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A Tale of Two Kingdoms: The Forgotten Treaty Between the Netherlands and Ryūkyū

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A Tale of Two Kingdoms:

The Forgotten Treaty Between the Netherlands and Ryūkyū

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Book and Digital Media Studies

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Front cover: A4-sized Dutch flag made in Paint.NET by Stijn Bekker, image file of the Ryūkyū Kingdom’s royal seal by Felipe Fidelis Tobias (Wikimedia Commons) used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license.

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There are certain moments in life when things all seem to come around full-circle and, when looking back, things had to fall into place in a certain way. My secondary school graduation paper was about Deshima, and now here we are at the end of my MA. In the meantime, I have done many different things, ranging from organising games of tag for Leiden's university students to doing traditional Korean metalcraft in Seoul. That said, I have always maintained an academic connection with the Land of the Rising Sun, even during Book and Digital Media Studies. It has always been funny to me how the more things change, the more things stay the same. Thank you to everyone who has supported me along the way and enabled me to do what I want to do. Whether you did something big or small, intentionally or not, I am deeply grateful.

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1. Introduction

> *'I wish that I was a part of something. I wish that anything I said mattered, to anyone. I mean, let's face it: would anybody even notice if I disappeared tomorrow?'*
>
> – V. EMMICH, *Dear Evan Hansen*[1]

Between the 15th of March and the 7th of July 2024, the Japan Museum Sieboldhuis in the Dutch city of Leiden hosted a special exhibition entitled *Turbulent Times: Dutch-Japanese relations and the last days of the Samurai (1853-1867)*.[2] Charting the history of the Netherlands' engagement with Japan in the middle of the 19th century, it used several important art objects (such as a complete set of the *Souvenir du Japon*) as well as other historical remnants to teach visitors about the various illustrative events that led up to the end of both the samurai-era and the position of the Netherlands in Japan. It touched upon many of the well-known episodes, such as the transformation of Yokohama into a so-called treaty port, aligning well with academic scholarship and popular history highlighting the "hits" of the Japanese treaties of 1854 and the resulting Meiji Revolution of 1868.

There is, however, one part of Dutch-Japanese history that is not brought up as often: a treaty between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Ryūkyū (modern-day Okinawa), signed on the 6th of July 1859 at Naha on Ryūkyū's main island; a treaty that was signed after the *Van Bosse* shipwrecked near Ryūkyū in 1857 and shipwrecked passengers and sailors employed by a Dutch trading company were rescued and given shelter by Ryūkyūans. In fact, at least as far as English scholarship is concerned, this document appears to be ignored or forgotten by virtually everyone. It is listed on Yanagihara's list of Ryūkyū's treaties, there is a short description in a print catalogue from Leiden University Library, and a non-encoded transcription of the official Dutch text is on Wikisource[3], but that appears to be all.

This treaty is remarkable in two ways. Firstly, there is the fact that there is virtually no scholarship about this treaty between a Western country and what is now a part of Japan, a treaty concluded at during a time when Japan was opening up to the West after centuries of

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[1] V. Emmich and others, *Dear Evan Hansen: The Novel* (New York, NY/Boston, MA: Poppy, 2018), p. 32.
[2] Japan Museum Sieboldhuis, 'Turbulent Times: Dutch-Japanese relations and the last days of the Samurai (1853-1867)', <https://www.sieboldhuis.org/en/exhibitions/roerige-tijden-nederland-japan-en-de-val-van-de-samoerai-1853-1867/> (24 April 2024).
[3] M. Yanagihara, 'Treaties Concluded by the Kingdom of Ryukyu', *Oxford Public International Law,* accessed online on 18 March 2024, <https://opil.ouplaw.com/page/485>; K. Kuiper, J.J. Witkam, and Y. Bingling, *Catalogue of Chinese and Sino-Western manuscripts in the central library of Leiden University* (Leiden: Leiden University Library, 2005), p. 192; Wikisource, 'Traktaat tusschen Nederlanden en Lioe-kioe', < https://nl.wikisource.org/wiki/Traktaat_tusschen_Nederlanden_en_Lioe-kioe> (28 November 2024).

isolationism. Moreover, no source other than the aforementioned catalogue mentions the correspondence by a Dutch minister who had second thoughts after the treaty was signed. The minister in question commissioned a literal Dutch translation of the treaty's official Chinese text to compare with the official Dutch version.[4] It is a slightly different case for the *Van Bosse*. For example, there is a children's book based on archival research in the Netherlands and local tales that still make the rounds on the island of Tarama.[5] In addition, there is a Japanese journal article tracing the history of the *Van Bosse* and the whereabouts of the last crew in between shipwreck and repatriation.[6] Besides these sources there is little more and there is certainly no literature about the shipwreck in English.

Secondly, there is the matter of the treaty being with Ryūkyū instead of with Japan. Okinawa may be an integral part of Japan now, but this was not always the case. Starting in 1374 by edict of the Hongwu Emperor, Ryūkyū was to pay tribute initially to the Ming and then the Qing dynasty in China once every two years.[7] Although the Chinese tributary structure allowed for tributary states to retain control over their domestic affairs and most foreign affairs, it did involve a hierarchy in the sense that they could not conduct their own policy towards China.[8] In the East Asian international context being a tributary state may not be a limiting factor for that state's international strategy, but from the perspective of a European nation in the Westphalian system East Asian tributaries may not have the exclusive sovereignty required to be seen as equal; given that international treaties are between two or more countries, this may pose a problem. Next followed a long, two-stage process at the end of which Ryūkyū became an official part of Japan. After the conclusion of a military conflict in 1609, the Japanese feudal domain of Satsuma took the Ryūkyūan king and more than 100 officials to Satsuma where they were to be treated as foreign embassies. However, there are no two ways about it: they were effectively prisoners and, with the blessing of the shōgun (Japan's military ruler), control over the Ryūkyū Islands was now in the hands of Satsuma's daimyō (feudal lord).[9] Eventually, a

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[4] Kuiper, Witkam, and Bingling, Catalogue of Chinese and Sino-Western manuscripts, p. 194.

[5] Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 'Het raadsel van het Hollands rif', <https://catalogus.cultureelerfgoed.nl/Details/books/141143> (26 April 2024).

[6] A. Kaneda, '多良間島沖で難破したオランダ商船ファン・ボッセ号の歴史的考証 [Historical Investigation into the *Van Bosse*, a Dutch Merchant Ship Wrecked off the Coast of Tarama Island]', *Bulletin of the Japan-Netherlands Institute*, 26.1 (2001), pp. 79-97.

[7] S. Chen, 'The Chinese Tributary System and Traditional International Order in East Asia during the Ming and Qing Dynasties from the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Chinese Humanities*, 5.2 (2020), pp. 171-199 (p. 178).

[8] Y. Zhang and B. Buzan, 'The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice', *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 5.1 (2012), pp. 3-36 (p. 27).

[9] Y. Jiadong, 'Satsuma's Invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom and Changes in the Geopolitical Structure of East Asia', *Social Sciences in China*, 34.4 (2013), pp. 118-138 (p. 125).

newly modernized and centralised Japan pulled Ryūkyū away from Satsuma and formally annexed the kingdom into the Japanese Empire in 1879.[10] For 457 years, Ryūkyū first had a somewhat ambiguous relationship with a foreign power, followed by a more forceful and obvious loss of a significant share of its own sovereignty. The fact that the treaty signatory was Ryūkyū rather than Japan is remarkable to say the least. The surviving letters and literal translation commissioned after the treaty signing are testament to this.

1.1. Methodology

This thesis project has two goals and is split in two corresponding parts. The first part is the main body, or the thesis itself if you will. In it, historical context is provided, as well as the ideas and terminology underlying the second part. Its chief objective is to introduce the 1859 treaty between the Netherlands and Ryūkyū (as well as a few related archival sources), both to make the sources more approachable for anyone not familiar with Japanese history and to shine a light on this usually forgotten historical episode. The second part is an edition of several archival, mostly handwritten sources that have been transcribed and encoded according to the TEI P5 guidelines. The aim here is to facilitate future academic research by deciphering the handwriting for others in advance and enable computational analysis. To aid in the transcription process, optical character recognition AI on the Transkribus platform was used. A majority of the text could be read without Transkribus' assistance, but whenever words were unclear AI proved to be effective. Since in a majority of cases all AI models struggled with properly recognising the handwriting fed to it, between two and five models were applied to a scan or photograph of the text. Any consistencies and trends that arose as a result of this method were very helpful at identifying the right transcription. Of all models used, IJsberg_PyLaia by the Dutch National Archives turned out to be the most accurate.[11] The digital edition can be accessed through the following link: https://bookandbyte.universiteitleiden.nl/ryukyu/.

The next chapter will sketch half of the historical context of the archival sources by introducing Ryūkyū, how the state formed and became a Chinese tributary, and the Japanese invasion. Given that the Netherlands did not ratify the treaty with Ryūkyū due to sovereignty-related reasons, it is important to be aware of what lead up to the special characteristics of Ryūkyū's geopolitical status and what that meant for Ryūkyūan sovereignty. Chapter 3 continues with the second half of the historical context by going over how the Netherlands

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[10] Chen, 'The Chinese Tributary System and Traditional International Order in East Asia', p. 179.

[11] Unsurprisingly, '[among others] it is based on the careful transcription of dozens of different handwritings coming from the 17th, 18th and 19th century and comprises scans from the Incoming Documents from the Dutch East India Company (Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren van de VOC).' Nationaal Archief, 'Description of IJsberg_PyLaia', <https://readcoop.eu/model/dutch-handwriting-17th-19th-century/> (09 November 2024).

arrived in Japan, won itself exclusive European economic and political rights, and how the unique Dutch position in Japan came to an end. Chapter 4 tells a condensed version of the shipwreck of the *Van Bosse*, partially based on some of the historical sources that are a part of the produced edition. Chapter 5 then shifts focus and discusses various types of editions – with particular attention being paid to digital editions – before examining the goals of editions and their relationship to archives. The second half of chapter 5 follows this by laying out the main objective, target audience, and editorial principles used for making the digital edition. Chapter 6 is a close reading of the edition's archival corpus from Leiden University Library, and goes into why each side wanted a treaty as well as why the Netherlands ultimately did not go through with it. Chapter 7 signs off on a concluding note and a promising lead for future research.

1.1.1. Archival Corpus – Leiden University Library

The archival documents constituting the corpus of the edition from Leiden University Library's Hoffmann Collection are as follows (see chapter 4 for more detail):

BPL 2186 Q:1: contains the official Dutch next of the treaty as well as a literal translation into Dutch from the official Chinese version. These two versions are presented side-by-side.

BPL 2186 Q:10: consists of a classified letter from the Dutch Minister of Colonial Affairs (J.J. Rochussen), requesting a literal translation of the treaty from J.J. Hoffmann as well as drafts of the translator's two separate replies. The Library's numbering stops at Q:10, but to enable referencing to the individual parts of it, the edition splits it into Q:10.1 (the letter Hoffmann received), Q:10.2 (Hoffmann's first reply's draft), and Q:10.3 (Hoffmann's second reply's draft). Judging by the handwriting, Q:10.1 is either an original or a copy produced by a ministry scribe. A question mark above the day in the dateline in Q:10.3 raises questions about whether this was a draft or a copy of a draft.

