumour that the Hollanders in Malacca were planning to attack the people of Johor and do them harm. Thereupon Paduka Raja, the *Temanggung* and Sri Bidiji di Raja had assembled the Sakis (the Sea Gypsies) amounting to some 400 men and twenty-nine vessels both great and small completely fitted out and armed, intending to move against the King of Johor and accomplish that [he was kidnapped] and transported to Trengganu. And when [they] sailed out upon the high seas, [they] intended to massacre the *Bendahara* and the other ministers of state of Johor. And when they had accomplished this, then [they] wanted to abduct the King of Johor to the country of Champa but the Sakis no longer agreed with this decision and plan of the Paduka Raja, and [they] opposed it. When this matter came to the ears of the *Bendahara*, and the Paduka Raja [also] heard of it, so did he put them to flight, and the *Bendahara* had five [war] vessels sent in pursuit of them [fol. 136], and then the Paduka Raja flew into a rage with him, quarrelling with the same, but the men sent [after him] by the *Bendahara* captured him and arrested him with his son Sri Bidiji di Raja, but yet another four sons of this Paduka Raja escaped, namely: first the *Laksmana*, second the *Temanggung*, third Sri Nara di Raja and fourth the Paradara Menteri, all of whom fled to Patani.

Hereupon the King of Johor with the *Bendahara* and the other great men of the realm returned again to Johor and took up his residence there. And that, as has been the situation since days of old, the state and country of Johor has been a tributary of the Kingdom of Siam, as was unequivocally demonstrated to the Governor-General by Lewang Tsoela during the time he spent in Batavia. As a consequence, the King of Johor has also written to Siam to His Most Illustrious Majesty with all due respect that the Hollanders in Malacca were plotting to attack the country of Johor, but nevertheless the Governor-General had ordered the government in Malacca to do Johor no harm, neither to treat it as a subject nor to attack it. Likewise, in a letter to [the King of] Johor I have commanded that no hostilities or offensives be launched against Malacca. Therefore, while those who are in Johor now restrain themselves from inimical acts against Malacca, so for its part Malacca will not cause Johor any insult or injury. Should those in Johor by any chance commit some offence against those in Malacca, would the Hollanders please send a letter about this to Siam to the captain there, so that [the King of] Johor might be commanded to appear in Siam so that proper information about what is going on between both parties can be obtained.



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Furthermore [fol. 137], [in its letter] the Company announces that the eleven [Siamese] people who were sent thither [to Batavia] to learn some sorts of crafts have been behaving pretty badly and have become fairly addicted to arrack and gambling, but that the Honourable Company had not taken steps to deal with this, treating them as it would its own Company servants, and therefore has ordered that each should complete the training in his craft, the which is yet another unequivocal sign of the sincere mutual friendship between us both. Furthermore, when these boys have completed their study and each has a proper understanding of his craft, so might they be sent hither as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, (the Honourable Company reported) about the servant of the King who was sent to Portugal, the ship on which he was sailing foundered in the vicinity of the Cape [of Good Hope] but that he had arrived back in Jaccatra and had been sent to Siam by the Honourable Company. Moreover, that of the royal servants who were sent to France, two persons had died and the other had also arrived in Batavia, and was also being transported back to Siam, all this being a matter of good sense leading to an outcome of a completely mature understanding.

Furthermore, concerning the vessels laden with rice, which were to sell their cargo to buy horses in Jaccatra, that the Governor-General had provided them with as many tokens as they needed, the same considered a sign that [he wants] to ensure the friendship between us grows even closer.

Furthermore, the royal servants who had departed for the east coast of Java to buy horses had not yet returned, and if they were to return to Jaccatra before the [end of the] monsoon that these [servants] would have to wait here [in Batavia] until the [right] monsoon began to blow, and then they would sail to Siam on a Company ship. And about the [money] extended to these royal servants with which to buy horses, an official of the Treasury has been ordered to repay that same to [fol. 138] the Lowang Feiwari and Pieter van den Hoorn in conformity with the account of the Governor-General which was in the hands of the Lowang Feiwari.

Furthermore, in the letter of the Governor-General it is said that that people did not have a great understanding of the sixty-four sort of medicinal herbs, because these same are expressed in the Brahman language¹¹, about which [we] have now had the Brahmans asked about them, who said that all the medicines mentioned on the list could be procured in Bengal and also in Surat, having all the same put on a list once again composed in the Brahman language. Would the Company please be so kind as, to order those who live in Surat and Bengal in its service, to hand this list in to the apothecaries there with the request to read the names of all the medicines and if they can be bought there to procure the same and send them hither to Siam.

Item that of the royal ship which had remained in Surat and had foundered there, thirty pieces of cannon, fifty muskets and 806 cannon balls, 5,000 musket balls, thirty-nine bows, 364 arrows, 2 *pikuls* and three *catties* of spoiled gunpowder, as well as some ship's tackle and rigging were recovered and that the same was sent to Siam. The

¹¹ Sinskrit?



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Governor-General also wrote that [he] was intending to question the master Ali who had stayed on the ship which was left behind about what happened and the quantity, but the said man was still ailing and hence this investigation had yet taken place and therefore what could be ascertained about this could [not yet] be passed on to Siam. If he is still ill, the good decision of the Governor-General is a very good one. Furthermore, whenever the master Ali should be convalescent, [we] would like the interrogation to be carried out with him and also ask for advice about the opportunity and the possibility for the vessel [fol. 139] [to sail] to Siam, and also that to send him so that he can say in person all which is to be said about this hither to Siam.

Furthermore, the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia have with all due respect presented a carriage and six horses as well as various other goods as gifts, which have all been sent to me at this time by the Governor-General. However, this was ordered through the machinations of Constant, the same he had ordered for his own purposes and commanded for himself, whereupon the Governor-General was given to understand that the carriage would give very great delight to His Most Illustrious Majesty and would please him, therefore giving orders that the same should be offered to His Majesty as a gift. When all the presents were now brought to me with all due respect, so were they accepted by His Most Illustrious Majesty, who thereupon commanded the highest official in the Treasury to reciprocate the same with 1,650 *pikuls* of sappan wood. However, here in Siam the carriage is useless and unserviceable, and therefore I have given orders that the same should be given back to the Governor-General as a gift. All the other gifts, with the exception of the carriage, I have ordered to be recompensed with tin in the *negeri* of Ligor to the amount of 57 *bahar*, and I am personally sending another 15 *bahar* of that mineral. It is my intention and purpose in the future to maintain the good friendship with each other until the end of time, as long as the sun and moon continue [to run] in their courses, the same for all days and nights and that these will remain unbroken and unending, hoping that the Governor-General (for his part) will also endeavour to do the same.

Written on a Tuesday in the month of Safar in the year 2232¹² in the reckoning of Siam. *Finis*.

¹² The Buddhist era year 2232 is equivalent to around 1689, so the date given by the Dagregister here is probably correct.

