

Gold-Leaf Flattery, Calcuttan Dust, and a Brand New Flagpole

Five Little-Known VOC Collections in Asia on India and Ceylon

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Beside the records of the Dutch East India Company (or VOC) stored at the Netherlands National Archives in The Hague,¹ there are various VOC collections kept in Asia that pertain to India and Ceylon. Some of these are relatively well-known: the “Dutch Records” in the Tamil Nadu Archives (Chennai); the records of the VOC government of Ceylon in the Sri Lanka National Archives (Colombo); the records of the Dutch Reformed Church of Ceylon at the Wolvendaal Church (Colombo); and the records of the Asian VOC headquarters at Batavia in the National Archives of Indonesia (Jakarta).²

In the past few years, several other all but unknown Dutch record collections concerning India and Ceylon have been identified in India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. These “newly found” collections have remained virtually untouched so far, even though they are in fact relatively easily accessible.³ Most of these records are unique and they comprise interesting materials which, for instance, complement Dutch documents elsewhere, include texts in South Asian languages, or are visually attractive. This paper briefly introduces five of those collections⁴ in the hope of stimulating researchers to explore these materials and remove the dust that quite literally covers some of them. In addition, the appendix includes a brief description of a collection of microfilms kept in New Delhi of a very important set of VOC sources in the Netherlands concerning India.

Dutch Records, Regional Archives Ernakulam (Kochi)

The Regional Archives Ernakulam (a branch office of the Kerala State Archives) in Kochi,⁵ formerly known as Cochin, keeps a number of collections that are relevant with regard to the presence of the VOC on India’s south-western Malabar Coast. Cochin was the headquarters of the VOC establishment of Malabar, but the documents described here do not seem to derive directly from the VOC administration.⁶

Most important is the collection of “Dutch records” dating from the period ca. 1693-1815, which consists of about 120 documents (numbered D 1 to D 65) and covers about 0.25 linear metres of shelf space. The collection is described (occasionally incorrectly) in a typescript catalogue, entitled “Manuscript Records” (on pp.

9-11), that includes several other collections of materials in a number of Indian and European languages.

The collection of “Dutch records” consists of letters that appear to originate from the archives of the kings of Cochin, and of various Dutch papers the provenance of which is unclear.⁷ The materials include correspondence between the Cochin kings and the VOC (chiefly the governor-general and council at Batavia) and miscellaneous documents, in particular acknowledgements and declarations of a judicial and mercantile nature. The latter papers are probably for the most part unique and may have been kept throughout the years by various Indian and British parties because of their judicial relevance. The bulk of the materials concern Malabar and date from the eighteenth century. Many documents contain short sections or notes in Malayalam, Kannada, Gujarati, Persian, Portuguese, English, or French, and some are written entirely in Portuguese. Also included are a few Portuguese letters of which the connection with the Dutch presence in Malabar is not clear. Most materials are accompanied by English translations dating from the colonial period. While some documents are damaged, the physical condition of the collection is generally reasonable.

Many of the letters from the governor-general and council to the kings of Cochin are beautifully decorated with gold-leaf floral patterns (bound together in one album), which makes them unique. While contemporary but undecorated copies of the letters are available elsewhere,⁸ these valuable documents must have been the original letters sent to the kings and were certainly meant to impress, honour, and flatter them.

The following is a summary and incomplete survey of the documents:

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| D 1-10, 12-13 | Acknowledgements of debt and of the receipt of money, rice, and pepper, drawn up at Cochin, Cannanore, Chetwai, and Surat, involving “Malpa Pooij,” “Beccatas Poy,” “Venidas Ternagerdas,” P. Lindzaij, Adam van der Duijn, Barend Ketel, Alexander Hamilton, Sara Fleck, and Jan Star, among many others, ca. 1704-19. With notes in Malayalam, Kannada, and Gujarati. |
| D 11, 16-18 | Correspondence between the kings of Cochin and the VOC (and the Dutch states-general and Prince of Orange), including condolences on the death of a former king and queen and pleas for Dutch military assistance, ca. 1694-1784. Partly in Portuguese, with notes in Malayalam. |
| D 14, 45 | Financial accounts, partly drawn up at Cochin, involving “Malpa Pooij,” Jan Star, and the king of Cochin, ca. 1717-19. |
| D 19, 25 | Deeds of mercantile partnership and the transfer of a garden, involving Ezekiel, “Wengatessa,” “Deiwa Naijagen,” “Jogia Porboe,” “Camottij van Angecarrio,” and “Malpa Pooij,” 1700-14, 1729. With a note in Kannada. |
| D 26, 31, 52-53, 63 | Declarations on the receipt or claims of money, the sale of sandalwood, and the transfer of villages, partly drawn up at Cochin, involving “Wengatessa Pooij,” the king of Cochin, “Pinnen Pooij” (son of “Malpa Pooij”), “Anta Chittij,” and some British traders, 1718-22, 1736-40. Partly in Malayalam, with a note in Kannada. |
| D 27 | Letter by J. Span (?) to <i>Vaandrig</i> Ketting (?) concerning complaints by the king of Cochin about Ketting’s unwillingness to have military |

