



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## Seeing through coloured glasses: A study of succession reports of the Dutch East India Company in the 1660s

Oosterwijk, Lucas

### Citation

Oosterwijk, L. (2022). *Seeing through coloured glasses: A study of succession reports of the Dutch East India Company in the 1660s*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

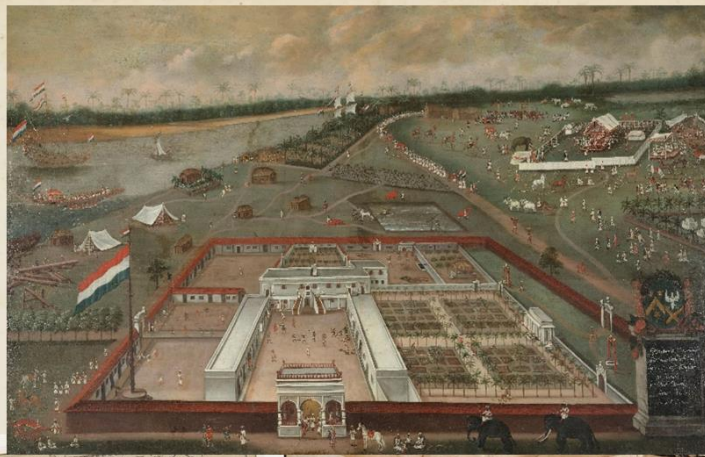
License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master thesis in the Leiden University Student Repository](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3483616>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# Seeing through coloured glasses

*A study of succession reports of the Dutch East India Company  
in the 1660s*



Lucas Oosterwijk

E-Mail: [l.d.oosterwijk@umail.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:l.d.oosterwijk@umail.leidenuniv.nl)

MA-Thesis

Supervisor: prof.dr. M. van Groesen

Due date: 30-8-2022

19294 words

Front page: collage representing the five succession reports discussed in the thesis. Clockwise starting on top, the painting *Handelsloge van de VOC in Hougly* by Hendrik van Schuylenburgh, represents trade and diplomacy in Bengal; A *Map of the Fort at Malakka* represents the military defences of Malakka; sketches of *Twee Khoisan mannen met pijp* by Esaias Boursse, representing the company's precarious relationship with the Khoi; the painting *View of Ambon* by Johannes Vingboons and finally a *Kaart van Perzië* by Mattäus Merian, copied from Willem Jansz. Blaeu, representing shipping and trade around and in Persia. The images are retrieved from the websites of the Rijksmuseum of the Netherlands and the Wikimedia category of the Atlas of Mutual Heritage. Clockwise, starting on top, they can be found at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.10186>; [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMH-4570-NA\\_Map\\_of\\_the\\_fort\\_at\\_Malakka.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMH-4570-NA_Map_of_the_fort_at_Malakka.jpg) (and within the National Archives: NL-HaNA\_4.VEL\_1108); <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.726327>; [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMH-6130-NA\\_View\\_of\\_Ambon.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AMH-6130-NA_View_of_Ambon.jpg) (and within the National Archives: NL-HaNA\_4.VELH\_619.16); <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.721633>

**Contents**

Introduction..... 4

Chapter 1: I wrote a report because... ..... 15

    Early origins ..... 17

    Motives for the five succession reports ..... 18

    Justification of the departing governors ..... 21

Chapter 2: Helping the reader?..... 25

    Main structure ..... 26

    Ordering by theme ..... 26

    Ordering by place ..... 28

    Conclusion ..... 30

Chapter 3: Providing warnings and reassurance..... 31

    First lesson: What to trade? ..... 31

    Second lesson: Who is working for me?..... 35

    Third lesson: What ships do I need to send and receive? ..... 39

    Fourth lesson: How to defend what you have? ..... 42

    Fifth lesson: How to contact local rulers? ..... 43

    Sixth lesson: Producing goods yourself? ..... 46

    Smaller lessons: How to help organise society?..... 48

    Conclusion ..... 51

Conclusion ..... 53

Bibliography..... 57

    Primary source material ..... 57

    Secondary literature ..... 57

## Introduction

It was a rainy 5th of May 1662 with winds from the north to northwest when Commander Jan van Riebeeck of the Cape Colony finished and signed the succession report (*memorie van overgave*) he was commissioned to write for the next commander of the Cape, Zacharias Wagenaer. He started with an empty sheet of paper, to write about “the useful things to do at the Cape for the noble company” as he was commissioned.<sup>1</sup> It meant Van Riebeeck had to communicate his knowledge of the trade and production he had overseen, unto the new commander, as he was called for a new post elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The above is just one of the many examples of Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie - VOC*) administrators who had to write a succession report as they were leaving their post for a successor to take the helm. It was a document with the intent of transferring knowledge of an administrative nature. In this thesis, those documents will be the central point of study, to answer the main question: How did governors/directors/commanders of the VOC differ in their supply of knowledge to their successors, when they left their offices in the 1660s? The thesis, therefore, is positioned in between different perspectives to which the VOC has been studied: the political-economic side, the institutional side and the gathering of (scientific) knowledge.

The Dutch East India Company as a whole has been thoroughly researched as a political and economic institution. The standard works on the company, by Els Jacobs and Femme Gaastra, go into detail about how it functioned economically as well as administratively. Jacobs focuses more on the economic side when it comes to the activities in Asia. Institutionally speaking she dedicates a chapter to the inner workings of the Gentlemen Seventeen (*Heren XVII*) and the chambers in the Dutch Republic. She focuses on the Company’s founding, collecting of capital, first institutions and the returning of information and goods from Asia to Amsterdam. Gaastra’s work is more institutionally focused, discussing the financial policies of both the *Heren XVII* and the High Government (*Hoge Regering*) in Batavia. In his standard work, he expands on the political history of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Literally: Het nuttichste dat aende Caep voorde E[dele] Comp te betrachten zij.

<sup>2</sup> For the weather, see the ‘dagregister’ (journal) at ‘Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), Nummer Toegang 1.04.02, Inventarisnummer 3997’, n.d., fol. 170v; For the comissioning see the letter from Batavia: ‘Missive aan de gouverneur en raad van Cabo de Boa Esperance’ (Letter, Batavia, 30 January 1662), fol. 84, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 886.

VOC, alongside economic and institutional history. He gives more space to the discussion of the companies that preceded the VOC, and a brief overview of political and economic developments in Asia. However, institutionally the focus remains on the *Heren XVII* and the *Hoge Regering*.<sup>3</sup> From that angle, Gaastra briefly mentions the *memories van overgave* in the context of the debate on knowledge gathering under the VOC. Right after introducing *memories* as a genre of knowledge transfer, he connects it to Company's efforts in scientific knowledge gathering. Gaastra pictures the VOC as it has been described elsewhere: a collector of knowledge in scientific and corporate ways as well as an unwilling patron.<sup>4</sup>

Bruno Latour provides theoretical support in the study of (scientific) knowledge transfer in *Science in Action*. His work supports historians of science who study knowledge gathering within European overseas companies.<sup>5</sup> While his work covers the bases of scientific data collection more broadly, its ideas can be applied to broader accumulation and transfer of knowledge. The ideas also apply well to the everyday operations of European overseas companies. Latour grounds his definition of producing knowledge in the early overseas explorations, with the example of the French captain Laperouse 'discovering' new islands in the Pacific. The captain could gain knowledge by communicating with the local population and an elderly Chinese fisherman. Laperouse was lucky to be in the right place at the right time to write the knowledge down, and bring it back to their ship, and France. By doing so, Laperouse provided the opportunity for further navigators to get acquainted with the area. This whole story is Latour's prelude to the definition of knowledge and knowledge-gathering. Knowledge is having "seen" a phenomenon before, even though one has not visited the place. For that, the information had to become "immutable and combinable

---

<sup>3</sup> Els M. Jacobs, *In Pursuit of Pepper and Tea: The Story of the Dutch East India Company* (Zutphen : Amsterdam: Walburg Pers ; Netherlands Maritime Museum, 1991) specifically 15-22; F. S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003); F. S. Gaastra, *Bewind en beleid bij de VOC: de financiële en commerciële politiek van de bewindhebbers, 1672-1702* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 106.

<sup>5</sup> See for examples where Latour is part of the debate of scientific knowledge gathering for European overseas companies: Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 2007), 176; Siegfried Huigen, *Knowledge and Colonialism Eighteenth-Century Travellers in South Africa*, Atlantic World (Leiden, Netherlands) ; v. 18 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2009), 76n46; Arndt Brendecke and Susanne Friedrich, 'Introduction', in *Transformations of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion*, ed. Arndt Brendecke, Stefan Ehrenpreis, and Susanne Friedrich (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, Inc, 2015), 2n7; Maria-Theresia Leuker, 'Knowledge Transfer and Cultural Appropriation: Georg Everhard Rumphius's "d" Amboinische Rariteitenkamer' (1705)', in *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks*, ed. Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong, and Elmer Kolfin, *Intersections* 14 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2010), 145–46, 150–51.

mobiles.” The information should be written in such a way that it can form useful knowledge. For the role of networks in the forming of knowledge, Latour refers back to the early colonial times once more, to Portuguese carracks. He discusses the continued cycles of accumulation of knowledge, as each time a ship returned to the centre, new voyages built upon the last journey. The new voyages brought back knowledge again, and so the cycle continued. What was crucial according to Latour was that eventually, all knowledge had to end up in the “centre” to be useful again.<sup>6</sup>

Latour’s work contains the major problems of eurocentrism and a teleological view on the progress of science, to which historians of science Anna Winterbottom and Lissa Roberts reacted by constructing their theoretical frameworks. They identify the first problem in the idea that knowledge was only formed upon return in Europa, rather than in Asia. The second, related problem arrives from his “centres of calculation”, which managed the “sure path to science” when additional steps had been taken. After information had travelled through the cycle of accumulation, the moment arrived when knowledge was formed. Latour gives the example of how the geographical information Laperouse had collected was finally transformed into latitude and longitude, which made the knowledge accessible via a map. Those that had not joined the trip along the cycle of accumulation would only then understand the knowledge after it had gone through the process in the centre of calculation – a term Latour links more to the natural sciences, as calculations could be re-used for other research. By then, the knowledge had become useful and reusable, so that the linear path of science in Latour’s view could continue.<sup>7</sup> Winterbottom critiques this vision, as it devaluates the native informants, and reduces those individuals who had joined the expedition to “passive yielders of information.” She stresses that the knowledge could only arise, because of the particular and individual local interactions between Europeans and the local population. Furthermore, Latour’s focus on Europe as the ‘centre of calculation’ denies the possibility of accumulation of knowledge from multiple centres. Winterbottom argues for

---

<sup>6</sup> Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 215–22, 227.

<sup>7</sup> Latour, 224, 232–40; Lissa Roberts, ‘Centres and Cycles of Accumulation’, in *Centres and Cycles of Accumulation in and around the Netherlands during the Early Modern Period*, ed. Lissa Roberts, *Low Countries Studies on the Circulation of Natural Knowledge 2* (Zürich [etc.]: Lit, 2011), 6; Anna Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*, *Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 13.

the scenario where combining knowledge happened through copying, translating and stealing from different places.<sup>8</sup> Roberts' reaction to Latour focuses on the process of accumulation, broadening it beyond what is currently considered science. She adjusts the concept to entail other knowledge exchanges, sharpens it to be described as a grouping of resources of productive uses, and finally, she finetunes to make sure the concept works for personal accumulation of knowledge within student-master relationships. She problematises the idea of useful knowledge to combat the problematic teleology of Latour's work, as she looks for stories around processes of knowledge accumulation instead.<sup>9</sup> Roberts shows an application of her ideas in her contribution to the volume of essays edited by Arndt Bredecke, Susanne Friedrich and Stephan Ehrenpreis. Roberts also connects to their introduction, where Bredecke and Friedrich rejected the idea that research had only been set in motion by individuals. The push for (scientific) research came from the company itself, and as such, those individuals that left specific marks must have worked within the framework of the company.<sup>10</sup> Roberts researches the political and cultural knowledge exchange in Dutch-Japanese relations, taking her idea of a centre of accumulation to show how both parties did not make ground-breaking discoveries about each other. On the contrary, she describes the situation in Deshima as one of 'normal science' where slow and small developments were made in gathering knowledge. In the history of science, this normal situation is pushed to the margin, as there is more interest in the exceptional, the great breakthroughs. Roberts finds it important to look for the normal situation, to show the VOC getting acquainted with Japanese mining and minerals, culture and the skills of their servants. Knowledge that goes far beyond the natural sciences, providing a way for my application of these ideas too.<sup>11</sup>

Latour's ideas have regularly been applied to study European overseas companies like the English East India Company (EIC). In Miles Ogborn's study of writing practices in the British colonial and imperial times, he has applied Latour's model to politically and economically loaded reports of the company. Ogborn is still focused on the interaction and

---

<sup>8</sup> Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*, 13, 19–20.

<sup>9</sup> Roberts, 'Centres and Cycles of Accumulation', 5–8, 12, 14–16.

<sup>10</sup> Bredecke and Friedrich, 'Introduction', 4–5.

<sup>11</sup> Lissa Roberts, 'Re-Orienting the Transformation of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion: Nagasaki as a Centre of Accumulation and Management', in *Transformations of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion*, ed. Arndt Bredecke, Stefan Ehrenpreis, and Susanne Friedrich (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, Inc, 2015), 24–25, 33, 35–36.



information exchange between Europe and Asia, between India and London. The Court of Directors in London wanted to control the factories, and Ogborn explains how they did that via reports, letters, accounts, diaries and more. Ogborn discusses the consultation book, in which local agents of the company had to write down all decisions, including transactions, from the local council. Their fellow council members had to sign the copies dispatched to London, to show their consent to the decisions. So, this genre was still in service of the directors, letting them know how decisions were made. The information would travel to Europe and had no goal of knowledge transfer for Europeans within Asia.<sup>12</sup> The more local-level knowledge transfer within the EIC is the subject of study for Emily Erikson and Sampsa Samila both quantitatively and qualitatively. They discuss the informal exchange between captains of the EIC, who shared knowledge of safe ports to visit for favourable trade. Captains could commune in personal quarters within the factories in Asia and convey the information personally to one another. This was necessary until 1776 when the EIC launched a strong institutional system. The authors argue that before that period, captains were surprisingly cooperative.<sup>13</sup>

For the Dutch case, intra-corporate communication has been discussed with the *Heren XVII* and the *Hoge Regering* in Batavia at the forefront. Ketelaar presents the VOC as an organisation in Latourian fashion, with an enormous amount of paper. Those would be comprehensible for the directors in the Dutch Republic after being transformed as in Latour's "centre of calculation." Cultural information and depictions are central to the work of Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, supported partially by Latourian ideas as well. Schmidt takes the idea of converting gained information to secondary information to another level. He claims Latour's idea supports the idea that the Dutch gained information and "universalised" those cultural depictions for a broad European audience from the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Directed to the Dutch adventures in the Atlantic, Donna Merwick's study of Killian van Rensselaer focuses on how he gained information from the other side of the ocean. His experience with his papers is central to his part of the story. He needed information for his strategic planning to control the fur trade and to exercise

---

<sup>12</sup> Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago, 2008), 70–72, 74, 77–79, 84.