4 Colophon

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|-------------------------------|---|
| Title | Hendrik E. Niemeijer, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Phetracha (r. 1688-1703) to the Supreme Government, 12 February 1689”. In: <i>Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC-Archives in Jakarta</i> , document 19, Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014. |
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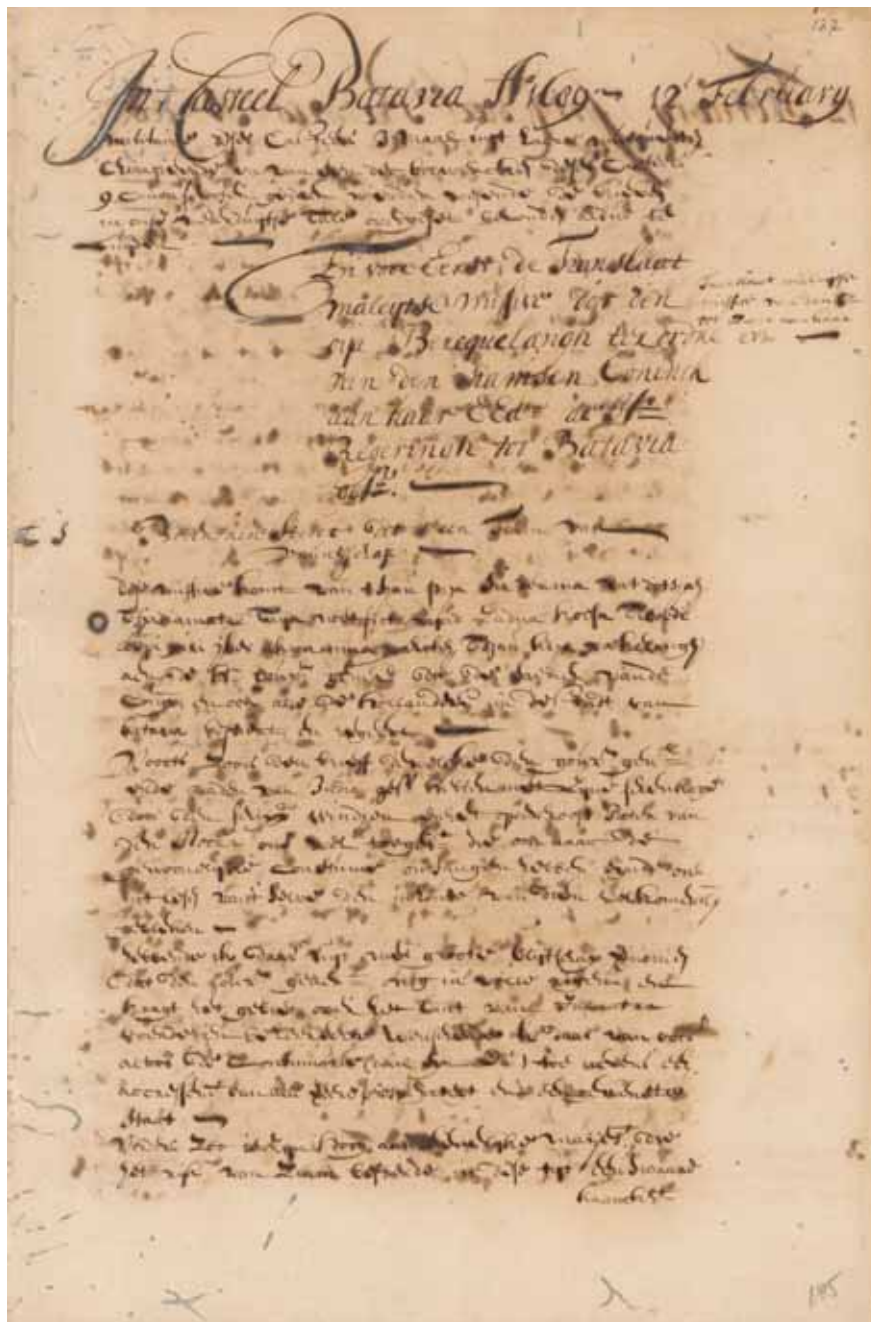




5 Folio image

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Archival Source, ANRI, HR 2504, fols 127-139.



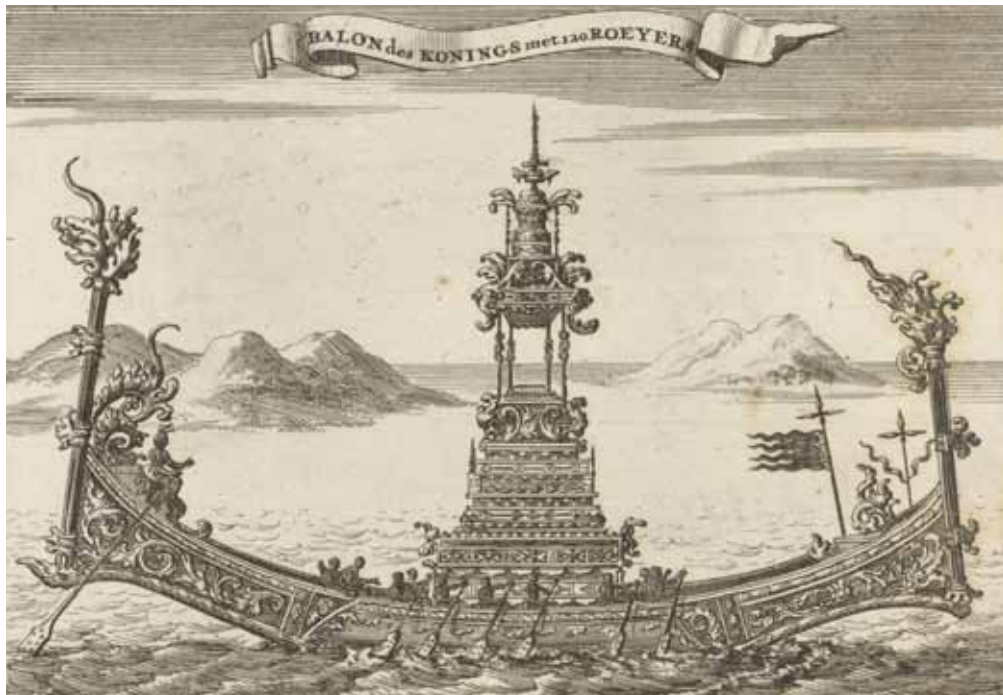


Illustration 1. Siamese royal vessel with 120 rowers. Jan Luyken, Aart Dircksz Oossaan, 1687.

Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of King Süa of Siam (r. 1703-1709) to the Supreme Government, circa March 1703

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sejarah
nusantara



1 Introduction

Dhiravat na Pombejra, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of King Súa of Siam (r. 1703-1709) to the Supreme Government, circa March 1703”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 20. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014.

BY DHIRAVAT NA POMBEJRA

The Chaophraya Phrakhlang’s letter of 1703 to Governor-General Van Outhoorn and Council on behalf of Somdet Phrachao Súa, King of Siam, was written when the king had only very recently acceded to the throne. The minister still refers to the previous king’s funeral arrangements. King Súa (r. 1703-1709) was the eldest son of King Phetracha (r. 1688-1703) and before his accession had been Prince of the Front Palace (*chao wang na*). Though Siamese chronicle tradition¹ would have it that he was an unacknowledged son of King Narai (r. 1656-1688), there is no solid evidence to support this conjecture. He was later to cement his royal power after ruthlessly eliminating his half-brother Chao Phra Khwan and several other leading courtier-officials.²

The letter dates from a time of mutual dissatisfaction between the VOC and the Siamese court.

