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History in Documents, VOC Records from Batavia (17-18th Centuries)

Abstract: The present article deals with Malay letters and documents from the archives of the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie – VOC), dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The documents belong to the collection of the Russian scholar and collector N.P. Likhachev (1862-1936) and have been kept in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg since 1938. The collection of VOC diplomatic letters that was in a possession of to Governor-General Johan van Hoorn (1653-1711), travelled from old Batavia, to Amsterdam and then to St. Petersburg. Fifty-six letters were written in different languages, Malay in Arabic and Javanese scripts, Dutch, Persian, Arabic, Spanish and Chinese. Mostly addressed to Johan van Hoorn the Dutch Governor-General in 1704-1709, they are not only exemplary of the fine art of Malay letter-writing, but also original diplomatic documents and historical sources on Dutch early colonial policy in Malay Archipelago.

Keywords: Malay Diplomatic Letters, Dutch East Indian Company (VOC), N.P. Likhachev, Cirebon, Banten.

Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas surat-surat Melayu dan dokumen-dokumen dari arsip Perusahaan Hindia Timur Belanda (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie – VOC), yang berasal dari abad ketujuh belas dan kedelapan belas. Dokumen-dokumen tersebut milik koleksi akademisi dan profesor asal Rusia N. P. Likhachev (1862-1936) dan disimpan di Institute of Oriental Manuscripts di St. Petersburg sejak tahun 1938. Koleksi surat-surat diplomatik VOC yang dimiliki oleh Gubernur Jenderal Johan van Hoorn (1653-1711), berasal dari Batavia lama, ke Amsterdam dan kemudian ke St. Petersburg. Lima puluh enam surat ditulis dalam berbagai bahasa, Melayu dalam aksara Arab dan Jawa, Belanda, Persia, Arab, Spanyol, dan Cina. Sebagian besar ditujukan kepada Johan van Hoorn, Gubernur Jenderal Belanda pada tahun 1704-1709, karya-karya tersebut tidak hanya merupakan contoh seni penulisan surat Melayu, namun juga dokumen diplomatik asli dan sumber sejarah mengenai kebijakan awal kolonial Belanda di Kepulauan Melayu.

Kata Kunci: Surat-Surat Diplomatik Kerajaan, VOC, N.P. Likhachev, Cirebon, Banten.

The present author undertook this research in order to make contribution to academic scholarship by the collection of rare historical documents, precisely the early Malay diplomatic correspondence dated back to the period of 1683-1710. Nowadays preserved as a gathering of original letters collected and possessed by famous Russian academic and antiquarian N.P. Likhachev (1862-1936), this collection is marked as OIC (Oost Indische Compagnie collection)¹. In order to trace its history it makes sense to begin with the life of its former owner, Nikolay Petrovich Likhachev (1862-1936), one of the outstanding Russian scholars, a great collector and a person with a rare erudition and thorough knowledge in the fields of history, paleography, diplomatics, sphragistics and numismatics. He was born on April 12, 1862, in the town of Chistopol, in the governorate of Kazan. In 1892 he graduated from Kazan University, in 1894 he became a member of the Archeographic Committee in St. Petersburg and a lecturer in St. Petersburg University. During the period of 1902-1914 he worked as a vice-director of the Public Library in St. Petersburg. His scholarly activities, his habit of forming collections and his immense fortune enabled him to establish the Museum of Paleography in St. Petersburg. In 1930 he was arrested and exiled to Astrakhan, declared guilty during what was called in the Soviet Union at the time the 'Trial of the *Prompartiya*'. He died in Leningrad after having returned from exile in 1936.

In his gathering activity Likhachev paid special attention to collecting private letters, documents and autographs as they were paleographical samples of scripts in different languages. Before the World War I the antiquarian market in Western Europe was full of collections of private letters which were in trend at that time. The collection of diplomatic VOC documents contains fifty six letters in Malay, Javanese, Dutch, Persian, Arabic, Spanish and Chinese, which date from the period between 1683 and 1710. According to Likhachev's notes he

1 Preserved in St.Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of Russian Academy of Sciences (OIC 1 – 56)

found and purchased the Malay letters in an auction catalogue of Messrs. Frederik Muller of Amsterdam in 1910. Some letters in Chinese he was able to obtain earlier, in 1890, from Gaston Saffroy, the antiquarian bookseller in Paris (Arhiv t.t., 103). Presumably, the collection belonged to the private archive of Johan van Hoorn as almost all letters were addressed to him, either as Director-General in the years 1691-1704 or as Governor-General in the years 1704-1709 in Batavia, with the exception of one letter which was addressed to his predecessor governor-general Willem van Outhoorn (Governor-General in 1691-1704 and written by Pakih Tadjoeidin from Banten in 1695 (OIC5). However, this letter can also be seen as belonging to Van Hoorn family collection, since Johan van Hoorn married Susanna Angela van Outhoorn in 1691, who was the daughter of his predecessor, Willem van Outhoorn (Kloot 1891, 71–75).

Johan van Hoorn was born in Amsterdam on 16 November 1653, and in 1663 he departed together with his father Pieter van Hoorn, *Raad Ordinair van Nederlandsch Indië* to the Dutch East-Indies aboard the vessel ‘Alphen’. In Java he made a successful career from the bottom to the top, from the position of *onder-assistent* to the highest possible office, that of Governor-General. On 16 July 1710 he returned to Amsterdam in the rank of admiral on board of the ship ‘Sandenburg’, and he died there on 20 February 1711. In spite of his brilliant career Van Hoorn is mentioned in VOC’s accounts as a controversial figure regarding his policy on Java. Historical sources mention him as a personality who managed to establish peaceful relationships and liberal policy of VOC towards local rulers on Java and Chinese community in Batavia; while he was accused by the Directors of VOC for his style of family policy² and nepotism in Batavia (Taylor 1983, 72). Besides, according to the data of

2 De Haan (1912, 3–15) emphasize the importance of his family connections. For example, his sister was married to Francois Tack. His third marriage was to Johanna Maria van Riebeeck, daughter of Director-General Abraham van Riebeeck who followed his son-in-law as a Governor-General (1709-1713)

Dutch scholarly works and archives, J. van Hoorn was one of the main correspondents of Amsterdam burgomaster who gained a fame of being a patron of the world of learning, Nicolas Witsen (1641-1717). Regarding to Asian affairs van Hoorn was a person possessing true interest to native culture including serious knowledge of Archipelago languages. It is important to mention that he inherited his interest to Asia from his father Pieter van Hoorn who contributed much to studying Chinese civilization and to developing the East-India, trying to make it “ëen emporium van gants India” (F. de Haan: p. 718). Batavia became “Koningin van het Oosten” as it was called by famous traveler Valentijn (de Haan: 710), one of the prosperous new ports in China Sea region.