BPL 2186 Q:12: a letter by J.J. Hoffmann that accompanied the literal translation. Definitive version of BPL 2186 Q:10.2. Includes some notes concerning said translation. The Library's numbering stops at Q:12, but to enable referencing to the individual parts of it, the edition splits it into Q:12.1 (the letter Hoffmann wrote) and Q:12.2 (the notes).

BPL 2186 Q:13: a classified letter from the Minister of Colonial Affairs concluding that Ryūkyū is not an independent realm with which treaties can be signed after all, and that henceforth the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies can take care of direct contacts.

BPL 2186 Q:14 and BPL 2186 Q:15: some excerpts from reports by *jonkheer* J.H. van Capellen, the naval commander who acted as the representative of the Dutch government when signing the treaty. Q:15 is handwritten and consists of 'excerpts of a report' Van Capellen wrote

about his mission; Q:14 is typewritten except for a short note at the top, is ‘borrowed from a report’ by Van Capellen, and contains all articles from the treaty. Although there are commonalities and Q:14 was helpful in deciphering some of Q:15’s handwriting, the texts are not identical. Q:14 is longer, but despite being shorter Q:15 does feature writing not found in Q:14. For a completer picture one would have to read both, though it should be said that based on Q:14 and Q:15 alone it is unclear which parts come from the original report and which were added by an editor or civil servant. Alternatively, one could visit the Dutch National Archives to read the original.

1.1.2. Archival Corpus – National Archives

Five documents connected to the *Van Bosse* have been selected to be transcribed and edited. While not of primary importance in relation to the treaty, they are important textual witnesses to the incident that inspired the creation of the treaty and the archival material listed in the previous subsection. As such, it felt apt to include them. These five sources were found in the Dutch National Archives and are as follows (see chapter 3 for more detail):

1.04.21 1640 313: a translation of a notice sent to the Dutch commissioner (J.H. Donker Curtius) by an agent of the daimyō of Satsuma. It tells the commissioner about a shipwreck and that the survivors want to go home.

1.04.21 1640 321: a brief letter by Hendrik Hagers, the captain of merchant and repatriation vessel *Jan Daniel*, to Donker Curtius, telling the latter of an incident that occurred aboard the *Jan Daniel*.

1.04.21 1640 327: Dutch copy of a letter by two agents of the daimyō of Satsuma. Features a lot of the same information as 1.04.21 1640 313 but phrased in a slightly different way and with a few extra details.

1.04.21 1657 145: a letter by Donker Curtius reporting to the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies that a ship got wrecked in the Ryūkyū Archipelago and that he was looking for a ship to take them to the Dutch East Indies’ capital of Batavia.

1.04.21 1657 147: a request by Donker Curtius to captain Hagers to collect 27 stranded passengers and sailors from the Ryūkyū Archipelago on its return to Batavia.

2. Historical Context – Ryūkyū

> *'There is a maxim that free peoples must remember: Liberty can be acquired, but never regained.'*
>
> – J. ROUSSEAU, *The Social Contract*[12]

The Ryūkyū Islands are a chain of islands between southwestern Kyūshū (the third largest of Japan's main islands), and Taiwan. As is shown on figure 1, it can be divided into three sections and six or seven subdivided groups, depending on the territorial status of the disputed Senkaku Group.[13] Between these islands, the Okinawa Group is the most significant since it is where Okinawa, the chain's eponymous largest island, is located. This island houses the current Okinawan prefectural capital city of Naha[14] and Ryūkyū former royal capital of Shuri, and this is where in 1859 the treaty was signed; the preceding event, the 1857 shipwreck of the *Van Bosse*, occurred near Tarama in the Miyako Group. As should already be clear enough from figure 1, these islands are of strategic importance for anyone looking to stage an annexation attempt from Japan and to have some degree of control over the southern portion of the East China Sea, which is the only sea-based corridor between mainland East Asia's coast, the Pacific Ocean, and the archipelagos of Southeast Asia.

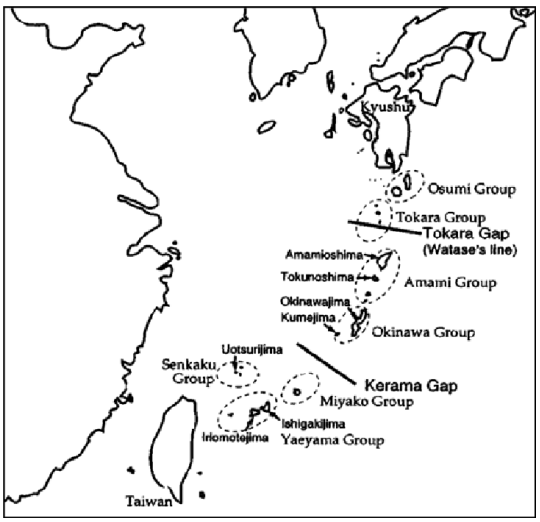

Figure 1: the Okinawa Islands with Taiwan and Kyūshū for reference. The map of the Ryukyu Islands, M. Motokawa, 'Biogeography of Living Mammals in the Ryukyu Islands', Tropics, 10 (2000), pp. 63-71 (p. 64).

2.1. *Formation of a Tributary State*

Being geographically disparate, it took time for the cultures on the islands to evolve and grow into a cohesive whole. But, as it traded with China and others in its own region during the 11th to early 15th-century *gusuku* period, a distinct Ryūkyūan culture did develop.[15] It should be noted here that this culture was only shared between members of the elite, as common Ryūkyūans only became aware of a common Ryūkyūan culture after Japan's annexation in

[12] J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, tr. by C. Betts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 80.
[13] This division is arbitrary to some degree. For example, the Miyako and Yaeyama Groups are sometimes also grouped together as the Sakishima Islands.
[14] Okinawa Prefecture encompasses the islands south of the Amami Group.
[15] M. Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom: Cornerstone of East Asia*, ed. by R. Huey, tr. By L.J. Terrell (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), p. 17.

1879.[16] In 1372, when at the end of the *gusuku* period the Ming dynasty demanded tribute from Ryūkyū for the first time, the Ming were presented with one Ryūkyūan (elite) culture, but there was no unified Ryūkyūan state yet. Instead, Ryūkyū was divided between three polities:[17] Hokuzan, Chūzan, and Nanzan – Northern, Central, and Southern Mountain respectively. Therefore, the Chinese envoy had to choose. And since Chūzan was the most powerful of the three he chose to relay his imperial message there,[18] thereby legitimising Chūzan in the process of Ryūkyūan unification.

What exactly happened next is hazy – something that is at least in part due to myths about early Ryūkyūan kingship that were written 17th and 18th-century. Ryūkyūan needed to find a way forward for the Kingdom under newly established Satsuma control, and storytelling seemed to do the trick.[19] These myths linked Ryūkyū to both the Japanese imperial and shogunal lines –[20] in reality, the Shō dynasty was established by king Satto of Chūzan and his successor Hashi in 1407.[21] Over the next 22 years, Hashi took over an increasingly large share of Okinawa, and with the usurpation of Sanzan he completed his dynasty's quest to reign over the entire main island. At this moment, the Ryūkyū Kingdom was born. The 57 years old tributary relationship with China continued, providing an official political context to the pre-existing trading links and adding a new valuable dimension to it with an always profitable gift exchange. Additionally, getting recognised and formally invested by Chinese emperors as king gave Ryūkyūan nobles the legitimacy required to take the throne.[22] Over the next 100 years, Ryūkyū gradually expanded until by the end of the 15th century the Kingdom would spread from the Amami Group in the north to the Miyako Group in the southwest and amass more regional power.[23] Again a 100 years later, the pillars of tributes, trade, and imperial investiture would still be in place. What is more, the preferential treatment in trade which Ryūkyū had acquired as part of the tributary deal meant that not only did it do business with China, but it also acted

[16] G. Smits, 'Rethinking Ryūkyū', IJOS: International journal of Okinawan studies, 6.1 (2015), pp. 1-19 (p. 8).
[17] The terminology for these polities changes from source to source. Sometimes they are called principalities, sometimes they are kingdoms or even empires, and other sources treat them as three domains of the same kingdom. Since it is the most neutral sounding option, the word 'polities' is used here.
[18] Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom*, p. 22.
[19] J. Jeong, 'Myths for Kingship of the Ryukyu Kingdom in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Cross-Cultural Studies*, 35.1 (2014), pp. 123-154 (pp. 153-154).
[20] Smits, 'Rethinking Ryūkyū', p. 1.
[21] G. Wade, *Ryukyu in the Ming Reign Annals 1380s-1580s* (Singapore: Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, 2007), p. 5.
[22] T. Wong, *Approaching Sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands*, tr. by T. Xiaohua (Singapore: China Academic Library, 2022), pp. 39-40.
[23] G. Smits, 'Ambiguous Boundaries: Redefining Royal Authority in the Kingdom of Ryukyu', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 60.1 (2000), pp. 89-123 (p. 91).

as an intermediary of a lucrative network stretching from China, Korea, and Japan to Southeast Asia.[24]

2.2. *Japanese Invasion*

Yet, for all the good Ryūkyū's territorial expansion and its tributary relationship with China may have brought, the status quo would not last. Before 1609 Ryūkyū may have acknowledged the Chinese emperors as cultural superiors and been unable to do whatever they wished regarding China, but again, they could still determine their own domestic course. Since a stronger Chinese influence could counteract Japan's influence on the realm, Ryūkyū *had to* maintain their superior-subordinate relationship with China, lest they lost the ability to determine their own domestic policies. The Ryūkyūan monarchy was aware of this too. Early into Ryūkyū's Satsuma era, in 1633, the king wrote in a letter that 'since this country has survived on account of our dealings with China, we must satisfy Satsuma's desires [for (…) trade]'.[25] The bond between Ryūkyū and China was mainly cultural, and the bond between Ryūkyū and Japan mainly political.[26] This allowed Ryūkyū to play them off against each other. Crucially, Japan's political interest in Ryūkyū was not so much in Ryūkyū itself, but instead in its highly valuable connections in China.[27] Even though Tokugawa Japan was practically speaking a military dictatorship under rule of the Tokugawa shōguns, it was still technically speaking an empire in the sense that the shōguns upheld the institution of emperor.[28] As such, they could not pay tribute and subordinate themselves to China. After all, the title of emperor denotes a theoretically universal monarch, meaning that any foreign state with an emperor at its core (regardless of how much they were involved in government) was fundamentally incompatible with the Chinese tribute system.

However, there was a certain advantage to be gained from being a tributary that has already been mentioned and that was Satsuma's key motivator for invading Ryūkyū: it facilitated trade. Japan was no stranger to Chinese goods and desired luxury articles from China

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[24] T. Kazuyuki, 'Ryukyu Kingdom Diplomacy with Japan and the Ming and Qing Dynasties', in *Self-determinable Development of Small Islands*, ed. by M. Ishihara, E. Hoshino, and Y. Fujita (Singapore: Springer, 2016), pp. 55-65 (p. 56).

[25] K. Tomiyama, *Ryūkyū Ōkoku no gaikō to ōken 琉球王国の外交と王権* [The Diplomacy and Sovereignty of the Ryukyu Kingdom], (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), pp. 68-69, cited in M. Watanabe, 'Early Modern Ryukyu Between China and Japan', in *The Tokugawa World*, ed. by G.P. Leupp and D. Tao (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 420-441 (pp. 429-430).

[26] Smits, 'Rethinking Ryūkyū', p. 8-9.