After the 1688 Siamese “revolution” had overthrown King Narai and ushered in a new dynasty, things had looked promising for the Dutch. In December 1688, they had signed a new treaty with King Phetracha which reiterated all the VOC’s rights in Siam as enshrined in the previous VOC-Siam Treaty of August 1664, including “free trade” in Siam, an export monopoly on deer-skins, and extra-territorial rights. Furthermore, it had confirmed the Company’s export monopoly on tin bought at Siam’s southern port town of Ligor (Nakhon Si Thammarat), initially granted in 1671.³ Much of this letter concerns discussions around and about the renewal of the 1688 treaty, now that a new monarch had come to the throne. The Dutch hoped to secure better trading terms, but the Siamese court was insisting on the old treaty conditions, formally re-endorsed by the Phrakhlang.

Dutch disaffection with their trade and position in Siam had set in soon after 1688, climaxing during King Súa’s reign. Around the time of this letter the VOC’s major problems in Siam concerned their trade in sappan wood, tin and textiles – as well as King Súa’s suspicious attitude towards the Dutch. In 1705 Gideon Tant, who served as *opperhoofd* (head of mission) in Ayutthaya between 1699 and 1703, analysed the obstacles to the company’s trade in detail.⁴ In spite of the treaty clause allowing

¹ Richard D. Cushman (tr.) and David K. Wyatt (ed.), *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*. Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2000, pp. 300-301.

² Nationaal Archief, Den Haag. VOC 1691, fols. 61-72, “Relaas van ‘t voorgevallene bij de ziekte en overlijden van den Siamse koninck Phra Trong Tham genaamt” by Arnout Cleur, c. 1703-1704. See also Bhawan Ruangsilp, *Dutch East India Company Merchants at the Court of Ayutthaya: Dutch Perceptions of the Thai Kingdom c. 1604-1765*. Leiden: Brill, 2007, pp. 173-176.

³ George Vinal Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University, 1977, p. 45; Han ten Brummelhuis, *Merchant, Courtier and Diplomat: A History of the Contacts between the Netherlands and Thailand*. Lochem-Gent: De Tijdstroom, 1987, pp. 40-41.

⁴ NA, VOC 1711, fols. 1-20, “Berigt” on the Company’s trade in Siam by Gideon Tant, 20 March 1705.



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Illustration 2. Mural from Ayutthaya period showing early foreign visitors.

them “free trade” in the Kingdom of Siam, the Dutch were forbidden from buying certain goods from private merchants. Hence one of the most important items for VOC (or just “their”) trade in Siam, the dye wood sappan, could only be bought from the royal warehouses at high prices.

Concerning the supposed VOC export monopoly of tin from Ligor, Tant discovered to his dismay that a discrepancy in the texts of the 1688 Treaty led to the Dutch receiving far less tin than they expected, much of it going to the King of Siam instead. This was because in the Dutch version of the treaty, the VOC was to be allowed to export all the tin in Ligor except for what the King of Siam might wish to use for his own activities. The Siamese language version, however, stipulated that “all the tin” in Ligor “belonged to the king and may only be traded by His Majesty’s servants”.⁴ The misunderstanding most probably stemmed

from the treaty not clarifying that the Siamese kings claimed the right to receive tin from Ligor as tribute tax (*suai*).

The Dutch regularly supplied Indian textiles to the Siamese market, usually printed or “painted” cotton cloth from the Coromandel Coast, Bengal and Gujarat. The persistent problem of the textile trade in Siam, however, was the Siamese crown’s insistence on pricing all the items they bought, even to the extent of buying cloth from the VOC at prices lower than what the Dutch had actually paid for them in India. Any unsold cloth was seized by the crown, making the trade a virtual royal monopoly.⁵

The Phrakhlang asks Batavia to replace the VOC *opperhoofd* Gideon Tant with a more suitable person. Tant was characterized as “a person inimical to the path of mutual friendship and ancient custom”. The minister had become exasperated

⁴ Ten Brummelhuis, *Merchant*, p. 45.

⁵ Ten Brummelhuis, *Merchant*, p. 45; Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, p. 177.



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by the Dutchman's efforts to obtain a royal audience for the purposes of renewing and renegotiating the Dutch-Siamese treaty. In sharp contrast to the Company's "golden age" in Ayutthaya during King Narai's reign (1657-1688), when its servants acted as courtiers at the Siamese court, access to the king was now circumscribed by court protocol. In this letter, the Phrakhlang maintained that the precedent cited by Tant dated from a time when there was a crisis caused by French aggression in Siam, leading the king (Phetracha) to summon both Okluang Aphai Wari (Joannes Keyts) and Okluang Wisit Sakhon (Pieter van den Hoorn) to court in late 1688 to renew the 1664 Treaty. It was therefore against custom to request an audience with the monarch – the Phrakhlang was maintaining that all communication with His Majesty had to go through him. He included in this missive a strong attack on Tant's competence and integrity, virtually accusing him of corrupt trading practices.

Although Gideon Tant left for Japan in July 1703 to assume the position of *opperhoofd* at Deshima and was replaced by Arnout Cleur, Dutch conflicts with the Siamese royal court were to be further exacerbated by the Siamese court's protocols, leading to the Dutch closing down their Siam factory. Protocol was again at the heart of the conflict. A diplomatic incident occurred in 1705 when the Dutch commissioner Joan van Velsen was snubbed by King Sūa's court. The Siamese were offended that the Governor-General had not replied to the king's previous letter, and King Sūa made his displeasure clear. Van Velsen was intimidated, his every request refused, and in the end he was not even granted a royal audience. As a final insult, the two Persian horses brought by Van Velsen as Batavia's gifts to the king were taken into the Royal Palace for ten days, then returned to the

Dutch in a miserable condition. The VOC had little choice but to leave Ayutthaya, although it was not a total withdrawal. An employee was left in residence at the Company lodge, and another one was detailed to look after the Company's warehouse "Amsterdam".⁶

The Phrakhlang refers more than once in this letter to the relationship between the King of Siam with the "Prince of Orange". This was, on the Siamese side, no mere formality. The Ayutthayan court had always stressed the importance of direct correspondence with the Princes of Orange (the "King of Holland"), or failing that a bilateral relationship between the two rulers. The Dutch Republic seems to have been an alien concept. Yet all the while Ayutthaya maintained a steady diplomatic contact with Batavia because the Governor-General was seen as a ruler in his own right as well as being in charge of VOC's affairs in Asia.⁷

The court of King Sūa, like that of King Phetracha before it, saw the Dutch East India Company as purveyors of luxury goods (notably Indian textiles), buyers of merchandise from the royal warehouses and finally as facilitators in the king's quest for quality Javanese horses. Thus, even allowing for King Sūa's wary attitude towards Europeans and the rise of Chinese influence at the court, there was always a place for the VOC to occupy in the trading world of Ayutthaya.

But for the Dutch matters were not so clear. The perennial dilemma of the VOC in its last half century or so in Ayutthaya was whether to leave this troublesome post, or to stay on despite falling profits.⁸ The closure of the Siam office in 1705-1706 was to be but a temporary one – by June 1706 the Dutch *opperhoofd* Arnout Cleur was back in the Company's riverside residence, a mere musket's shot away from the walled city of Ayutthaya, carrying on a frustrating and flagging trade.

⁶ Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, pp. 177-178.

⁷ Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, pp. 29-33.

⁸ Bhawan, *Dutch East India Company Merchants*, p. 179.



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2 Transcription of the Dutch text

Dhiravat na Pombejra, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Süa (r. 1703-1709) to the Supreme Government, circa March 1703”.

UIT: DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 19FEBRUARI1704 [BEGINNEND BIJFOL.90]

Translaat Maleytse missive van den presenten berckelang ofte rijxbestierder tot Siam aan Haar Edele de Hooge Regeringe tot Batavia geschreven.