The VOC's competitive advantage in the South China Sea fell further and further behind its rivals while the eighteenth century wore on. Japanese scholars, Atsushi (2006) put forward one important reason for this failure, namely the fact of VOC's reliance on exclusive contracts with sultans, rajas, and other monarchs to establish monopolies in order to control production and prices. Undoubtedly, it was the distinctive feature of Van Hoorn's policy, trade and social activity on the Archipelago and his predecessors too. The attempt of establishing relationships of partnership with indigenous rulers was the core of VOC officials' policy on Java and other regions in the 17th and the first half of the 18th century. Diplomatic correspondence of Likhachev's collection shed more light on the character of these relationships.

Historical Documents of Policy and Trade

It is not optional to notice that all diplomatic correspondence arrived at Batavia Castle and was systematically catalogued in the 17th-18th centuries in the form of ‘*contractenboeken*’; besides all letters from Asian rulers were translated in Dutch. All these translations of original letters were compiled in VOC's principle

chronicle – the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle³. So thousands of letters were translated and recorded, however, rare samples of originals have been survived and are still scattered in the world institutional and private collections.

Thus, an account which is given here reveals history of collection of the original documents and supplies it with some translations and paleographical descriptions. Besides, inspired to some extent by the solid research published by Meilink-Roelofz (1962). This article represents a historical development of Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) trade instead of from sociological standpoint. The first works on this theme were written from sociological view by Dutch scholars J.C. van Leur (1934) and B. Schrieke (1925, 90–107). We drew on the original Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) records which is an essential procedure and one which neither Schrike nor Van Leur was in a position to follow except the historical book of Meilink-Roelofz which became possible owing to the new sources of information.

Noteworthy, it is difficult enough to extract adequate information from these documents about the trade of native Malay rulers and states and the so-called foreign Asian traders like Chinese, in fact that is possible after prolonged research among widely dispersed data. But it became real only by studying the European sources and mostly VOC records, which qualified as material for the study of the economic element. Thus, scholars are entirely dependent on the data of European trading Companies and what they say about the trade of peoples with whom they came into contact. In this context ‘Suma Orientale’ by Tome Pires is recognized to be one of the most important sources on early trade in Malay-Indonesia area. Besides, it is evident that Portuguese documents from different

3 In 2014 researchers from National Archive in Jakarta (ANRI) and Leiden University created database of diplomatic correspondence (TANAP project) which consists of more than 4,300 letters referenced in the Daily Journals of Batavia Castle, identified and published online at <http://www.sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/diplomatic-letters-1683-1744/>

archives are still unavailable for studying, except books and articles by Boxer, C.R. which are based mainly on Portuguese sources.

Van Leur's works were written before the Second World War, and one can notice the first symptoms of a new trend in world history there, namely the decline of European influence in Asia. His works and views on Indonesia and Asian trade owe a great deal to another scholar B. Schrieke who was the first to make a general survey of native trade in Indonesia. After all, among the principal themes of his research work was accounts of how the Javanese ceased to be regarded as a trading people, and how Makassar developed into a centre of trade (Meilink-Roelofz 1962, 12). Additionally, Van Leur put forward a term 'peddling trade' character of Asian commerce while Meilink-Roelofz writes "Asian trade was not predominantly a peddling trade, but neither was it, like the western European trade of the time, a shipping trade carried on mainly by independent citizens.

Great structural difference characterized the many social milieus in Asia, including those in Malay-Indonesian Archipelago (Meilink-Roelofz 1962, 8). Besides, neither Van Leur, nor Schrieke depicted Asian foreign traders, namely Chinese, Arabic, Persian or Indian. But if we touch on the history of trade in Banten, for example, so this big seaport was orientated on local and European traders owing to the powerful position of Chinese and Indian communities living there. Moreover, both of these Dutch scholars underestimated the influence of Islamic traders, their spiritual and economic value and studied very little forms of partnerships in maritime trading which are mentioned in Malay Maritime Code. On the contrary Meilink-Roelofz tried to avoid discussing of European expansion from the European point of view. She paid attention to the destruction of spice trade which was the most important branch of independent Asian trade in Malay-Indonesian area. The historians of the 19th and 20th centuries like Coolhaas, W.Ph., De Jonge, Van der Chijs and Stapel, F.W.

were much more based on historical records and reflected the European point of view. In this context we can distinguish only the work by Van Limburg, B (1872, 4) who was a civil servant of National Archive in The Hague and made hundreds of extracts from VOC records shedding more light on the Asian element than on Company's business. Coolhaas, W. Ph. (deel IV, 156–57) provided the data on VOC records and criticized Van Leur for insufficiently documented historical data, especially regarding the 18th century. For that matter, most of the documents relative to this period are still unpublished in contrast to the position with respect to the first half of the 17th century. A large number of published documents were at Van Leur's disposal except the Portuguese sources.

This research is aimed to contribute the collection of historical records of VOC which is still out of attention of either European, or Asian scholars. The documents deal with diplomatic and trading relationships between Dutch VOC servants, native rulers and aristocrats on the edge of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century. The correspondence of this collection of letters mentions the names of such famous historical figures from Malay-Indonesian area and other regions of VOC activity like India and China. Among them are Sultans, rajas, regents, and representatives of local nobility, prominent traders, captains and servants of VOC.