Letter from Governor-General Abraham Patras and Council at Batavia to the King of Cochin, October 1736, with gold-leaf floral decorations. (Regional Archives Ernakulam, Dutch records, no. D 64, no. 3. Photograph by Bauke van der Pol.)



- exercises early in the morning, 1794.
- D 29, 32, 44, 61 Correspondence between the VOC and the kings of Cochin, including a plea for Dutch military assistance against Calicut and the British, and complaints about the treatment of Indian merchants, 1694, 1784, 1791. Partly in Portuguese and Persian, with a note in Malayalam.
- D 36, 40 Correspondence between the VOC, *Paliyatthu* "Comi" of "Perumbadapil," Galtis Richters, and "Malp," 1701, 1708. Partly in Portuguese.
- D 41 Letter from Friederich Schallis and Jan Sall at Trissur (?), serving in the army of the king of Cochin, complaining about the way they are treated during the king's absence, 1794.
- D 42-43, 54, 56-58 Acknowledgements of the receipt of money, gold, and a bill of exchange, partly drawn up at Cochin, involving Mr Pauswijn, "Rhamaijen Chettij," Laprairic, "Mallepar," Pieter Moringh, "Malpa Rooij," and the Dutch Reformed Church, 1705, 1718-19, 1726, 1790, 1800. Partly in French, with notes in Kannada.
- D 50 Letter from M.D. van der Sloot to the king of Cochin, presenting him with a puppy, 1803.
- D 62 License to the king of Cochin to have his vessel call at ports in Coromandel and Bengal, with seal and list of merchandise, 1793.
- D 64 Album containing 21 letters exchanged between the governor-general at Batavia and the king of Cochin, concerning Dutch-Cochin relations, debts, gifts, successions, Malabar politics, Tipu Sultan, Cochin's population, fortifications, etc., with gold-leaf floral decorations and seals, ca. 1706-89. Partly in Portuguese and Malayalam.
- D 65 Album containing 30 deeds, acts, and declarations issued by the VOC, concerning the ownership and transfer of land, houses, and capital, and the transport of merchandise, with seals, drawn up at Cochin and Quilon, involving Dutchmen and Indians from various places, including Ezekiel Rabbi and other Jews, King Rama Varma of Cochin, Jan Lambertus van Spall, and several Indian Muslims, Christians, and Hindus, ca. 1704-1805. With notes in Malayalam.

A few other collections in the Regional Archives Ernakulam concern the Dutch presence in Malabar as well. One of these is the treaty collection, which comprises 26 treaties concluded by the kings of Cochin with the Dutch and the British. Most are in Malayalam, but numbers T 12 and T 15 to 17 (from 1666, 1684, 1698 and 1717) are partly in Dutch. Other collections with non-Dutch documents pertaining to the VOC or translations of VOC materials include the "Konkani records," records of the *Paliyatthu Achan*, "Malayalam records," "Jewish records," "English records," palm-leaf materials, and copper-plate inscriptions.

Dutch *Pattas*, State Archives of West Bengal (Kolkata)

The collection of "Dutch *pattas*" at the State Archives of West Bengal in Kolkata (Calcutta)⁹ appears to derive directly from the archives of the VOC's Bengal establishment. The materials date from the years 1702-1825, consist of 10 inventory numbers, and cover around 2 linear metres of shelf space. They are described in the *Guide to the Records in the State Archives of West Bengal, Part I: 1758-1858* (published in 1977), pp. 174, 179-80.