Desen brief komt van den sjapia berkalang aan Willem van Outhoorn gouverneur generaal en de raden van India die wegens d’E. Compagnie het bestier der zaken mitsgaders de regeringe door [fol. 86] geheel India sijn toebetrouwt, hebbende den gouverneur generaal die verstandig is door sijn opregte handelinge de weg van onderlingen vrundschap en goede overeenkomste met het Siamse rijck en den Prince van Orangie mitsgaders de Compagnie verbetert, soo datter tegenwoordig niet het minste verschil en is, sijnde alle’s Compagnies saaken door gheheel het Siamse rijck vast ende bestendig in allen deelen sonder dat er eenig verandering ontstaen is. Want ick mij ten hoogsten bekommert om met den gouverneur generaal in eendragt te leven en alles in toecomende in beter toestant te brengen. Mijn genadige vorst en heere Somdat Bormat Boesti Prapoudi Tsjouw Dzjouhou heeft aan mijn gelast om de weg van goede overeenkomste met de Prince van Orangie te bevestigen en heeft Sijn Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt seer gunstig van den gouverneur generaal gesproken en gelast om alle’s Compagnies zaaken te begunstigen en te verbeteren met deselve meerder voordeel te bewijzen als voorheen bewesen is, ende dat met dubbelde winste.

Het opperhoofd heeft op dynsdag den 6 van de 3 maand van het paardejaar aan mijn gesonden Lowang Tronpanet, en laten versoecken om ten hove te mogen komen, eerder een brief van mij na Batavia afging, want dat ten tijde van Lowang Apywaree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen, sijlieden versogt hadde om voor den coninck te mogen verschijnen en haar die gunste door Sijn Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt toegestaan was, alles volgens het verbond in den beginne gemaakt, dat hij sijn tegenwoordige mayesteyt oock om deselve gunste voor den gouverneur generaal soude versoecken en dat het verbondschrift mogte vernieuwt en bekrachtig werden. Ick hebbe dit aan Sijn Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt bekend gemaakt, die daarop sijn gunste en genetheyt aan den gouverneur generaal en rade van India heeft gelieven te bethonen, gebiedende aan mij om te doen hetgene de oude contracten quamen te melden, waarop ick aan Lowang Tronpanet belasten om aan den capitain te seggen dat hij het verbondschrift in de logie en onder den capitain berustende was, soude bij mij brengen, dat ick dan het contract soude vernieuwen en agter anschrijven, gelijk als Sijn Hoog Aansienelijke Mayesteyt belast hadde volgens het versoeck van den capitain aan mijn gedaan. Het opperhoofd sond den tolck Lowang Trongpanet weder en liet seggen dat



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hij het schriftelijck contract niet konden senden¹ off medebrengen omdat te vernieuwen ten ware Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt hem gelieven te begenadigen om voor hem te mogen verschijnen, gelijk ten tijden van Lowang Apia Waree en Lowang Witsit Sacoen geschiet was opdat dan personelijck soude kunnen horen wat gunste de Compagnie toegestaan wierden, waarop ick tegens het opperhoofd liet seggen, dat sulx tegens de gewoonte is en dat in het slangejaar ten tijden van Lowang Apia Waree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen, sijlieden versogt hadden dat het contract soude beschreven en agteraan mogt gestelt werden, welck door Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt geordineert wierden dat Lowang Apia Waree, Willem Keis en Lowang Witsit Sakoen, Pieter van den Hoorn, daarna voor Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt sijn verscheenen omdat te dier tijd de France seer veel quaad deden in de negorij off landen van Ambongian Boery door welcke gelegentheyt haar E. Edelens ter audiëntie bij Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt toegelaten sijn en alsdoen het verbond vernieuwt ende beschreven² is geworden, hebbende ick noyt gesien hetgene den capitain voorgeeft, want sulx tegens de gewoonte comt te strijden. Ick hebbe op het alderonderdanigste aan Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt die mijn heer nu geworden is, versogt dat hij den capitain dog beliefte te begunstigen, om hem ter audiëntie te laten komen, dog hebbe tot nog toe sulcx niet kunnen verkrijgen. Ick hebbe gesegt dat den capitain menigmalen heel wel gehandelt en opregtelijck den weg van vrundschap tusschen den Prince van Orangie en Sijn Mayesteyt onderhouden heeft en dat hij wenschte om voor Sijn Mayesteyt te mogen gebragt werden, gelijk als Lawang Apil Waree en Lawang Witsit Sakoen, begunstigt waren. Het opperhoofd heeft gesegt dat hij al mijn seggen den gouverneur generaal soude afschrijven, waarop ick tegens hem seyde dat hij sulx wel mogt doen, en Haar Hoog Edelen verstendigen wat Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt mij geboden hadde aan den capitain te seggen. Op woensdag den 6e der 4 maand van het paardejaar soo quam Lawong Trompanet en Ombon Witsit Nasa medebrengende het opperhoofd en tweede persoon bij mij in de woning van den berkalang alwaar alle mantrys, officieren en 'sconings dienaren [fol. 87] soo Maleyers, Chinesen, Moren als Siammers bijeen vergadert waren. Den capitain versogt aan mijn dat ick hem bij sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt soude brengen, dog ick seyde tegens het opperhoofd dat sijn versoek tegens de manier van 't Siamse rijck strijdig was, dewijl te deser tijd, seyde ick, den ouden vorst overleden en van de verganckelijckheit tot de eeuwigheit overgegaan was en dat nu 12 dagen lang van seer veel moeyelijckheden was overvallen geworden om de tombe van 't lijck met haar chieraden toe te stellen. Dog indien den capitain eenige zake voor te stellen hadde, dat ick deselve Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt soude voordragen, en waarom hij soo haastig was om voor Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt ten gehoor gebragt te werden, dat den capitain het contractschrift maar soude brengen, dat dandeselve vernieuwt, getekent en den weg van onderlingen vrundschap met den Prince van Orangie voortaan meerder bekrachtigt en sterker gemaakt soude werden, waardoor de Compagnie meerder voordeel soude

¹ Lezing onduidelijk.

² Lezing onduidelijk.



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bekomen dan voorheen.