<sup>13</sup> Emily Erikson and Sampsa Samila, 'Networks, Institutions, and Uncertainty: Information Exchange in Early-Modern Markets', *The Journal of Economic History* 78, no. 4 (2018): 1036–39, 1063, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022050718000566>.

obsessive control over the managing of his affairs overseas. However, Van Rensselear did not hear from his agents as soon as he wanted to, worrying about all that could go wrong.<sup>14</sup>

Among those specifically focussing on information flows within the VOC are Gerrit Knaap and Nico Vriend. Gerrit Knaap researched the information flows of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on the *Heren XVII* and the chambers in the Republic and the High Government in Batavia. He explains the importance of the *Haags Besogne* that filtered the incoming information from Batavia in their *Haags verhael* for the *Heren XVII* to read. The focus on Batavia acknowledges the information flows within Asia as dictated by the monsoons, but Knaap mainly sees information coming from offices as building blocks for the *Generale missive*, the story of the governor-general about the past year.<sup>15</sup> Nico Vriend argues that the archive of the Dutch East India Company has been understudied, but simultaneously limits his focus to the administrations of the *Heren XVII* and the *Hoge Regering* for him to trace so-called “archival events”. Vriend describes the inner workings of the secretariats in Batavia and the Dutch Republic alike and describes the flow of information. He stresses how information was made accessible via indexes and summaries in “minutes”. For the organisation in the Republic, he points to the chambers of Amsterdam and Zeeland, who received information, as well as to the *Haags Besogne*.<sup>16</sup>

Further research has been done looking into the two-way flow of information, not only upwards to the *Heren XVII*, but also into instructions from the top of the company down. Adrien Delmas focuses on journals, from the moment the company established outposts in Asia. The management in the Dutch Republic initiated the formation of journals aboard ships, which in turn influenced the way journals in Asia were constructed. His focus is on what information the *Heren XVII* wanted to gain after they had issued several reprints of an instruction for the writing of journals. In the second part of his article, he describes the

---

<sup>14</sup> Eric Ketelaar, ‘The Dutch Comptoir as Information Centre’, *Archival Science* 18, no. 4 (2018): 335, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-018-9298-3>; Donna Merwick, *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York* (Cornell University Press, 2018), 52, 57, 74; Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe’s Early Modern World*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2015), 7–9.

<sup>15</sup> Gerrit Knaap, ‘Communication, Information, and Power in the Dutch Colonial Empire: The Case of the Dutch East India Company, c. 1760’, in *Information and Power in History*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Routledge, 2020), 123–30, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429438738-8>.

<sup>16</sup> Nico Vriend, ‘An unbelievable amount of paper: The information system and network of the Dutch East India Company’, in *Colonial legacy in South East Asia: The Dutch Archives*, ed. Charles Jeurgens, Ton Kappelhof, and Michael Karabinos, Stichting Archiefpublicaties Jaarboek 11 (Voerendaal ; Stein, 2012), 69, 71–75, 78–79.

VOC's effort in archiving the material and keeping what would be published under their control, in line with the more conservative idea of the company as an unwilling patron.<sup>17</sup> For the introduction of his sources and the framework they existed in, Guido van Meersbergen takes a similar approach to Delmas, for both the EIC and the VOC. He focuses on the corporate writing institutions within both companies. In *Ethnography and Encounter*, he presents how the early voyaging ethnographers would be instructed so they could inform future voyagers properly. The companies kept control over how those voyages and interactions would be approached through their instructions. Van Meersbergen describes the information flows in a generalising way for both companies and points to the top-down (subconscious) influence of certain stereotypes on the production of reports in Asia.<sup>18</sup> In his second chapter, he focuses on the VOC, presenting the instruction the *Heren XVII* gave the first explorers for the writing of reports. The most important piece was a memoir for merchants and other officers that was printed in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, with several reprints in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The memoir explains what information was of interest to the company, but Van Meersbergen points out it was partially ignored by those who wrote their reports in Asia. Moreover, Van Meersbergen shortly dives into succession reports (*memories van overgave*), as a genre useful as source material to find ethnographic descriptions. He describes the genre as emerging in the 1640s and finally finding its place in different offices during the 1650s. However, for the contents, he only points to some specific examples of delivering papers. In the end, he pays more attention to the way information ended up higher in the organisation, via the *Generale Missive* from Batavia to the report of the *Haags Besogne* in the Republic.<sup>19</sup>

The succession reports have been studied within the timeframe of the later 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the modern era. Alicia Schrikker researches the bridging function of the succession reports from the VOC to the Dutch colonial state. She refers to the genre of documents as one of the examples that show how the writings traditions and ethnographic traditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were grounded in the work of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The genre itself

---

<sup>17</sup> Adrien Delmas, 'From Travelling to History: An Outline of the VOC Writing System during the 17th Century', in *Written Culture in a Colonial Context Africa and the Americas, 1500-1900*, ed. Adrien Delmas and Nigel Penn, African History 2 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012), 103, 107, 110–17, 120.

<sup>18</sup> Guido van Meersbergen, *Ethnography and Encounter: The Dutch and English in Seventeenth-Century South Asia* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2022), 15–16, 41, 43, 46–47, 63–64, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Meersbergen, 75–78, 86–89.

stimulated officials to inform their successors about various practicalities, and at the same time legitimising one's position within the local society – of Ceylon in this case. The common practice throughout the times of the VOC was continued into the colonial era, re-appearing as administrative genres hardly different from the writings under the VOC.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, Schrikker does leave space for the development of the succession report during the period of the VOC in Asia. Schrikker points to a continuation of an established genre of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Meilink-Roelofs presents her view on the VOC succession reports as an introduction to her discussion solely of the modern era succession reports of the colonial state. She projects the colonial era reports back on the VOC reports, as she claims there were fixed rules in place to which the 'bureaucrats' had to adhere. In that, she forgoes the making of the genre, where the rules had a chance to grow organically.<sup>21</sup>

For this thesis, I will dive into the 1660s, when the number of succession reports was greatly expanding after they had been introduced on a small scale in the 1610s. During the 1660s, the Company had established itself throughout most of Asia and set up offices and outposts that changed command once in a while. For the development of the succession reports, I have constructed a graph, indicating that the 1660s saw a leap in the number of reports produced and sent back to the Republic. The graph is based on information from the TANAP database, which has codified a part of the VOC archives residing in the National Archives of the Netherlands. For that part, containing the shipped documents from Asia, they constructed new 'inventories' for each office of the company and sorted the documents based on its genre.<sup>22</sup> The succession reports are collected together for each office, making them countable. Eventually, that provided me with a total number of succession reports per

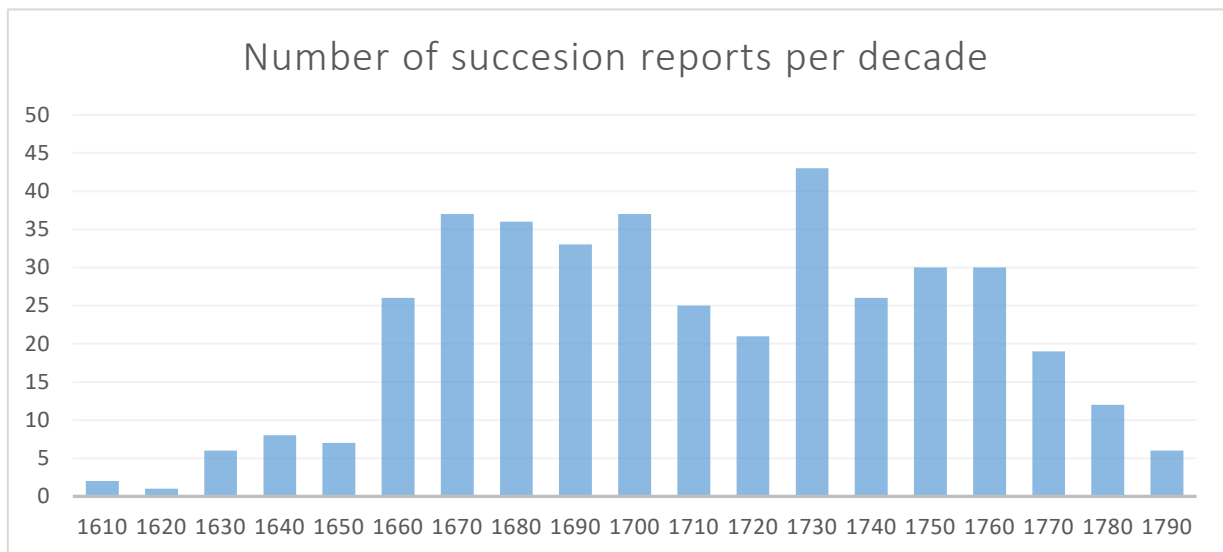
---

<sup>20</sup> Alicia F. Schrikker, 'Institutional Memory in the Making of Dutch Colonial Culture in Asia (1700–1870)', in *The Dutch Empire between Ideas and Practice, 1600–2000*, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 114–15, 122, 126, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27516-7\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27516-7_6).

<sup>21</sup> M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Memories van overgave van bestuursambtenaren in het voormalige Nederlands-Indië* (S.l.: Vereniging van Archivarissen in Nederland, 1968), 14–15.

<sup>22</sup> 'TANAP Database of VOC Documents: Overgekomen Brieven En Papieren', accessed 30 March 2022, <http://databases.tanap.nl/vocrecords/>. Sadly, as of August 2022, the TANAP database is no longer accessible. After the .net domain disappeared earlier, I have been able to obtain the mentioned constructed inventories in the form of PDFs. For more information contact the mailadress on the first page.

decade. It shows the slow start in the 1610s, the boom of the 1660s and the gradual changes afterwards.

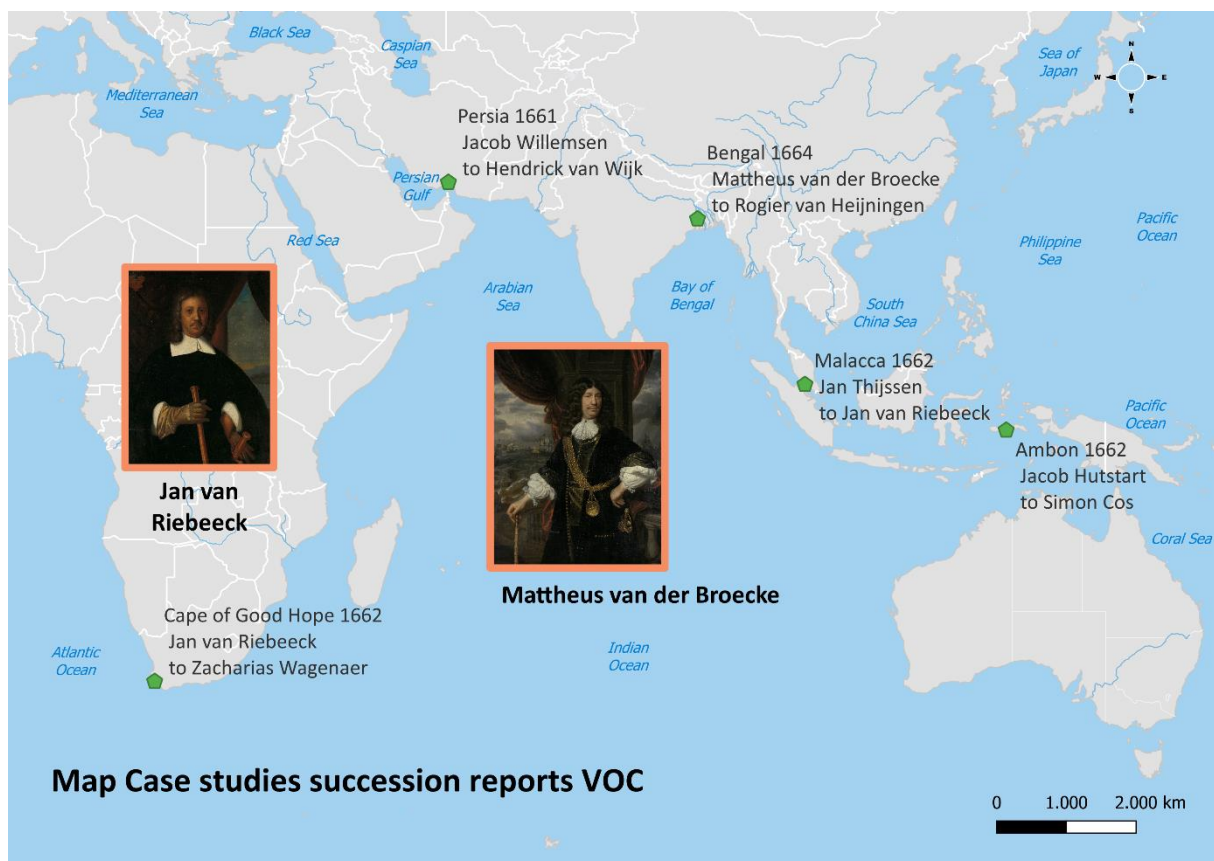


To be able to go in-depth, I chose to study five succession reports of the (early) 1660s, which I have selected based on three criteria. First of all, the succession reports had to date from the booming 1660s. Second, they had to be geographically spread out. This meant that I would not include reports from Ceylon or Coromandel beside the one from Bengal and that I would exclude reports coming from an already represented office. Third, I chose to make use of those succession reports that had a substantial length. Shorter succession reports, for example coming from Japan, Surat and Jambi were therefore excluded.<sup>23</sup> The oldest and most westward of the reports I chose comes from Persia and was written by Jacob Willemsen to Hendrik van Wijk in 1661. Willemsen had been a director for the trade in Persia, residing in Bandar Abbas. He would now leave the office for his right-hand man Van Wijk, who had been residing in the outpost of Isfahan. Three reports from 1662 feature the offices of the Cape, Ambon and Malacca, which were all production-based offices where the VOC held territorial power. Jan van Riebeeck introduced his successor Zacharias Wagenaer to the Cape of Good Hope, before he would himself obtain a succession report from Jan Thijssen about the governing of Malacca. Jacob Hutstart warned Simon Cos

---

<sup>23</sup> TANAP presented the number of folio's. Four of the five reports are substantially long enough, varying between 18 and 39 folios. The relative shorter report from Persia (8 folios) was included for its geographical position. The smaller reports varied between 2 and 6 folios each.

about all kinds of problems for his upcoming period as governor of Ambon. Finally, in 1664, Mattheus van der Broecke would prepare Rogier van Heijningen for his job as director in Bengal, an important trading office for the company. They all served for several years at their respective offices, gaining experience collaborating with their staff towards their goals, be it in production or in trade. Now they were about to leave their office for someone else to take the helm. The departing governors received letters that instructed them on the transition of power and asked for the writing of succession reports. In the first chapter, among others, I will discuss these letters, and the reasons for writing the departing governors provided themselves. The ordering and contents of the reports will follow in chapters two and three.



Map created using Natural Earth data in QGIS. The displayed paintings both belong to the Rijksmuseum. The painting of Van Riebeeck was painted by an anonymous painter and available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.4803>. The painting of Van der Broecke was painted by Samuel van Hoogstraten, and is available at <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.6686>. Paintings of the other three departing governors were not available.

While the rest of the thesis will contain a broader discussion of these sources, I would like to end the introduction by introducing the sources, their origins, problems and uses. The departing governor, director, or commander of the Office would write a document

describing the office they presided over. The versions I use are those that eventually ended up in the archives of the *Heren XVII*, currently residing in the National Archives in The Hague. The documents travelled there via Batavia, as the offices had supplied them with copies of the text so that Batavia would be informed. The value of the documents lies in the variety of information and the variety of subjects. Of the different limitations, the first one is the possibility of copying mistakes, made in the office or Batavia. Normally, the foremost restraint would have been its inability to provide an accurate picture of the events in Asia, but for me, this restraint is less important as I am more interested in the views the departing governors wanted to express to their successors. A great limitation for me is when the departing governors mentioned they had already instructed their successor, be it partly, in an oral fashion. Some claimed they repeated themselves in the succession report, but it is unclear what they discussed orally.

To summarise, I will study several *memories van overgave* from the period just after the spreading of those reports, the early 1660s, a period in which the Company had consolidated itself throughout Asia via several outposts and offices. I will do that by comparison in space, with the theoretical insights from Latour, Winterbottom and Roberts on the accumulation of knowledge in the back of my mind. The historiographical contribution will contain the exploration of administrative knowledge transfer, below the institutional level of the *Hoge Regering* of Batavia, those of the offices. Structurally, the thesis will start with the need for the specific production of these succession reports. Thereafter, I will examine how the departing governors decided to order the information they wanted to convey, and how much they helped their readers. From there, I will go into the contents, what knowledge and what attitudes the departing governors wanted to convey towards their successors.