The ten bundles together consist of at least 1,500 (perhaps 5,000) single-sheet documents concerning leases of plots of land by the VOC at Chinsura—the Dutch headquarters in Bengal near Hooghly—to various (Indian) individuals in the Chinsura area. The collection is probably entirely unique. The materials mostly date from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and continue through the various temporary British takeovers of Chinsura between 1781 and 1817. In or around 1825, the documents must have been separated from the other VOC records and transferred to the British, probably because the leases in question were still active at that time. Thus, they constitute a whole with the Dutch records of Bengal kept at the Tamil Nadu Archives in Chennai¹⁰ and the archives of Bengal at the National Archives in The Hague that are referred to as *Bescheiden der voormalige Nederlandsche bezittingen in Voor-Indië*.¹¹

The land leases (or “*pattas*”) are individually numbered from 1 to 5166, with several gaps, suggesting that the collection is incomplete. Each grant mentions the leaseholder, location and size of the land, and lease price, both in Dutch and Bengali. The documents often have notes verso in Persian and Bengali, and occasionally bear Persian and Dutch stamps. Probably because of their judicial value, short English summaries made by British colonial authorities have been added to each document. Apparently for the same reason, the materials were conserved at some point, as a result of which their physical condition is still rather good. However, the thick and persistent layers of dust on the covers of the volumes strongly support the assumption that these records have hardly ever been touched by scholars.

Galle Books, Christian Reformed Church (Colombo)

The main office of the Christian Reformed Church of Sri Lanka—the current incarnation of the erstwhile Dutch Reformed Church on Ceylon—at Colombo¹² keeps two collections part of which date from the period of the VOC’s presence on Ceylon, when the Company supervised the activities of the church.

Most prominent is the collection of the so-called “Galle books,” which comprise roughly 80 volumes (without consistent numeration) and cover the period from 1677 up to the present. It consists of several kinds of registers of the Dutch Reformed Church at Galle and Matara. (The Wolvendaal Church in Colombo keeps materials that mostly derive from the Colombo Consistory.)¹³ No inventory or other finding aid of the materials is available. The documents seem to be unique. Some of the materials are heavily damaged. In the future, the collection may be transferred to the Wolvendaal Church.

Below follow summarised descriptions of those materials dating from the VOC period and its immediate aftermath. In addition, the collection includes several nineteenth-century baptismal and marriage registers that may partly be in Dutch.

- Baptismal register of Galle, 1677-1807.
- Marriage registers of Galle, 1744-1847 (5 vols.). Partly in English.
- Alphabetical index to the marriage registers of Galle, 1748-1833.
- Funeral register of Galle, 1806-47. Partly in English.
- Church member register of Galle, 1770-1840s.
- Baptismal register of Matara, 1776-1800.

Cupboard including the collection of Galle church books at the main office of the Christian Reformed Church at Colombo. (Photograph by the author.)



In addition, the main office of the Christian Reformed Church keeps a collection of deeds of plots of land owned by the church, dating from 1792 to the present and covering about half a linear metre of shelf space. One of the deeds concerns a land plot at Bambalapitiya (Colombo), including a plan of the plot, signed by the VOC's judicial council at Colombo in 1792.

Dutch Manuscripts, Colombo National Museum

The library of the Colombo National Museum¹⁴ includes a small collection of "Dutch manuscripts," partly deriving from Louis Nell, deputy queen's advocate in British-ruled Ceylon. It consists of around 25 miscellaneous items (some of them published works), which date from the years ca. 1660-1820 and are accessible through a card-tray index. Part of the materials may be unique.

Below follows an abridged and incomplete survey of the manuscripts:

- 6/C 1-2, 6-9 Final reports (*memorie van overgave*) of departing governors of Colombo and *commandeurs* of Jaffna, including Hendrik Zwaardcroon, 1697; Julius Valentijn Stein van Gollonnesse, 1751; Thomas van Rhee, 1697; Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff, 1740; Laurens Pijl, 1692; and Anthony Paviljoen, 1665.
- 6/C 3 Instructions to the *dessave* of Colombo, 1707.
- 6/C 4 Letters from Governor Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff to the Gentlemen XVII, 1736-39.
- 6/C 10 Proceedings (*recapitulatoire besoigne*) of Colombo, 1740.
- 6/C 13, 29 Dutch translations of a Sinhalese document on Buddhism and of a deed of the king of Kandy concerning a gift of land (Colombo?) to the Portuguese in 1580.
- 6/C 14 Inventory of the Dutch archives at Colombo, 1796.
- 6/C 15 Copies of a grant of paddy land at the village of "Pellegore" for cultivation, to the Javanese "Joeatoerna," with seal, 1751.
- 6/C 16 English translation of the regulations for the orphan or deacon "house" of Colombo, 1758, with appendices.
- 6/C 25 English translations of letters concerning trade with Batavia and other establishments, made in support of the claim that the VOC excludes foreigners from trading with their settlements in times of peace, 1760-95.
- 6/C 26 Miscellaneous Dutch and British manuscripts, including surveys of Ceylonese living in VOC-ruled areas, the administrative division of the Jaffna *commandement*, criminal cases at Colombo in the years 1785-94, and a history (incomplete) of the origin of the Ceylonese (translated from Portuguese).
- 6/C 27 Report concerning a translation of the Old Testament into Tamil, by the Reverend Philippus de Melho, with English letters by De Melho and M. Ondaatje at Jaffna, 1784.
- 6/C 30 Various papers concerning the mission of Fredrik Jakob Billing to Kandy, 1782.
- 6/C 31; O 16 Treatises concerning the religion of the Kandyans, undated, and elephants on Ceylon, by provisional *Commandeur* Cornelis Taaij van Wesel of Galle, 1713.