Den capitain heeft mij daarop gelieven te seggen dat hij Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt moest versoecken dat de Compagnie in haren handel mogt bevestigd en het verbond als vooren vernieuwt ende verzegeld werden, seggende wijders, indien der in eenig artikel yets gesegt of gestelt wierd, dat met het oogmerck niet overeenkomt, dat dan hij capitain in persoon of wel de andere die in sijn plaats tot hoofden wegens de Compagnies handel tot Siam aangestelt wierden aan wien den gouverneur generaal en raden van India recommandeeren om in alles wel te handelen sonder verschil ofte verringinge sulx soude betragten, maar indien hij capitain of sijne navolgers die tot hoofden van 's Compagnies handel tot Siam, soo mede den gouverneur generaal en raden van India ergens tegens quamen te misdoen en geen vergenoeging gaven, dat ick dan oock niet gehouden soude zijn vergenoeging te geven na mijn bevattning, soo komt het seggen van den capitain seer wel overeen met dat van Lawangapy Waree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen, en hebbe het seggen van den capitain opgeschreven en hetselve aan Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt bekend gemaakt. Toen heeft Praya Angkana mij geboden om het verbond te beschrijven en te teekenen agtervolgens 't verbond en contract met den Prince van Orange opgeregdt en dat op de wijze als het met Loang Apia Waree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen volgens het voorgeeven van den capitain soude gemaakt sijn. Hierop heb ick aan den capitain beloofd dat hij op den sondag den 8e dag van de 4e maand van het paardejaar met het contractschrift bij mij soude komen en dat men dan het verbond soude vernieuwen en tekenen, dog het opperhoofd wilde niet bij mij komen maar sond den tolck Loang Trongpanit met een geschrift bij mij luydende als dat Kididjongtan versogt om aan sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt bekend te maken als dat in het verbondschrift ten tijden van Pytery Dya Pytry gemaakt, vastgesteld was dat de thin van Ligoor in het verbond mede beschreven en begrepen soude sijn en dat Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt door Praya Angkana geboden en geordonneert hadde dat het in 't verbondschrift soude ingelijft werden en de Ligoorsen thin daaronder begrepen blijven, welck voortijds oock soo geschiet is, sijnde volgens ordre het verbondschrift getekent en door hetselve te stercker bekragtigt geworden en tegenwoordig aan beyde de sijden verzegelt. Den capitain heeft door het senden van dit schrift aan mijn gesonden doen blijcken dat hij tegens de manier van Lawang Apia Waree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen komt te misdoen, volgende hij daarin sijn eygen wil, op het opperhoofd segd wel dat de Compagnie begunstig is, en om haar wharen te handelen vastgeseten waren volgens het oude verbondschrift dat voorheen op versoeck beschreven en getekent was, maar ick segge dit moet verstaan werden, soo lange het presente opperhoofd ofte wel dengenen die hem in sijn bediening komen te vervangen om 's Compagnies zaken in het Siamse rijck te bestieren opregt komen te handelen, maar indien den capitain en andere opperhoofden die na hem 's Compagnies zaken toebetrouwt werden off den gouverneur generaal en raden van India niet wel handelen, en het verbond overtreden, dat ick dan niet gehouden ben om oock wel te doen, dog den capitain verdraeyd dien sin der woorden en verwerp deselve. En dit sijn geen nieuwe woorden in desen tijd versonnen, maar voorheen ten tijden van Lawang Apy Waree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen gestelt geworden, welcke manier nu nog gevolgd werd, dog



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het [fol. 88] opperhoofd volgt sijn eygen wil en meend de goede sin tot sijn voordeel, en dat hem tegen is laat hij blijven. Ick hebbe het verbond willen beschrijven maar hetselve niet connen verkrijgen, welck ick aan Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt hebben moeten bekent maken, waarop Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt heeft gelieven te gebieden, indien men het verbondschrift niet wilde laten opmaken en beschrijven op de wijze als door Lawang Apia Waree en Lowang Witsit Sakoen geschiet was, daar het den capitain versogt heeft, sal dat als een misdaat die den capitain opnieuw begaat aangemerkt moeten werden, strijdig tegens de manier in het doen van Lawang Apia Waree en Lawang Witsit Sakoen, willende den capitain alleen dat tot sijn voordeel is wel beschreven en ondertekent hebben, welck niet wesen kan, waarop g'ordineert wierd aan den capitain nog eenmaal te vragen wat hij van meyning is, en indien hij het verbond niet wil laten beschrijven, soo is aan mijn gelast om aan den gouverneur generaal en raden van India te schrijven om een ander opperhoofd die verstandiger is na herwaarts te senden, die genegen is om de weg van onderlinge vrindschap met de Prince van Orange gemaakt te onderhouden. Ick ben genegen geweest om het verbondschrift te vernieuwen en te onderteecken, waardoor de Compagnie meerder voordeel als voorheen soude konnen verkrijgen, dog het opperhoofd heeft Lowang Trongpanit aan mij gesonden en laten seggen dat hij een brief aan den gouverneur generaal tot Batavia hadde afgesonden, en dat verhoopte dat er een ander capitain die meerder verstant hadde om den dienst van de Compagnie te connen behertigen soude gesonden werden en hij weder na Batavia hoopte te keeren.

Den capitain die 's Compagnies zaken op Ligoor waargenomen en nu alhier tot Siam alles bestiert heeft, heeft seer veel misdaan in vergelijkinge van de andere opperhoofden die voorheen hier geresideert hebben, doende hij veel saken na eygene meninge en sinnelijckhede dat tegens den weg van onderlinge vrindschap komt te strijden, handelende hij dwaaselijck met in sijn negotie meerder winst te willen nemen waardoor de Compagnie schaden comt te lijden, hebbende den capitain geen beleyd van saaken. Want als den gouverneur generaal cleden en andere rariteyten off wharen oversenden om te vercoopen, soo reket den capitain op de cleden en coopmanschappen die hij aan de thresoriers verhandelen wil eerst eygene winst, nemende den prijs veel hoger, soodat hij seer veel komt te misdoen tegens 'tgene de manier van handeling der vorige capitainen is die met de schatmeesters hebben genegotieert tot groot voordeel. Wanneer ick den prijs der cleden, en andere soorten van coopmanschappen die de capitains in vorige tijden tegens de prijs van de tegenwoordigen capitain vergelijckt, soo is de prijs nu veel meer als voorheen, en wanneer ick de monsters met de cleden vergelijck en besiet, soo weet het opperhoofd niets te seggen en daarom ben ick van gevoelen dat de capitain liegt en de schult ten onregte op den gouverneur generaal legt als hij segt dat deselve soude geordineert hebben voor wat prijs de goederen moeten verkogt werden. En wanneer den prijs geboden wert volgens de waarde als voorheen geaccordeert was, soo heeft den capitain daar geen behagen in, maar wil de goederen verkopen sooals hij komt te eyssen, seggende dat die veel hoger van prijs sijn als de prijs der goederen van andere handelaars die tot Siam komen negotieeren. Ick hebbe verboden dat de woorden van den capitain geloofd werden, die soo vast op den hogen prijs blijft



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staan, want ick niet anders kan bevroeden, dan dat een capitain sijn leugenen op Haar Hoog Edele schrijft, konnende het niet wesen dat deselve sulx soude geboden hebben maar wel dat U Edele Hoog Agtbare gebieden dat het opperhoofd de waren op 't bieden van de gewoonelijcke prijs den coop met de tresoriers soude sluyten.

Het opperhoofd komt alle jaren te misdoen tegens de weg van onderlinge vrundschap dewijl hem verstant ontbreekt, willende de goederen dierder verkopen en de winst voor hemselfen houden, welck niet opregt gehandelt is, strijdende tegens de weg van onderlinge vrundschap tot nadeel van de Compagnie. Den capitain heeft geen overleg off beleyd en daardoor begaat hij meerder misslagen als de vorige capitainen die voordesen in den dienst van de Compagnie alhier geresideert hebben. Soo het opperhoofd hier nog langer de de zaken van de Compagnie sal blijven waarnemen sal hij geen vernoeginge geven en den weg van vrundschap niet onderhouden, waardoor hij de Compagnie seer veel schaden sal toebrengen, hebbende hij menigmalen misdaan gelijk als veelmalen gerepeteert is, en het nu nog maal aan de gouverneur generaal come te verstandigen alsdat den capitain de prijs der goederen soo hoog blijft houden opdat sulx aan hem mag verboden en het verschil niet langer uytgereckt werd.