[27] Smits, 'Ambiguous Boundaries', p. 92.

[28] Tokugawa is the name of the clan that held the position of shogun, Japan's military leader and de-facto ruler (the emperor was a figurehead from the late 12th century until the 1864 Meiji Revolution, also called the Meiji Restoration). 'Tokugawa Japan' is the customary way to refer to Japan between 1603 and 1868, the time when the Tokugawa held the shogunate.

such as silk or useful texts about medicine,[29] but Ryūkyū had a preferential trade status. Interestingly enough, the part of Ryūkyū's network that reached outside East Asia was completely cut off by orders of the shogunate and of no interest to Japan. As will be discussed in more detail later, Japan closed itself off to the majority of contact with the world abroad between 1603 and 1868 out of fear of risking unwanted foreign influence. This meant that any trade, save that with a select few countries (the Ainu people, the Netherlands, and Korea) from a select few ports, was prohibited. In this isolationist policy, Satsuma was allowed by the shogunate to use Ryūkyū to continue trading with Ryūkyū's foreign trading partners. For their part, since ships from Southeast Asia could be used by the Catholic Church to infiltrate the yet-to-be-Christianised Japan, Ryūkyū merchants were barred from sending ships further than China.[30] Meanwhile, Satsuma exercised their powers chiefly in relation to Ryūkyū's general foreign policy, trade, and the military. Royal succession had to be confirmed by the daimyō of Satsuma, pledges of loyalty submitted, and land surveyed for tax purposes. Of course, Ryūkyū officials were monitored and spied on by Satsuma using magistrates, inspectors, and police agents, but they were there primarily for the three aforementioned policy areas. Even if Satsuma demanded that in addition to the above Ryūkyū should also send annual tribute to Satsuma, the internal administration was still in Ryūkyūan hands.[31] The fact that Chinese trade was explicitly allowed proves then that this trade was the primary motivation for Satsuma and the shogunate to take political control over this island kingdom. Trade was probably permitted because, as convinced as Japan may have been about its isolation, the Japanese elite could not do without Chinese goods. Some northern islands were absorbed into Satsuma,[32] but the remaining kingdom was allowed to exist. If they had taken over all the islands and made it abundantly clear to China that their tributary was no more, Ryūkyū would have at best been demoted from biannual tribute missions to decadal voyages,[33] and at worst lost their trading privileges

[29] M. Yanagihara, '"Shioki (Control)," "Fuyo (Dependency)," and Sovereignty: The Status of the Ryukyu Kingdom in Early-Modern and Modern Times', in *Comparative International Law*, ed. by A. Roberts and others (New York, NY: Oxford Academic, 2018), pp. 141-158 (p. 143).
[30] Wong, *Approaching Sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands*, pp. 88-89.
[31] R.K. Sakai, 'The Ryukyu (Liu-ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma', in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. by J.K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 112-134 (pp. 119-120); R.I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868* (Leiden: Harvard University Asia Center, 2020), p. 35.
[32] Sakai, 'The Ryukyu (Liu-ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma', p. 118.
[33] Hellyer, *Defining Engagement*, p. 38.

completely. In 1617, not even a mere decade after 1609, Satsuma actually issued an order against the 'Japanization' of Ryūkyū.[34]

2.3. *Ryūkyūan Sovereignty*

To describe the situation Ryūkyū found itself in between 1609's invasion and 1879's full annexation, historians use the term 'dual subordination'.[35] Chinese intellectuals have a perverse incentive to use terminology rooted in the word 'subordination' given that it strengthens any historical claim China lays to islands in the area, in particular the disputed Senkaku Islands. Liu is not alone in this either; Wong does the same thing.[36] Yet, they are not entirely without a point. The fact of the matter is that Ryūkyū had no say in matters regarding its own foreign policy, trade, and military, and was at least nominally subordinated to China through the tributes; even if the only thing China cared about was being treated as the Middle or Central State. However, it also had some say over its own politics. Therefore it might be more accurate to take Hellyer's approach and use the term 'dual tribute system' to describe the early 17th and middle to late 19th century in which Ryūkyū paid tribute to both China and Satsuma.[37] Even if Wong's assertion that 'dual subordination' has its origins by the American Commodore Perry's observation that Ryūkyū was at once a vassal of Japan and of China is correct – an assertion backed up by a source that cannot be tracked down – it still would not be sufficient reason to see Ryūkyū in this way. As Yanagihara put it: 'It would be seriously misleading to apply directly, without any reservations, modern European ideas of sovereignty or territory to the East Asian World.'[38] The same Yanagihara argued that when it comes to Ryūkyū specifically, two better terms would be *shioki* and *fuyo*, respectively meaning control and dependency. Fuyo indicated that Satsuma had control over Ryūkyū while the islands were not seen as an integral part of Satsuma, showing that this control was limited; shioki specified this limited control. Essentially, shioki unified in one word that there was an annual land tax to be paid to Satsuma, that Ryūkyū had to take a series of vows (15 to be exact, that altogether meant an iron Satsuma grip over the trade with China), and that Ryūkyū was required to send envoys to the shogunal capital. And even then, the notion of shioki changed over time and meant different things in different situations.[39]

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[34] P. Heinrich, 'Japanese language spread', in *Handbook of the Ryukyuan Languages*, ed. by P. Heinrich, S. Miyara, and M. Shimoji (Berlin/Boston, MA/Munich: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015), pp. 593-612 (p. 593).
[35] D. Liu, 'The Historical and Legal Status of Pre-modern Ryukyu and the Sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands', *China Oceans Law Review*, 2016.2 (2016), pp. 109-154 (p. 112).
[36] Wong, *Approaching Sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands*, p. 92.
[37] Hellyer, *Defining Engagement*, p. 36.
[38] Yanagihara, 'Treaties Concluded by the Kingdom of Ryukyu', (28 April 2024).
[39] Yanagihara, '"Shioki (Control)," "Fuyo (Dependency)," and Sovereignty', pp. 142-143.

Ryūkyū was not a fief of Satsuma and neither was it a 'puppet state',[40] for Ryūkyū benefitted from Satsuma's interest in the tributary China trade to operate as a 'quasi-independent country' until the official end of the Kingdom in 1879.[41] Despite Satsuma' influence, it did retain a modicum of domestic control. Instead, it had its own kind of relationship with Satsuma that entailed a unique blend of dependency, control, and sovereignty.

As this brief history of Ryūkyū has demonstrated, Ryūkyū's relationship with the concept of sovereignty was complex and easily misunderstood by those not coming from a solid historical East Asian background. To Western eyes, like those of Commodore Perry's, the old system of Chinese imperial investiture would probably have seemed like the granting of a domain to a vassal by that domain's ultimate authority. After all, if Ryūkyū was completely independent, its kings would not have needed to rely on an external power to make them king; their status would have rested on nothing but their own power and the fealty they command of their followers. Add to that the way Satsuma demanded tribute too and had full control over multiple important functions of total territorial sovereignty, and it is understandable why a Western observer might come to certain conclusions. Here we have a region with its own history, culture, and customs culminating in international arrangements that other parts of the world simply did not subscribe to prior to the modern (Western) standardisation of international conduct. Yet, Commodore Perry was not the only Westerner who had problems characterising Ryūkyū's sovereignty. In the 16th century, the first European ships reached Japan. This kicked off a chain of events that would lead, via the 1857 shipwreck of the *Van Bosse*, to the signing of the treaty between the Netherlands and Ryūkyū.

[40] Sakai, 'The Ryukyu (Liu-ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma', p. 134.
[41] G. Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), p. 31.

3. Historical Context – The Netherlands in Japan

> *'How gleefully'—the old man's eyes close—'life shreds our well-crafted plans.'*
>
> – D. MITCHELL, *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*[42]

3.1. *Establishment of a Dutch Trading Post*

It started with a storm. In the middle of the 16th century, in either 1542 or 1543, less than a handful of Portuguese merchants were blown off-course by a typhoon and became the first Europeans to set foot on Japanese soil. About seven years later they were followed by Francis Xavier, who was at once the first European to intentionally travel to Japan, the first Christian missionary in Japan, and the first Jesuit sent on a mission outside of Europe.[43] The fact that the Jesuits were the first Christian order to begin proselytising in Japan deeply shaped Japanese expectations of Europeans.[44] As we will see shortly, the dominant branch of Christianity in a European nation would play a role in which nation got to stay and which ones got expelled.

Half a century later, in 1600, the Dutch trading vessel *De Liefde* would run ashore on the Japanese coast. This was an accident, but one that prompted the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to send two more ships to Japan in order to persuade the shōgun to grant them trading permits. The shōgun granted these permits, as well as the establishment of a trading post at Hirado.[45] By this point, however, the Japanese authorities had already begun to crack down on Christian activity. Trade brought prosperity, but the import of foreign religion was seen as a threat to Tokugawa authority.[46] There had been weakly-enforced anti-Christian laws since 1587 – with the one exception being an execution of twenty-six Jesuits in 1597 – but from 1612 onwards these laws were applied much more strictly: in 1616 Christian missionaries were banned; in 1623 the Spanish were banned in their entirety; in 1639 all Portuguese were expelled.[47] Meanwhile, although they were forced to move to the artificial "prison island" of

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[42] D. Mitchell, *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (New York, NY: Random House, 2010), p. 287.
[43] J.F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth Century in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 1.
[44] M.M. Mochizuki, 'Deciphering The Dutch In Deshima', in *Boundaries and their Meanings in the History of the Netherlands*, ed. by B. Kaplan, M. Carlson, and L. Cruz (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), pp. 63-94 (pp. 73-74).
[45] C.R. Joby, 'Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Japan: A Social History', *Journal of Low Countries Studies*, 42.2 (2018), pp. 175-196 (pp. 175-176).
[46] M. Chaiklin, *Cultural Commerce and Dutch Commercial Culture: The Influence of European Material Culture on Japan* (Leiden: CNWS at Leiden University, 2003), p. 3.
[47] Mochizuki, 'Deciphering The Dutch In Deshima', pp. 77; A. Curvelo, 'Nagasaki/Deshima after the portuguese in dutch accounts of the 17th century', *Bulletin of Portuguese - Japanese Studies*, 6.1 (2003), pp. 147-157 (p. 147).