Van Leur in his "Indonesian Trade and Society" devoted a separate chapter to the 18th century titled "On the 18th Century as a category in Indonesian history" (1934, 268–89), while Stapel F. called the 18th century "a transitional form in the development of the Netherlands" (1941, 7). The first half of the 18th century still reminded the previous century characterized by the world of baroque, political capitalism and a quest for Oriental spiritual knowledge. The American historian H. Furber in his study "*Rival Empires of Trade*" characterized European activity in Asia in the 16-18th centuries as "The Age of Partnership". Due to this Dutch collaborative policy of VOC with Chinese community Batavia became a capital of regional power in Java Sea. Batavia

at that time was as much as Chinese city as a Dutch colonial one (Blusse 1988). Such relatively harmonious situation lasted for a considerable period of time till the events of Chinese massacre in 1740. It was never restored after this tragedy.

Noteworthy, some scholars write about different situation and different policy of the VOC towards Asian traders in India and Southeast Asia. For example, Anthony Reid asserts that SEA witnessed a crisis in its trade in the middle of the 17th century, and that the VOC happened to be the only one winner in commerce. Such success was based on the fact that it had used its power selectively to establish monopoly conditions. This selectivity emerged in their aggression in the Archipelago, precisely in Banten. Dutch scholar Gaastra (1999, 200) writes, "It is, however, remarkable, that in the discussion about Banten in the correspondence between the home country and Batavia the idea of gaining a monopoly in the pepper trade played no role. It was Banten's position of distribution of Asian products in the archipelago that caused irritation and worried Batavia the most".

By contrast the VOC treated merchants from Surat in cautious way which was incomparable to the brutal elimination of Banten as a centre of long distance trade. Only in Banten did the VOC illustrated its inability to compete in the Asian trade by purely commercial means. The years around 1680 have been regarded by many historians as a time of rapid change in Asian trade (Winius dan Vink 1991). These changes were characterized by the policy of exclusion of Asian merchants from the seas and harbors controlled by the VOC. But the vigorous competition in trade led the VOC to liberal policy. For instance, in the problem of the passes the VOC thus took resort to a liberal policy. In this context two letters from the collection written in Persian are considered to be of special value. They belong to the well known Muslim trader of Persian origin Mulla Fahrudin Abdul Ghafur (1622-1718) and date back to 1707 and 1709 (OIC7 and OIC49).

Abdul Ghafur was famous as a leader of mercantile community of *bohras*⁴ in *Surat*, the 'blessed port of the Moghols' of the 18th centuries and owned a fleet of seventeen ships which were sailing along the routes to Mocha and Batavia under the convoy of VOC. The content of both documents, addressed to Governor-General J. van Hoorn, touches on the problem of arrested Indian ships in Malacca and Dutch policy of passes. The eminent Indian historian A. Dasgupta distinguished Mulla Abdul Ghafur as 'a merchant prince' of Indian Ocean (Dasgupta 2004). Nowadays, one has no data about the other letters written by Abdul Ghafur preserved in other world collections. The research survey and translation is in progress.

Whatever one may think of the VOC's tactics, it played a vital role in sustaining and encouraging trade in maritime Asia during the period of the 17th – 18th centuries. VOC extended its trade network from the East China Sea to the Bay of Bengal and made contribution to the development of regional commerce in early modern maritime Asia. In many of the countries where it established outposts, it used different forms of diplomacy including the force of arms to prevail over the indigenous rulers and any previously established commercial interests. In most of the countries except China and Japan, military force proved effective for the initial establishment of a Dutch commercial stronghold. On Malay archipelago VOC with headquarter in Batavia held the policy of the 'double perspective', or selective policy, so this early period of establishing of its power is called 'age of partnership' by some scholars. Many scholars found the reasons of such policy in the privileged status of Chinese population and traders on Java, provided to them by VOC. Doubtless, that exactly the family of Van Hoorn, namely Johan van Hoorn and his father Pieter van Hoorn played important role in establishing contacts with Chinese community on Java and in understanding Chinese culture.

4 Bohras – community of Shi'a Ismaili Muslims, originating from Gujarat

N.P. Likhachev's – Van Hoorn's Collection

Likhachev's collection comprises rare original documents of high cultural value in the sense of linguistic, paleography and history of Dutch diplomatic contacts with Asian courts. One can find here the samples of different Asian scripts like Jawi, Pegon and Carakan in Malay and Javanese as well as samples in Persian, Arabic, Chinese and European languages like Old Dutch and Spanish. Many documents can be considered fine examples of the art of Malay letter writing from the courts of numerous Malay states. According to the sophisticated etiquette of diplomatic correspondence the letters were often written on illuminated paper, decorated by calligraphic letter-headings and different types of seals like Javanese red wax seals and lampblack ones from other Malay regions.

One of the most intriguing features of Van Hoorn-Likhachev's collection is their linguistic and geographical diversity. Van Hoorn selected fifty-six letters for taking a long voyage to Amsterdam and we might guess that his choice was justified by his diplomatic experience and scholarly intuition of person who spent his whole life on Malay Archipelago. Geographically the correspondence cover the whole Malay Archipelago and other places, precisely these are documents from various states and cities on Java and other islands - Banten 1683-1709, Surabaya 1701, Japara 1689, 1709, Batavia 1696, Kartasura 1700, Cirebon 1686-1703; Madura; Sumatra: Palembang 1700 – 1709; Buton 1709; Bima 1701; Gowa 1707, Bone, Tallo 1688-1709. Moreover, the collection contains some documents from India (Surat, Agra): 1703, 1709; China: 1702-1708 and Comoris islands.