## Chapter 1: I wrote a report because...

It must have been a busy day at the office of Batavia's clerks on the 22nd of September 1662, as governor-general Joan Maetsuijcker and his council dictated the letter they wanted to address to the Dutch governor of Malacca, Jan Thijssen, and his council. The day before, the Batavia council had met to talk about silver transports that would pass Malacca, but most likely they decided what they were about to add to the letter.<sup>24</sup> They would release governor Thijssen from his duty at the peninsula and replace him with Jan van Riebeeck, who had left the Cape Colony a few months earlier. The year 1662 had been a busy year, as this letter to instruct Thijssen for an orderly transition of power would have been the sixth across the VOC's Indian Ocean network that year. Each time they had to make sure the transition of power, and knowledge, would be secured.

In this chapter, I will discuss the reasons for the writing of succession reports. What made the governors and directors who left office write a lengthy report about the state of their affairs? I will clear up the context of these succession reports and how they have been handed down to us before I can go into detail on the production of the succession reports. The governor or director of an office was the one to write such a report. In the years prior, he would have commanded the greatest, or sometimes only, outpost of the VOC in that specific part of Asia. Depending on the value of the office, he would have carried the title of governor, if the VOC exercised power over territory; director, if he exercised control over important trade, commander or chief in case of less important offices. For clarity purposes, I will use the term 'governor' when discussing the five reports more generally. At the end of his period in office, the governor would write a succession report to explain the current state of affairs in various domains, from the economic to the political, from employment to the military. In the first instance, the governor would address his report to his successor that would take the helm over the office, so they would know what was going on when they started their time in office. After the departing governor had written or dictated the succession report, another copy would be sent to Batavia to the governor-general and his council who had asked for the report to be written. After arriving in Batavia, it could inform them of the current events in the office where the report was written. The report would then be copied again, so that the Council could include it in the papers they sent to the

---

<sup>24</sup> For the intern discussion of the High Government, see 'NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, Inv.Nr. 678', n.d., 251.



Republic. In this condition a copy would eventually be delivered to the assembly of the *Heren XVII*.

The succession reports are currently available to the public via the copies that ended up with the *Heren XVII*. The reports reside in their archive in the Dutch National Archives, as part of the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* (Letters and Papers received from Asia). Physically, it means that the succession reports are scattered across this part of the archive. Year by year, papers were transmitted to the Dutch Republic, bound in thick bundles, including the succession reports.<sup>25</sup> It does not mean the succession reports are hard to find. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the TANAP project digitised the lists of contents the VOC had themselves added to those thick bundles, to make sure they would become searchable. They also provided an inventory where succession reports (*memories van overgave*) became one of the genres in which the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* were sorted. In short, the project enabled the presentation of a fictive inventory for the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*, while documents remain clustered together in those yearly bundles that the governor-general sent to the Republic.<sup>26</sup>

In order to research the reasons for writing a succession report, I will be using letters sent from Batavia to the five local offices, which equate to the case studies I have selected. Those letters initiated the process for the transfer of power from one governor to another and pre-date the reports themselves. The letters are part of the *kopie-uitgaande stukken van gouverneur-generaal en raden* (copy outbound pieces of governor-general and council), which indicates those are copies of letters sent from Batavia to different posts throughout Asia. Those outbound letters are not included in the TANAP database, but each of the books that contain letters have contents inserted by the VOC itself. The books are sorted by year,

---

<sup>25</sup> Both the inventory and the contents of the Letters and Papers received from Asia are available digitally through the Dutch National Archives. See 'Deel I/E.5.a Overgekomen brieven en papieren uit Indië aan de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam', Nationaal Archief, accessed 3 April 2022, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/%40Deel%20I~Deel%20I%7C%7CE~Deel%20I%7C%7CE.5~Deel%20I%7C%7CE.5.a>.

<sup>26</sup> For more on improving accessibility of the VOC archives see 'TANAP - Archives / Access', accessed 30 March 2022, <http://tanap.nl/content/archives/access.cfm>. For the database as a whole see 'TANAP Database of VOC Documents: Overgekomen Brieven En Papieren'. For the constructed inventories see 'Reconstruction of the Archives of the VOC Establishments', accessed 30 March 2022, [http://databases.tanap.nl/vocrecords/4\\_virtual\\_reconstruction.cfm](http://databases.tanap.nl/vocrecords/4_virtual_reconstruction.cfm). Sadly, as of August 2022 the TANAP site is no longer reachable. I have been able to save the reconstructions in PDF-form and could provide these via e-mail.

but the contents of a book are sorted by office, making that a letter for a local leader or the employees of an office is accessible through the contents.<sup>27</sup>

Early origins

Before I examine the letters preceding the succession reports of the 1660s, I will start at the origins of writing succession reports. The first succession report ever written predated the structural institutions of sending over bundled papers from Asia. Jaspas Jansz wrote the report for his successor Adriaen Blockmansz at Ambon in June 1614, but the original version is lost to us. The only reason this document made its way into the archive of the *Heren XVII*, is because Blockmansz himself provided the text again to his successor when he wrote his succession report in 1617. Therefore, it is difficult to construct who took the initiative for writing the report. It seems like the orders did not come from Batavia or the Dutch Republic, as no document exists that would indicate they asked for a succession report to be written. There are some documents within the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* that predate November 1614, though without contents. Moreover, the internal communication sent from Batavia prior to November 1614 is non-existent within the archive of the *Heren XVII*. Lastly, the outbound communication of the *Heren XVII* for a direct request in 1614 is also absent.<sup>28</sup>

The situation of 1617 could theoretically provide letters from either the governor-general or from the Republic with the orders for a succession report. The outbound correspondence of governor-general Jan Pietersz Coen is available in the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*. A letter from the *Heren XVII* sent in December 1616 to departing governor Adriaen Blockmansz resides in the archives too. However, none of Coen's letters is directed to Ambon and the letter of the *Heren XVII* only contains active suggestions and requests for the continuation and expansion of trade and their growing monopoly position in the area. As Blockmansz was encouraged to continue his business, instead of giving way to resigning the position, it is unlikely the *Heren XVII* requested the succession report. For Coen,

---

<sup>27</sup> The outbound pieces are also digitally available via the Dutch National Archives. See 'Deel I/E.4 Kopie-uitgaande stukken van gouverneur-generaal en raden', Nationaal Archief, accessed 3 April 2022, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/%40Deel%20I~Deel%20I%7C%7CE~Deel%20I%7C%7CE.4>.

<sup>28</sup> The eldest outbound pieces sent to Asia from the Republic date from November 1614. See NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv. 312; The eldest incoming pieces sent by the governor-general from Asia date from the early 1610s as can be found in NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv. 597. However, the internal communication from the governor-general to the Offices dates from the end of 1614 onwards. See for that NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv. 1053 and 1060.

it remains possible that a letter asking for the report got lost. The fact is that both the *Heren XVII* and the governor-general did not leave a trace indicating their wishes for a succession report.<sup>29</sup> Adriaen Blockmansz indicated his motives in the succession report of 1617, by first acknowledging the great help the report of Jaspar Jansz had provided. He hoped that the report of 1614, together with his own report, would provide the same aid to his successor. Furthermore, Blockmansz felt a sense of duty towards his successor and the legacy of his predecessor. It is a form of collegiality that is reminiscent of the exchanges Erikson and Samila present between English captains of the EIC, who directed each other to the best trading spots in an uncertain era. As neither the *Heren XVII* nor the governor-general left traces of a wish for a report, while an intrinsically motivated departing governor of Ambon did, I believe the tradition of writing succession reports originated bottom-up.<sup>30</sup>

After the small-scale introduction of the genre, there was a gradual slow increase in the number of succession reports. The 1610s left no more succession reports outside those of Ambon. The 1620s only left a succession report from Jan Pietersz Coen in 1623, when he (temporarily) left office to make room for the next governor-general. The 1630s, recently characterised by Guido van Meersbergen as the start of the succession reports tradition, saw a rise in the number of offices that delivered succession reports. There was a continuation of the production in the 1640s and 1650s, at which time the genre spread to the area of South Asia, in which Van Meersbergen is specifically interested.<sup>31</sup> As pointed out in the introduction, from the 1660s onwards, the number of succession reports increased significantly, after the company had settled throughout Asia.

Motives for the five succession reports

The 1660s did not only produce more succession reports than before, outbound letters from the governor-general and his council were also preserved throughout the decade. Within these letters, the governor-general and his council sent mixed messages concerning what they asked of the departing governors for the transitions of power. The first example dates

---

<sup>29</sup> Jan Pietersz Coen, 'Letters to Jambij, Pattana, Japan, Cormandel' (Bantam en Jaccatra, 1617), fols 103–116, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1064; 'Missive aen Adriaen Blockmartsz' (Letter, Amsterdam, 12 December 1616), 524–26, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 312.

<sup>30</sup> 'Copie van twee memoriën, d'eene gelaten bij den gouverneur Jaspar Jansz. aen Adriaen Blocq Martensz. ende d'andere gegeven bij ditto Blocq Martensz. aen admirael Steven van der Haghen, gouverneur in Amboina, 25 Junij 1614 en 4 Julij 1617.' (Report, Ambon, 4 July 1617), fol. 389, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1066; Erikson and Samila, 'Networks, Institutions, and Uncertainty', 1063.

<sup>31</sup> Meersbergen, *Ethnography and Encounter*, 87.

from late 1661 as Governor Hutstart of Ambon was preparing to leave the next year. The governor-general and his council sent the following orders over: “[If] your Lordship will persist with your departure, so we [must] stick to our old resolution, to order your Lordship in that case to advise the governor Cos in Molucco.”<sup>32</sup> They did not specifically mention a succession report, but asked for a piece of ‘advice’. That indirect approach could indicate one of two things. Writing a succession report was either so established that a more direct way was unnecessary, or the genre had yet to reach a fully formal status. I will discuss below how the receivers of the letters interpreted this indirect request to argue in favour of the former viewpoint. This top-down initiative fits in with the idea suggested by Brendecke and Friedrich that the VOC valued knowledge gathering as it needed the information for itself. For these processes to start the company did not need to solely rely on exceptional individuals that sought knowledge, they could take the initiative.<sup>33</sup> The same indirect approach is also visible within the other letters. In 1662, the governor of Malacca Jan Thijssen was only mentioned, not directly addressed, even though he was one of the intended recipients of the letter. Jan Thijssen, the letter stated, would ensure a clear instruction for his successor was provided. That year, his successor Jan van Riebeeck was himself only mentioned when he received the order to make sure the new commander of the Cape, Zacharias Wagenaer, would obtain a “memoir or written message to regulate him in “occurring affairs” that he might face in the governance of the colony.”<sup>34</sup> The letter sent in 1663 that ended up with Matheus van den Broecke in Bengal pointed him to the fact that his successor Rogier van Heijningen was “allowed” to have the information necessary to continue trading. Van den Broecke would just have to write instructions for him, to make sure the knowledge would end up with Van Heijningen. Lastly, the oldest succession report I am looking into has a preceding letter that does not even mention the succession report. The release of duty for Jacob Willemsen, the appointment of the successor and the ceremony around the transfer of the office are all described. However, there is no mention of the succession report that was written after this letter had arrived. Because the number two of the office was elected to succeed, it would have been logical if there was not a lot of

---

<sup>32</sup> Literally: Ende u E[dele] bij zijn vertreck persisteerdt en soo blijven wij oock bij onse oude resolutien volharden, met u E[dele] t’ordonneren indien gevallen den gouverneur Cos in Molucco van u E[dele] vertreck t’adviseren.

<sup>33</sup> Brendecke and Friedrich, ‘Introduction’, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Literally: memorie ofte berichtschrift om hem in voorvallende saecken nocte reguleren.

knowledge to pass on. However, the tradition of providing successors with reports must have become so entrenched that Willemsen still wrote a report for his successor.<sup>35</sup>

While the indirect approach might give the impression the governor-general and his council undervalued the transfer of knowledge between departing and incoming governors, there are three indications they wanted to stimulate those exchanges. To begin with, the governor-general seemed busy with preserving knowledge, as displayed by the situation at Ambon in December 1661. They sent a letter begging Governor Hutstart to stay on the island. However, they were also anticipating his departure, as they had asked Governor Cos of Ternate to step in as quickly as possible, ensuring he would write a succession report on Ternate in turn. Moreover, the governor-general's perceived importance of knowledge transfer was also visible in case they would no longer be able to provide a report. The appointment letter for the new governor of Banda indicated his predecessor had died without leaving a report. The governor-general and his council had appointed Governor Van Voors of Ternate ad interim in order to preserve as much knowledge as possible.<sup>36</sup> The second indication that the High Government in Batavia prized knowledge transfer was that for three of the five departing governors, they dictated which information had to be transmitted to the new governors. Both Jan Thijssen and Matheus van der Broecke were asked to get their respective successors Jan van Riebeeck and Rogier van Heijningen acquainted with the staff of the office as was custom.<sup>37</sup> Van Riebeeck himself had to convey what "useful" products he obtained at the Cape, either at the Company's garden or via local trade with the Khoi peoples.<sup>38</sup> Jan Thijssen was asked to pay special attention to the contracts and privileges agreed upon with local princes and how these were executed. He was also asked to inform his successor about the state of the defences of the city, and how these could be bolstered, and garrisoned with fewer soldiers.<sup>39</sup> Van der Broecke was instructed that outside of personnel he had to make sure that all the papers and books

---

<sup>35</sup> 'Missive aende h[ee]r Jacob Hustaerdt ende den Raet' (Letter, Batavia, 6 December 1661), 629–30, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 885; 'Missive aen den gouver[neur] Joan Thijs[sen]' (Letter, Batavia, 22 September 1662), 517, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 886; 'Missve aan Jan van Riebeeck', fol. 84; 'Missive aen d'h[ee]r directeur vanden Broeck en Raedt' (Letter, Batavia, 29 August 1663), 365, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 887; 'Missive aan den directeur ende raet' (Letter, Batavia, 27 September 1660), 606, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 884.

<sup>36</sup> 'Missve aen Jacob Hustaerdt', 629–30; 'Ordre ende instructie voorde gemelde zijn E[dele] Joan van Dam' (Letter, Batavia, 19 November 1661), 589–90, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 885.

<sup>37</sup> 'Missve aen Joan Thijssen', 517; 'Missive aen Vanden Broeck', 365.

<sup>38</sup> 'Missve aan Jan van Riebeeck', fols 83v–84.

<sup>39</sup> 'Missve aen Joan Thijssen', 517.

would be introduced to his successor so that he could get a glimpse of all that had happened in Bengal. Practically, they asked for a little history to be presented to successor Rogier van Heijningen.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the third indication that the governor-general and his council wished for an orderly transfer of knowledge and power is that they asked all five departing governors to transport all papers, stocks, but also letters and other materials to their successors.<sup>41</sup> These could include special requests, for example governor Jan Thijssen of Malacca was requested to transport the financial products, ammunition and instruments of war to his successor.<sup>42</sup> To conclude, the letters were sent to their destinations, and from a Latourian point of view, this would start a cycle of accumulation so that the information could return to the centre of Batavia.<sup>43</sup>

Justification of the departing governors

The five departing governors began their reports by explaining why they wrote a succession report for their successors. Some cited reason they were about to leave their posts, such as Jan Thijssen and Mattheus van den Broecke. The former explained he was leaving for the Republic and the latter mentioned that he had just received a promotion to join the Council of Indies in Batavia.<sup>44</sup> The departing governors continued their explanation by pointing to the strict orders of the governor-general and his council for them to write a succession report. With those statements the governors confirmed the genre's degree of establishment had caused the governor-general and his council to ask for the reports in an indirect way. Jacob Willemsen was the first to mention a direct order in the form of the letter of 27 September 1660, which he received on 25 February 1661. The odd thing is that the letter did not mention the need for a succession report. While the order for his release from service was directly mentioned, the letter should have given him no incentive to write a succession report. On the contrary, Jan Thijssen framed the situation quite differently, showing how he undervalued the idea of writing a report. He would write out of a sense of duty, and "because of the order of the esteemed Nobles", referring to the direct order coming from

---

<sup>40</sup> 'Missive aen Vanden Broeck', 365.