Deshima in Nagasaki Bay, the Dutch were allowed to keep a factory. Crucially, they were the only European traders in all of Japan.[48]

This new position was no fluke or random arrangement of convenience. It was the result of years of political marketing by the VOC. The Iberians were mostly Jesuit and practically all Catholic, whereas the Dutch were Calvinist Protestants and ever the trade-loving pragmatists. The VOC's attempts at convincing the shogunate that Protestantism stood in sharp contrast to Catholicism, afraid as the shogunate was of the destabilising force of Christianity, were successful. Result: a special position in Japan for the Netherlands.[49] For the next two centuries, the VOC would keep their presence on Deshima, an area no larger than Amsterdam's Dam square, as long as 'Hollanders did [not] do anything which savours of Christianity'.[50] For some time around the middle of the 17th century, it was even the VOC's most lucrative Asian trading post. Primarily because they were able to bring in silks from other Asian ports in exchange for great quantities of Japanese silver, gold, and copper, the Dutch were able to stay in Deshima and to maintain an active gifts-based relationship with the Japanese, in the form of tribute missions to the capital (so-called *hofreizen*).[51] Moreover, when in 1637 the jointly Christian and peasant Shimabara Rebellion erupted, the Dutch even received a request for military aid. Although they served a self-admitted non-decisive role, they did dutifully respond to the Japanese call to help crush the uprising.[52]

In the 1640s, the Japanese the issued some successful restrictions on the export of their precious materials, and the number of ships sent to Deshima dwindled from ten in the 1640s to one a century later. In spite of these developments, Deshima remained 'one of the most curious plots on the face of this planet'.[53] While residents could not leave Deshima without permission (as was granted for hofreizen) and there were tight limitations on contact with local Japanese,

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[48] M. Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan: Gift Giving and Diplomacy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), p. 8.
[49] M. Chaiklin, 'Monopolists to Middlemen: Dutch Liberalism and American Imperialism in the Opening of Japan', *Journal of World History*, 21.2 (2010), pp. 249-269 (p. 251).
[50] E. Shirōemon, 'Excerpts from a Letter from Ebiya Shiroemon to the Governor-General of the VOC (1642)', tr. by C.R. Boxer, in *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life During the Age of the Shoguns*, ed. by C.N. Vaporis (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2014), pp. 110-112 (p. 111).
[51] Y. Suzuki, *Japan-Netherlands Trade 1600-1800: The Dutch East India Company and beyond* (Kyōto: Kyōto University Press & Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2012), pp. 12-13; Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan*, p. 4-5; Joby, 'Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Japan', p. 180.
[52] G.C. Gunn, *World Trade Systems of the East and West: Nagasaki and the Asian Bullion Trade Networks* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 129, 133.
[53] C.R. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie in Japan, 1600-1817: an essay on the cultural and scientific influence exercised by the Hollanders in Japan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1936), p. 115; K. Camfferman and T.E. Cooke, 'The Profits of the Dutch East India Company's Japan Trade', *ABACUS*, 40.1 (2024), pp. 49-75 (p. 52).

the Dutch were useful tools for Japan to avoid a complete isolation from Western scientific, medical, and technological developments.[54] In essence, the Dutch acted as intermediaries between Japan and the West, and this was a function they continued to serve until the mid-18th century. The import of Western knowledge came to be known as *rangaku*, Dutch Studies.[55] According to founding rangaku scholar Sugita, rangaku mainly appealed to Japanese academics because compared to Chinese Studies, the language involved was relatively simple.[56] Of course, since the source texts were written in Dutch, rangaku was not naturally accessible to all of those interested. Therefore, it directly lead to an increase in the number of Dutch-to-Japanese translators, who prided themselves so much on their skill that families taught it to their children, much like a hereditary craftsman would.[57] Much has already been written in more detail about life on Deshima, the VOC's activities in Japan, rangaku, and cross-cultural interaction, more than there is space for in this thesis. For now though, it should suffice to say – and easy enough to see – that the period in between the 17th and mid-19th centuries formed a unique era of exclusive trade and intangible exchanges for the Dutch and those in their employ in Japan.

3.2. *The End of Isolation – Preludes*[58]

The first aggressive cracks in Japan's isolationism appeared in 1806. Nikolai Rezanov had embarked on a mission to open Japan up to trade, and as an official envoy have the Russian Empire be the first state to do so since the Iberians were expelled two centuries prior. However, this mission failed. Rezanov responded to this with violent raids on a few Japanese islands in the north, against which Japan could not defend itself.[59] Two years later, the cracks grew a little wider when the British attempted to force Japan open by having their warship *Phaeton* sail into Nagasaki harbour under the guise of a Dutch flag. Once safely inside, they made 'aggressive demands' for trade and intended to take hostages. Partially due to interference by the Dutch chief at Deshima, the *Phaeton* went home without accomplishing its task.[60] Nevertheless, it was

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[54] A. Wahid, 'The Dutch's Floating Life on Deshima Island: a Gloomy Side of Dutch-Japan Relationship During the Tokugawa Period, 1715-1790', *Jurnal Kajian Wilayah*, 6.1 (2015), pp. 1-16 (p. 2).
[55] D. Palmer, 'Nagasaki's Districts: Western Contact with Japan through the History of a City's Space', *Journal of Urban History*, 42.3 (2016), pp. 477-505 (p. 492).
[56] M.B. Jansen, *Japan and its World: Two Centuries of Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 34.
[57] Palmer, 'Nagasaki's Districts', p. 492.
[58] The following two sections, while not directly paraphrased summaries, owe a lot of their structure to J. Dwinger, 'Diplomatie in Roerige Tijden', in *Roerige tijden: Nederland-Japan en de val van de Samurai*, ed. by J. Dwinger and H. Groenendijk (Leiden: Japanmuseum SieboldHuis, 2024), pp. 15-41. Specifically, heavy inspiration was taken from the events, dates, and people mentioned Dwinger mentions, as well as a few sources.
[59] G.A. Lensen, *The Russian Push Toward Japan* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1971), pp. 160-161, 167-171.
[60] Y. Yokoyama, 'Tension in East Asia in the Nineteenth Century', in *Bridging the Divide: 400 Years The Netherlands–Japan*, ed. by L. Blussé, W. Remmelink, and I. Smits (Hilversum: Teleac/NOT, 2000), pp. 173-194 (p. 176).

still a foreign warship that managed to get dangerously close to Japan. Following these Russian Rezanov and British Phaeton incidents, the Tokugawa realised that Dutch was no longer the only language they needed to nurture and compiled French, English, and Russian dictionaries.[61] Although, despite the help of Dutchmen on Deshima in this endeavour, it was also the first sign that the Dutch language – and by extension the Netherlands – had begun to decline in relevance. Other attempts to open up Japan by non-Dutch ships into Japanese waters were by Russia in 1792, Britain in 1779 and 1818, and the USA in 1791, 1797, 1837, 1846, and 1849.[62]

In 1824, two particularly tense episodes involving foreigners lead to the 1825 promulgation of the 'Don't Think Twice' edict. Henceforth, all Western ships which were not allowed to land were to be repelled immediately by shore battery bombardments.[63] Yet, reality is harsh, and this edict would last only 17 years. Dutch reports told the shogunate about the Opium War, which ended in a decisive British victory over a hitherto isolationist China. The victory eventually led to British-controlled tariffs, forced-open "treaty ports", and extraterritorial justice for British subjects. The prospect that similar demands could be imposed upon Japan scared Japanese leaders, and the first steps were taken to appease foreign powers. In 1842 the 1825 edict was relaxed, and provisions and fuel were to be given to castaways.[64] Meanwhile, the Netherlands' objective was to maintain their monopoly in Japan, and they needed to see how much the shogunate was warming up to abandoning isolationism. As such, King Willem II wrote a letter to warn about the Opium War, recommending the Japanese to open up trade and to abandon isolationism 'only in a worst-case scenario'. Although Japan replied, this reply did not address the topics raised by Willem II and no action was taken.[65]

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[61] Y. Torii, '"Dutch Studies": Interpreters, Language, Geography and World History', in *Bridging the Divide*, pp. 115-138 (p. 126).
[62] E.O. Reischauer and A.M. Craig, *Japan: Tradition & Transformation* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), pp. 116-117.
[63] D.L. Howell, 'Foreign Encounters', *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 40.2 (2014), pp. 295-327 (pp. 298, 309).
[64] A. Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 48.
[65] F. Matsukata, 'King Willem II's 1844 Letter to the Shogun: "Recommendation to Open the Country"', tr. by A. Clulow, *Monumenta Nipponica*, 66.1 (2011), pp. 99-122 (p. 110, 113).

3.3. *The End of Isolation – Breakthrough*

Inspired by the needs of whalers, shipwrecked sailors, trade, and coal-hungry steamboats, the Americans decided to send Commodore M.C. Perry on a mission to open up Japan once and for all. Adopting a tactic known as "gunboat diplomacy", he sailed into the Japanese capital's bay in 1853 with four warships. Two of these were hypermodern steamboats (see figure 2 for an artist's interpretation of these "monsters"). Due to Japan's history with the Netherlands, most negotiations were held in Dutch. Perry made a strategic retreat home, promising to return the next year and leaving the Japanese to simmer in their worries.[66] Thanks to a diligent study of rangaku, Japan knew it was in no position to resist the Americans' power.[67] The multitude of incidents in the preceding fifty years must have left an impression too. And so, when Perry returned in February 1854 with six more warships than before, the Tokugawa acquiesced and signed the Treaty of Kanagawa.[68] Not having heeded decades of warning signs, they had no choice. This treaty opened two ports for American provisioning and shelter, granted the USA a most-favoured nation status, and provided for future commencement of diplomatic relations.[69] More than two centuries of isolation had ended.

Figure 2: American ship sailing into Edo Bay (Japan, 1853), artist unknown, c. 1854, woodblock print, <https://medium.com/tomorrow-in-progress/when-black-ships-bring-the-future-9c7456050fcc> (14 September 2024).

Through Deshima, the Dutch had been acting as middlemen and negotiation facilitators for a long time. And clearly, Perry's success hit them as a sign they needed to be more assertive. The Dutch steamship *Soembing* was gifted to Japan in October 1855, followed by the establishment of a naval academy in Nagasaki.[70] Instead of a more American approach, however, this should more be seen as continuing the older Dutch-Japanese tradition. As pointed

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[66] C. Holcombe, *A History of East Asia: From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 242-243.
[67] P. Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (London: Penguin Politics/Economics, 2013), p. 130.
[68] Holcombe, *A History of East Asia*, p. 243.
[69] C. Totman, *A History of Japan* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), p. 282.
[70] W. McOmie, *The Opening of Japan, 1853–1855: A Comparative Study of the American, British, Dutch and Russian Naval Expedition to Compel the Tokugawa Shogunate to Conclude Treaties and Open Ports to Their Ships in the Years 1853-55* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2006), p. 423; D.C. Evans and M.R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), p. 5.

out by Dwinger, the Nagasaki naval academy matched the Dutch 'role of educator, rather than aggressor'.[71] The new academy would hopefully function as a vessel for Dutch influence through carving out a space for the Netherlands in a hotly-demanded branch of modernisation. As aggressive as the VOC was in the Indonesian colonies, so oriented towards trade and softer forms of power dynamics were the Netherlands in Japan. Perhaps the Dutch had grown complacent, having had a monopoly since the mid-1600s. They were teachers, doctors, merchants, newsmen, translators, and international facilitators. They acted not out of some sense of altruism, but for the 'national prestige'. As a small country, national prestige was a requisite to keeping the Netherlands independent and influential. But the Netherlands did not have the same tools at its disposal as, say, the USA.[72] Therefore, a more subtle strategy was employed. The first Dutch-Japanese treaty was signed in 1856 and was expanded with supplemental commercial articles in 1857. Even if it was not the first of Japan's modern treaties (it was the fourth), it was the most expansive of the original set of four.[73]

However, the fact of the matter is that the Netherlands was not the country to crack open Japan's shell. It was repeated incidental encounters by non-Dutch foreign vessels and sailors, as well as active attempts by non-Dutch states that finally put an end to Japan's isolation. The Netherlands may have been able to negotiate the longest initial treaty, but it could only do so after hitching its wagon to three others. The Netherlands may have played the game of soft power to counter bigger rivals' military prowess, but once one of those rivals brought its warships to bear in the capital's bay, they were forced to play catchup. After centuries of isolationism and not taking any initiative to weaponize itself against modernising foreign powers, Japan was weak and primed to be taken advantage of. While the initial four treaties were relatively benign, the treaties that were signed in the wake of the 1858 Harris Treaty with the USA (one of which was with the Netherlands) reduced Japan to a semi-colony of the collective West.[74] Whether it was due to a lack of military prowess, urgency, or the earlier hypothesised historical complacency, we cannot say for sure. What is certain, is that the Netherlands was significantly more passive than its competitors. For example, the Dutch representatives stayed in Nagasaki while the representatives of other countries went to what is

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[71] Dwinger, 'Diplomatie in Roerige Tijden', p. 29.
[72] M. Kogure, 'National prestige and economic interest : Dutch diplomacy toward Japan 1850-1863' (doctoral dissertation, Leiden University, 2008), pp. 25-26.
[73] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Treaties and Conventions, Concluded Between Empire of Japan and Foreign Nations, Together with Regulations and Communications, 1854-1874* (Tokyo: Nisshu-sha Printing Office, 1874), pp. 1-42.
[74] Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, p. 50.

now called Tōkyō. As the capital, this is where all the important politics took place. One contemporary observer remarked that the Dutch commissioner-general was so far removed from the political centre, that it was as if Amsterdam's mayor lived in Lisbon.[75] The Nagasaki naval academy closed in 1859 in favour of a school in the capital, further signifying that the Netherlands had not fully grasped the newly-developed irrelevancy of Nagasaki when they set that city as the academy's location.[76] Other countries were pulling ahead, leaving the Netherlands increasingly less relevant. A position that once was prominent, as a source of national prestige, was clearly in decline. At the same time, Japan found itself facing a tempestuous climate created by its own frailty and a West that was all too eager to exploit Asia. It was in this geopolitical environment that the *Van Bosse* shipwrecked off the coast at Tarama in 1857.