The correspondence covers the period of 1683-1710 which is characterized as rather turbulent and significant in the history of VOC and establishing of its power in this region. These historical archival documents could contribute to the theory of Dutch diplomatic relations with Asian courts, promoted by P.N. Rietbergen and named by the term 'double perspective'.

He describes ‘the permitted presence of the Company’, usually supported by the presence of its soldiers, as ‘legitimized indigenous power’ (Rietbergen P. dan Scholten 2004, 1–14). Studying the texts of these diplomatic correspondence one can find the names of such figures of Malay history as Surapati,⁵ Captain Jonker⁶, Captain Zakharias⁷, Francois Tack⁸, Lampiden⁹, prominent Sultans as well as representatives of local nobility which were loyal to VOC and had friendly relationships with J. van Hoorn during his career on Java, for example, Pangeran Cakraningrat¹⁰ from Madura, Sindureja¹¹ and Jangrara II¹²

The VOC established well-organized civic structures in Batavia, reminiscent of the homeland. Malay captains provided translators for writing letters to the neighboring port principalities. The High Government, with the Governor General at its head, appointed *kapiteinen* [captains] among

5 Suropati (Coolhaas deel IV, 835; Kumar 1976)

6 Captain Jonker van Manipa - Indonesian (Amboneese) Muslim on military VOC service, took part in Muslim rebellion against VOC, killed in 1689. On his career see de Graaf ‘Ambon en Zuid Molukken’ (157-63); De haan (1912, 228–31); Dagregister (1681, 247–24); Coolhaas (deel IV, 310–44).

7 Zacharias Sawarga (d. 1730) - Amboneese, nephew van Jonker, struggled in Banten in 1682-4; Ambonese captain in Batavia (Coolhaas, deel IV: 201)

8 Francois Tack – spouse of Van Hoorn’s sister; participated in military expedition to Palembang in 1681; in 1684 – president of Celebes; 04/02 1684 was sent to Banten; killed in Kartasura in 1686 (Coolhaas deel IV, 5,480, 674)

9 Lampidja - since 1699 the first Balinese captain in Batavia till his death in 1711 (Coolhaas deel V, 549)

10 Cakraningrat II (d. 1707) – Pangeran Adipati Cakraningrat of Madura (Pangeran Sampang of West Madura), Trunajaya’s uncle (Coolhaas deel IV, 745, 828)

11 Kanjeng Raden Aria Sindureja (d. 1703) – influential figure at Kartasura court; since 1684 governor of Tegal (Coolhaas deel IV, 746; deel VI, 174)

12 Kyai Ngabehi Jangrana II – regent of Surabaya (1697-1709) (Coolhaas deel V, 190).

the population, who functioned as mediators between the Governor General, the VOC administration and the inhabitants. It is interesting to note that the earliest object of Likhachev's collection is a yellow small cotton envelope with inscription and date in Jawi : *pada Kapiten Melayu 1642*¹³. (OIC 38).

The earliest letter in Likhachev's collection was written in January, 1683/ Muharram 1094H.(OIC 13) It was translated in Dutch, originally written in Malay by captain Jonker van Manipa in Banten and addressed to *raad extraordinaris van India J. van Hoorn*. In this letter Captain Jonker also mentions one more famous figure *comandeur* of VOC Francois Tack and Captain Zacharias as well as Sultan Agung Tirtayasa who reigned in Banten in 1651-1683.

Beyond any doubt Banten (Surasowan)¹⁴ was the most significant Muslim state on the Archipelago and serious rival of VOC in trading competition. In Banten the Dutch had to deal with independent Sultans 'policy and severe competition from other traders like Chinese, Indians and English. The Banten Sultanate consisted of the western tip of Java and the southernmost region of Sumatra, Lampung. The oldest record mentioning Banten as a coastal port town is thought to be Suma Oriental a Portuguese travel account by Tome Pires. The establishment of Banten refers to 1522-27. In his travel account 'Peregrinacao' written by Fernando Mendes Pinto, he states that Banten was a vassal of Demak in 1545, freed itself from the supremacy of Demak in 1546. VOC established itself in Banten Bay since 1603. The Sultanate set up a monopoly on pepper trading cooperating with local Chinese merchants and regained its prosperity during the reign of the fifth ruler Sultan Abulfath Abdul Fattah (Sultan Agung r.1651-1683). Sultan Agung had wisdom of more conciliatory policy with

13 See for a detailed description of the documents Katkova, I. (2010, 209–23)

14 The indigineous name of Banten. Guillot, The Sultanate of Banten 1990. Archive in Jakarta (ANRI) is the main source on the history of Banten (Bantam files: 64-80)

the Dutch and their rivals like the English and the Danes who played the mediating role between Coromandel Coast and Banten. In its golden age Banten possessed fleet of European model. The Sultans of Banten, like the rulers of Macassar, kept his port city open to the traders of all nations, despite frequent pressure from the steadily increasing power of the Dutch in the neighboring Batavia (Meilink-Roelofz 1962, 11). According to the earliest Dutch reports most of its prosperity Banten gained from Chinese in the 16th century (De Graaf, *De regering van Sultan Agung*, t.t., 119). There was a large Chinese colony settling in Banten and trading with pepper, sandalwood, fine spices, tortoise-shell, elephant tusks, stocks of reals of eight. In 1614 Banten Council consisted more of Chinese and Kelings (Indians) than indigenous representatives of Malays. Some Chinese traders cooperated with Dutch merchants.

In the 17th century the shahbandar of Banten came from Meliapur in India, risen from nothing, His position at the court stood higher than Adipati (Keuning J 1938, 48). The governor of Banten made use of this Indian service giving the right of priority of purchase and sale to Indians. Dutch interpreted it as favoritism towards Gujarati traders. They usually brought cloth from Surat and took away pepper. So the leading port's officers like syahbandar and laksamana (admiral) were Kelings; the head of Turkish and Arab merchant community in Banten was Kojah Rayoan originating from Constantinople while the court's counselor was 'pangeran Cina' Chinese Lim Lacco (Kathiritamby t.t.). There was also a large colony of Portuguese traders in Banten; they also imported cloth of better quality than Dutch. Besides, one can mention prosperous individual traders in Banten like Sanco Moluco, half-blood son of Spanish or Italian and Chesi Molucco. Persian, Turkish and Armenian trade were attracted by precious stones and medicines (Marrison G.E 1955, 1).