<sup>41</sup> 'Missive aan Jacob Willemsen', 606. Also see the letters quoted below.

<sup>42</sup> 'Missve aen Joan Thijssen', 517.

<sup>43</sup> Latour, *Science in Action*, 219–20.

<sup>44</sup> 'Memorie door den heer Jan Thijssen gelaten aen den president Riebeek tot Malacca in dato den 1 November 1662' (Report, Malacca, 1 November 1662), fol. 1434, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240; 'Memorie van Mattheus van den Brouck voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen in dato 14 Februarij 1664' (Report, Hugli-Chuchura, 14 February 1664), 437, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1246.

Batavia to provide a document for his successor Jan van Riebeeck as governor of Malacca.<sup>45</sup> Finally, both Mattheus van den Broecke and Jan van Riebeeck pointed to the assignment of the governor-general and his council. Both of them also referenced the letter they had received from Batavia, where Van Riebeeck inserted a direct mention of the letter of 29 January 1662, just as Willemsen had done. Van den Broecke omitted the date but included the contents of the letter, including what other ceremonies he had to perform in the process of handing over the office. With that, Van den Broecke was the only one who mentioned the transfer of effects, money, stocks and papers, as well as the ceremony with the employees of the office.<sup>46</sup>

Just after they unveiled their assignments, they argued why their succession report was constructed in the way it was. Both Willemsen and Hutstart voiced a double-edged explanation to present a succession report to successors who already had adequate amounts of knowledge at their disposal. Willemsen's successor Hendrick van Wijk had worked both in Bandar Abbas and Isfahan, the capital of Safavid Persia. During that time, he acquired knowledge of the inner workings of the company's trade in the area. However, Willemsen argued that he still needed to write the succession report to refresh Van Wijk's memory, to prevent him from acting ignorantly. Hutstart was even more humble in acknowledging the experience of his successor. He would only inform his successor, who had governed Ambon before, about the current developments, mentioning how it would be irresponsible of him to have his successor Cos search through all available papers in his residence, for information. On the other hand, Hutstart admitted he could not compel Cos into certain actions, as Cos was more experienced than he was himself. He would restrict the report to a short insight of what had happened after peace had arrived at Ambon during his period in office.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, Jan Thijssen was in an odd position when he seemed to indicate writing a report would be a waste of his time. He depicted governing as constantly reacting to future

---

<sup>45</sup> Literally: ten eijnde tbevel van hoogh gedachte haer Ed[elen].

<sup>46</sup> 'Copie memorie van den afgaenden directeur van Persia, Jacob Willemsen aen sijn opvolger Hendrick van Wijck in dato 31 Meij 1661' (Report, Bandar Abbas, 31 May 1661), fols 689–690, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240; Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fol. 1434; 'Memorie door den commandeur Jan van Riebeeck gelaten aen sijn successeur Zacharias Wagenaer in dato 5 majj 1662' (Report, Cape of Good Hope, 5 May 1662), fols 1523–1523v, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240; Broecke, 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 437–38.

<sup>47</sup> Willemsen, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', fols 689–690; Jacob Hutstart, 'Memorie door Hutstart aan sijnen successeur den heer Cos in Amboina gelaten in dato 6 julij 1662' (Report, Ambon, 6 July 1662), 736–37, NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240.

business. Therefore, the only knowledge Thijssen seemed to value passing on, was the knowledge he had gathered on the management of the fort over the last sixteen years. To finish, Mattheus van der Broecke explained in detail the reasoning behind his succession report. He was meant to inform his successor to his full ability in the broadest sense possible. For him, this meant raising attention to how trade was conducted, at what places, what privileges had been obtained and which ships had visited in the past four months.<sup>48</sup>

The available papers at the outpost also played a role in the reasoning behind the writing of the reports. On the one hand, some departing governors wished to provide insight into the chaos of papers around their offices, like Jacob Hutstart and Jan van Riebeeck. The latter indicated several documents would be waiting for his successor Zacharias Wagenaer, including reports from visiting commissioners Rijckloff van Goens, Joan Cunaeus and Pit Stertheunius, as well as papers with the intentions of the *Heren XVII* and the governor-general and council for the development of the recently founded Cape Colony. To add to that, both Willemsen and Hutstart also pointed to older succession reports as a means of helping their successors. Those older reports seemed to have a different impact on the outbound governors. Willemsen seemed to be encouraged to follow this tradition from the succession report written in 1655, which he labelled as very trustworthy and helpful to understand the Persian trade. Conversely, Hutstart used the availability of the 'excellent' succession report of De Vlamingh as part of his excuse to shorten his succession report for incoming governor Cos.<sup>49</sup>

In conclusion, the reason for writing a succession report can be found by comparing the explanations of the departing governors and directors with the orders within the letters of the governor-general and his council. The letters of the governor-general and council only lightly suggest that the successors would be provided with the knowledge they would need to take the helm of the office as governor or director. They declared their preferences for what specific knowledge the departing governors had to include within the succession reports but avoided pressing orders in their letters. Governors framed the writing of their succession report as a pressing demand from the governor-general and his council and

---

<sup>48</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fol. 1434; Broecke, 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 437–38.

<sup>49</sup> Riebeeck, 'Memorie gelaten aen sijn succeseur', fols 1523–1523v; Willemsen, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', fols 689–690; Hutstart, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', 736–37.



explained how they would give substance to what was asked of them. Besides their feeling of duty towards the gentlemen in Batavia, the five departing governors seemed to feel the same responsibility Adriaen Blockmansz described in 1616. They had to write their succession report, standing in a tradition of valuable reports they had been able to use themselves.

## Chapter 2: Helping the reader?

Rogier van Heijningen had been in charge of the office of Bengal since 31 January, but he had to wait for half a month before he would obtain his succession report from his predecessor Mattheus van der Broecke. However, he eventually found a report on the desk of his office. Defoliating through the pages, Rogier van Heijningen felt he was guided through the succession report with care. In the margin of the pages, he could find what chapter on what outpost he was reading. Slowly, he worked his way through the succession report, getting to know all of the outposts, their trade and personnel. In the final two chapters, he came to know more general information to be able to govern the office as responsibly as he could. However, he might not have been aware of how blessed he was with such a helpful predecessor.

As noted in the introduction, there were examples of instructions on what to write about, and in which way, as studied by Guido van Meersbergen. Those were printed in the Dutch Republic and distributed throughout the network of the Company. Furthermore, M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs has reflected the strictly organised succession reports of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch colonial state on their preceding VOC tradition. She argued in that essay that those strict rules concerning the contents derived from the VOC reports.<sup>50</sup> The theory thus implies that the genre was fixed and that the order in which the core business would be presented was fixed, too. Moreover, in the previous chapter I concluded that the succession reports were written after the governor-general and his council made indirect inquiries after these reports. The departing governors, directors and commanders should have been aware of the embedded tradition of the genre. That should have meant that the genre had a fixed structure and order. In this chapter, however, I will contend the idea that a fixed template was imposed upon departing governors. For the five selected case studies, I will ask what choices were made in the ordering of subjects. What freedom did a departing governor have to differ from others in their arrangement? How did they try to guide their successors through the report they had written? I will first discuss the overall introduction, core and conclusion structure the governors adhered to before I will delve into the ordering methods of the five selected reports.

---

<sup>50</sup> Meersbergen, *Ethnography and Encounter*, 75–78; Meilink-Roelofs, *Memories van overgave van bestuursambtenaren in het voormalige Nederlands-Indië*, 14.

## Main structure

All five governors adhered to a broad structure featuring an introduction, core and conclusion. In the introduction, the departing governors explained why they wrote the succession report in the first place. Some governors inserted conflicting messages that for example diminished the need for a report, such as the previous experience of the intended reader in their respective office. A counterargument they usually found was that it would be irresponsible to deny their successors even the smallest of reports. The introduction was also the place for most of the departing governors to point their successor to the other documents they were required to read. Those varied from reports written by commissioners at the Cape, to the special trade reports of Bengal, and a succession report of a predecessor at Ambon. The overall conclusion is that almost none of the departing governors used their introduction to guide the reader on what structure and themes they could expect in the report. The exception is Jan Thijssen from Malacca in 1662, who raised five themes: military defences, governance, shipping, diplomacy with princes and religion.<sup>51</sup>

## Ordering by theme

Between five succession reports I chose, the means by which the departing governors ordered the information can be divided into two categories: geography and theme. Jacob Willemsen, Jan Thijssen and Jan van Riebeeck chose to organise their reports thematically. Each of them took a different approach on how they would organise around those themes, and how they would guide their successors through the text.

The oldest succession report, from Jacob Willemsen to Hendrick van Wijk in 1661 had a thematic ordering but also differentiated between the outpost in Bandar Abbas and the one in Isfahan. Right after the introduction, Willemsen shared with Van Wijk the diplomatic history of the relations with the shah in Isfahan. Willemsen hardly guided Van Wijk through that part of the report and made no clear mark when he transitioned to the major theme of shipping and trade. In turn, shipping and trade seemed to harbour several smaller themes within, from local trade in Bandar Abbas to their place within the greater VOC-network, administration and communication. Afterwards, Willemsen returned to the theme of diplomacy once more, now focused on Bandar Abbas. Here Willemsen showed a dichotomy

---

<sup>51</sup> Willemsen, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', fols 689–689v; Riebeeck, 'Memorie gelaten aen sijn successeur', fols 1523–1523v; Hutstart, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', 756–57; Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1434–1435; Broecke, 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 437–38.

between ordering on geography or theme by ordering and splitting the theme of diplomacy between Isfahan at the start and Bandar Abbas right before the finish.<sup>52</sup>

Thijssen guided Jan van Riebeeck thematically through his 1662 report, just as he had indicated in his introduction, but he added a little more than the five themes he had mentioned. At the end of the first theme about the military, he added information about the artisans and their production. He continued this trail of thought with themes of governance, shipping, and diplomacy he mentioned in the introduction. From those three, he chose to have the theme of shipping and trade be as broad as possible, discussing different kinds of levels, from the wider VOC-network on the largest level to the local shops on the smaller level the company had to manage. However, the most interesting part of the theme of shipping is that Thijssen decided to split the subject into two separate sections. He started another discussion on the wider VOC-network after he closed his discussion on local diplomacy. This part was more practical than the earlier part on shipping, but an aberration from what he had promised to discuss in the introduction. Thijssen finished his report as promised with the theme of religion. However, different from his implicit suggestion in the introduction he only dedicated two small paragraphs to the topic.<sup>53</sup>

Jan van Riebeeck also ordered his succession report to Zacharias Wagenaer in 1662 thematically. He split more themes than the other two governors. The important theme of (food) production for the passing ships is separated into at least three parts, while the relations with the local Khoi population are split into four parts across the report. For the relations with the Khoi, Van Riebeeck chose to present the different Khoi groups systematically, starting with those living closer to the Cape before moving away from the Cape to groups further inland. Each time Van Riebeeck came to a new group he systematically discussed them, from their leader and size to what they had to offer. That consistency might have given Wagenaer some assistance in reading that part of the report. Van Riebeeck chose to split the theme of shipping into several parts, beginning with deliveries to ships, returning later to the theme by discussing all passing ships and later on examining how they helped with the communication lines. The only topics that Van Riebeeck did not separate into pieces were those of the military defences that can be found halfway

---

<sup>52</sup> Willemsen, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', fols 689–696.

<sup>53</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1435–1452v.

through the report and the theme of woodworking around the office. There, Van Riebeeck constructed concise sections that must have helped Wagenaer gain an understanding of both subjects.<sup>54</sup>

Ordering by place

In contrast to ordering by theme, some governors ordered the information per outpost. By doing so, they provided historians with a peek behind the curtain, illustrating the multi-centre approach of the forming of knowledge Winterbottom proposed as the way to look at knowledge gathering.<sup>55</sup>

Jacob Hutstart's succession report to the new governor of Ambon Simon Cos in 1662 was ordered around different islands that fell under the authority of the office of Ambon. Among those were the current islands of Ambalau, Manipa, Buru, Waesala, Haruku and Ceram. The section on Haruku was split into two separate parts inside the report. Moreover, Hutstart did not provide any clear indicators to signal that a new section was about to begin. Cos could not have seen it from the length of the section, as those differed greatly, with Buru gaining only a couple of sentences while the smaller island of Ambalau obtained several paragraphs. What is remarkable is that even though Hutstart seemed to have the report organised along geographical lines, he still ended up connecting certain themes to certain places. Finally, in three sections of the report, Hutstart chose a thematic approach to discuss governance, production and shipping in-depth, detached from any geographical entity.<sup>56</sup>

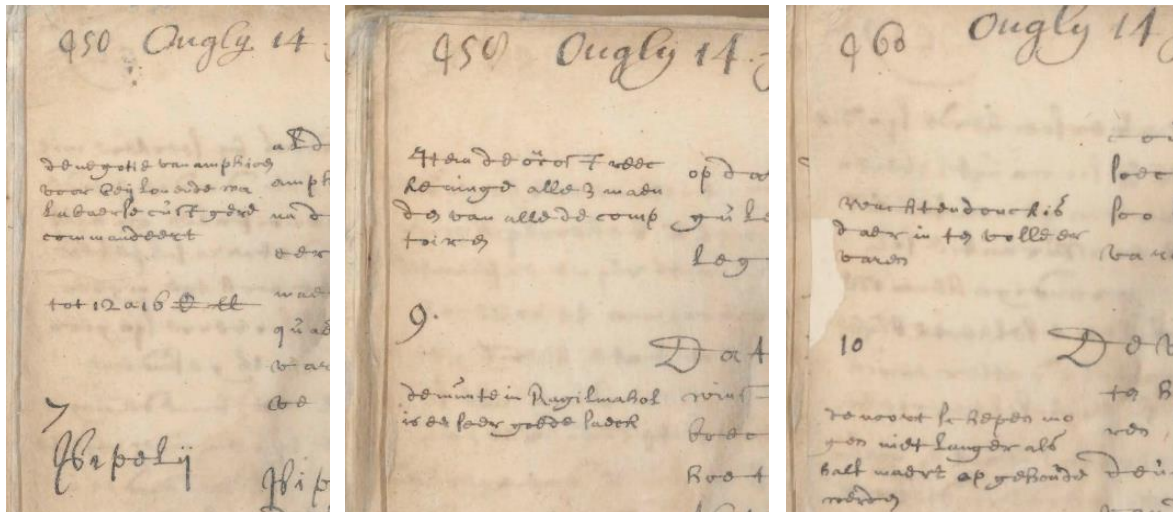
---

<sup>54</sup> 'Memorie gelaten aen sijn succeseur', fols 1523–1551v.

<sup>55</sup> Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*, 19–20.

<sup>56</sup> Hutstart, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', 737–74.