[75] C.T. van Assendelft de Coningh, *Ontmoetingen ter Zee en te Land*, 2 vols. (Haarlem: W.C. de Graaff, 1879), vol. 2, p. 47.
[76] Dwinger, 'Diplomatie in Roerige Tijden', p. 29.

4. The Shipwreck of the *Van Bosse*

> *'One event makes another: what we anticipate seldom occurs; what we least expected generally happens; and time can only prove which is most for our advantage.'*
>
> – B. DISRAELI, *Henrietta Temple*[77]

As can be seen in the chronology table on page 21, the *Van Bosse* (see figure 3 for a painting of a ship of the same type owned by the same company) had been in service for trading company Bonke & Co. for two years before it was sent to the Far East. After taking a mere half year making a few stops in the Dutch East Indies and Shanghai, it was intended for it to dock at Singapore next. As bad luck would have it, the ship was blown off course and shipwrecked near Tarama on the 18th of July 1857. The site of the accident was not too far off the coast, since the crew and passengers were able to row to shore in two dinghies. And fortuitously, everyone survived the event. Once having approached solid ground, their flag easily identified them as Dutch, and all 25 men and the one woman with her daughter were taken care of.[78] Following some time spent on Tarama and Miyako, the 27 were brought to the Ryūkyū capital of Naha where they were allowed to stay in a temple.[79]

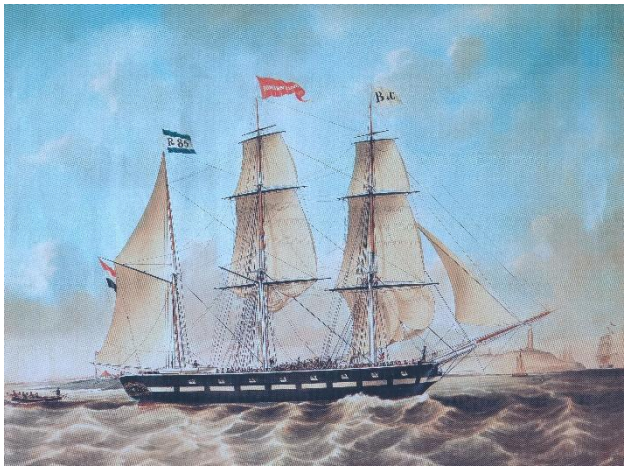

Figure 3: Another three-masted barque as used by Bonke & Co. Johann Jacob leaving for Batavia, J. Spin, 1846, watercolour painting, Rotterdam, Maritiem Museum Rotterdam.

According to two letters by Japanese officials from the 12th of September 1857, captain Hageman was rather eager to leave.[80] So, the daimyō of Satsuma requested the Dutch commissioner on Deshima to arrange from a returning ship to pick up the stranded sailors and passengers from Naha; they would have done more themselves, were it not for a lack of resources.[81] Specifically, a report from Donker Curtius to the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies reveals that the original plan was for the 27 to be brought from Naha to China aboard

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[77] B. Disraeli, *Henrietta Temple*, 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), vol. 1, p. 147.
[78] The Hague, Nationaal Archief (NA), 1.04.21 1640 313, p. 1; The Hague, Nationaal Archief (NA), 1.04.21 1657 145, p. 1.
[79] The Hague, Nationaal Archief (NA), 1.04.21 1640 327, p. 1.
[80] The translation of one of these letters survives as NA 1.04.21 1640 327, and is the translation mentioned in table 1's entry for 29 – October – 1857; the original is the missive mentioned in the entry for 27 – October – 1857.
[81] NA, 1.04.21 1640 327, pp. 1-2; NA 1.04.21 1640 313, p. 1.

Chinese junks in August 1858.[82] Having no real choice in the matter, Donker Curtius followed the local lord's request and ask around to see if he could get a returning ship to stop in Naha.[83] Meanwhile, on the 25th of July, a Dutch ship just so happened to have already arrived at Deshima: the *Jan Daniel*, captained by Hendrik Hagers.

Three months after the *Van Bosse* shipwrecked near Tarama and nearly two months after the 27 were housed in that Naha temple, captain Hagers received a message from Donker Curtius.[84] In it, he was officially asked to sail to Naha on the way back to Batavia and retrieve the castaways. The colonial government in the Dutch East Indies would pay for the additional insurance costs as well as supplies, but Donker Curtius would act as the short-term financial intermediary. Additionally, he would send captain Hagers all the relevant maps as well as a Japanese letter explaining to Naha authorities what the *Jan Daniel* came to Naha for. Interestingly enough, despite everyone labouring under the assumptions the 27 were all Dutch due to the flag they flew, Donker Curtius did make mention of the possibility they might not all be: in case it turned out someone belonged to a different nation, they were to be treated equally as if they were Dutch.[85] For their part, in internal communication of the Japanese, the authorities in Naha were told to make sure that when a Dutch rescue ship arrived it would take on sufficient water and food for the journey ahead.[86] Then, on the 5th of November the *Jan Daniel* was ready to return to Batavia. It would do so the next day, but not without a small hiccup. As promised, Donker Curtius had forwarded to captain Hagers an introductory or explanatory document for Naha and all seemed well. Yet on the night before departure, the *Jan Daniel* got a visit by two Japanese officers and their two interpreters. Confusingly – the sources do not offer an explanation as to why the Japanese had different ideas about this document than the Dutch – they came over to the *Jan Daniel* to ask the captain to hand over Donker Curtius' document before the ship left for Naha. Due to them not being able to present him with written evidence backing up this request, captain Hagers refused and sent the Japanese party back to shore.[87] Evidently, this proved not to be too great an issue, as the *Jan Daniel* was able to set sail from Nagasaki on the 6th of November regardless. Three days later they arrived at Naha, picked up

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[82] This is the report mentioned in table 1's entry for 25 – October – 1857 and is archived as NA 1.04.21 1657 145. Also, the report says 1858, but it is unclear whether this was a mistake or if the initial idea actually was to let them stay in Naha for a year.
[83] NA, 1.04.21 1657 145, pp. 1-2.
[84] This is the request mentioned in table 1's entry for 27 – October – 1857, and is archived as Nationaal Archief (NA), 1.04.21 1657 147.
[85] NA, 1.04.21 1657 147, pp. 1-2.
[86] NA, 1.04.21 1640 327, p. 2.
[87] As recounted in a report mentioned in table 1's entry for 6 – November – 1857, see Nationaal Archief (NA), 1.04.21 1640 321, p. 1.

the people from the *Van Bosse*, and arrived safely back in Batavia on the 2nd of December. And a little over a year and a half later in July 1859, Ryūkyū and the Netherlands would sign a treaty.

Chronology of the Van Bosse, from construction to shipwreck

Year/Date (Gregorian calendar)	Event
1854	Built in Bremerhaven, Germany.
1855	W. van der Hoeven captains the ship for Bonke & Co.
1856	W. van der Hoeven captains the ship for Bonke & Co.
1 – September – 1856	Preparations for a voyage from Hellevoetsluis to Batavia are complete. W.E. Hageman captains the ship for Bonke & Co.
4 – September – 1856	Departure for Batavia.
18 – December – 1856	Arrival in Batavia.
27 – December – 1856 (uncertain)	Departs Batavia, bound for Semarang.
30 – December – 1856	Arrival in Semarang.
17 – February – 1857	Departs Semarang, bound for Shanghai, China.
9 – April – 1857	Arrival in Shanghai, China.
3 – July – 1857	Departs Shanghai, bound for Singapore.
18 – July – 1857	Shipwrecked at Tarama in the Ryūkyū Archipelago. Afterwards, the crew was provided shelter by the Tarama islanders.
24 – July – 1857	The crew is escorted from Tarama to Karimata on the island of Miyako.
25 – July – 1857	The *Jan Daniel* arrives at Deshima.
25 – August – 1857	The *Van Bosse*'s crew is escorted from Miyako to Naha.
27 – August – 1857	Arrival of the *Van Bosse*'s crew in Naha.
25 – October – 1857	Chief Donker Curtius of the Dutch trading post on Deshima sends the governor of Batavia a report about retrieving the *Van Bosse*'s crew.
27 – October – 1857	Donker Curtius sends a request to captain Hagers of the *Jan Daniel* to pick up the *Van Bosse*'s crew. Next, a missive by Somegawa Kisozaijemon and Inōe Shōtarō to Ryukyu magistrates reaches captain Hagers via Donker Curtius.

29 – October – 1857	Donker Curtius has a translation made of the message by Somegawa Kisozaijemon regarding the retrieval of the *Van Bosse*'s crew.
5 – November – 1857	The *Jan Daniel* is ready to depart Nagasaki for Batavia via Naha.
6 – November – 1857	The *Jan Daniel* departs Nagasaki, bound for Batavia via Naha. Captain Hagers reports to Donker Curtius about issues related to the letter by Somegawa Kisozaijemon and Inōe Shōtarō.
9 – November – 1857	The *Jan Daniel* arrives at Naha.
10 – November – 1857	The *Jan Daniel* collects the *Van Bosse*'s crew and departs for Batavia.
2 – December – 1857	The *Jan Daniel* arrives in Batavia with the *Van Bosse*'s crew.

Table 1: The original features a middle column with Japanese dates which was left out of this translated version due to space-related reasons. Kaneda, '多良間島沖で難破した', p. 93. Table translated by S. Bekker, translation edited by M. Masaki.

5. Digital Editions and Encoding

'Code is read much more often than it is written.'

– G. VAN ROSSUM, *Style Guide for Python Code*[88]

Link to the digital edition: https://bookandbyte.universiteitleiden.nl/ryukyu/.