In 1670 Sultan Agung handed over a large part of the administration to his son Sultan Abul Nazar (Sultan Haji r.1676 -87) In 1680 Sultan Haji , afraid that his father would

eventually appoint his younger brother as his successor, seized power as a result of compromise policy with VOC. The High Government of VOC sent troops to Banten in 1682 and finally seized Sultan Agung in March 1683. Abul Nazar concluded a treaty with VOC in 1684 according to which the Dutch was granted monopoly on pepper trading in return for continued military assistance. So, since 1682 the Sultanate of Banten lost its diplomatic independence and economic prosperity. Royal power decreased. In 1685 J. van Hoorn was sent to Banten as a representative of VOC.

Besides the abovementioned early letter of 1683, there are ten more documents from Banten in Likhachev's collection. They were composed between the years of 1695 -1709 (OIC 1-6, OIC 9-13, OIC 52). Four of these documents (1699-1709) come from Sultan Abu al-Mahasin and six (1695-1709) from *Pakih Tajoedin*. The letters of Sultan are lavishly decorated and visually impressive. Almost all documents bear the small red wax seals which are typical for Banten. In reports of VOC 'red laquer seals' are mentioned as 'Suruaso seal' as it was different from 'Negeri seals', black ones. Banten had distinctive political culture and the state seals reflect one of the most elaborated regnal system of Malay world (Gallop 2019).

On January, 15 1691 Sultan Haji's Son was installed as Sultan Abu Al-Mahasin Abdul Nasir ('Father of virtues, servant of Helper') but according to VOC accounts five weeks later the king changed the name into '....Zain al-Abidin ('Ornament of the servants of God'). The decorated letters of Sultan Abu al-Mahasin Muhammad Zain al-Abidin (r.1690 - 1733) may be considered as the true jewels in Likhachev's collection (OIC1, 9, 11, and 52). The style of the scripts, Pegon and Jawi, and the decoration of the Malay letters are often refined and sophisticated. They are skillfully written in calligraphic enhancement of the last line and letter heading at the top of the sheet. Some letters remind the *jali-style* calligraphy of Ottoman and Safavid courts' scribes, precisely the manner of using dots to fill in the spaces around the letters (Asmah 2005, 194-233). It is evident that Sultan's

epistles were composed by different scribes. The style-writing of the word 'Sultan' is a distinguished mark of one of him who places the letter 'nun' above the word. Beyond any doubt, the distinctive feature of Banten's documents are expertly-made decorations in floral and foliate illumination. All Sultan's illuminated letters are written on decorated Indian paper.

Noteworthy, that merchant's community of Gujarat had since 1596 its own settlement in Banten (Colombijn 1989, 19–30) and the Gujaratis imported the so-called Indian 'surat' paper to the Banten court. Bantenese masters decorated it with different floral motives. In the art of letter illumination each kind of decoration had its own symbolical meaning (Mu'jizah 2006). Studying correspondence from Banten one cannot help mentioning the investigation made by Indonesian scholar Prof. T. Pujiastuti. It contains detailed description of Banten letters preserved in various world collections. The early Banten Sultans' letters dated back to the 17th century before 1682 are preserved mostly in the Public Record Office of London (twelve letters) and in the Royal Library of Copenhagen (two letters). The investigation by T. Pujiastuti demonstrates that there are no original Banten Sultans' letters, dated to the period of 1682-1781 preserved in the world collections (Pudjiastuti. Titik 2007).

In general, history of Java including Banten were written after the publications of a compilation of VOC records selected by J .K.I. de Jonge (1862). All historians focused on three historical events in Banten: the first – the internal conflict between Sultan Haji (1676- 1687) and his father Sultan Agung Tirtayasa (1651-1682) in 1682-83. Scholars tended to consider the 1682-1750 period as a prosperous era because of the good relationship between Banten and VOC which brought protection for the Sultan against his court rivals and outside enemies. In this sense, the letters by Sultan Abu al-Mahasin Muhammad Zain al-Abidin from Likhachev's collection, written in the period of 1695-1709, are valuable pieces of cultural heritage. They fulfill the lacuna of historical artifacts dated to the long reign of Sultan al-Abidin as well as elucidate the character of his relationships with VOC.

During the years of van Hoorn's service as Governor-General in Batavia one more important treaty was signed. This strengthened the Company's position in Mataram and Madura. The years of 1704-1708 are known in Indonesian history as the first Javanese war for the throne. In the course of this war Pakubuwono I became king (*Susuhunan*) of Mataram in 1705 and signed the new treaty with the Company. According to this treaty Dutch traders were given the monopoly on commercial activities and the eastern part of Madura became the Company's vassal. In Likhachev's collection one can find several significant letters which are the evidence of Van Hoorn's diplomatic contacts with Javanese eminent aristocrats from several courts who played important role in the Javanese policy towards the presence of Dutch on the Archipelago.

Conspicuous fact that van Hoorn's correspondence with Javanese nobility dates back to the period earlier than the treaty between Company and Mataram was signed in 1705. The correspondence dated to the years of 1688-1701 refers to the period of tense relations between VOC and the new court of Kartasura which was established in 1680. The records of this time are not clear but it is supposed that the king of Kartasura Amangkurat II himself took part in the plot against the Company in 1686. As a result 75 European soldiers headed by Captain Francois Tack were attacked by Surapati's Balinese rebellions and killed. In 1690s the relations between Amangkurat II and VOC were gradually restored. The king paid his debts to the Company and in 1696 sent his ambassador to Batavia as well as asked for VOC's military assistance.