Wanneer Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt was komen te overlijden, sijnde geweest op saterdag den 10e dag [fol. 89] van de 3e maand in 't paardejaar, heb ick den capitain laten versoeken om op het spoedigste daarover na Batavia te schrijven en den schipper van 't schip aan te pressen om ten eerste te zeylen eer de moesson verlopen soude sijn, waarop het opperhoofd aan mijn versogt dat het contract mogte vernieuwt ende getekent werden volgens ouder gewoonte, 'twelck ick op dien dag oock aan Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt hebbe bekent gemaakt, die daarop gebeden heeft dat ick het verbondschrift soude laten opmaken en tekenen gelijk van outsher gebruyckelijck geweest is, bevelende wijders dat den schipper van 't schip met den eersten en sonder vertoeven soude vertrecken na Batavia eer de mousson verliep, den capitain niet volvoert maar leugenen tot verschoninge gebruyckt om sigselvs los te maken en te bevrijden, voorgevende dat ick al te lang, tot de mousson gedaan was, hadde gewagt.

Alle de coopliden, soo Chinesen, Siammers en Pegunesen, die de huyden van herbeeste en ossen aan den capitain komen vercoopen, waardoor de Compagnie winste geniet, die sijn aan mij comen klagen dat sij in vorige tijden de vellen aan den capitain in 't packhuys leverden met een vaste prijs, sijnde onderscheyden in drierley soorten. En wanneer de vellen ontfangen waren, soo wiert daarvoor de waarde aan silvergelt gegeven en dat sonder verschil. En dan wierd aan de handelaars van buyten de prijs der vellen voldaan en de personen welcke veel huyden opcogten en in de packhuysen leverden, aan denselven wierd een catty silver gegeven, dog die weynig huyden aanbragten, aan die wierd 15 1/2 thayl, oock wel 10 thayl gegeven, sijnde dit alhier de gewoonte geweest. Dog den capitain die in 4 jaren 's Compagnies zaken alhier waargenomen heeft, heeft dese gewoonte maar een jaar onderhouden. Daarna heeft hij haar niets gegeven, nog de gestelde prijs der huyden gehouden, schietende bovendien nog de huyden van de wijfjens uyt, schoon die niet gebroken sijn, hetwelck tot schaden der vercoopers van de vellen streckt en het haar seer beswaart 'twelck door geen van de vorige opperhoofden die wegens de Compagnie alhier gelegen hebben oyt geschiet nog



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gedaan is. Maar het tegenwoordige opperhoofd is een persoon die sig geheel tegens de weg van onderlinge vrindschap en het out gebruyck in veel deelen misgaat.

Ick hebbe aan de handelaars van huyden, soo Chinesen, Siammers en Pegunesen gelast dat sijlieden de vellen aan den capitain in 't packhuys soude brengen, seggende het opperhoofd is 't alleen die tegens den weg van vrindschap misdoet. Maar de vorige capitains en den gouverneur generaal en raden van India hebben altijd heel wel met het Siamse rijck gehandelt en aan de coopliden jaarlijx gegeven, gelijk als het de gewoonte was. Ick kan alles niet seggen wat dat die luyden wel aan mij geclaagd hebben. Indien den gouverneur generaal en raden van India sulx in toecomende niet voorkomen, soo sal het met de negotie niet wel kunnen gaan en de voordelen verandert werden. Want soo kunnen Haar Hoog Edele haar oogmerck niet bereycken maar schaden komen te lijden en geen voordeel nog winsten hebben, dewijl hierdoor de weg van onderlinge vrindschap met de Prince van Orangie niet opregtelijck gehouden werd. Ick moet bekent maken alsdat den tegenwoordigen capitain soo hij nog langer in Siam blijft om 's Compagnies zaken te derigeeren, dat hij de weg van opregte vrindschap door sijn menigvuldige misslagen geheel bederven sal, dewijl hij niet wil doen dat de gewoonte van Siam is. En so de Compagnie niet wel handelt sal het tot de schaden van deselve sijn waardoor alle de voordeelen sullen ophouden die de Compagnie soo menigvuldig geniet. En daarom gelieven Haar Hoog Edele liever een ander opperhoofd te maken om 's Compagnies handel alhier te drijven. Indien deselve verstandig is en den weg van onderlinge vrindschap tusschen ons en den Prince van Orangie met onsen vriend de Compagnie komt te onderhouden volgens de gewoonte van 't Siamse rijck, soo sullen alle 's Compagnies zaken met veel meer winst en voordeel voorgeset werden als voordesen oyt geschiet is, en voortaan veel, ja dubbelde winst genieten.

Eyndelijck alle hetgene van stuck tot stuck gemelt staat sal strecken tot bekragtinge van de weg van onderlinge vrindschap tusschen Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt Probat Somdat Boesitrapoudi Tsjouw [fol. 90] Dzouhou mijn genadige vorst en heere welcker suyvere en opregte vrindschap tot in eeuwigheyt sal duuren indien der in de toecomende geen misslagen strijdig tegens het verbondschrift ende de gewoonte van 't Siamse rijck begaan werden. Den gouverneur generaal en raden van India gelieven te overwegen ende te besorgen dat alles na waarheyt en in opregtigheyt geschieden.

Geschreven op dynsdag in de vierde maand van 't paardejaar.



3 English translation

Dhiravat na Pombejra, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Süa (r. 1703-1709) to the Supreme Government, circa March 1703”.

FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA, 19 FEBRUARY 1704 [COMMENCING AT FOL. 85]

Translation of a Malay letter written by the present *bercklang*¹ or prime minister of Siam to His Lordship the Supreme Government in Batavia.

This letter is from the *sjapia*² Phrakhlang to Willem Outhoorn Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia to whom the Honourable Company has entrusted the government of affairs and the rule over [fol. 86] the whole of Asia (the Indies). By his upright conduct of affairs, the wise Governor-General has improved the path of reciprocal friendship and good relations between the Kingdom of Siam and the Prince of Orange, as well as the Company, so that at the moment there is not the slightest dissension ruffles this. The [state of] all the business of the Company throughout the whole Kingdom of Siam remains stable and untrammelled in all parts [of the realm], there being not even the slightest alteration. [This is] because I do my utmost to live in concord with the Governor-General and to ensure that in the future everything will be in even better case. My gracious ruler and lord, Somdat Bormat Busti Prapoudi Tsjouw Dzijouhou³, has commanded me that I should affirm the path of the sound purpose with the Prince of Orange. His Most Illustrious Majesty has spoken most favourably of the Governor-General and commanded that all the affairs of the Company be encouraged and improved. And that [these] will enjoy even more advantages than has hitherto been the case, and that with a twofold profit.

On Tuesday the sixth [day] of the third month in the Year of the Horse, the chief merchant sent Lowang Tronpanet⁴ to me, and [through him] submitted a request that he may come to court, before a letter from me was dispatched to Batavia. For, in the time of Lowang Apywaree⁵ and Lowang Witsit Sakoen⁶, they had also submitted a request that they might pay their respects to the king. This favour was granted them by His Most Illustrious Majesty⁷, all in accordance with the treaty which was concluded at the very beginning. And that he [the chief merchant] might [now] also submit the same

¹ *Phrakhlang*.

² *Chaophya*, also spelled *chao phraya*, highest rank in Siamese officialdom during the Ayutthaya period.

³ i.e. *Somdet Borom bophit phra phuttha chao yuhua*, generic term denoting His Majesty the King of Siam.

⁴ *Luang Song Phanit*, translator assigned to the VOC.

⁵ *Luang Aphai Wari*, rank and title royally conferred on the Dutch *opperhoofd* in Ayutthaya, in this case Joannes Keijts.