Before expounding on the main objectives and the motivations underlying this digital edition given in the introduction, it would be prudent to discuss a number of definitions. After doing so and explaining the difference between a transcription and an edition, it then discusses the various goals editions can have. Finally, the main objectives of and guiding principles underlying the digital edition as part of this thesis are given.

5.1. *Types of Editions*

In order to understand what kind of edition was produced, readers and users first need to know what types of editions there are; only then do the usual labels have meaning. Let us start by considering what a transcription is. In this context, a transcription is a written representation of a primary source's words. While the primary source can be of any kind, in the 21st century transcriptions are often digitally typed out (as opposed to handwritten). Once a source has been transcribed, a transcription becomes an edition when that transcription is published.[89] In other words, transcriptions themselves are not automatically the same as an edition, but an edition of a primary source does involve a transcription.

Editions are not a monolith and can have a variety of labels attached to them. A diplomatic edition of a text entails a transcription with identical linguistic attributes, but which takes a loose approach to the typography and form of the original. For example, phrasing is kept intact while text size is left up to the editor. A sub-category of the diplomatic edition is the semi-diplomatic edition, which contains a transcription that is mostly faithful, but that does correct for the most obvious errors or linguistic rarities without explicit mention for every instance of such.[90] Since the appearance of the text is different but does convey the same

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[88] G. van Rossum, B. Warsaw, and A. Coghlan, 'Style Guide for Python Code', *Python Software Foundation – Python Enhancement Proposals*, 5 July 2001. <https://peps.python.org/pep-0008/> (28 November 2024).

[89] E. Pierazzo, 'Digital Documentary Editions and the Others', *The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing*, 35.1 (2014), accessed online on 18 September 2024, <https://www.scholarlyediting.org/2014/essays/essay.pierazzo.html>.

[90] 'Diplomatic edition', in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, ed. by M.F. Suarez SJ and H.R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), accessed online on 18 September 2024, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-1427>.

meaning in the same linguistic style, a diplomatic edition is almost – but not quite – a typographic facsimile. It is important that readers of diplomatic editions are made aware that they are not, in fact, reading a typographic facsimile, should the specific appearance of the original be of interest to them. One aspect which helps to emphasise this difference is the presence of explicit corrections or editorial interventions in the case of a semi-diplomatic transcription. If an editor is preparing a transcription of this nature, any emendations ought to be marked using certain textual symbols. Typographical elements occurring in the original text, such as italics or underlining can generally be reproduced easily using today's word processing software or markup languages, so those do not require getting marked with symbols.[91] If any and all old-fashioned spelling, punctuation, or other outdated matters are updated to reflect modern language, the edition ought to be referred to a normalised edition.[92] Regardless of the specific approach an editor takes, they should be clear in their introduction about what kind of edition it is and how they present the choices made in their transcriptions.

Furthermore, there are such things as minimal and maximal approaches to editing, according to Vanhoutte. A minimal edition is intended to be read and is the result of a scholarly editor's efforts to curate or protect a single textual witness. A maximal edition showcases considerable scrutiny in presenting multiple extant witnesses of a text and 'preferably' includes annotations. Like this, a maximal edition counters a reader's assumptions about a text's singularity.[93] However, the minimal-maximal distinction does not necessarily apply in the same way to historical documents as it does to the literary texts Vanhoutte was considering. Far from all historical documents or texts were treated in such a way that would lead to multiple surviving textual witnesses. Besides, only a single copy might have been made of, for instance, a letter. Keeping Vanhoutte's conceptualisation intact would mean that many editions of historical documents would be minimal by default, thereby leaving us without an effective descriptor. The minimal-maximal terminology was borrowed from a chapter about creating editions for literary texts. And in that field, the terms being about textual witnesses makes more sense due to how such texts are transmitted. However, if the terms minimal and maximal are to be used for historical documents, the notion of minimal and maximal editions should be expanded. A minimal edition can refer to the work of editors trying to transmit the text of a single witness

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[91] M. Kline and S.H. Perdue, *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2008), accessed online on 18 September 2024, <https://gde.upress.virginia.edu/05-gde.html>.

[92] A. Cusworth, 'A Prince's Papers: Session 2', *Digital Humanities @ Oxford*, n.d. <https://digital.humanities.ox.ac.uk/princes-papers-session-2> (September 18, 2024).

[93] E. Vanhoutte, 'Every Reader his own Bibliographer – An Absurdity?', in *Text Editing, Print, and the Digital World*, ed. by M. Deegan and K. Sutherland (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 99-110 (p. 100).

and nothing more; maximal editions can refer to richly annotated versions of multiple extant witnesses. Yet, it is possible to create two middle categories. Ones that would allow for the conceptualisation of minimal and maximal as presented earlier, but that also make space for annotated single-witness editions and non-annotated multiple-witness editions. Like *The Oxford Companion to the Book* used the term semi-diplomatic to refer to editions that are mostly diplomatic save for some exceptions, this thesis proposes to call a minimal edition with notes "semi-minimal". A maximal edition with no annotations would be called "semi-maximal". See figure 4 for a visual summary of the proposed additions to the terminology.

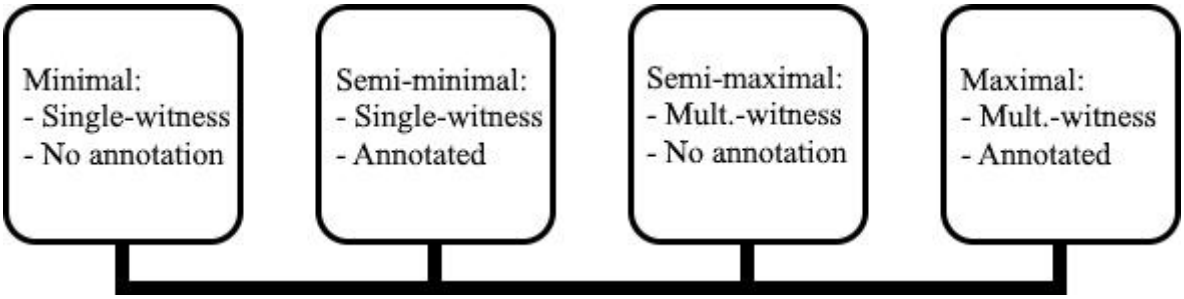

Figure 4: The four categories visualised. Figure by Stijn Bekker.

5.1.1. *Digital Editions*

With the above clarified, there is one more type of edition that deserves attention: digital editions, sometimes called electronic editions. Distinct from digi*tised* editions, digi*tal* editions are made according to a digital paradigm, or more specifically a born-digital paradigm. There already are a few features of digital editions you could get by turning a print edition into a digital text – like searchability (i.e. ctrl+f) or copiability – but a true digital edition can make use of digital affordances.[94] Paper books, in contrast, come with the inherent restrictions of paper book technology, be it space-related, financial, or otherwise.[95] Firstly, a digital edition can feature unlimited images (especially coloured images) whereas such a feature is usually prohibitively expensive for print editions.[96] Certainly nothing to sneeze at, providing a photographic facsimile of the original source(s) next to a transcription is a new possibility of digital editions.[97] Secondly, digital editions can represent a potentially unlimited number of versions of sources and/or transcriptions.[98] As a result, readers are able to derive more varied,

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[94] E. Spadini, 'Producing Scholarly Digital Editions', in *Reassembling the Republic of Letters in the Digital Age*, ed. by H. Hotson and T. Wallnig (Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 2019), pp. 251-260 (p. 252); P. Sahle, 'What is a Scholarly Digital Edition?', in *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories and Practices*, ed. by M.J. Driscoll and E. Pierazzo (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016), pp. 19-39 (p. 26).
[95] C. Ohge, *Publishing Scholarly Editions: Archives, Computing, and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 53.
[96] Sahle, 'What is a Scholarly Digital Edition?', p. 26.
[97] K.M. Price, 'Electronic Scholarly Editions', in *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, ed. by R. Siemens and S. Schreibman (Chichester: Blackwell, 2013), pp. 434-450 (p. 437).
[98] Sahle, 'What is a Scholarly Digital Edition?', p. 27; Price, 'Electronic Scholarly Editions', p. 437.

more nuanced takeaways from the edition. The only constraint in producing this multilayeredness is the editor's or editorial team's time and skill. Additionally, digital editions do not have to restrict themselves to the source, transcriptions, and apparatus. Even translations and other, creative 'responses' could be included in a sociological digital edition.[99]

Thirdly, being created on a computer, digital editions are uniquely positioned to take advantage of the computer's flexibility and computing power. Digital editions can be accessed through multiple interfaces and devices, and computers are able to perform calculations to aid humans in recognising patterns much better than humans could by themselves. Therefore, digital editors should always be aware of the computational possibilities afforded by computers.[100] To that end, digital editors should exercise caution when selecting the specific technologies they use. If it is accepted that a regular transcription becomes an edition when it is published, sharing the transcription with the world so that others may build on it, it is vital that the edition is built on an open technological base. Text is simple and is likely to survive transitions to future technological environments, but an edition that is meant to be machine-readable so that computers can perform calculations is more complex and therefore more vulnerable to changes in the platforms scholars use. Proprietary software and formats may not always be accessible to everyone for a variety of reasons, and so open-source technology is crucial to keep the digital edition accessible, durable, and computationable for as long as possible.[101] One particularly noteworthy open format are the TEI Guidelines from the Text Encoding Initiative, responsible for a 'recent flourishing' of digital editions that lean towards the document-facing side of aforementioned slider.[102] Furthermore, there is also a moral argument to be made for editions based on open formats, especially editions published under a Creative Commons license. Facilitating creativity like this is akin to the way that the open-source software community has enabled a productive exploitation of what is gifted to the Commons and privately (or in the case of editions, intellectually) owned. In this open context, according to Robinson, digital editions as the result of scholarly research and can rightfully be considered 'social' and are symbols of modern, digital academia's value.[103]

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[99] Price, 'Electronic Scholarly Editions', p. 448.
[100] Ohge, *Publishing Scholarly Editions*, pp. 53, 60.
[101] J. Nyhan, 'Text encoding and scholarly digital editions', in *Digital Humanities in Practice*, ed. by C. Warwick, M. Terras, and J. Nyhan (London: Facet, 2012), pp. 117-138 (p. 119).
[102] P. Eggert, *The Work and the Reader in Literary Studies: Scholarly Editing and Book History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 82.
[103] P.M.W. Robinson, 'Project-based digital humanities and social, digital, and scholarly editions', *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 31.4 (2016), pp. 875-889 (pp. 886-887).

Two particularly advanced examples of digital editions are the *Digital Ramusio* (a 2015 edition of the *Dei Viaggi di Messer Marco Polo gentiluomo veneziano*) and the 2008 CD-ROM edition of *De trein der traagheid*. The *Digital Ramusio* enabled users to display the main text next to its seven sources, as well as pop-up windows with philological commentary with among other things an analysis of Ramusio's manipulation of the seven sources.[104] Meanwhile, the CD-ROM *De trein der traagheid* contains TEI-encoded versions of the text from all 19 print editions' texts of the original book. Through the interface provided on the disc, users can export XML (for computation), XHTML (originally for on-screen viewing), and PDF (originally for printing a reading edition). Moreover, any of the 19 source texts can be presented next to a different version, and be combined with one another as central witness and lemmas for a total of nearly ten and a half million possible editions; all of which are again exportable in three formats.[105] Digital editions like these are so technologically complex by making such heavy use of HTML that they are also called hypertext editions, and showcase what is possible in the digital editorial realm.