Mattheus van der Broecke also took a geographical approach in his report on Bengal in 1664. However, he guided his successor Rogier van Heijningen more efficiently in marking the transitions to a new outpost. He presented a system with a total of ten 'chapters' of which the first eight were dedicated to separate outposts that fell under the authority of the governor in Bengal. The first chapter is indicated only by the name of the outpost, Cossimbazar, but from outpost number two, Oudaghin, Van der Broecke numbered his



'Chapters' 7 (Pipelij), 9 and 10 as presented in the margin of Van der Broecke's report – Broecke, 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 450,458, 460

chapters until he arrived at number eight, his residence of Hugli(-Chuchura). Most of the outposts share the same order and topics in which Van der Broecke presented the trade, personnel and local rulers to his successor. He was more elaborate in his description of the outpost of Hugli, as his residence would also be Van Heijningen's first and foremost place of responsibility. Conversely, Van der Broecke turned to more generic topics in the last two 'chapters'. In 'chapter' nine Van der Broecke addressed the topic of the financial administration of the company. In the tenth and final chapter, he focuses on regional and interregional shipping related to Bengal, what orders he obtained from Batavia and which ships from the VOC network would arrive to provide him with what he had asked for. After concluding that chapter, he indicated the start of his "besluit" or closure with his final remarks.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Broecke, 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 438–63. The first section starts at 438 (Cassinabazaer), followed at 440 (Oudaghin), 443 (Zeerpour), 444 (Tehh India), 445 (Decca), 448 (Patena), 450 (Pipelij) and 452 (Ougelij). Chapters 9 and 10 can be found at respectively 458 and 460. For the current-day

## Conclusion

Overall, the overarching structure of introduction-core-conclusions appears to be in place for all succession reports, but departing governors did have freedom in the way they would order the information they presented to their successors. Furthermore, they certainly had a choice in how much they would guide their successors through the text. For the ordering based on different themes, Thijssen wanted to make sure his successor Van Riebeeck was on board with what themes to expect from the start of reading the report on Malacca. Van Riebeeck left his successor at the Cape much more in the dark, jumping right into different topics after the introduction, even splitting them into several parts. The differences in the degree of guidance were not excluded when the departing governor ordered based on geography. Mattheus van der Broecke chose to separate his story into several chapters, indicating whenever a new outpost was being discussed. Simon Cos on the other hand had to browse before he could understand which of the islands around Ambon Hutstart was talking about. Cos had the advantage of having had earlier experience at the office of Ambon, but nonetheless, he obtained a difficult piece to read from Hutstart. These differences tell us that in this period, the strict rulebook that M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs projected on the period of the VOC, had yet to materialise. Departing governors had room to determine how they wanted to order information. They had a choice in how much they wanted to help their successor get acquainted with the new world they would enter.

---

names, as used in the text, I have made use of 'De VOCsite : Handelsposten; Bengalen', accessed 5 May 2022, <https://www.vocsite.nl/geschiedenis/handelsposten/bengalen/>.

### Chapter 3: Providing warnings and reassurance

Arnoldt van Wachtendonck, Jay Wiswaas, Jacob Verburgh, Ram Ray, Dirck Chesinghs, Jan van Leenen, Joan Verschuijre, Francoijs de With, Adam Jacobsz van Bremen, Hans Yl van Straelhoudt, Jan Hulst van Haerlem, Roelandt Barrevoedt van Potua, Reijndert Harmansze van Groeningen, Joan Velters, Arend Croesbeeck and Willem Alma. All those names passed by Rogier van Heijningen when he assumed his seat at the VOC office of Bengal and read the document his predecessor Mattheus van der Broecke had written for him. From that moment in 1664, he was responsible for those people, the employees working under his command. He had to learn all of their names, and more importantly, what they contributed to the operations in Bengal: from acting as merchants to pilots.

Two years earlier, Jan van Riebeeck came into another office, with a different succession report in front of him. Jan Thijssen, his predecessor at the strategic VOC fortress at Malacca, provided him with a report that gave him a whole different list of names to learn. However, this list consisted not of people, even though some names suggest otherwise. Van Riebeeck would have had to memorise a list of military defences of Malacca: Frederik Hendrik, Amsterdam, Amelia, Wilhelmus, Mauritus, Middelburgh. He was informed, that they had enough gunpowder in stock to defend the office and the Strait of Malacca.

In this chapter, I will discuss several themes that come to pass in at least two of the five succession reports. What was said about these themes? How did different departing governors and directors decide on which themes to focus on and what to discard? I have distinguished eight different themes throughout the five succession reports. As the VOC was a trading company, there are always some remarks on trade and the operational side of shipping. However, the author also always acknowledged the relations with the local rulers. The topics of personnel, military defence, production, and administrative organisation were also important, coming to pass in more than half of the reports. I will discuss those topics in order of importance, starting with trade, and continuing with personnel and military defences. From there I will discuss shipping, production, governance, and religion.

First lesson: What to trade?

In the trade division, most of the departing governors and directors informed their successors about which trade goods were traded in their offices. The departing governors wrote about the trade relations with the local population, either pointing out the



opportunities or warning for the problems ahead and giving advice for possible solutions. I will discuss three of the five reports, leaving out Malacca and Ambon, as the other three present the spectrum of approaches sufficiently.

In the Persia of 1661, the departing Willemsen reminded Van Wijk primarily of the inner workings of the silk trade he would watch from a distance. While Willemsen had a pessimistic view of the possibilities provided by the silk trade, he pointed Van Wijk to enough potential in the Bandar Abbas trade. For the silk trade, Van Wijk would have to appoint a director in Isfahan that would closely watch the Grand Vizier of the Shah. The Company had signed a contract and Willemsen commented how they “are held to yearly purchase 300 cargas or 6001 bales of silk from the king. Though, [the amount] is for us yearly not more, just like your Lordship knows.”<sup>58</sup> The Grand Vizier had successfully diminished that amount to a variation between 80 and 200 “cargas” of silk. The director Van Wijk would send to Isfahan also needed to be instructed to guard the quality, which had not always been up to the Company’s standards. Lastly, that director needed to be wary of the English who had gained a better position by providing better gifts to the Shah. For Van Wijk’s residence, Willemsen had fewer warnings to give as he saw more trade opportunities. Bandar Abbas was a sales market in which the Company could sell cloth from Surat, Coromandel or Bengal, with which they could accomplish the goal of 40% profit. The selling of cinnamon from Ceylon was more complicated, so Willemsen warned Van Wijk to refrain from selling those goods too easily or too quickly. For Bandar Abbas as a buyers’ market, Willemsen pointed to more opportunities, such as the Persian pearl fishing the Company could take advantage of for a good price or the opportunity to buy angoras from the Turks for 3 Spanish reales. Finally, Willemsen fully trusted the capabilities of his specialised employees that acquired horses for other offices.<sup>59</sup>

At the Cape, in 1662, departing Commander Van Riebeeck was forced to explain the trade with the local Khoi in great detail, including how to retain the monopoly. As the Khoi were not a sedentary people, his successor Wagenaer had to learn about distinct groups, what they could offer, what problems Van Riebeeck had faced engaging with them, how to keep the groups interested in trading with the company, and finally what regulations Van

---

<sup>58</sup> Literally: gehouden jaerl[ijck] 300 cargas ofte 6001 baelen sijde legia vanden coninck aen te nemen. Doch is bij ons jaerlijcx niet meer gelijk u E[dele] bekennt is.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Memorie aan sijnen successeur’, fols 691–695v.

Riebeeck had instated to ensure that the free Burghers would not disrupt his monopoly trade. Van Riebeeck started to discuss smaller groups closer to the fort of Good Hope, which could not offer much. The Goringhaicons (called 'Beachwalkers') could offer fish; the Goringhaqnas (called 'Cape people') could only offer the services of an intermediary, and the Gerachouqua in the same area were even less useful to Van Riebeeck, as they stole tobacco from the fields. The further removed Chocoquas would trade cattle with the company, just as the Chariguriquas traded with other Khoi groups. The Chariguriquas held a positive stance towards the company, but Van Riebeeck had not managed to trade cattle with them. Most cattle came from the Chainouquas, who provided good sheep and delivered good deer after a period of absence. The problem of distance between the company and the different Khoi groups came to pass several times. Van Riebeeck lost contact with the Chainouquas, and the trade in ivory, elephants, and herb plants with the Hancumquas and Namaquas was also hampered because of the distance. The distance and consequently the supply problems increased during times of drought. It was more difficult to obtain meat for the ships and the Dutch had to resort partly to trade with the peoples of the peninsula. Van Riebeeck explained he was only able to trade a little, offering Spanish wine and not-so-strong brandy in arracks from Batavia. When possibilities for significant trade would arise again, van Riebeeck urged Wagenaer to use decent quality and quantity of tobacco to secure the cattle he would need. Finally, to retain their monopoly Van Riebeeck had forbidden most trade between the group of free Burghers and the local Khoi people. Van Riebeeck had brought free Burghers to the Cape for the production outside of the service of the Company, but competition in local trade had to be prevented. There were exceptions for pigs, ducks and hens so that the burghers would be able to breed the animals themselves. That could also provide skins that Van Riebeeck hoped could be sold in Japan to compensate for the cost the Company had to bear for the outpost at the Cape. With that, Van Riebeeck finished his advice on how to maintain the fragile trade with the Khoi. Overall, Van Riebeeck seemed more pessimistic about the idea that trade would flow naturally, needing to convey the warnings and advice to Wagenaer.<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the 1664 succession report of Mattheus van der Broecke, trade was present in each outpost he dedicated a chapter to. The pieces together are very much

---

<sup>60</sup> 'Memorie gelaten aen sijn succeseur', fols 1527, 1528–1535, 1540v–1541, 1545v–1546, 1548v.

export-orientated, showing Rogier van Heijningen that Bengal was in the first place a purchasing office. Van der Broecke designated every important product the company bought at different outposts, from the white powdered sugar in Tehh India, the nice cloth in Decca, and the saltpetre in Patna to the whole list of saltpetre, sugar, rice, shrouds, and fabrics bought at Cassimabasar. Never did he mention problems or challenges, presenting Van Heijningen with the faith that trade would flow in the future as it did in the past. The most important of the export products was, like in Persia, silk, and Van der Broecke seemed optimistic about this product too. The product would be exported to Japan from the outposts Zeerpour, Oudaginh and Cassimabasar. At the first outpost, Van der Broecke obtained a restricted number of 100 bales of the best quality silk in the region. Some silk came from Oudaginh, where it was scarce too, and where the relations with the local authorities could be tense. At Cassimabasar, Van der Broecke seemed to trust the process as he noted that “conveying of silk of [the] native merchants to Agra, Delhi, etc. was being stopped. The same [silk] being 25 to 30 per cent cheaper to obtain, contrary to afterwards, when [we would] get the prescribed [amount] by the end.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, by buying from native merchants, Van der Broecke could prevent unnecessary expenses. With those tactics, he assumed the Company would still be able to make substantial profits in Japan with the silk they had bought at his office. Finally, Van der Broecke discussed the trade at his residence in Hougli. From there, he bought sugar as well as bulks of rice to feed other parts of the VOC network. His outpost was also the place where the imported silver from Japan would be converted into cash. Van der Broecke instructed Van Heijningen to make sure the negotiations with the cash exchangers would result in sufficient results to keep the outpost profitable. Van der Broecke believed those cash exchanges would prove profitable, as he later discussed how he kept the no longer important outpost of Pibley open. The only reason Van der Broecke remained in business there was that “by the falling of the quay or the embankment of the old, decayed place, and [we] became a new residence.” He did not stay there for essential goods.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Literally: het opvoeren van de zijde der inlantse coopliden naer Agra, Dillij etc.. gestopt wesende. Deselve wel 25 a 30 procento beter coop te krijgen was, als naderhandt wanneer door t eijnd en van den voorschreven krijgh.

<sup>62</sup> Literally: "doort 't afvallen van de wal ofte 't voorlandt der oude vervallende Logie en bequame nieuwe wooningh." The whole paragraph is based on 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 438, 441–45, 448, 450, 456.

Overall, the three reports above presented, as all five did, what and with whom local trade would be executed. They differed greatly in how they informed their readers about the prospects of the trade ahead. On the one hand, governors pointed to the possibilities of the trade in their area and provided tactics to usefully exploit it, showing their cunning and ambition to provide the company with as much profit as possible. On the other hand, there were cautious approaches, to maintain the status quo with certain partners and avoid (further) obstruction. Van Riebeeck felt like he had to give Wagenaer all kinds of warnings to maintain a precarious balance in the trade with the local Khoi people. Van Riebeeck had to warn his successor about possible competition of the free Burghers, and the difficulties contacting far removed Khoi. Van Riebeeck suggested that it would be hard to obtain all the meat needed to conform to his goals of refreshing ships at the Cape. Willemsen's views lie between ambition and realism, as he presented both the problems of the silk trade in Isfahan and the possibilities of profitable trade in Bandar Abbas. He seemed optimistic about the continuation of reaching the goal of 40% profits under his successor Van Wijk. Finally, the most optimistic departing governor on the profitability of the trade was Van der Broecke in Bengal. He presented Rogier van Heijningen with some of the challenges in the buying of silk but also pointed towards useful tactics. Furthermore, he summed up quite a lot of goods without remarks, showing the faith that Van Heijningen would have no trouble acquiring those goods and exporting them to other places within the VOC network. In conclusion, trade paragraphs in succession reports addressed the goals of what goods to acquire, but the different departing governors varied in their views on what prospects the future had for obtaining the goals.

Second lesson: Who is working for me?

The second theme that comes to pass in almost all of the succession reports is the introduction of the personnel working at the office and outposts. Did the incoming governor have to be suspicious of them, or could they rely on them for all actions that needed to be done? This part also demonstrates the process of personal knowledge accumulation as coined by Roberts for those working for the company, whether it be the schoolmaster at Ambon having gained the leadership skills to govern an island for an interim period or the long period of service of the directors of outposts in Bengal.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Roberts, 'Centres and Cycles of Accumulation', 12.

For Ambon's report in 1662, Hutstart introduced Simon Cos to his staff, showing that some groups of employees required a different approach than others. Hutstart expressed some trust in his executors, the military commanders sergeant Jan Leipsich, captain Pauls Andriesz, lieutenants Jan Riermands, Didelost Verbeeck and former lieutenant Govert Danielsz. They would destroy clove trees to maintain control over the production of cloves and to keep the de facto monopoly of the precious spice in the hands of the company. Hutstart informed how the military officers respectively took 224 trees at Manipa, 4.000 and 1.700 chopped down at Arangcaij Leeuw, Sangdje Tuban and Warnoela, while he left out what kind of instructions he had given those commanders. Those military officers in charge of the administrative business, such as the goods deposited at the yard or administrations of islands under the office of Ambon, also enjoyed his trust since Hutstart did not feel the need to warn Cos about any of it. Moreover, Hutstart trusted schoolmaster Francisco Mole, about whom he wrote the following: "[It is ] good to give the authority to the chief schoolmaster Francisco Mole to preserve the same until the aforementioned son will have reached his male years."<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, Hutstart was far less pleased with the situation regarding the five ministers working within the office who were facilitated by the company. He could appreciate them to a certain extent, praising the experience of Francois Caron jr. and Cornelis Walrandt, mentioning the progress of the recent theology graduates Johannes de Graeff and Arnoldus Bartrant and finally stressing the contribution of Josias Splijardus, who had experience in the Malay language. However, Hutstart had to deal with the agreement that his predecessor De Vlamingh had arranged with the five ministers. They were granted money, wine, butter and rice lavishly. However, the governor-general and the Heren XVII had objected and ordered the ministers to be brought back to the standards of normal employees. Hutstart thus implicitly warned Cos from getting too close to the ministers.<sup>65</sup>

Discussing the personnel of Malacca, Jan Thijssen introduced Jan van Riebeeck to several different occupations around the office with a neutral to distrusting stance. Within the military paragraph, he introduced the 374 soldiers that were stationed at a fort accompanied by their three lieutenants and an ensign. The information was later expanded with all the duties of Commander of the operations and First Lieutenant Hans Creniger, in

---

<sup>64</sup> Literally: goet 'tgesach aenden opperschoolmeester Francisco Mole te geven om tselve te behouden tot dat gemelte soon gen tot zijne mannelijcke jaren sal gecomen zijn.