Among the correspondents of van Hoorn are persons who played important role in the history of Java like Adipati Djangrana, regent of Surabaya in 1697-1709 (OIC17, letter in Jawi from Surabaya of 1701 written under the name of *Susuhunan* of Kartasura) and *Pangiran* Cakraningrat (fig. 1), the respected and famous among Mataram's court old representative of Javanese nobility (OIC19, letter in Javanese written in Madura in 1704). Noteworthy, that in the end of the 17th century Angabei

Djangrana II and Pangiran Madura expanded their influence over the territories of Eastern Java. The collection also contains one letter written in Jawi by Johan van Hoorn himself, dating back to 1696 and addressed to Pangiran Cakraningrat on Madura. Besides, the collection preserved one letter written by one of the most powerful figures in Mataram, famous statesman and military commander Raden Arya Sindureja (OIC 20). The letter with a large oval red wax seal in the left was written in Javanese script in 1700. Beyond any doubts, these documents are of high cultural value as historical sources and antiquarian rarities.

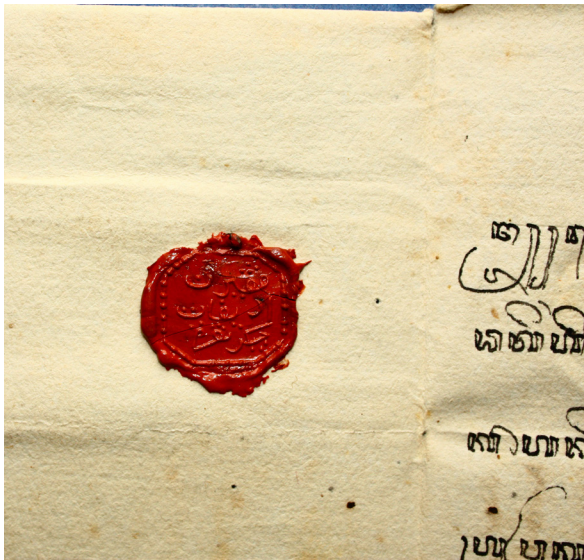


Figure 1. Madura seal 1704 Letter by Pangiran Adipati Cakraningrat
OIC 19 SPb.

The court dynasty of Sultan Sepuh from Cirebon also established close collaborative relationships with VOC officials. Cirebon was one of the oldest Islamic states on Western Java along with Banten. According to the *Da Asia*, a corpus of Portuguese accounts of overseas expedition of Joao de Barros in the 1550-60 and Javanese historical sources (*Sejarah Banten*, *Babad Cirebon*) after the pilgrimage to Mecca, Fatelehan or Maulana Hasanuddin, an Islamic teacher from Pasai arrived

in Cirebon and spread Islam there. Later he became the ruler of Cirebon as Susuhunan Gunung Jati and assigned Cirebon and Banten to his two sons (Mulkhan 2015). Cirebon was a large independent trading port and had commercial relations with Demak and especially, with Malacca. The leader of Javanese settlement in Malacca, Pate Kediri originated from Cirebon. Six wealthy merchants of Cirebon paid him homage as a respected person of this city.

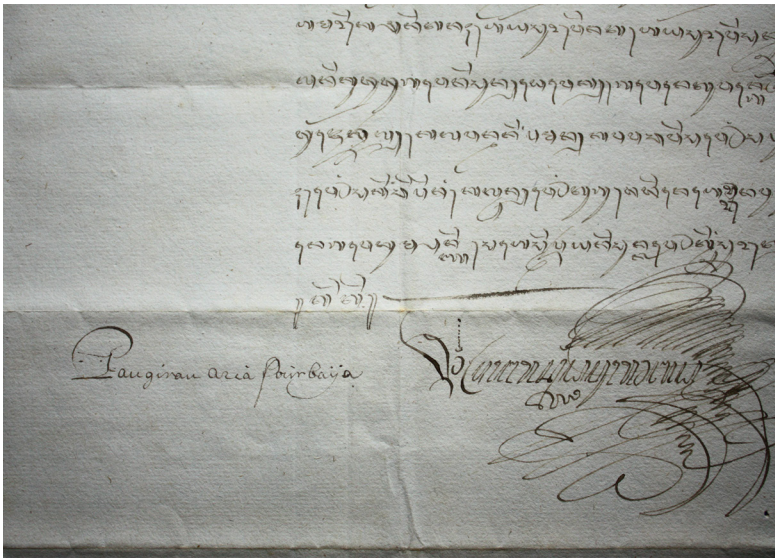


Figure 2. OIC 51 Signature Pangiran Aria Pourbaya Cirebon.

During the history of the relationships of these two states Cirebon always tried to preserve its sovereignty from Banten having got a support from VOC. The Company preferred to take Cirebon under its own protection. In 1680 Cirebon brothers proclaimed their loyalty to the VOC which promptly constructed a fortress called 'de Bescherming' (Protection) there (De Haan 1912, 45). The treaty between VOC and Cirebon was signed on 7, January, 1681 (Dagh-Register 1681, 240–46). *Babad Cirebon* has another version of sailing Cirebon to VOC by Chinese Muslim Aria Celik

(Reksanagara) who was in power in the state at that period of time (Brandes 1911).

Likhachev's collection possesses five letters written by Sultan Sepuh (OIC 14, 1688) Sultan Anom (OIC 15, 16, 50; 1688, 1703) and Pangiran Arya Purbaya (OIC 51, 1686). They are written in Dutch, Jawi and Javanese carakan. Many academic works on the history of Cirebon indicate the collaborative relationships between VOC and the courts' family of Cirebon; however, the content of at least one letter from Likhachev's collection, written by Pangiran Arya Purbaya, is a clear evidence of its ambiguous character. In this letter Pangiran Arya Purbaya expresses his refusal to help Governor-general of VOC in controlling the work on his property in the suburbs of Cirebon (OIC 51) This letter is a distinctive one as it is signed by Pangiran Arya Purbaya in Latin script and in Javanese carakan; there is no seal on this document. (fig. 2).