Buitenland Collection, National Archives of Indonesia (Jakarta)

Apart from the well-known archives of the governor-general and council at Batavia

and several other central VOC institutions,¹⁵ the National Archives of Indonesia at Jakarta keeps a number of collections that partially date from the VOC period and focus on particular regions or subjects.¹⁶ Many of these collections include miscellaneous VOC documents. One of them is the so-called *buitenland* (“abroad” or “foreign countries”) collection, which concerns most of the VOC establishments outside present-day Indonesia. Dating from the mid-17th century to 1863, the collection consists of 208 inventory numbers (with many of these subdivided) and covers an estimated 8 linear metres of shelf space. It has been described—in Bahasa Indonesia—in a typescript catalogue titled “Inventaris Arsip Buitenland” (access no. K.48), which unfortunately is occasionally incorrect or incomplete and seems rather inconsistent in its archival terminology. The numeration of the documents is also somewhat confused at times, with entirely different folders being designated with the same inventory number.

The bulk consists of documents received from India and Ceylon, many of which—foremost those from Coromandel, the Fishery Coast, and Bengal—appear to be unique. These include many texts in various South Asian languages, particularly Tamil and Telugu, and to a lesser extent Bengali, Persian, and Marathi. Most of the relevant materials date from the decades around 1800 and provide details on the last phase of the Dutch presence in south and east India (which lasted until 1825). For the settlements of Sadras and Pulicat in this period, partially consecutive series of certain types of documents—such as correspondence and proceedings—can be reconstructed. It is unclear whether these documents were sent to Batavia as correspondence and appendices while the Dutch settlements in India were still maintained (meaning they would actually belong to the archives of the governor-general and council), or were only shipped to Batavia as “defunct” administration after these settlements were abandoned (in which case they would belong to the archives of those settlements).

Below follows a selective and summarised survey of the documents, arranged by VOC establishment:

General

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| 11. a, c; 205 | Correspondence between Batavia and several European powers, including the British at Madras, Balasore, Surat, and Ceylon, 1753-61, 1787, 1793, 1805-08. Partly in French and English. |
| 109.a | Proposed agreement between Haider Ali Khan and the French concerning Coromandel (?), and the final report of <i>Directeur</i> Cornelis van Citters Aarnoutzoon of Bengal, with appendices, 1795. Partly in English and Latin. |
| 109.g-h | Correspondence and other papers from Coromandel and the Fishery Coast (Tuticorin, Manapadu) on various matters, including the transfer of settlements by the British and ecclesiastical matters at Colombo, 1818-25. Partly in Tamil. |
| 110.a | Correspondence of the Bengal, Coromandel, Ceylon, Malabar, Surat, and Persia establishments concerning coinage, 1730-63. |
| 111.b; 179.m | Instructions to J.A. van Braam and Johan Jacob Hoff concerning the takeover of the possessions in India from the British, with appendices, 1817-24, and other papers of Braam concerning Coromandel and Malabar, date unknown. |

- 111.c, e, g-i Correspondence and other papers between Tuticorin, Sadras, and the British, partly about the transfer of settlements to the British, 1818-25.
- 120-22; 125.a-b Letters of Tuticorin, with appendices, including correspondence with Sadras, Manapadu, Cape Comorin, and the Archbishop of Goa, 1819-25. Partly in Tamil, English, and Portuguese.
- 133 Letters received at Colombo from various places, including Jaffna, Galle, Tuticorin, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Batticaloa, Mannar, Kalpitiya, Matara, Chilaw, Pulicat, Tranquebar, Cochin, Hooghly, and Delft Island, 1792-95. Partly in Tamil, English, and German.
- 167 Advice of Governor Jacob Mossel of Coromandel concerning trade and monetary matters in Coromandel, Ceylon, and India's west coast, 1739.
- 168 British correspondence between Java, Bombay, Madras, and elsewhere in India, 1811-16. In English.
- 171.b Proceedings of Sadras, 1822; papers of Tuticorin, 1822. Partly in Tamil and English (two separate folders with the same number).
- 184.l Diary of a tour of Governor Van Imhoff of Ceylon to Cochin, Travancore, Madurai, Tuticorin, Kilakkarai, Jaffna, and Mannar, with index and annexes, 1739.