<sup>65</sup> Hutstart, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', 741, 743, 746, 758, 761, 766–68, 771.

detail. He was in charge of the military as a whole and needed to ensure they exercised twice a week, and Creniger was in the lead of the operations at the hospital. Together with merchant Curre he would need to stimulate people to return to work. He should give them only half their salary during their stay in the hospital, paying for the food provided to them. The reason why Thijssen might have felt the need to detail all those tasks is to make sure Van Riebeeck could oversee them all. Thijssen was even more distrustful of some of the non-military personnel, implicitly instructing Van Riebeeck to keep an eye on those who had obtained several functions within the company. The junior merchants Nicolaas Miller and Jacob Joritsz Pits had obtained the functions of estate agent and garrison accountant respectively, but could also oversee all the documents of the office and were in charge of the mortuary and the orphanage. Miller, moreover, was a shopkeeper who had acquired rights to sell cloth in a shop he exploited for the company. Certainly, those last rights seemed to have made Thijssen worry, as he noted about Miller: "So, he was not allowed any clothe or other [goods] from the warehouse neither any parts from the cashier without a written permit."<sup>66</sup> The senior merchant responsible had to be vigilant, was the cautious advice Thijssen added. Furthermore, Thijssen also gave attention to accountant and merchant Gillis Sijbes who had taken the mantle of commissioner for marriages while also being in charge of some of the financial records. He was aided by his assistant Abraham den Hack, so Thijssen did not have to explicitly warn Van Riebeeck here. Implicitly he showed his distrust by focusing his watchful eye on those who accumulated offices. He showed less attention, and therefore implicit distrust of the nameless artisans that would be coordinated by equipment master Frans van Heijs, to whom he would neither express what his specific tasks were.<sup>67</sup>

Mattheus van der Broecke, in 1664 in Bengal, presented the most important personnel per outpost. Rogier van Heijningen would get to know the director of the outpost, but Van der Broecke also showed his trust in the assisting personnel, which he introduced by name. He mentioned the irreplaceable Ram Ray, a Persian writer at Cassimabasar assisting the company as a translator. Moreover, he discussed the six pilots crucial for navigating the Ganges near the outpost Decca. "As the Ganges, [with] the dangerous banks cannot be

---

<sup>66</sup> Literally: Soo wert hem oock niet toegelaten, eenige cleeden als anders, uijt het packhuijs noch oock comptanten vanden cassier sonder schriftel[ijck] bevel.

<sup>67</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1436, 1437–1437v, 1439–1440, 1446–1446v.

navigated without expertise and good knowledge. Now staying here [are] Adam Jacobsz van Bremen, Hans Yl van Straelhoudt, Jan Hulst van Haerlem, Roelandt Barrevoedt van Potua en Reijndert Harmansze van Groeningen.”<sup>68</sup> He trusted these men to successfully navigate around the banks. The more generic assistants of the directors of the different outposts were also introduced by name, aiding their directors in the negotiations and problems they would face. Finally, Van der Broecke presented the directors of the outposts with whom Van Heijningen would be in direct contact: Arnold van Wachtendonk (Cassimabasar), Dirck Chesings (Oudaginh), Joan Verschuijre (Tehh India) and Joan Velters (Patna). Van der Broecke came back to them while discussing his residence outpost of Hougli. He praised his directors for the experience they had built over the last ten years in Bengal alone, which had made them aware of the trade and relations with local merchants and rulers. Furthermore, two of the directors had aided Van der Broecke at Hougli. Arnold van Wachtendonk had gained experience in the selling of Japanese silver and Dirck Essings had been keeping the books for the past five years. Van Heijningen needed to keep that in mind when he would reshuffle the tasks between Willem Alma, his new right-hand man, and Essings. Van der Broecke suggested Van Heijningen would carefully divide the tasks, having Alma do the bookkeeping, but reserve the other tasks for Essings. The overall theme Van der Broecke conveyed to Van Heijningen was to trust the personnel in the environment they knew well. In contrast to the aforementioned reports, he did not discuss all kinds of surveillance to check the work of his employees.<sup>69</sup>

In terms of faith and trust in their personnel, Mattheus van der Broecke trusted those working for him to a great extent, while Thijssen and Hutstart had some reservations with certain employees. They were cautious whether those people would do their job well, or the governors were annoyed with the costs the company endured. Van der Broecke praised the qualities of both his high- and low-ranking personnel. He tried to convey to Rogier van Heijningen that he needed all those who were already employed so that trade and shipping could continue as they had done. His pilots at Decca lit the way for the ships to move the Ganges, while his directors sold and acquired the goods needed. On the other hand, the

---

<sup>68</sup> Literally: Alsoo de Ganges de dangereuse bancken sonder experientie ende goede kennisse niet te bevaren sijn. Thans verblijven alhier Adam Jacobsz van Bremen, Hans Yl van Straelhoudt, Jan Hulst van Haerlem, Roelandt Barrevoedt van Potua en Reijndert Harmansze van Groeningen.

<sup>69</sup> Broecke, ‘Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen’, 440–41, 444–46, 448–49, 451, 455–57.

other two governors present an image of some dependable employees. Hutstart did not question the actions of the military officers in his service and Thijssen seemed to approach his military staff neutrally. They did have their issues with other employees as Hutstart needed to combat the luxurious lifestyle of the ministers. Thijssen had severe trust issues with his junior merchants and to a lesser extent to the highest ranked military officer, for whom he described in great detail what his duties entailed. In the end, Mattheus van der Broecke trusted his staff's accomplishments for a great deal. Hutstart and Thijssen were more distrustful and felt the need for their successor to know how to direct their employees.

Third lesson: What ships do I need to send and receive?

The sections on shipping addressed both incoming and departing ships, as well as the difficulties of sailing around the offices they were visiting. I will leave out the examples of Ambon and Bengal. The latter is similar to the navigational dangers at the Cape, and Ambon where Hutstart did not contribute much attention to shipping.

The report from Persia in 1661 contained the least information about shipping, but Jacob Willemsen informed his successors Hendrick van Wijk in a most optimistic way. He pointed out that he could request certain goods to come from all over the VOC-network, from Batavia to Coromandel and Bengal to Surat. The only caveat was that he always needed to ensure the profit margin of 40% would be accomplished. If not, he could no longer ask for cloths that came from Surat or Bengal. Willemsen reported on the more localised shipping routes with even more confidence. He told Van Wijk how the English or Islamic traders from Mocha would appear with coffee beans that could be bought for an affordable price. Those goods could be added to the cargoes of silk and sent to the Dutch Republic with the return fleet in September. There, Willemsen shortly pointed towards the planning of shipping from an international perspective. The trust in the affordable price, furthermore, seemed such that results from the past gave a sense of safety to Willemsen for him to share this information.<sup>70</sup>

Regarding the Cape of Good Hope in 1662, Van Riebeeck's main concern related to shipping was the accessibility of his office. Accessibility in this case meant that he wanted to make sure that ships could reach the office, as well as that they would be sustained there. Van Riebeeck started to explain the preparations to Wagenaer first. He addressed how

---

<sup>70</sup> Willemsen, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', fols 692, 695.



nineteen ships each year would sail by in autumn or winter on their return journey to the Republic. The ships would be around for 18 to 20 days while they resupplied before they could continue their long journey. For everything to go well, Van Riebeeck planned for the warehouses to be fully stocked at the moment the ships would arrive. He had already provided Wagenaer with the oral instructions for the amounts of cabbages and carrots they needed to have in abundance, and several fruits needed to come from the Company's garden. To have everything ready in time, the stocking would need to happen between September and May. At the same time, Van Riebeeck instructed Wagenaer to ensure the ships could safely reach the Cape. Sending out expeditionary forces to map both the coastline and inland would increase accessibility. Van Riebeeck noted Wagenaer should: "Continue on good occasion of the monsoon also cannot be discouraged, but hereby recommend [investigating] the same thorough."<sup>71</sup> The monsoon probably was not a monsoon, but rather a reference to the difficulty navigating the sea-current system around the Cape. With that, he painted the landscape as an obstacle that ships needed to overcome. Connected to that, Van Riebeeck warned Wagenaer about the different anchors that needed cleansing from the sea. When those obstacles would be removed, great ships would enter the port again and they should be managed with great care. Crews of big ships were not to be allowed to leave the ships, to prevent the spread of diseases on shore. On a positive note, Van Riebeeck added that incoming ships provided enough opportunities for communications with Batavia and the Republic. On the whole, it leaves the impression Van Riebeeck balanced between concern and encouragement. There were ample problems, and Van Riebeeck encouraged Wagenaer to take steps in the right direction to solve some. For other problems, he remained worried about possible dangers to his office and incoming ships.<sup>72</sup>

In contrast to Van Riebeeck, Thijssen was content with shipping opportunities in the landscape of Malacca. Within the 1662 report, he conveyed to Van Riebeeck the importance of Malacca's hub function. In the first instance, Malacca was shown as an important hub in the VOC-network, where Thijssen provided a list of ships that came to enter the harbours of Malacca in the last year. He went into more detail about some of those, such as the ship *Hoorn* which had arrived from Japan with Captain Joannes Massis with 25.000 pieces of

---

<sup>71</sup> Literally: Continuatie bij goede gelegentijden van 't mousson oock niet can ontraden, maer bij desen ten hooghsten aenraeden deselve met ijver te betrachten.

<sup>72</sup> Riebeeck, 'Memorie gelaten aen sijn succeseur', fols 1524v, 1537, 1543, 1544–1545.

silver and 1.000 'kopdaelders' (coins), travelling to Bengal. The ship called *Kabeljauw* was also heading for India, as it would trade for cloth in Coromandel. Cloth from Surat and Coromandel would also regularly pass by the hub of Malacca. For food provisioning of the office they would be stocked from Siam and Bengal, while other needs came from Formosa, Delhi, Isfahan and Batavia. In addition, Thijssen showed Van Riebeeck how he could use the landscape to their advantage. Close to the island of Maria, the passage was at its narrowest point, which made it the optimal place to oversee all ships that sailed through the Strait of Malacca. One footnote Thijssen added was that they needed to let incoming Islamic ships enter due to an ancient Portuguese habit. However, he was far from pleased, as he noted: "The damage [whom] the same Malacca bring, by their pernicious commerce."<sup>73</sup> Overall, Thijssen presented the office as a place where one could be in control, overseeing the trade routes and having free access for the VOC-ships. He had only a few remarks on some limitations.<sup>74</sup>

At the basic level, while the governors shared the same concerns about shipping and accessibility, two of the three felt in control. Willemsen in Persia was confident his successor could hold on to the access they had to the company's network of goods shipped to them, and that they could sell with enough profit. Furthermore, Willemsen was optimistic about the regional shipping lanes, in which the Islamic and English traders coming from Mocha could provide them with coffee beans for a reasonable price. Thijssen at Malacca felt in control of shipping traffic thanks to the use of the landscape at the narrowest point of the Strait of Malacca. He showed Van Riebeeck that it gave them the option to oversee the trade routes and clear the way for those ships coming from East Asia, heading for the markets in South Asia and vice versa. Moreover, due to the central location of the office, Thijssen could reasonably expect to be stocked sufficiently. On the whole other side of the spectrum is the advice that Van Riebeeck himself gave to Wagenaer about the accessibility of the Cape. They needed to better map out the coastline and learn more about the sea currents in order to prevent ships from wrecking in the face of their harbour. Van Riebeeck thus was more worried about what could go wrong, presenting much work to be done before the Cape was truly accessible.

---

<sup>73</sup> Literally: de schaede disdeselve Malacca, door hare bederfelijcke commertie toebrengen.

<sup>74</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1443v, 1447, 1450–1452.

Fourth lesson: How to defend what you have?

In three of the offices where the VOC had authority over a greater area, the departing governor included a military paragraph. I will discuss those of Malacca and Ambon that were distinctly different, leaving out the Cape that was in many ways similar to the discussion at Malacca, albeit less extensive.

Jan Thijssen opened his 1662 succession report to Jan van Riebeeck with a military paragraph. He explained comprehensively to Van Riebeeck which defences were available to guard Malacca. Thijssen took Van Riebeeck on a journey along different forts, starting with the fort named after Frederik Hendrik. For each fort, Thijssen discussed what was at hand: between two and nine cannons, though usually five, and sometimes there was storage space in the cellar available for 10.000 to 12.000 pounds of ammunition. After he mentioned the distance, he would transition to the next fort, until he had discussed all of them. Thijssen had a mostly neutral stance, providing facts only about what would be ready for war, without complaining. However, he did seem to have his concerns for those who would defend the office of Malacca. Fort Middelburgh housed a garrison of 374 soldiers, with three lieutenants and supporting artisans. Thijssen felt the explicit need to inform Van Riebeeck about the duties of First Lieutenant Hans Creniger in taking care of that garrison. They would obtain and distribute food in rations of 40 pounds of rice and 20 pounds of scare wheat. They would need to exercise often enough and Creniger would have to make sure the state of the armoury would remain to the right standards. By mentioning all of this, Thijssen mostly focused on the hardware he had available to defend the office against a European attack. Thijssen did not feel the need to add more remarks about shortcomings. When it came to his soldiers, he did have some reservations and advised extra care: "The common soldiers [have to] train in arms twice a week, so that the incapable be practised."<sup>75</sup> Showing that he believed to have some incompetent soldiers stationed at the forts.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast, Jacob Hutstart at 1662 Ambon focused first on active conflicts with the local population. He explained to Simon Cos how some conflicts had developed in the recent period. The Amblauwers had used old tricks to prevent the destruction of their clove trees, which were not even found after the Company had broken their barricades. Meanwhile, the

---

<sup>75</sup> Literally: de gemeene soldaten wekelijcx tweemaal inde wapenen te doen comen omd e onkudnige daerinnen te exerceren.

<sup>76</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1434–1438.

Chialoupen fought a conflict with the company too, unlike the Cerammers, with whom Secretary Philip Dupres had signed a treaty to halt the fighting. In that way, Hutstart showed that trust and cooperation with the local population were precarious and could lead to fighting more often than once. When Hutstart came to the necessary defences of Ambon, they were incomparable to those at Malacca too. The ammunition cellar was filled, storage for rainwater ready, but Fort Middelburgh at Ambon was devastated and therefore useless. In that, Hutstart did not present the faith and trust that his successor would easily be able to fend off (European) invasions, as Thijssen did at Malacca.<sup>77</sup>

Fifth lesson: How to contact local rulers?

In all five of the succession reports, there is attention to diplomacy, explaining to whom the Company had to direct their efforts for favourable terms in the trade. I will discuss three of them to show the differences in the relations with the local population. I will leave out Ambon, where more hierarchical relations were in place, and the Cape where Van Riebeeck had maintained a precarious balance that I discussed prior in the trade section.

For Persia, the segment on local rulers was most elaborate, as Willemsen decided that Hendrik van Wijk would have to start with a history lesson in Dutch-Persian diplomacy. Willemsen started with Hubert Visnich, the founding of the outpost in Isfahan and the first contract with Shah Safi in 1623. Quite soon, Willemsen shifted to discuss the biggest obstacle in Isfahan: “As well as what force the greedy confidant of the empire Miersa Tachij [had unleashed] with the enforcement of any tolls, among other unreasonable violence.”<sup>78</sup> The Grand Vizier was an important position they needed to please. The company had tried to remove the tolls via the diplomatic missions of Nicolaas Verburgh and Willem Basting in 1647, and Joan Cunaeus in 1652. However, Willemsen could not inform Van Wijk what precisely was achieved by these missions, instead referring to the documents that would be at his office in Bandar Abbas. Willemsen also discussed his beneficial relations with the local authorities in Bandar Abbas. Willemsen advised a more frugal approach, where Van Wijk had to prevent unnecessary gunshots, only accept gifts for himself should he need them for his household and deposit all other gifts to the Company. Willemsen stressed that obstacles in the trade at Bandar Abbas could be prevented, by maintaining connections with the

---

<sup>77</sup> Hutstart, ‘Memorie aan sijnen successeur’, 738, 755–56, 760, 768–69.