⁶ *Luang Visitor Wiset Sakhon*, another title for the VOC *opperhoofd*, in this case Pieter van den Hoorn.

⁷ King Phetracha.



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request to His Present Majesty⁸ on behalf of the Governor-General, and that this treaty might be revised and confirmed anew.

I announced this to His Most Illustrious Majesty, who thereupon has been graciously pleased to show his favour to and amity for the Governor-General and the Council of Asia. He commanded me to do that which was mentioned in the former contracts, whereupon I ordered Lowang Tronpanet to tell the captain that he should bring me the treaty which remains in the keeping of the captain in the factory to me. That I should [thereupon] revise the contract and when this had been accomplished date it, in accordance with what His Most Illustrious Majesty has commanded me, acquiescing in the request the captain had submitted to me.

The chief merchant then dispatched the interpreter Lowang Trongpanet back to say that he could not send the written contract⁹ or bring it with him for revision, unless His Most Illustrious Majesty should grant him an audience at court, just as it had come to pass in the days of Lowang Apia Waree and Lowang Witsit Sacoen. This would be so that he [the chief merchant] might personally be able to hear what favours would be granted the Company. Hereupon, I had the chief merchant informed that such was contrary to the tradition, and that in the Year of the Snake, in the days of Lowang Apia Waree and Lowang Witsit Sakoen those people had [also] requested that that the contract should be written and, as the final act, dated. At that time, His Most Illustrious Majesty had commanded that Lowang Apia Waree, Willem Keis¹⁰ and Lowang Witsit Sakoen and Pieter van den Hoorn¹¹ should present themselves before His Most Illustrious Majesty because this was the time at which the French were committing widespread despredations in the *negeri* or countries of Ambongian Boery. On that occasion Their Worships were granted admittance to a personal audience with His Most Illustrious Majesty and in this wise in those days the treaty was revised and written down.¹² I have had no personal experience of what the captain has asked for, because such is contrary to the custom. I have most humbly besought His Most Illustrious Majesty, who is now my liege lord, that he might be disposed to grant the captain the favour of permitting him to attend an audience, but I have not been granted this permission.

I have said that on many an occasion the captain has dealt very fairly, and has sincerely maintained the path of friendship between the Prince of Orange and His Majesty, and that he wishes to be granted an audience with Your Majesty, in the manner that Lawang Apia Waree and Lawang Witsit Sakoen were favoured. The chief merchant has said that he will write to the Governor-General about all I have said. To this, I replied to him that he might do so, and inform His Most Excellency of what His Most Illustrious Majesty had commanded that I should say to the captain.

On Wednesday the sixth day of the fourth month in the Year of the Horse, Lawong

⁸ King Süa.

⁹ Uncertain reading.

¹⁰ Probably Joannes (or Johannes) Keyts, *opperhoofd* in Siam 1685-1688.

¹¹ VOC *opperhoofd* in Siam 1688-1691.

¹² Uncertain reading.



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Trompanet and Ombon Witsit Nasa¹³ [came to me]. They brought with them to me the chief merchant and the second person [his deputy] in the residence of the Phrakhlang, where all the ministers, officers and servants of the king [fol. 87], as well as Malays, Chinese, Moors and Siamese had gathered together. The captain requested that I should conduct him into the presence of His Most Illustrious Majesty, but I told the chief merchant that his request was at odds with the manner of the Kingdom of Siam, in view of the fact that, said I, the former ruler¹⁴ had expired and had passed from this transient life to eternity, and now for the last twelve days [I had] been extremely busy settling a myriad of affairs so that the tomb for the body would be embellished with ornaments. Nevertheless, should the captain have several matters to put forward, that I would personally announce these to His Most Illustrious Majesty, and why did he act so impetuously in wanting to bring these to the ears of His Most Illustrious Majesty. [I also said] that all the captain had to do was the bring the contract, and that then the same would be revised, [and] signed and that the path of mutual friendship with the Prince of Orange would henceforth be affirmed even more strongly and reinforced, which would bring the Company even more benefit than it formerly had enjoyed.

Thereupon the captain was pleased to take it upon himself to say that he must request His Most Illustrious Majesty affirm the Company in its commerce and the treaty as in the past revised and sealed. He went on to say that, should in any article anything be said or proposed which did not tally with this goal, that he, the captain, would then personally intervene to have this changed, or that else others would be appointed in his place to be chief merchants in charge of the Company trade to Siam, to whom the Governor-General and the Councillors of Dutch Asia should recommend that they deal with all matters without discord or confusion. [However, I said] that should the captain or his successors as captain of the Company trade to Siam, or indeed if the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia, should happen to cause offence and prove in some way unsatisfactory, then I would also not be encumbered in any way from speaking my mind. What the captain had to say agrees pretty much with that said by Lawangapy Waree and Lowang Witsit Sakoen. And I wrote down the captain's words and made the same known to His Most Illustrious Majesty.

Then Praya Angkana¹⁵ commanded me to commit the treaty to words and sign it, after which the treaty and contract with the Prince of Orange [could be considered] to have been extended, and that in the fashion in which it had been done with Lawong Apia Warwee and Lowang Witsit Sakoen, according to the directions the captain had laid down. Thereupon I promised the captain that on Sunday the eighth day of the fourth month in the Year of the Horse he could come to me with the contract, and that the treaty would be revised and signed. Despite this [concession], the chief merchant refused to come to me, but sent to me instead the interpreter Lowang Trongpanit with

¹³ *OkmünWisit Phasa* or *Wiset Phasa*, a translator.

¹⁴ King Phetracha.

¹⁵ Probably from the Siamese expression *phra ongkan*, or *phra ratcha ongkan*, meaning "royal command".



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a letter, announcing that Kididjongtan¹⁶ had requested His Most Illustrious Majesty make known that the treaty drawn up in the time of Pytery Dya Pytry¹⁷ had been confirmed that the tin from Ligor also be so described and incorporated in the treaty. And that His Most Illustrious Majesty through Praya Angkana had ordered and commanded that as had happened in days gone by, as this was commanded and was noted down in the treaty, and by doing this have been confirmed even more strongly, and now that the [the matter of the] Ligor tin would be incorporated in it. This is what has formerly occurred, being according to orders written in the treaty and by the same strengthened, and at present sealed by both sides.

By sending this letter the captain has revealed to me that he has strayed from the path of Lawang Apia Warwee and and Lowang Witsit Sakoen. In this he is following his own will. The chief merchant does say that the Company is favoured in being able to trade its wares, guaranteed by the terms of the former treaty which was drawn up in former times and made and signed at the request [of both parties], but I declare that this should be understood as: as long as the present chief merchant or whomsoever will come to replace him in his office, in their management of the Company business in the Kingdom of Siam do come to deal in all probity, [then all will be well]. However, should the captain and other chief merchants to whom the business of the Company is entrusted, or if the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia do not want to trade fairly, thereby breaching the treaty, then I shall not be obliged to deal fairly. Nevertheless, the captain twists the sense of the words and repudiates the same.