Surat

- 138.d Report on accusations of secretary Kuper at Surat, 1803.
- 187.1-5 Various cash books and ledgers, 1795-98, 1823.
- 188 Papers concerning the estate of bookkeeper Abraham Witboom, 1741-42. Including signatures in Gujarati.
- 189 Collection of translated *farmans* and other agreements with the Mughals in the period 1618-1729.

Malabar

- 181.a Account books and ledgers of Cochin, 1784-93.
- 183.1-8 Miscellaneous papers on various subjects, including trade, commerce, shipbuilding, forestry, tool production, clothing, and food, 1790-94.
- 184.2-5; 185.1-3 Final reports of departing *commandeurs*, including Julius Valentijn Stein van Gollonnesse, 1743; Frederik Cunes, 1756; Godefridus Weyerman, 1765; Cornelis Breekpot, 1769; Adriaan Moens, 1781; Johan Gerard van Angelbeek, 1793; and a secret letter by Moens to Batavia, 1793.
- 186 Notes of Hendrik Zwaardcroon concerning various topics, including Malabar opium, liquor, Cochin and its rulers, VOC servants, trade, and fortifications, ca. 1720 (?).

Ceylon, including the Indian Fishery Coast

- 136.a-d, f; 138.b;
- 142.b Various papers on the (improvement of) fortifications at Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee, and Fort Oostenburg, by C.F. Reimer, E. (?) Paravicini de Capelli, and others, partly with plans, 1785-87, 1794.
- 136.e Collection of notarial acts, 1732.
- 138.a Letters from various people on Ceylon, including Jacob Burnand, Henricus Volraad von Sohsten, and Gerrit Franken, with appendices, 1780s-1807.
- 138.c Treatise (*deductie*) by Philippus de Melho, preacher at Jaffna, 1778.
- 138.e Papers concerning the taxing of coconut trees, including lists of gardens, 1797. Partly in English.

- 138.f Note concerning the cinnamon trade on Ceylon, 1793.
- 138.g Papers concerning a disagreement with the British about the right to collect textiles on the Fishery Coast, including correspondence between Colombo and Tuticorin, and with the Nawab of Arcot, 1794; letter from Batavia to the King of Kandy, 1767 (two separate folders with the same number).
- 138.h-i, l Correspondence with the British (in Rangoon and elsewhere) and the French, 1785-88, 1796. Partly in English.
- 138.j Miscellaneous papers concerning the surrender of Ceylon to the British. Partly in English and French.
- 138.k Daily reports of Colombo, 1796.
- 138.m Letter from Cape Comorin, 1796.
- 138.n Registers concerning the transfer of archives from the judicial council at Colombo, 1797.
- 138.o Papers concerning exiled nobility (*staatsbannelingen*) from the Indonesian archipelago, 1807-08. Partly in English.
- 142.a; 144-45;
- 146.b Reports, proceedings of the church council, and correspondence between (the church councils at) Colombo, Galle, Matara, and Batavia, with appendices, 1646-1741, 1754-63, 1773-89.
- 143 Description (*landbeschrijving*) of Ceylon, 1744.

Coromandel

- 109.b, e, g; 117;
- 118.b; 172.c Proceedings of Sadras, 1818, 1820, 1822-24, with appendices. Partly in English (see also nos. 113-14; 118.a; 171.b).
- 109.c-d, f; 111.a, f;
- 126; 169.b; 172.a;
- 173.b-s; 174-75;
- 177-78; 179.a, k Correspondence between Pulicat, Sadras, Jagannathapuram, Porto Novo, Palakollu, Bimlipatam, Erikan, and Batavia, and with the British at Madras, Chingleput, Rajahmundry, Masulipatam, and Visakhapatnam, and (the French at?) Yanam, with appendices, 1788-1825. Partly in Telugu, Tamil, English, and French (see also nos. 113-14; 118.a). Including:
- 126 Containing a drawing of a new flagpole to be erected at Palakollu, ca. 1820.
- 177 Containing plans of the ground at Pulicat belonging to Pieter Emanuel van Hogendorp, ca. 1822.
- 178 Containing lists of children at Pulicat vaccinated against cowpox, ca. 1824.
- 113-14 Proceedings and/or correspondence of Sadras, 1819-20.
- 118.a Various papers concerning lease matters in and around Sadras, ca. 1819-25, letters of Sadras, with appendices, 1822-24, proceedings of Sadras, 1821, 1825, bookkeeping of Sadras, 1823. Partly in English.
- 150.a Secret proceedings of Pulicat (?), concerning the activities of chief Willem Hendrik van Byland of Jagannathapuram, with appendices, 1789.
- 150.b Correspondence of Jan Daniel Symons, second at Sadras, with Nagappattinam, Batavia, and various ships, with appendices, 1761-73.
- 150.e Treaties concluded with Tanjavur, with appendices, 1679-91.
- 150.i Secret (?) memorandum of Governor Pieter Haksteen to Reynier van Vlissingen, 1771.