<sup>78</sup> Literally: Alsmede wat force dien gelt suchtigen rijcxvertrouwe Miersa Tachij met het affdringen eeniger thollen als andre onredelijcke geweldten.

shahbandar (harbourmaster), and sending him mediocre gifts of spices, sugar, and cloth each year so that he remained satisfied with the company.<sup>79</sup>

For Malacca, Jan Thijssen dedicated a special part of his succession report to instructing Van Riebeeck about the ‘friendship’ with the local rulers. However, rather than a tract on diplomacy, it resembles a history of trade conflicts. Jacob Keijser and Balthasar Both had initially signed a contract with the king of Pera for 2.500 bales of tin and a debt settlement for the 45.642 ‘ropia’ that the king was indebted to the company. However, Thijssen had to come to a new agreement with the king of Pera, now for only 200 to 250 bales that would be bought for 31 ‘ropia’ - a contract to which the king of Pera did not even adhere as he started a war that killed 250 people. Van Riebeeck had to finish the negotiations with the king, as the king had promised to send an envoy. With the king of Orangkaij the company struck a similar deal so that the king would deliver 800 bales of tin and the debt of 1.768 ‘ropia’ would be settled. Here a conflict arose too, leading to stolen goods and a burned lodge. While the company had retreated from Orangkaij, the English formed an opposition there, paving the way for extra obstruction from an important courtier when the company returned. Finally, the company clashed with the king of Johor about the Chinese junks that sailed along Malacca. Overall, Thijssen presented a balancing cord for Van Riebeeck, where he would have to be distrustful of the local leaders. A conflict was always on the horizon, and if the envoy of the King of Pera would “then at some point appear, your Lordship would [have to] decide it.”<sup>80</sup> There was no paved way to follow, no relationship to build off of, and no certainty that those relationships could be built.<sup>81</sup>

In Bengal, Van der Broecke instructed Rogier van Heijningen per outpost on what local rulers he would face, presenting a mixed field with whom the company did business. Near the outpost of Cassimabasar resided governor Hafia Mameth Reza, who had permitted the VOC to buy 1.000 bales of silk without paying tolls. Van der Broecke suggested sending a proper gift right away to preserve his good favour. Good relations were also kept with governor Mamech Isoph at the minor office of Pipely. The diplomatic history of Hougli represented a turning of good relations into tense relations. Van der Broecke suggested he

---

<sup>79</sup> Willemsen, ‘Memorie aan sijnen successeur’, fols 689v, 690, 696–696v; Hutstart, ‘Memorie aan sijnen successeur’.

<sup>80</sup> Literally: Dan teeniger tijt ten voorschijn coomende, en gebeurende u E[dele] daarmede testont het te besluyten.

<sup>81</sup> Thijssen, ‘Memorie aen den president Riebeeck’, fols 1447v–1450, 1451.

had good contact with the first governor Mith Samameth Sjamma but needed the firman that Dircq van Adrichem had gained from the Mughal emperor to keep the later governors Mameth Sarijf, Mookermechan and Miermameth Sarijf in check. The firman was a letter granted by the ruler of the Mughal empire, by whom the governors were appointed, and it gave the holder certain privileges to trade in the Mughal empire. The most troublesome relationship was with the Nabab Chaestuchan of Oudaginh, who was unimpressed with the offerings of the company when Van der Broecke sought to reinstate the trade relations and settle the debts that had to be repaid. One last piece of advice that Van der Broecke added in the last chapter was to be reserved with promising Persian horses, as it had proven difficult to provide Mirsa Meela Rebeesch with one. This meant that Van Heijningen would not always have horses to offer, so he had to keep those with whom the company maintained good relations content in another way.<sup>82</sup>

To conclude, diplomacy did not always work out as intended, but some governors seemed more distrustful of local leaders and therefore less confident about the possibilities of establishing or maintaining good relations with local leaders. Thijssen at Malacca seemed the most distrusting, being unable to present his successor Van Riebeeck an example of a good relationship with one of the local kings. Instead, Thijssen warned him of all kinds of conflicts over contracts that could burst repeatedly. He also informed Van Riebeeck about the incoming envoy of Pera, but Thijssen was unsure whether it would provide the final resolution of the conflict. This distrust might have been caused by his experiences, but Thijssen potentially having a more demanding attitude, since he governed a production office and not a trading office, could have played a role. Willemsen and Van der Broecke, who were in charge of trading companies, presented more examples of good relationships with local leaders. They maintained those relations with gifts and frequent communication, so there were connections for their successors to build upon. The thing their successors would have to be mindful of was ways to be economical with what presents they offered, but generally, both departing governors seemed optimistic. This is not to say that they did not have their obstacles, for Willemsen regarding the situation in Isfahan, and for Van der Broecke the relationship with Nabab Chaestuchan, who was unimpressed with the company's offerings.

---

<sup>82</sup> Broecke, 'Memorie voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen', 440, 442, 450–54, 461–62.

Sixth lesson: Producing goods yourself?

In the three places where the Company exercised power over the area the production of goods is mentioned, or even discussed in great detail. At Malacca and Ambon production was only a minor issue, contrasting with the Cape, where Van Riebeeck provided a long overview of the office's production.

For Malacca, Thijssen instructed Van Riebeeck about the current situation at the end of the military paragraph. Most of it is focused on the regulation of the production, rather than production on its own. The food production was mostly in Thijssen's hands, via the enslavement of the Chinese of which he commemorated 30 new arrivals in chains, but also by those in debt bondage who worked until their debt was paid. A sergeant of Thijssen's military was assigned the job to oversee them. Thijssen noted that the sergeant "had the authority to prevent that those [would] not by others [be] deployed for the same private use and put to work."<sup>83</sup> Thijssen wanted to keep control over the agricultural process within his office and worried that private parties would seize his resources. That idea of seeking control is strengthened by his regulation of the private agricultural land in Malacca. Some did own land but did not produce on that land. Thijssen advised his successor to make sure those owners' land would be forfeited and given to someone who had previously struggled to make a living, based upon fishing and small trade. Thijssen could have already referred to Chinese civilians there, to whom he returned later on, as he discussed how they had taken leases from the company, in turn providing them with a variety of necessary products, from woodwork to meat, from anise to fish, wine and arracks. Thijssen seemed very pleased with those regulations. So, Thijssen presented a mixed image where severe regulation was needed for some parts to work properly, while other parts of production worked in favour of the company.<sup>84</sup>

Hutstart instructed Cos first on the notion of food production on Ambon, especially the Company's stimulation of rice production. Hutstart showed how he tried to regulate rice production, making sure the farmers at the river mouth would have water at their disposal. For that, Hutstart had planned to build a wooden separation to hold the water, but after consultation with the local farmers, he changed it to stone. Now the only pitfall was to have

---

<sup>83</sup> Literally: 'T Gesach gehadt en te verhoeden, dat die niet door andere tot derselver particulier gebruijck aengeslagen en te werck gestelt wierden.

<sup>84</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1438–1439, 1442–1443.

enough of the local population producing the much-needed rice, as some of them had fallen ill and were unable to harvest. Hutstart had his doubts about those working the land: “[I have] obtained sully people whom [are] slow and carefree, thinking of no further needs as for the day of tomorrow.”<sup>85</sup> The rice production was a tough case to deal with, showing that Hutstart had little trust in local production. Moreover, Hutstart worried about the production of cloves, which he sought to regulate in order to enforce the company’s monopoly. In some places, trees needed to be destroyed, so that the local population would not gain power over them. In other parts, the planting of up to 6.000 trees was necessary, and required shade for protection against the heat. Finally, Hutstart distrusted the enslaved that produced building materials in an expensive manner, be it stones or woodwork. Luckily for him, he had found Chinese providers that could work for his production in the sawing of planks and the baking of stones.<sup>86</sup>

For Van Riebeeck at the Cape, production might have been the most important task that he had to explain to his successor Wagenaer. Van Riebeeck had two kinds of production to address: production under supervision of the company, and production by free Burghers they had brought to the Cape. Within the first topic, Van Riebeeck concerned himself explaining which fruits were grown in the Company’s garden and what needed planting when they needed to be planted to be ready for the arriving ships in October. Beans needed to be planted in mid-June, olive trees had to be in the ground when the rainy season started in May, and the Dutch trees in July or August. After the harvest, the garden would prepare for winter with beans and lettuce in the ground. On top of that, Wagenaer had to deal with instruction from Batavia, prohibiting planting on most islands. Van Riebeeck explained that while he had orally instructed Wagenaer, it was necessary to repeat his instructions in the report. Apparently, Van Riebeeck was concerned about the capacity of Wagenaer to do it right on his first try, providing him with all those details. Furthermore, Wagenaer had to regulate the free Burghers, who had to produce reasonable quantities of qualitative grains. Those farmers generally needed help in the ploughing of the land as they faced a difficult climate with a tough dry season. Moreover, they faced opposition from “aforementioned foxes”, most likely Khoi fighting for their land. Land use was a problem, as Van Riebeeck

---

<sup>85</sup> Literally: Bequaem besalvende menschen die traegh en sorgeloos om geene vordre behoeften dencken als voordien dagh van morgen.

<sup>86</sup> Hutstart, ‘Memorie aan sijnen successeur’, 740–41, 745–46, 757–58, 764.



showed the balancing line between keeping peace with the Khoi and having enough land to provide food for all people living or visiting the Cape. Finally, there was a precarious balance in the use of cattle: some farmers needed support by having bought cattle on credit, and the company on the other hand wanted to control the cattle trade as much as possible to keep the Khoi at peace. Therefore, most Company cattle were shipped to the remote Robben Island, and trading with the Khoi was forbidden to burgers and incoming ships alike.<sup>87</sup>

Within the three producing offices, all departing governors paid some degree of attention to the production of food. Thijssen seemed most relaxed about it, having enslaved people produce the rice they needed, while Van Riebeeck felt the need to extensively instruct Wagenaer on the planting process and timing. Hutstart was the most pessimistic, discussing the lazy local population that was hit by illnesses and therefore incapable of producing the amount of rice they needed. A second theme in the reports of Van Riebeeck and Hutstart was their concerns about regulating those who lived and produced goods within their offices. Van Riebeeck had to control and help the free Burghers he had brought to the Cape for production. Hutstart had to gain and maintain control over the clove trees and their production, by destroying those trees of the locals, and planting trees in other places, under his control.

Smaller lessons: How to help organise society?

When the company exercised power, it also set up institutions for governance. Those three offices where the company had taken charge of production were also the places where they instated some institutions regulating governance. I will discuss how the departing governors of the Cape and Ambon presented it, leaving out Malacca as the situation presented there was similar to Ambon.

For Ambon, Jacob Hutstart exposed Simon Cos to all the institutions on the island, appearing to dislike each of them for his inability to use them as he pleased. The three institutions were the council of justice (*Raad van Justitie*), the college of aldermen (*Schepenen*) and the *Landraad*. The first two institutions resided near his castle but were both financial ballasts. For the council of aldermen, Hutstart was very strict in his advice to at least diminish the expenses, including the salaries of the aldermen. Abolishment would altogether be a better

---

<sup>87</sup> Riebeeck, 'Memorie gelaten aen zijn succeseur', fols 1523v–1524, 1525–1526v, 1537v, 1539–1539v, 1541–1541v, 1543–1544, 1545v, 1546v, 1551.

solution, as the fines they collected were never enough to cover all the expenses, making them take away from the profit of cloves. Furthermore, some of the aldermen were part of the council of justice. Hutstart did not specify whether those were the civilians Abraham Wittecam, Jochum, Slood and Claes Snijders or company officials, but having them only in one institution would save the company 300 'ropia'. All in all, Hutstart could make no use of these institutions to seize the control he wished to have. Moreover, Hutstart seemed just as annoyed with the *Landraad* consisting of all the local chiefs of the villages that collaborated with the company. Once again that institution did not cover all expenses, forcing the company to pay for it at the cost of the cloves' profits. However, Hutstart could make more use of this instrument, as he it enabled discuss trade, the weighing of cloves and some religious matters with five of the local leaders, and one rotating member. It appears the *Landraad* was permitted to weigh in on criminal cases, as Hutstart pointed towards an incident regarding a thief. However, some justice could come directly from the governor, as Hutstart pointed to one of his predecessors, who had instantly executed the death sentence for hiding clove trees. The latter, being able to judge in his own right, seems more in line with the overall control Hutstart wished for.<sup>88</sup>

Governing and organising around the Cape of Good Hope meant mostly that Van Riebeeck discussed the available facilities. Wagenaer learned about two mayors appointed by the free Burghers, but Van Riebeeck did not make a great deal out of it. They might not have cost that much or stood in his way for him to be concerned. Instead, Van Riebeeck raised attention to the available education, making enslaved persons and Khoi learn Dutch so that communication would be easier. The first upside he communicated about this education was that: "Portuguese and others [would] always be dumbfounded in front of this nations, and the same therefore are not able to tempt."<sup>89</sup> It also provided interpreters, like the Khoi girl Eva and the man Doman, which he both mentioned. Van Riebeeck showed contentment with how he could make use of the language education he had set up. Finally, institutions in the case of the Cape also meant looking outward for the position of the Cape in the wider organisation. Here, Van Riebeeck was more distrustful, anxiously protecting the lines of communication with Batavia and the Republic. He would send secret letters

---

<sup>88</sup> Hutstart, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', 742–43, 747–53.

<sup>89</sup> Literally: Portugeesen ende andere altijt stom te doen staen voor dese natie ende deselve daerdoor te min te cunnen verleijden.

threefold to the Republic and twofold to Batavia and specifically avoided foreign ships like the English. Furthermore, he referred to how he would ask 8 to 10 guilders of foreign ships in the form of tolls so that they would not come to profit off the function of the Cape in the wider VOC network.<sup>90</sup>

Besides more practical institutions, Jan Thijssen and Jacob Hutstart also presented their readers with the religious institution of the Reformed church that was present at their offices. It was only a minor issue for both of them, for Thijssen at Malacca even so small that he only informed Jan van Riebeeck in small detail how the Reformed church acted in Malacca. The 65 members had hired a minister and the set-up of a diaconia with 7.179 ropia in cash to provide for those in need affectionate to the true religion. Hutstart in Ambon provided Simon Cos with more details directed at converting the local population. In the village of Waijlapen, it resulted in the arrival of 'New Christians', converted Muslims, in order to prevent actual Muslims from taking over the village. Those converts needed to be kept content, and with them, Hutstart had to make agreements about the supper and the provision of ministers. As aforementioned, there were five ministers stationed at Ambon, of which one was also fluent in the Malay language. About the island Manipa and religion, Hutstart remarked: "About which case we recently made a visit there, [and] showed our fierce displeasure."<sup>91</sup> The inhabitants were so hard to teach in the 'true faith', that Hutstart went as far as to throw some people in chains out of frustration. So, in contrast to Thijssen, Hutstart had a more activist and ambitious attitude when it came to conversion. Nonetheless, also in his ranks, Hutstart had to deal with minister Philip Dupree, being too drunk, too exuberant and in that behaviour mocking the Christian religion.<sup>92</sup>

Concluding with societal issues, Hutstart was at times as distrustful as before, showcasing his lack of control. Van Riebeeck and Thijssen seemed to find it less of an issue that they would not exercise complete control over all aspects of the offices they governed. Hutstart advised his successor to get rid of the institutions that helped or rather frustrated governance. They were taking away profit from the cloves they were producing and trading in. A decrease in costs was thus highly needed, with the most profitable option being to

---

<sup>90</sup> Riebeeck, 'Memorie gelaten aen sijn succeseur', fols 1547, 1548, 1550–1550v.

<sup>91</sup> Literally: Over welcke saeck wij jongst daer de visite doende soo heftich misnoegen lieten blijcken.

<sup>92</sup> Thijssen, 'Memorie aen den president Riebeeck', fols 1452–1452v; Hutstart, 'Memorie aan sijnen successeur', 743–44, 750–51, 760–62, 766.

dissolve institutions. He showed how he lacked the control he aspired to, while Van Riebeeck could suffice with only informing his successor about what institutions were around. He did mention the instalment of a mayor for the free Burghers but focused more on education for better communication and the status of the Cape in the wider organisational structure of the company. There, he needed to distrust the foreign nations coming to the Cape and needed to keep the communication lines within the VOC-network working properly.

### Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, when looking at the succession reports from a more overview level, what is remarkable is the divide between pessimism and optimism, trust and distrust, and ambition and caution among the departing governors. The most optimistic of them was the departing director of Bengal, Mattheus van der Broecke. In all four of the instances where I came to discuss his view on the topic at hand, he had a positive outlook on the future: goods would be bought, his personnel were most trustworthy and experienced, and interactions with the local rulers went well most of the time. The departing director of that other trade office, Willemsen of Persia, advised his successor to take caution in the silk trade in Isfahan but he believed that the trade in Bandar Abbas would continue as it had done before, and good relations with the shabandar would last for the foreseeable future. In contrast, governors departing a more production-focused office – places where the company exercised real power over the local population – were more distrustful, more cautious and felt they lacked the degree of control they wished for. Hutstart instructed Cos on how to check in on his personnel whom he seemingly distrusted. Moreover, he feared upcoming military conflicts and pointed to the flaws in governance and production of both food and cloves. Van Riebeeck at the Cape advised his successor Wagenaer on the precarious balance he had to find with the local Khoi in the cattle trade; how he had to strictly regulate the free Burghers; take the helm in better accessibility of the colony for ships, and plan out the production. Finally, Thijssen believed in the military defences of Malacca, but expressed his concerns about some of his employees and most of the local rulers. Overall, what this could mean is that departing governors from more production-based offices had to prepare their successors for a tougher experience. They had to oversee, and thus distrust, more employees and they were more directly tied to the local population through different institutions. Nonetheless, personal experiences did play a role in looking at the differences between those in similar categories. Thijssen did not see everything as black as Hutstart did,

while Willemsen seemed cautious, presenting the problems in Isfahan, in contrast to Van der Broecke who displayed trust in almost every person he had encountered and in the continued profitability of his office.

## Conclusion

During the 1660s the departing governors and directors of the VOC were allowed to provide their successors with knowledge. More than that, they also provided their successors with an approach to their upcoming period in office. Should their successor be trusting of all personnel and the local rulers with whom they had to deal? Or were they the person who had to oversee everything, aware of every mistake or conflict that could be on the horizon? Some of the departing governors were more on the sides of the spectrum, very trusting or oppositely very weary of what would come. Other governors were more balanced in their approach, showing their stance his less distinct ways. They could point to the successes and possibilities of one specific outpost, or one area of work in which they had faith for the future while pointing to some problems or things the upcoming governor had to be mindful of going forward.

It seems that the departing governors' attitudes to governing affected their succession reports in more ways than just the contents. Looking back at the ordering of information and the reasons to start writing a succession report in the first place, the attitude of trust or distrust shined through there too. To start with the ordering of information, whether by theme or by places, it depended on the departing governor, how much help the reader obtained in navigating the document itself. The mood or stance of the departing governor seemed to have impacted the degree of help a successor could get. Those more distrusting governors, Hutstart from Ambon mainly, but also partly Van Riebeeck at the Cape, ordered their information less clear for the reader. Van Riebeeck confused his reader with his ordering of the different themes, by splitting them into several parts, while Hutstart jumped islands within the office of Ambon without acknowledging where he headed next. In contrast, Mattheus van der Broecke, who conveyed a very trusting stance, had ordered his information in ten chapters of which the first eight were very clearly aimed at the different outposts of Bengal. The balanced Jan Thijssen presented a guide for his successor within the introduction of his succession report. Although he provided some warnings in the report, he was not overall negative, and that stance might have resulted in a clear and guiding report.

The stance of the departing governor is also visible in the language they used to justify why they had written a succession report, to begin with. While they all acknowledged the letter of the governor-general - even Willemsen who did not receive a letter, they varied

in how they addressed the strictness of the orders of the governor-general and how they in turn felt about the orders. Van der Broecke of the trade office of Bengal seemed enthusiastic, certainly compared to his fellow departing governors. More in the middle of the trust-distrust spectrum is where we find Willemsen and Thijssen who also provided more balanced reasonings behind the writings of the reports. Willemsen described a strict order, which, however, had no mention in the letter of the governor-general. So Willemsen must have taken the initiative to write his report, showing an urge to write and support his successor. Thijssen was not very eager and wrote out of duty. The overly negative Hutstart had a similar idea, but phrased it differently, as irresponsible to fail to write a succession report. The governor-general would agree with that statement, as they had searched for his quick replacement in the first place. Finally, Van Riebeeck stated he was reacting to the requests from the governor-general to give instructions on the local production and the trade with the Khoi, which requests originated from their letter. Van Riebeeck, while distrusting in his contents, seemed overall neutral towards the writing of the report. Though, Van Riebeeck did not elaborate as much on how he felt about the importance of conveying the knowledge as Van der Broecke did.

Departing governors thus had a good amount of liberty to form their succession reports, which brings the question of agency to the forefront. Brendecke & Friedrich and Winterbottom have diverging ideas, as shown in the introduction on that topic. Brendecke and Friedrich argued that the company needed the information and the knowledge, and was therefore primarily responsible for the initiatives to gather knowledge. Winterbottom instead argued that we should carefully consider the agency of those who collected the knowledge on the ground. For the succession reports, the first initiative came from Adriaen Blockmansz. at Ambon, an individual working for the company, and arguing for Winterbottom's case. We should not undervalue his agency in the knowledge he was to present to his successor. Within the 1660s, the initiative, albeit implicit, came mostly from the governor-general and his council, arguing for Brendecke's and Friedrich's case. However, how knowledge was presented to the successors who read the reports, in what order and more importantly what knowledge was discussed, was left for the departing governors to decide. Thus, describing knowledge gathering should mean looking towards both the initiatives of an organisation, as well as the agency of those within the organisation. So just as company employees could take certain liberty in the story of Meersbergen about the

*memorie* coming from the *Heren XVII*, so could the departing governors give their touch on the succession reports. Moreover, while Meersbergen looks to the succession reports, but more generally the company writing as becoming standardised genres, for them to be eventually understandable enough for the *Heren XVII*, I would argue that questions for knowledge would come top-down, while the implementation and all the choices that belong with it, were formed much more bottom-up.<sup>93</sup>

Related to the question of agency is when one can put the label of knowledge on the written piece that had been produced. The Latourian way to look at the production of knowledge in these succession reports is to see the letters being sent from the centre of Batavia as a starting point. From there, the cycle of accumulation would come to collect information and notes, so that they would return to Batavia, where it would become knowledge in its final form. An even stricter interpretation would be to take the Dutch Republic as the centre of calculation, meaning that the knowledge within the succession reports would only achieve that status arriving in the Republic. As this has no regard for the primary audience of the succession reports, the characterisations of Winterbottom and Roberts are more applicable here. As Roberts argues, for the making of knowledge we have to look at the peripheral centres, as the places where knowledge was formed, rather than solely focus on the centre. In terms of the succession reports, it means acknowledging that those pieces had become fully fledged pieces of transferable knowledge at the places where they were written. In turn, this fits well with the multi-centre approach of Winterbottom, where knowledge was brought together through stealing, copying and translating knowledge from several places to another. This is present within the succession reports, especially for Bengal and Ambon, as information had to be brought to the main outpost, as well as on a larger scale when complete succession reports were copied to be sent to Batavia for the information of the governor-general and his council.<sup>94</sup>

Latour does offer an understanding of the nature of knowledge, and what it means for those receiving knowledge. His description that knowledge means “seeing” things as you would for the first time, albeit in paper form, is still very much applicable to the succession

---

<sup>93</sup> Brendecke and Friedrich, ‘Introduction’, 4–5; Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*, 19–20; Meersbergen, *Ethnography and Encounter*, 77, 84.

<sup>94</sup> Latour, *Science in Action*, 220, 232–40; Roberts, ‘Centres and Cycles of Accumulation’, 7; Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*, 19–20.



reports. The reports showed persons, situations, and places and make the reader acquainted with them so that they would 'know' them by the time they would see them with their own eyes. Nonetheless, the knowledge that was presented was not the breakthrough-knowledge Latour would likely refer to, as according to Roberts, that is where the history of science has the most attention. So, her look at knowledge, and how it was a slow accumulation of "normal science" fits even better with the kind of knowledge presented in the succession reports. The kind that had been slowly acquired over the past few years of serving as a governor of a respective office. Furthermore, I would want to add that the lenses through which the incoming governors would come to "see" for the first time what persons, situations and places they had to work with, were coloured glasses. Rather than the fixed factual knowledge, Latour presents after a cycle of accumulation was done, the tone must have influenced how the incoming governors would see their time in office.<sup>95</sup>

The glasses the departing governors created must have come from a combination of what kind of office they had governed in the years before, and what personal experiences they had gone through during, but also before that time, shaping them as human beings. Succession reports of similar offices still have significant differences, in the choices of how to order the information per theme or per place, in the degree of help they provided the reader and even in the tone, the departing governors chose for their contents. The genre had not yet developed into an administrative bureaucratic genre governed by fixed rules and regulations - which would have resulted in very similar succession reports. Further research could delve into questions relating to the development of the succession reports after they had risen to more prominence in the 1660s. How it might have arrived at the assessments of Meilink-Roelofs of the strict bureaucratic documents of the 19th and 20th centuries. In that, what should be kept in mind is that the development, that loss of agency towards more bureaucratic documents, would not necessarily have been a linear route. Some of the departing governors would present the writing of the succession reports as strictly ordered by the governor-general, disguising that they had much freedom for their interpretation.

---

<sup>95</sup> Latour, *Science in Action*, 219; Roberts, 'Re-Orienting the Transformation of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion: Nagasaki as a Centre of Accumulation and Management', 24–25.

## Bibliography

### Primary source material

- Broecke, Mattheus van den. 'Memorie van Mattheus van den Brouck voor de heer Rogier van Heijningen in dato 14 Februarij 1664'. Report. Hugli-Chuchura, 14 February 1664. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1246.
- 'Copie van twee memoriën, d'eene gelaten bij den gouverneur Jaspas Jansz. aen Adriaen Blocq Martensz. ende d'andere gegeven bij ditto Blocq Martensz. aen admirael Steven van der Haghen, gouverneur in Amboina, 25 Junij 1614 en 4 Julij 1617.' Report. Ambon, 4 July 1617. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1066.
- Hutstart, Jacob. 'Memorie door Hutstart aan sijnen successeur den heer Cos in Amboina gelaten in dato 6 julij 1662'. Report. Ambon, 6 July 1662. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240.
- 'Missive aan de gouverneur en raad van Cabo de Boa Esperance'. Letter. Batavia, 30 January 1662. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 886.
- 'Missive aan den directeur ende raet'. Letter. Batavia, 27 September 1660. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 884.
- 'Missive aen Adriaen Blockmartsz'. Letter. Amsterdam, 12 December 1616. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 312.
- 'Missive aen den gouver[neur] Joan Thijs[sen]'. Letter. Batavia, 22 September 1662. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 886.
- 'Missive aen d'h[ee]r directeur vanden Broeck en Raedt'. Letter. Batavia, 29 August 1663. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 887.
- 'Missive aende h[ee]r Jacob Hustaerdts ende den Raet'. Letter. Batavia, 6 December 1661. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 885.
- 'Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), Nummer Toegang 1.04.02, Inventarisnummer 3997', n.d.
- 'NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, Inv.Nr. 678', n.d.
- 'Ordre ende instructie voorde gemelde zijn E[dele] Joan van Dam'. Letter. Batavia, 19 November 1661. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 885.
- Pietersz Coen, Jan. 'Letters to Jambij, Pattana, Japan, Cormandel'. Bantam en Jaccatra, 1617. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1064.
- Riebeeck, Jan van. 'Memorie door den commandeur Jan van Riebeeck gelaten aen sijn successeur Zacharias Wagenaer in dato 5 maij 1662'. Report. Cape of Good Hope, 5 May 1662. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240.
- Thijssen, Jan. 'Memorie door den heer Jan Thijssen gelaten aen den president Riebeeck tot Malacca in dato den 1 November 1662'. Report. Malacca, 1 November 1662. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240.
- Willemsen, Jacob. 'Copie memorie van den aegaenden directeur van Persia, Jacob Willemsen aen sijn opvolger Hendrick van Wijck in dato 31 Meij 1661'. Report. Bandar Abbas, 31 May 1661. NL-HaNA, VOC, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 1240.

### Secondary literature

- Brendecke, Arndt, and Susanne Friedrich. 'Introduction'. In *Transformations of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion*, edited by Arndt Brendecke, Stefan Ehrenpreis, and Susanne Friedrich, 1–18. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, Inc, 2015.

- 'De VOCsite : Handelsposten; Bengalen'. Accessed 5 May 2022.  
<https://www.vocsite.nl/geschiedenis/handelsposten/bengalen/>.
- Nationaal Archief. 'Deel I/E.4 Kopie-uitgaande stukken van gouverneur-generaal en raden'. Accessed 3 April 2022.  
<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/%40Deel%20I~Deel%20I%7C%7CE~Deel%20I%7C%7CE.4>.
- Nationaal Archief. 'Deel I/E.5.a Overgekomen brieven en papieren uit Indië aan de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam'. Accessed 3 April 2022.  
<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/%40Deel%20I~Deel%20I%7C%7CE~Deel%20I%7C%7CE.5~Deel%20I%7C%7CE.5.a>.
- Delmas, Adrien. 'From Travelling to History: An Outline of the VOC Writing System during the 17th Century'. In *Written Culture in a Colonial Context Africa and the Americas, 1500-1900*, edited by Adrien Delmas and Nigel Penn. African History 2. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012.
- Erikson, Emily, and Sampsa Samila. 'Networks, Institutions, and Uncertainty: Information Exchange in Early-Modern Markets'. *The Journal of Economic History* 78, no. 4 (2018): 1034–67. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022050718000566>.
- Gaastra, F. S. *Bewind en beleid bij de VOC: de financiële en commerciële politiek van de bewindhebbers, 1672-1702*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1989.
- . *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003.
- Jacobs, Els M. *In Pursuit of Pepper and Tea: The Story of the Dutch East India Company*. Zutphen : Amsterdam: Walburg Pers ; Netherlands Maritime Museum, 1991.
- Ketelaar, Eric. 'The Dutch Comptoir as Information Centre'. *Archival Science* 18, no. 4 (2018): 333–41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-018-9298-3>.
- Knaap, Gerrit. 'Communication, Information, and Power in the Dutch Colonial Empire: The Case of the Dutch East India Company, c. 1760'. In *Information and Power in History*, 1st ed., 1:122–37. Routledge, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429438738-8>.
- Latour, Bruno. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Meersbergen, Guido van. *Ethnography and Encounter: The Dutch and English in Seventeenth-Century South Asia*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2022.
- Meilink-Roelofs, M. A. P. *Memories van overgave van bestuursambtenaren in het voormalige Nederlands-Indië*. S.l.]: Vereniging van Archivarissen in Nederland, 1968.
- Merwick, Donna. *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York*. Cornell University Press, 2018.
- Ogborn, Miles. *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company*. Chicago, 2008.
- 'Reconstruction of the Archives of the VOC Establishments'. Accessed 30 March 2022.  
[http://databases.tanap.nl/vocrecords/4\\_virtual\\_reconstruction.cfm](http://databases.tanap.nl/vocrecords/4_virtual_reconstruction.cfm).
- Roberts, Lissa. 'Centres and Cycles of Accumulation'. In *Centres and Cycles of Accumulation in and around the Netherlands during the Early Modern Period*, edited by Lissa Roberts. Low Countries Studies on the Circulation of Natural Knowledge 2. Zürich [etc.]: Lit, 2011.
- . 'Re-Orienting the Transformation of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion: Nagasaki as a Centre of Accumulation and Management'. In *Transformations of Knowledge in Dutch Expansion*, edited by Arndt Brendecke, Stefan Ehrenpreis, and Susanne Friedrich, 19–42. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, Inc, 2015.

- Schmidt, Benjamin. *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World*. Material Texts. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2015.
- Schrikker, Alicia F. 'Institutional Memory in the Making of Dutch Colonial Culture in Asia (1700–1870)'. In *The Dutch Empire between Ideas and Practice, 1600–2000*, 111–34. Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27516-7\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27516-7_6).
- 'TANAP - Archives / Access'. Accessed 30 March 2022. <http://tanap.nl/content/archives/access.cfm>.
- 'TANAP Database of VOC Documents: Overgekomen Brieven En Papieren'. Accessed 30 March 2022. <http://databases.tanap.nl/vocrecords/>.
- Vriend, Nico. 'An unbelievable amount of paper: The information system and network of the Dutch East India Company'. In *Colonial legacy in South East Asia: The Dutch Archives*, edited by Charles Jeurgens, Ton Kappelhof, and Michael Karabinos, 67–95. Stichting Archiefpublicaties Jaarboek 11. Voerendaal ; Stein, 2012.
- Winterbottom, Anna. *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*. Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.