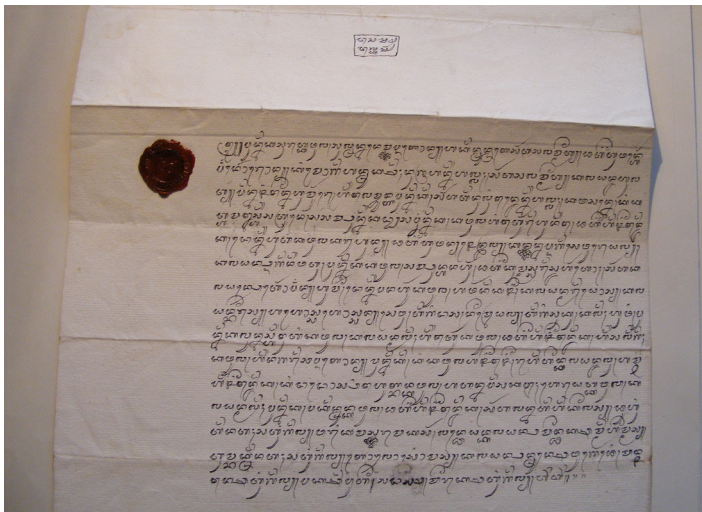


Figure 3. Cirebon OIC 16

The largest portion of letters in Arabic graphic from Likhachev's collection was sent from Sultanate Palembang on Sumatra. Letters in Jawi from Palembang are enumerated by

nine documents (OIC21-29). They were written mostly by the son and successor of Palembang Sultan Abdul Rahman who reigned until his death in 1706 at the age of 123. In fact, since 1694 Sultan Abdul Rahman gave power to one of his sons, Pangiran Arya and in 1700 accorded him the title Pangiran Ratu, indicating that he had been installed above all other princes. In 1701 he was installed as Sultan Ratu Senapati Ingalaga and in 1706 as Sultan Muhammad Mansur. Among these letters two samples were written by Pangiran Arya, one of senior princes, perhaps, the future Sultan Ratu Kamaruddin (r. 1714-1722) and Pangiran Purbaya, son of Sultan Muhammad Mansur. All letters date back to the period between the years of 1700-1709 and possess nine different types of lampblack seals.

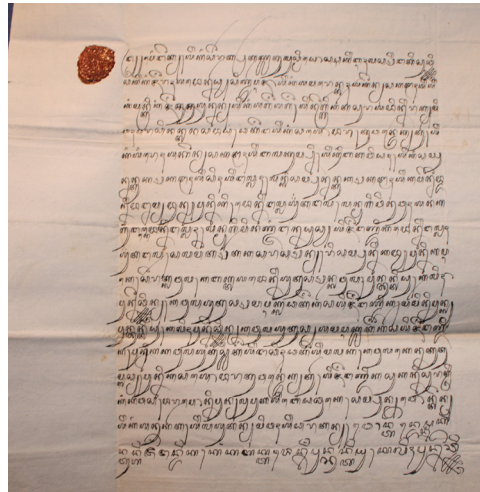


Figure 4. OIC 20.

Among fifty-six documents there are also letters from the Sultans of Malay states Buton, Bima Gowa, Tallo and Wajo. The island of Celebes is represented by four letters from Bone written by the famous Arung Palakka La Tenritatta, Matinroe ri Bantualak (r. 1672-1696) in 1688 (OIC 32) as well as La Patau, Matinroe ri Nagauleng (r.1696-1714) dated to 1703 and Arung

Palakka's wife, the Makassarese princess Sira Daeng Talele Karaeng Ballajawa dated to 1703 and 1709.

Historical development of relationships between VOC and local rulers, their policy and trade as a completely integrated picture proved to be unattainable ideal, owing to the nature of the sources of information and still unpublished VOC records. In this sense the investigation of Van Hoorn – Likhachev collection preserved in St. Petersburg is one more step closing us to the true picture of historical events.

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Supplement 1: Javanese Text (transliteration) and English translation

Letter OIC 16 Likhachev Collection / Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St. Petersburg.

OIC 16 24 x 29 cm; 1f.; 15 l.; Javanese script (carakan); black ink; red oval wax seal in the left with sign 'VOC' in the center and inscriptions in the border in Dutch "DEN WEDEN PRINS VAN SIREBON"; letter-heading in Javanese script; "Alexandria paper" with watermark "Strasburg Lily" with monogram "WR". and "4" Letter from Sultan Anom of Cirebon to the Director-General in Batavia Johan van Hoorn; received: inscription in rumi (Dutch) - van Sultan Anom¹⁵ van Sirebon 1688.

Transliteration:

Wa al-shams wa al-qamar

// Punika surat kawula / Sultan Nanom Carebon / Akintun tabé sarta salamet / Dhateng Tuwan Hérvanoron / Kang mogia antuk sih nugrahaning Allah / Sarta salamet / Kalawan daulat / Pinanjangna umuré / Ing ngalam dunya puniki / Sarta tinulungan déning Allah / Kawasané / Kangkat amales ing satruné / Sasampun ning kadya saprenika [sareng nika] / Kawula angaturi uninga / Dhateng i[ng] jeng ngandika / Déning utang kawula karuhun / Dateng Tuwan Jendral / Kancana regi séwu reyál / Kalawan regining watu / Punika kawula / Sampun anaur / Dhateng Kumasaris Daharboh / Sarta kalawan Pétor Van / Umer / Déning panaur kawula / Awarni kajeng / Kalawan mariyos / Kalayan beras / Aos-saos / Séwu tigang dasa / Nemréyal / Tigang suku / Kalih uwang / Punika lunas ing ngutang kawula / Kalayan malih ing ngatur kawula / Dhateng i[ng] jeng ngandika / Ing salinggihi kawula / Ing nagari Carebon / Puniki / Kang kawula ajeng-ngajeng / Réhiten kalawan dalu / Amung i[ng] jeng ngandika / Kang dados pangauban kawula / Dhateng i[ng] jeng ngandika / Sarta lan mali

15 Sultan Anom – d. 1703 (title 'Anom' – 'the younger')

*ikelas/Dhuhung tinatah satunggil/Warangka mas cara Makasar
/ Landhéyan kalayan pamendhak sami emas / Tumbak tinatah
satunggil / Bolosong mas / Kalayan pancuran séwu gédhéng /
Manjangan satunggil / Paksi Puter / Sadasa / Merak satunggil /
Titi//*

English Translation:

By the Sun and the Moon

This is the letter from your servant; Sultan Anom in Cirebon conveys respectful greetings and prosperity to Sir van Hoorn. Let Allah Ta'ala grant to Your Excellency prosperity and justice, long days of the life, His support and His Almighty protection against your enemies.