- 150.j Letters of P.C. Muratel (merchant in Nagappattinam?) to Batavia (?), 1773-74.
- 150.l Letters of complaint from inhabitants of Palakollu, 1791. Partly in Telugu (possibly bound with no. 189).
- 158, 161-62 Final reports of departing governors, including Elias Guilot, 1738; Jacob Mossel, 1743; and Galenus Mersen, 1748.
- 165 Correspondence with various courts, including Arcot, Tanjavur, and the Marathas (at Pune and elsewhere), including letters with gold-leaf decorations, 1788-92. Partly in Marathi (Modi), Persian, and Telugu.
- 166 Collection of translated *farmans* and other agreements concluded in Coromandel (including Madurai, Adrangapatnam, Ramnad, and Mughal-ruled areas) in the period 1612-1753, including drawings of three seals of Mughal rulers.
- 169.g Letters to Governor Nicolaas Tadema and merchant P.E. van Halm (?) from VOC servants (?) and indigenous inhabitants of Jagannathapuram, 1790. Partly in Telugu?
- 170.a-b Report of merchant W.H. van Bijland chiefly concerning the factories in Coromandel, and papers concerning Van Bijland's possible fraud during his term as chief at Jagannathapuram, all with appendices, 1791.
- 171.b Proceedings of Sadras, 1822; papers (*boeken*) of Tuticorin, 1822. Partly in Tamil and English (two separate folders with the same number).
- 171.c Papers concerning the bankruptcy of the trade firm of John de Vries & Co. at Madras, 1820. Partly in English.
- 171.e Letters from the Nagappattinam church council to the Batavia church council, 1737-83.
- 171.f Extract of the Nagappattinam diary, proceedings, and other papers concerning ecclesiastical matters involving the preacher Macxwel, 1675-76.
- 172.b Correspondence from Masulipatam, Pulicat, and Nagappattinam to Batavia, 1652-1736.
- 173.a Defence by resident P.E. van Hogendorp of Pulicat against *opperhoofd* (chief) T.E. van Regel of Sadras concerning the legacy of Jan Obdam, former resident at Pulicat, 1818.
- 179.b, d-h Cash books and other financial surveys of Sadras, Pulicat, and Jagannathapuram, ca. 1761-62, 1786-90, 1819. Missing at the time of research.
- 179.c List of Dutchmen in Madras, with appendices, 1817-18. In English. Missing at the time of research.
- 179.j Papers concerning criminal cases in Pulicat, 1819. Missing at the time of research.
- 179.l List of merchandise from Sadras. Partly in Tamil. Missing at the time of research.
- 179.n Report by J.A. van Braam concerning the transfer of land, 1819. Missing at the time of research.
- 207.(a?) Letter to Batavia by a Dutch prisoner at Madras, mostly concerning the VOC's trade in Coromandel, date unknown (ca. 1781?).
- 207.b Various papers, including correspondence, declarations, petitions, accounts, lists, and acts, drawn up or received at Nagappattinam, Sadras, and Madras, partly concerning the British takeover of VOC settlements and former Governor Reynier van Vlissingen, 1781-82. Partly in English.

