



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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sejarah  
nusantara



## 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 daarvan 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 daarvan 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 booswighden Sourapatty en Amirangh Cassuma 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 sijn hem buyten alle gesach houden; waermede 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 egther 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 sijn 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 daermede 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 zee kant sullen laten verblijven onder sijne beschermingh te nemen en van alle overlant bevrijden, waermede U Mayesteyt dan staat 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, 'twelk 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 ook 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

## TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

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".

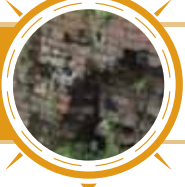
FROM: DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA, 20 APRIL 1697 [BEGINNING WITH FOL. 285]

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-

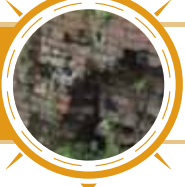


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vening period in the year 1686, in contradiction to the custom even of all barbarian and heathen people who are ignorant of God, he had cut down and murdered the Company envoy Mr François Tak, whose person his role decreed to be sacrosanct and inviolable, 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





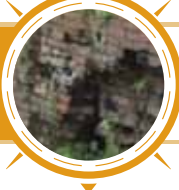
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out, nevertheless a goodly time thereafter he was still in Kartasura Adiningrat and was even in attendance at Your Majesty's court. This is the reason that in their letters, particularly those of the 12th of the month of July 1691 and 1st of April 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 Slood 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.

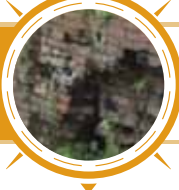
Furthermore that the excuses and pretexts of His Majesty that he has had neither the advice nor the opportunity to carry out the orders decreed by the Governor-General and Councillors of Asia in the land of Java, the which saddens him and overwhelms his heart with regret, might be assumed to be nothing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

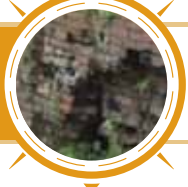


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by the Susuhunan that he be relieved of the burden of the settlement of the Company on the hill of Jepara, even though the costs amount to the sum of only 112,000 Spanish *reals* or 20,000 Rix-dollars every month under Article 13 of the above-mentioned 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

<b>Title</b>	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

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