Besides, your servant intends to tell Your Excellency that the debt of your servant equal to 1,000 golden reyal¹⁶, estimated as one stone, has been already reimbursed to Commissar Daharboh and Sir Peter van Umer. The same regards to the debt of your servant which were paid by wood mariyos, rice of good quality and money of 36, 000 reyal by coins of three values. All these staff has been already repaid for the debt of your servant to Your Excellency.

Furthermore, your servant trusts his fate in the land of Cirebon to Your Excellency during all days and nights. Your servant always believes that Your Excellency becomes the only one protector of his servant's land. Your Servant also sincerely donate a gilded keris¹⁷ in a pair with a golden sheath in Makassar style and hilt made of gold as well as a gilded spear together with a golden sheath decorated by a pattern of rice sheaves; in addition, a deer, ten white birds and one bird of red color. The end.

16 Reyal –one of the most widely used coin in Indian Ocean trade in the 17-18th centuries; there were different kinds of reyal : golden and Spanish silver reyal, the so-called ‘reyal of eight’

17 Keris – traditional Malay weapon/ dagger with flame- formed blade

Supplement 2: Javanese Text (transliteration) and Indonesian translation

Letter OIC 20, Likhachev's Collection / Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St.Petersburg.

30 x 41 cm; 1f; 17 l.; black ink; Javanese script (carakan); red wax oval seal in the left; Dutch paper with watermark: "Coat-of-Arms" - arms of Amsterdam and countermark "B". Letter from Raden Aria Sindureja Cirebon under the name of Raja Kartasura Diningrat to the Director-General in Batavia Johan van Hoorn; received: inscription in rumi (Dutch) - van Raden Aria Sirebon Radja voor Kartasoura Diningrat ontf. Batavia 13 July 1700;

Transliteration:

// Péngget / Ingkang serat tandha tulus miyos saking ihlasing
ngati suci saking Kangjeng Rahadén Harywa Sindureja
/ Ingkang amaréntahaken sakathahing ingkang mantri
Kangjeng Susuhunan ingkang ageng-ageng ing negri Kartasura
Hadiningrat miwah para sinantana sadaya / Dhatenga
ingkang saodhara / Tuwan Dréktur / Ingkang iréhaken
sakathahing bala Kumpeni / Ing ku Batawiyah / Ingkang
sampun tuk sakathahing sihing Ngallah / Lan kang sampun
antuk sakathahing kapanedaning dalem dunya puniki / Déning
Allah Hutangalla / Lan mugi winuwuhana kagungane déning
Ngallah / Lan mugi pinanjangana yuswa ijeng ngandika déning
Ngallah Hutangala / Salamet sarta kasarasan / Ni sampuning
kadya punika reké / Serat kawula / Kabaktaha déning utusan
kawula / Pun Buntiyu kalih pun Necin / Kawula utus mareka
dhateng karsa ijeng ngandika / Marmi nipun kapun Buntiyu
/ Kalih pun necin / Kawula utus marek dhateng karsa ijeng
ngandika / Punika kawula utus dhateng ing ngasih dhateng
ing Malaka / Kawula kén matumbas / Punika saodara Tuwan
Draktur / Ijeng ngandika sukani surat ingkang kawasa /
Darapon nipun luputa ing béya cuké / Sampun wonten ingkang

*anukarta / ing lautan miwah ing daratan / Wonten déning
pakintun ijeng ngandika / Kang kabakta déning pun Buntiyu /
Kalih pun Neci//*

Indonesian Translation:

Agar diingat. Surat ini adalah sebagai tanda tulus ikhlas yang keluar dari hati yang suci daripada Kanjeng Raden Harya Sindureja, yang memerintahkan kepada para mantri daripada Kanjeng Susuhunan Yang Agung di Negara Kartasura Hadiningrat, juga kepada semua para sentana. Datanglah kepada saudara Tuan Direktur yang mengendalikan semua para serdadu Kompeni yang berkedudukan di Batavia, yang telah mendapatkan kasih sayang dari Allah dan telah mendapatkan apa yang dimintanya selama di dalam dunia ini, telah terkabulkan oleh Allah Yang Maha Tinggi, dan semoga dicurahkanlah keagungannya oleh Allah, semoga dipanjangkan umur bagi tuan oleh Allah Yang Maha Tinggi, serta selamat dan sehat wal'afiat.

Setelah seperti yang sudah disebutkan, surat hamba dibawa oleh utusan hamba yaitu Si Buntiyu dan Si Ecin. Keduanya hamba utus agar menghadap kepada Paduka Tuan, sebab mereka berdua hamba utus kehadiran Paduka Tuan ialah karena Si Buntiyu dan Si Ecin hamba perintahkan supaya datang ke Malaka untuk membeli barang-barang kebutuhan di sana.

Demikianlah Saudara Tuan Direktur, supaya Paduka Tuan memberikan surat kuasa kepada keduanya dimaksudkan supaya tidak terkena biaya pajak, dan juga agar jangan sampai ada yang mengganggu baik di lautan ataupun di daratan. Itu semua disebabkan oleh surat kuasa Paduka Tuan yang dibawakan kepada Si Buntiyu dan Si Ecin.