Bengal

- 51 Secret notes and other papers, including letters to commanders Willem Burghgraef, Simon van den Bergh, and Harman Voet of warships in the Ganges River, residents Jan Pietersoon and Hugo van der Meer at Balasore, and others, 1693-98.
- 55; 61-66; 70-83 Secret proceedings, partly with appendices, including correspondence with various Nawabs, Jahan Khan Bahadur, local officials, Robert Clive, and other British officials at Calcutta, ca. 1750-90. Partly in English
- 58; 60; 84.d-e Secret correspondence between Bengal and Batavia, with appendices, including correspondence (partly in secret code) and agreements with Patna, Cossimbazar, Dhaka, various Nawabs, local authorities, the British at Calcutta, the French at Chandernagore and Pondicherry, and the Ostend Company, ca. 1729-77. Partly in Persian, English, and French.
- 84.a; 88; 89.b;
109.a Final reports of departing directors, including Jan Albert Sichterman, 1743; Louis Taillefert, 1755; and Cornelis van Citters Aarnoutszoon, 1795; partly with appendices. Partly in English and Latin.
- 85.b Memorandum (?) of Director Anthony Huysman to "Yosephat Peesch," 1711.
- 89.a; 110.c-d Correspondence between Bengal and Batavia, with appendices, 1795-1803.
- 91-93 Account books, 1784-94.
- 94 Collection of translated *farmans* and other agreements concluded by the VOC in Bengal in the period 1619-1752.
- 96.a Letters from Lord Minto at Calcutta to Lieutenant-General Thomas Stamford Raffles in Batavia concerning creditors and various orders for supply, 1812. In Dutch (apparently translated).
- 96.b-c Treaties with the British and the French in Bengal, 1742, 1787.
- 97 Instructions concerning trade, 1687.
- 99 Papers concerning bills of exchange for Bengal, partly concerning the British, ca. 1780-85, and appendices to a memorandum of Director Johannes Bacheracht concerning revenues (*peskas*) in Patna, including proceedings and correspondence between Hooghly, Patna, Cossimbazar, and the EIC in Calcutta, 1757-74. Partly in English.
- 100-101; 110.b Various papers concerning the duties of VOC personnel in Bengal, partly by Director Louis Taillefert, 1755.
- 104 Memorandum by the French Governor Chevalier of Bengal, including a declaration to the inhabitants of Chinsura, 1788.
- 105.a Bonds (*geroyeerde obligaties*) issued by the VOC at Hooghly, including various seals, 1786-87. Partly in Bengali.
- 105.b Papers of "Jeddonaat Mokerdja Birsjkiswer Boos" and "Bhowanie Porsaat Souwm" (?) concerning the case of Hamilton and Firetta (at Calcutta?) against "Ram Kanto Mitter" and "Goluk Tjend Mitter," 1787. Partly in Persian script (Bengali text?), with Persian seals.
- 105.c; 108; 111.b Various papers concerning the takeover of Chinsura and Falta (and other places?) by the British, 1781, 1795, and their return to the Dutch in 1817-24. Partly in Bengali, Persian, and English.
- 111.d Letter from Chinsura to Batavia concerning possessions in Balasore, with appendices, 1821, and diary of Chinsura, 1818.

Appendix

OBP Microfilms, National Archives of India (New Delhi)

The National Archives of India at New Delhi keeps a collection of microfilms referred to as “Dutch records.”¹⁷ Containing documents dating from the period 1614-1796, the 680 microfilm rolls are numbered 307-986 and are accessible by way of three different inventories.

Made around 1960, the films contain all volumes in the series of *overgekomen brieven en papieren* (OBP, letters and papers received from Asia) of the VOC’s Amsterdam Chamber that include materials from the Surat, Malabar, Coromandel, and Bengal establishments. The original volumes are kept at the National Archives in The Hague. They comprise the most voluminous set of Dutch sources on India.¹⁸ The volumes in The Hague with documents received from Ceylon, which also cover the Indian Fishery Coast (roughly between Cape Comorin and Rameswaram), have not been microfilmed and are not available in the National Archives of India. A recent random check of some rolls suggests that the microfilm collection is generally in a reasonable condition.

The numbers used in the inventories of the films are the old “KA” (*Koloniaal Archief*) numbers, whereas the original volumes in The Hague have been renumbered using “VOC” numbers. A concordance between the old and new numeration is available in Meilink-Roelofs, et al., *De archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, pp. 479-527. One of the collection’s inventories—comprehensively titled “List of missives exchanged between India and other factories of the Dutch East India Company, between these factories and the Governor-General at Batavia and from the Governor-General to the Board of Directors of the Dutch East India Company at Amsterdam...” (comprising 7 volumes and covering the years 1614-1702)—consists of a complete English translation of the Dutch typescript tables of contents of the OBP that are available in the National Archives in The Hague for the period in question. The two other inventories, both referred to as an index, respectively cover the period 1614-1796, in two paper volumes, and the period 1702-95, on microfilm numbers 3122-31.