Not all digital editions are created to do or be the same thing, however, and this is not necessary either. Just as there is a place for both document-facing minimal editions and audience-facing maximal editions, there is a place for both relatively simple and hypertext editions. The scale of what digital editions can be is so wide that we can even call into question whether or not a definition of digital editions is possible.[106] Retreading this discussion is outside the present scope, but the short version of the stance taken by this thesis would be this: it is a fruitless debate that serves little point. It is much more productive to focus on producing digital editions rather than being concerned with the semantics of the endeavour. As unsatisfying as it might be to our desire for well-defined theoretical structures, it is much more effective to think like Robinson and move on: 'For a digital edition to be all it can and should be, then it will let the editors include all that should be included, and say all that needs to be said.'[107] At the end

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[104] M. Buzzoni, 'A Protocol for Scholarly Digital Editions? The Italian Point of View', in *Digital Scholarly Editing: Theories and Practices*, pp. 59-82 (pp. 78-79). At the time of writing the edition's online host returns a connection time-out error, but as recently as March 3rd a successful snapshot was taken by the Wayback Machine. However, this archived version lacks the functionality of the intended publication, see Internet Archive, 'Marco Polo digitale', <http://web.archive.org/web/20240303102604/http://virgo.unive.it/ecf-workflow/books/Ramusio/main/index.html> (25 September 2024). Buzzoni's chapter features a screenshot on p. 79.

[105] Vanhoutte, 'Every Reader his own Bibliographer?', p. 109.

[106] E. Vanhoutte, 'Defining Electronic Editions: A Historical and Functional Perspective', in *Tekst and Genre in Reconstruction: Effects of Digitalization on Ideas, Behaviours, Products and Institutions*, ed. by W. McCarty (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), pp. 119-144.

[107] P. Robinson, 'Electronic Editions Which We Have Made and Which We Want to Make', in *Digital Philology and Medieval Texts*, ed. by A. Ciula and F. Stella (Pisa: Pacini 2007), pp. 1-12 (p. 8).

of the day, editors are people who produce (digital) objects that preserve history, each in their own way. Consequently, the past endures as a breathing part of the present.[108]

5.2. *The Goals of Editions and the Relationship of Editions to Archives*

In addition to the various labels discussed above, editions can also serve multiple goals. There are three, and they are not mutually exclusive. Firstly, editors can act as textual preserver or curator. Perhaps it is helpful to consider this to be archiving. According to the Society of American Archivists, archiving is the work undertaken by an archivist, a person who safeguards a collection of sources. Such a collection can bring together sources pertaining to a particular theme, or it may have been inherited or simply build up over time, as the byproduct of the activities of an organisation. Archivists maintain these documents whether they are older or newer and give the people of the present access to the documentary remnants of the past. In the paraphrased words of the aforementioned Society of American Archivists, by working with all kinds of sources, archiving preserves a valued piece of how a community became what it is today.[109] Whereas back in the 19th century, the title of "archivist" used to be reserved for qualified professionals, today, what it means to be an archivist has been democratised. In the wake of postmodernism, it may be argued that the act of archiving has left the traditional institutional rooms, moving into a wider community of anyone with an interest. While lay archiving activities might still hold connections to formally established professional archives or collections, growing numbers of people are calling themselves archivists, accredited or not.[110]

Unavoidably, this broadening of the concept of the archive and at least some of the work associated with it drew criticism from professionals. Specifically, this criticism targets the accessibility brought by new digital technologies and what the resulting changing scholarly practices mean for what archivists still are. To them, archiving is more than merely assembling materials.[111] This stance is partly understandable. After all, not every regular Jordan has spent the necessary time to acquire the skills needed to take proper care of 13th-century manuscripts, 17th-century maps, or early 20th-century film reels. Yet, the basic idea of archivism remains to undertake actions to guard archival sources and ensure the survival of a community's records.

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[108] Price, 'Electronic Scholarly Editions', p. 448.

[109] Society of American Archivists, 'So You Want to Be an Archivist', <https://www2.archivists.org/careers/beanarchivist> (20 September 2024).

[110] M. Procter, 'What's an "Archivist"? Some Nineteenth-Century Perspectives', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 31.1 (2010), pp. 15-27 (pp. 23-24).

[111] T. Clement, W. Hagenmaier, and J.L. Knies, 'Toward a Notion of the Archive of the Future: Impressions of Practice by Librarians, Archivists, and Digital Humanities Scholars', *The Library Quarterly*, 83.2 (2013), pp. 112-130 (p. 112).

Seeing as editions are copies of sources, they are (or can be) a part of this archivistic effort. Granted, any edition that is not a facsimile diverts from the textual integrity of the original document; they are imperfect representations and could never replace the originals, and that is not even mentioning the physical characteristics of originals. However, editions, especially easily reproducible digital editions, should help at least a version of the contents of archival sources survive. Even if originals get destroyed or damaged, this makes sure that people have access to documentary remnants.

Secondly, editions help support scholarship. In situations where the only way to consult a source is to physically go to an archive and request the original, that source is not very publicly accessible. To remedy this, holding institutions could scan sources and put those online for all to see and use. Although this does improve accessibility, it does not necessarily improve usability. Not all scans are of equally high quality, and not all scholars are trained in historical handwriting and read older sources as fast as they would like. Furthermore, even when editions are based on typewritten paper records, a digital edition has the ability to incorporate TEI encodings. Closely related to the second point is the third and final goal: editions can also disseminate sources and historical awareness to an audience that is not a part of a particular source's field of study. A wider audience, much like untrained scholars, does not necessarily possess the skills needed to decipher old handwriting. What is more, is that if an edition is maximal, it is also much better positioned to provide context and explain the source than the original could by itself.

All of these three goals make editions public-facing. Remember, editions are editions because they are published. Making an edition is by its nature an interpretation of an original

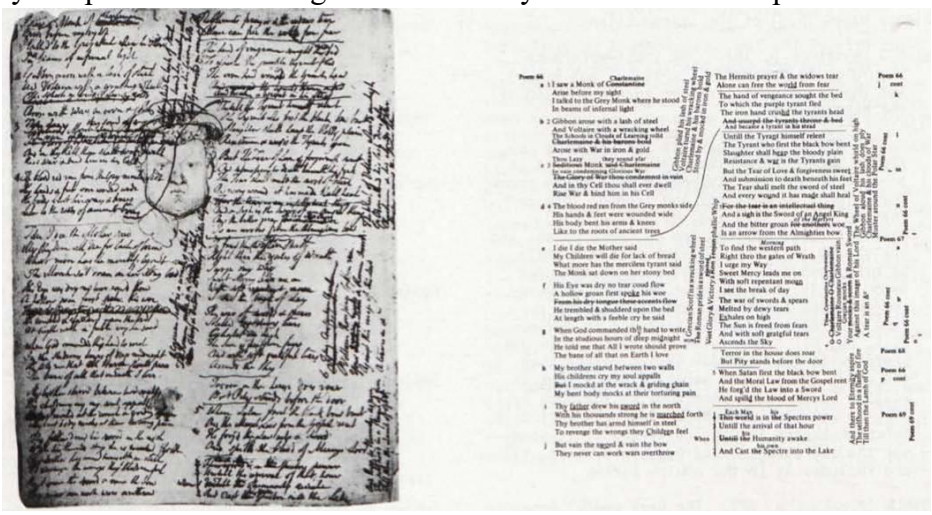

Figure 5: Blake's Notebook, p. 8, an infra-red photograph and facing typographic facsimile transcription, R.N. Essick, 'Review: David Erdman, ed., with the assistance of Donald Moore, The Notebook of William Blake', Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, 8.4 (1975), pp. 132-136 (p. 133).

document. Even a typographic facsimile is an abstraction and does not fully reproduce the properties of the original (see figure 5). 'Editing can get readers as close to the creative process as they can be without being the writer', Ohge wrote. This means that on the face of it, editors have a significantly more pronounced presence than archivists do.[112] Nevertheless, aforementioned critics of recently expanding notions of what it means to be an archivist would point out that earlier, this thesis argued that editions can serve as archives. They would then ask the question: is this not a contradiction, seeing as archives are usually more private-facing? After all, (traditional) archiving is more concerned with the preservation of extant historical sources and involves the archivist primarily as a background figure. And by virtue of having limited copies, the places where these extant sources are housed can only serve so many people. Two counterpoints can be made. Firstly, the idea behind not restricting terms like archiving and archive to a traditional conception is to do justice to developments that have taken place since that conception formed. Secondly, at a more abstract level, private-facing archives and public-facing editions are ultimately two different halves of the same undertaking. Eggert calls this private and public-facing pair document-facing and audience-facing respectively, and they concur that it is impossible to draw a sharp line between archive and edition. They point out that both involve active reading: to archive is to read and understand what you are recording, and to edit is to read and interpret. Moreover, for producing an edition of an archival source this source first needs to be archived, and archiving is done to enable someone to develop an understanding of the source and what it represents. In short: for as different as a traditional archive and edition are, they are two parts of the same whole 'linked at the hip yet forever pulling apart', existing on a spectrum.[113]

Editions are public-facing by definition, but also serve a document-facing curatorial and preservationist goal. In order to come to a full appreciation of the functions fulfilled by editions, we have to understand that the relationship between editions and archives is not inherently contradictory. On the contrary, it is all one historical enterprise. It is possible to characterise editions as public-facing, while at the same time editions do something to preserve a version of the original document's text.

5.3. *Main Objectives and Target Audience*

The main objective of the edition prepared as part of this thesis is to facilitate future academic research. It did so by providing a transcription of multiple handwritten sources from the 19th

[112] Ohge, *Publishing Scholarly Editions*, p. 16.
[113] Eggert, *The Work and the Reader in Literary Studies*, pp. 83-84, 92.

century and encoding them according to the most recent TEI Guidelines (P5). While seasoned archival researchers likely will not have more trouble deciphering 19th-century handwriting than handwriting following more modern writing conventions, not all scholars possess that skill. The selected sources are more readable to an untrained eye than the average medieval manuscript, but based on personal experience it still takes considerable time and energy to read these documents. As such, sharing a transcription should help to speed up the work of researchers, particularly less experienced ones. Since the primary aim is to help future scholars, the sources should speak for themselves as much as possible and therefore the apparatus was kept to a minimum. That said, a small number of notes have been attached to the transcription. For instance, romanisation styles of Japanese words have changed considerably since the 19th century, and older styles have become outdated. In some cases, they have become so outdated that they are hardly recognisable to someone only used to Hepburn or modified Hepburn.[114] And while the edition's corpus is too small for a deep computational analysis, the TEI encoding ensures that the edition can be relatively easily integrated in a larger selection of encodings in the case a researcher would like to do so.[115]

5.4. *Guiding Editorial Principles*

To make this edition suitable for its intended purpose, notes have only been added where deemed necessary. This means that no detailed context was provided upon the mention of a historical figure or vessel, but again, where it came to obvious mistakes or outdated romanisations of Japanese notes were added; likewise, images were only inserted where text was left untranscribed due to (partial) illegibility.