And these are not new words thought up on the spur of the moment, but composed earlier in the time of Lawang Apy Waree and Lowang Witsit Sakoen, whose manner of conducting affairsis still adhered to. However, [fol. 88] the chief merchant dances to his own tune and claims whatever in the contents favours his own advantage, and conversely, that which does not please him, he leaves undone. I was desirous of writing out the treaty anew, but was unable to procure the text which was kept in the VOC factory, the which I had to make known to His Most Illustrious Majesty. Hereupon His Most Illustrious Majesty was pleased to command that, if people were not prepared to have the treaty drawn up and written down in the same way as was done by Lawang Apia Warwee and Lowang Witsit Sakoen, considering the fact that this is what the captain had requested, this would have to be construed as yet another offence perpetrated by the captain, conflicting with what Lawang Apit Waree and Lawang Witsit Sakoen had done. The captain would have only that which was to his advantage written and signed, which is out of the question. Thereupon an order was given to ask the captain to give his opinion just one more time. And, in the event that he should refuse, to have the treaty written out, then I was commanded to write to the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia [asking them] to send hither another more sagacious chief merchant. Somebody who will be predisposed to foster the path of mutual friendship made with the Prince of Orange. I have been prepared to revise and sign the treaty, by

¹⁶ Gideon Tant, *opperhoofd* in Siam 1699-1703.

¹⁷ Pieter de Bitter, VOC Commissioner who negotiated the Dutch-Siamese Treaty of August 1664.



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which the Company should be able to accrue more advantage than [it] previously [did]. However, the chief merchant has sent Lowang Trongpanit to me in order to announce that he [the chief merchant] had [already] sent a letter to the Governor-General in Batavia, and he hoped that another captain who would be better informed about fostering the service of the Company would be sent, and that he hoped to return to Batavia.

The captain who had run the Company affairs in Ligor, and now has managed everything here in Siam, has made very many more mistakes compared to the other chief merchants who have resided here previously. He carries out a great deal of business as he thinks fit and feels that it should be done, which contravenes the path of mutual friendship. He has acted foolishly by wanting to make more [personal] profit, which has been to the detriment of the Company. The captain shows no discretion in business. Because, when the Governor-General sends textiles and other curiosities or goods here to be sold, the first thing the captain does when he negotiates with officials from the Treasury is to calculate his own profit. He then sets the price much higher and by so doing greatly encroaches upon the manner of trading pursued by the former captains, who negotiated with the Treasury officials to great advantage. When I compare the price of the textiles and other merchandise of the captains of former times with the price demanded by the present captain, then that price far exceeds what it formerly was. And when I compare and inspect the samples of the textiles, the chief merchant has nothing to say [to justify what he does]. And therefore I have the feeling that the captain is lying and unjustly shifts the blame onto the Governor-General when he says that the same[e.i. the Governor-General] would have ordered the prices for which these goods must be sold. And when the price offered is according to the price which was previously agreed, the captain is greatly displeased about it, and insists on selling the goods at the price which he demands. He says that these are much more expensive than the wares of the other merchants who come to trade in Siam. I have forbidden that the people take the captain at his word, which is fixed on such a high price, for all I can think is that the captain has entered his lies in [embezzled] the account of the Honourable Company, as it is beyond belief that the latter would have ordered this, but that unquestionably Your Excellency has ordered that the chief merchant should conclude the sale of the goods with the Treasury officials at the usual price.

Every year the chief merchant commits trespasses against the path of mutual friendship and [it seems] that he has taken leave of his senses. His desire is to sell the goods at a higher price and keep the profit for himself. This is not fair trade and is in contravention of the path of mutual friendship to the detriment of the Company. The captain neither consults nor does he display any discretion and for this reason commits more offences than the former captains, who earlier resided here in the service of the Company. Should the chief merchant remain here any longer directing the business of the Company, he will prove unsatisfactory and fail to uphold the path of friendship, the which will cause the Company untold damage. On so many occasions he has offended as has so frequently been reported on many occasions, and now the time has come yet again to inform the Governor-General that the captain is setting the price of the goods



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so high, that he should be forbidden to do this and the discrepancy [in price] will no longer be tolerated.

When His Most Illustrious Majesty passed away, being on Saturday the tenth day [fol. 89] of the third month in the Year of the Horse¹⁸, I requested that the captain write to Batavia about this with all speed and to impress upon the skipper of the ship to sail first, before the close of the monsoon. Hereupon the chief merchant had besought me [asking] that the contract might be revised and signed, according to the ancient custom, the which I made known to His Most Illustrious Majesty on that very same day. He thereupon commanded that I should draw up the treaty and sign it, just as was the custom of yesteryear, furthermore giving orders that the skipper of the ship should sail immediately and depart for Batavia without delay before the monsoon was over. The captain did not [carry out this order] but told lies in order to excuse and free himself from [his predicament], letting it be known that I was the one who had tarried too long, until the monsoon was past.

All the traders, be they Chinese, Siamese or the people of Pegu, who come to sell the hides of deer and oxen to the captain, which makes a profit for the Company, have come to me to complain that in former times they delivered the hides to the captain at the warehouse for a fixed price, according to the three qualities into which these hides were divided. And, when the hides were received, then the value was handed over in silver coin and that without any problems. Then the price of the hides was paid to the external traders, and the people who sold many hides and delivered them to the warehouse, those same people were paid a cattie of silver, however, those who brought only a few hides, were given 15½ taels, even 10 taels, as that is the custom here. Nevertheless, the captain who has run the affairs of the Company here for four years, only respected this custom for one year. After that he gave them nothing, not even kept to the price set for the hides. Furthermore, he was unwilling to accept the hides of female animals, unless they were undamaged, the which caused the sellers of the hides a loss and upset them greatly. This had never ever before been done by any one of the former chief merchants who have been posted here in the name of the Company. However, the present chief merchant is a person inimical to the path of mutual friendship and ancient custom, and gives offence in many ways.

I have ordered the traders, be they Chinese, Siamese or the people from Pegu, that they should deliver the hides to the captain in the warehouse, saying that it is only the chief merchant who abuses the path of mutual friendship. However, the former captains and the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia have always dealt fairly with the Kingdom of Siam and have annually given the traders [the hides], according to the custom. I cannot [possibly] repeat everything about which the people have complained to me. Should the Governor-General and the Councillors of the Indies not prevent this in the future, then the commerce will not be able to continue and the privileges will be changed. In this wise, His Excellency will not be able to reach his goal but will suffer losses and enjoy neither privilege nor profit, besides on this account the path of mutual

¹⁸ 3 February 1703.



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friendship with the Prince of Orange cannot be sincerely maintained. I must announce that the present captain, should he remain yet longer in Siam to direct the affairs of the Company, through his myriad offences will completely spoil the path of true friendship, because he refuses to honour the customs of Siam. And as the Company does not trade fairly, this will be to the detriment of the same through which all the privileges which the Company has so often enjoyed, will be stopped. Therefore, would it please Your Excellency to appoint another chief merchant to run the the Company business here. If the same is gifted with common sense and will be able to maintain the mutual friendship between us and the Prince of Orange with our friend the Company in accordance with the customs of the Kingdom of Siam, then will all the business of the Company be continued with much greater profit and advantage, as it was in the days before [this upset], yea indeed from now on even enjoy a doubled profit.

In conclusion, all that is mentioned item by item will serve to strengthen the path of mutual friendship between His Most Illustrious Majesty Probat Somdat Boesitprapoudi Tsjouw [fol. 90] Dzouhou, my gracious lord and ruler, which pure and sincere friendship will endure forever if in the future no offences are committed there which are contrary to the treaty and the customs of the Siamese realm. Would the Governor-General and the Councillors of Asia be pleased to deliberate and take care that everything should take place according to the truth and sincerity.

Written on Tuesday in the fourth month of the Year of the Horse.



4 Colophon

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