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Notes

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- 1 For Dutch materials from the period ca. 1600-1825 on India and Ceylon in The Hague and elsewhere in the Netherlands, see Gommans, Bes, and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 1, and Bes, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 2.
- 2 For inventories and other finding aids of these archives, see Bes, "Provisional Inventory," Heyligers, *Press List*, and Fruytier, *Supplementary Catalogue*, on the Tamil Nadu Archives; Jurriaanse, *Catalogue of the Archives*, and Mottau, *Inventory of the Archives*, on the National Archives of Sri Lanka; Mottau, "Catalogue of the Records," on the Wolvendaal Church; and Balk et al., *The Archives*, on the National Archives of Indonesia, all of which (except for the Wolvendaal Church records) are available online at: www.tanap.net/content/activities/inventories/index.cfm. For the Wolvendaal Church records, see: www.cbg.nl > 'collecties' > 'archieffronnen' > 'Oost-Indische Bronnen' (in Dutch). All materials are also described in Bes and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 3. For the Dutch Records in the Tamil Nadu Archives and a comparison with the VOC archives in The Hague, see also Bes, "Hundreds of Rosetta Stones."
- 3 To obtain permission to consult documents, researchers are usually required to present a letter of recommendation from their embassy in the country in question. Additional letters from universities or the national archives in one's home country or from local scholars may heighten the chances of getting access. One is strongly advised to always contact any repository beforehand by phone to find out the latest regulations. Emails are often not replied to.
- 4 There are various other (less voluminous or relevant) little-known collections of Dutch materials in Asia that concern India and Ceylon. These, as well as the collections considered in this paper, are all described in detail in Bes and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 3.
- 5 Regional Archives Ernakulam, Old Collectorate Building, Park Avenue, Kochi (Cochin) – 682 011, Kerala, India; phone: +91.484.2369.686; website: www.keralastearchives.org; email: archivesernakulam@gmail.com, keralaarchives@gmail.com; visiting hours: Monday-Friday 10.30-16.30 hrs.
- 6 The archives of the VOC establishment at Cochin are now part of the Dutch Records at the Tamil Nadu Archives in Chennai. See note 2.
- 7 These documents are probably what remains of the Dutch materials kept around 1930 in the 'Cochin Darbar Archives,' as mentioned in Van Kan, *Compagniesbescheiden*, 193.

- 8 For instance in the series of *Batavia's uitgaand brievenboek* (Batavia's outgoing letter book) in the VOC archives (nos. VOC 849-1052) at the Netherlands National Archives in The Hague.
- 9 State Archives of West Bengal, 6, Bhowani Dutta Lane, Kolkata (Calcutta) – 700 073, West Bengal, India; phone: +91.33.2241.1044 / 3988, fax: +91.33.2241.3966; email: wb.state.archive@gmail.com; visiting hours: Monday-Friday 10.45-17.00 hrs.
- 10 See Bes, "Provisional Inventory," and Fruytier, *Supplementary Catalogue*, nos. 1673-1763, and also Bes and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 3.
- 11 See Gommans, Bes, and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 1 (sections 1.3.3 and 6.3).
- 12 Christian Reformed Church – Main Office, 363, Galle Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka; phone: +94.11.2360.861, fax: +94.11.2582.469; visiting hours: Monday-Friday 8.30-16.15 hrs. (by appointment).
- 13 For the holdings of the Wolvendaal Church, see note 2.
- 14 Colombo National Museum, Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo / P.O. Box 854, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka; phone: +94.11.2693.314 / 2694.767, fax: +94.11.2692.092; website: www.museum.gov.lk; email: nmdep@slt.lk; visiting hours: Monday-Saturday 8.30-17.00 hrs.
- 15 See Balk et al., *The Archives*.
- 16 *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*, Jalan Ampera Raya 7, Cilandak Timur, Jakarta 12560, Indonesia; phone +62.21.7805.851, fax: +62.21.7810.280 / 7805.812; website: www.anri.go.id; email: info@anri.go.id; visiting hours: Monday-Thursday 8.30-15.30 hrs., Friday 8.30-12.00, 13.00-15.30 hrs.
- 17 National Archives of India, Janpath, New Delhi – 110 001, India; phone: +91.11.2338.3436, fax: +91.11.2338.4127; website: www.nationalarchives.nic.in; email: archives@nic.in; visiting hours: Monday-Friday 9.30-20.00 hrs., Saturday, government holidays 9.30-17.30 hrs. (full service Monday-Friday).
- 18 For an extensive description of the original *OBP* with regard to India and Ceylon, see Gommans, Bes, and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 1 (sections 1.1.7, 2.1, 3.1, 3.7, 5.1, 5.7, 6.1, and Appendix I), Bes, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 2 (Supplement II: 1), and Bes and Kruijtzter, *Dutch Sources*, vol. 3 (Supplement II). See also <http://databases.tanap.net/vocrecords> for a partial digital table of contents.