5.4.1. *Editorial Interventions*

The edition's text is not presented conforming to the exact typography of the originals. Naturally, the originals' order of headers, salutations, main text blocks, and closings were be maintained but matters like font, text size, and line spacing were not. Where multiple text blocks are used in parallel on the same page, the edition used @place attributes or <table> elements where possible or appropriate. Meanwhile spelling and grammar were left intact because the point of the edition is to do something about hard-to-read handwriting, not text that is hard to parse once read. However, of special note is the letter "y" and the diphthong "ij". Said diphthong in

[114] The same might apply to those more familiar with the Nihon-shiki or Kunrei-shiki romanisation systems, but outside of Japan it is (modified) Hepburn that is the system taught to practically all students of Japanese, including the author of this thesis.

[115] A small caveat is that not everyone has the exact same encoding style, so it is possible this hypothetical scholar still needs to edit the encodings to suit their needs. However, the fact that the groundwork would already have been laid should still save them time that can then be dedicated to other parts of their research.

handwriting is written as a “y”, but in modern typing is represented by the two composing letters. The edition treats this as follows: if in the original it is dotted it was transcribed as “ij”, but if it is not, it was be transcribed as “y”. Although believed to be the fairest way of representing the original source, it does present a problem. Namely, that of authorial inconsistence. Sometimes authors might have wanted to write a y when also intending a y, or to write an ij when intending to write an ij. However, there have to be cases in which they wrote a y when intending an ij. Likewise, authors may not always have pushed their pens onto paper with enough force to leave a clearly dotted ij. Whether any of this was due to forgetfulness, laziness, or carelessness only the authors could have confirmed, but is possible that the edition contains instances of an y where an ij was intended (or the other way around). Furthermore, it was not always easy to tell whether a word ended with a letter (often an n), or with a meaningless peculiarity of the author’s handwriting. An effort was made to transcribe all ij’s, y’s, and word endings exactly as was seen on the original’s paper, but readers ought to keep this in mind when spotting any misspellings. Additionally, this mean that the edition cannot be used for linguistic analyses involving these particular ambiguities. The edition’s intended primary value is not linguistic, but to give scholars less experienced with older handwriting easier access to the contents of historical sources. And considering that they were deemed not to have a significant impact on either the meaning of the contents or the text’s clarity, no instance of these ambiguities is indicated in a note. Finally, occasionally the original sources contained spaces in between words and some punctation marks, spaces of about the same length as one would expect to be put between words. Because of the perceived inconsistency in how these spaces are applied and the fact that, like aforementioned ambiguities, they have no bearing on clarity or meaning, spaces around punctuation marks have been normalised according to modern writing conventions.

All things considered, in the language discussed earlier in this chapter, this style of edition can be called a semi-diplomatic, semi-minimal, relatively simple digital edition.

5.4.2. *Encoding Strategies*

Notes were added through the simple <note> element. And the transcription is supplemented with images of illegible text using the @facs attribute, presented at the bottom of each page.[116] Thereby, users are enabled to come to their own conclusions regarding the gaps in the transcription. While not highlighted in said section, the pages for the <gap> and <unclear>

[116] Alignment of images and transcription is possible, but proved to be too challenging. Text Encoding Initiative, ‘Representation of Primary Sources – The TEI Guidelines’, <https://tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/PH.html> (26 October 2024).

elements indicate that they are compatible with @facs.[117] The @facs strategy was also used for signatures and their stamp or seal equivalents, be it with the <figure> element. Therefore, at such places where text was left untranscribed due to (partial) illegibility or being a signature, images are inserted in a way that looks like:

<unclear cert="high" facs="sample1.png">

The elements listed under section 12.3.1.1 of the TEI P5 Guidelines, of which <gap> is one, were taken as the core of the encoding process. To add to those, mentions of names, dates, and locations were tagged using their corresponding elements. Where available, Wikidata QIDs were added using the @key attribute. Of special note are mentions of ships or people with no QIDs, but who do have an entry in a different online database. Since there are no <shipName> or <vesselName> elements, ships were treated with the general <name> element with further detail having been provided through the @ref and @type attributes.[118] QID-less people got the @ref attribute, but for the standard <persName> element. While imperfect, it is the closest to the @key standard:

<name ref="https://www.marhisdata.nl/schip?id=13449"
type="ship">Jan Daniel</name>

Where no QID or suitable link for @ref were available, entities did not receive a @key or @ref. Should these become available in the future, they can easily be added by others.

Finally, there are some instances in which text is underlined, written in superscript, or otherwise specially yet simply formatted. These parts of the text were coded using the <hi> element in combination with the @rend attribute:

<hi rend="underline">Woordelijke vertaling van den
Chineschen tekst.</hi>

[117] Text Encoding Initiative, 'TEI element gap (gap)', <https://tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-gap.html> (26 October 2024); Text Encoding Initiative, 'TEI element unclear (unclear)', <https://tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-unclear.html> (26 October 2024).

[118] @ref directs users to alternative online databases (i.e. separate from Wikimedia-related databases) where more information can be found.

6. Analysis of BPL 2186 Q:1, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15

> *'The archives do not necessarily tell the truth, but, as Michel Foucault would say, they tell of the truth.'*
>
> – A. FARGE, *The Allure of the Archives*[119]

6.1. *The Treaty*

In 1859, Van Capellen set sail on the *Bali* (see figure 6 on page 35) to sign a treaty with Ryūkyū. After stating the names and ranks of the chief negotiators, the treaty opens with a general declaration of its purposes. According to both the official Dutch article 1 and the literal Dutch translation from the official Chinese text, 'a lasting peace and friendship will exist between the rulers and subjects of the two kingdoms'. Vaguely worded, it says that the main idea is that people and their property will be completely protected; no word on what that means in practice. The rest of article 1 as well as article 2 ensure that Dutch people could buy products at a reasonable price without interference of officials. However, article 2 states that Dutch ships stopping in Ryūkyū could purchase anything besides wood and water only at the port of Naha; the core two products could be traded anywhere. Articles 3 and half of 4 functioned as guarantees to Dutch ships that crew, passengers, and cargo would be rescued after a shipwreck, after which everyone was allowed to go wherever they wanted without anyone spying on them. Meanwhile, Ryūkyū got the promise that any rescue action would be financially compensated by a shipwrecked person's home country.[120]

However, the second half of article 4 reveals an anxiety about the local justice system not being fair enough. Its official Dutch version keeps it at 'offences against the people of Ryūkyū', but the translated version is both more specific and vaguer. As highlighted in red underlining by Hoffmann (the translator), the Chinese text speaks of 'breaking into homes, using force to buy goods, or committing illegal acts)'.[121] Where this difference comes from cannot be said. but it is interesting how the Chinese text leaves the door open for Dutch people to be tried under Dutch law for any 'illegal act', whereas the Dutch original only protects Dutch citizens in case of crimes committed against *people*. Extraterritorial justice was not unheard of. However, the countries pressured into this system usually felt humiliated, as if they were a semi-colony. Japan, for instance, had to extend extraterritoriality to Brits following the 1858 Anglo-Japanese treaty. It was the young Meiji state, a product of a revolution against the Tokugawa by

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[119] A. Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, tr. by T. Scott-Railton (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 29.
[120] Leiden, Leiden University Library (UBL), BPL 2186 Q:1, pp. 1-4.
[121] UBL, BPL 2186 Q:1, p. 3-4.

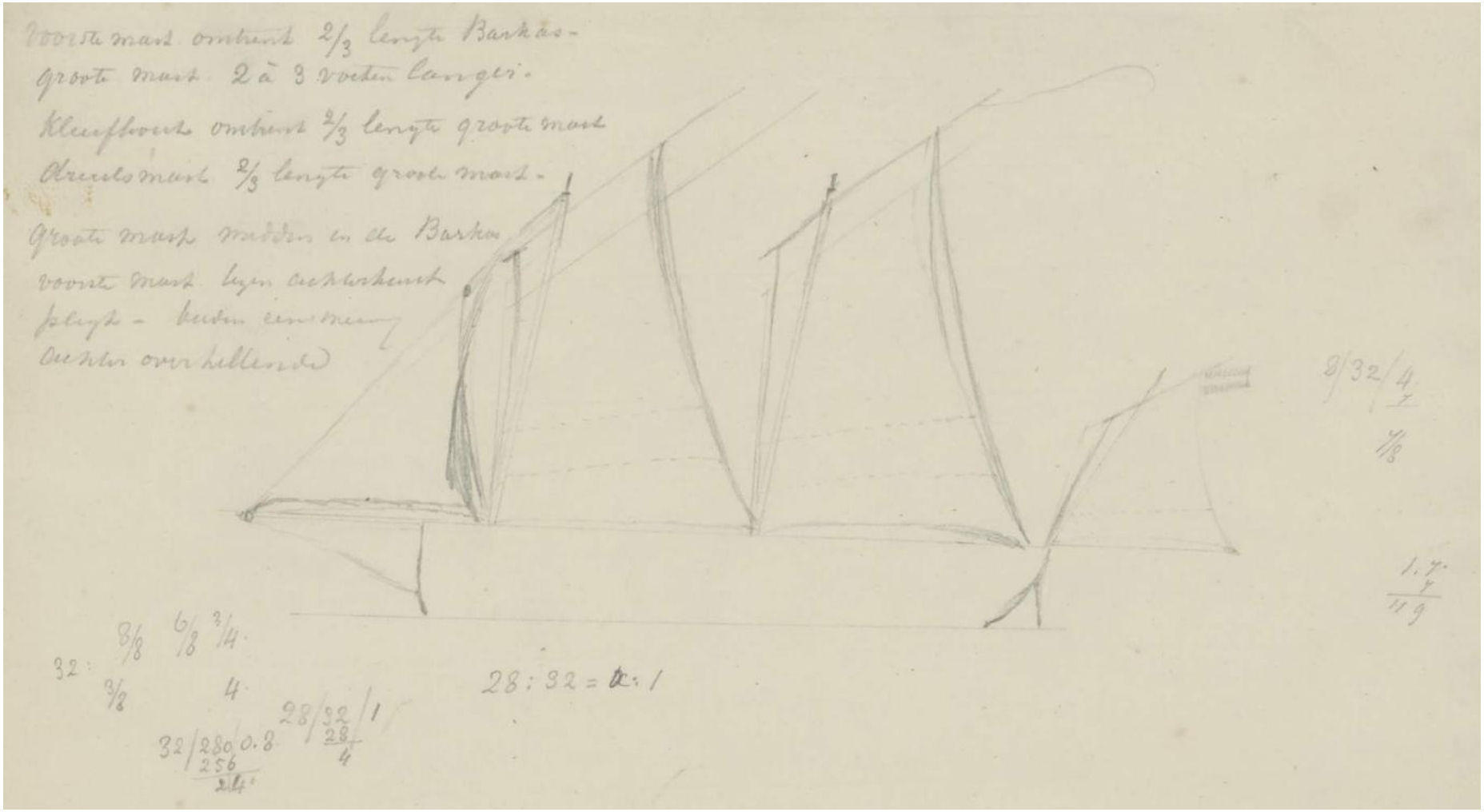

Figure 6: Sketch of the Bali and accompanying notes regarding the ship's dimensions, artist unknown but J.H. van Capellen is a candidate, 1857, pencil on paper, The Hague, Nationaal Archief (NA), 2.21.008.01 202.

a warrior class fed up with the shogunate's weak stance against foreign powers, that ended it in a new 1899 treaty – a stunning political victory.[122] For Ryūkyū to then seemingly voluntarily offer itself up like that is striking. Having been under Japanese dominance for two and a half centuries without formal annexation, this article makes it sound like Ryūkyū took this treaty as a chance to assert its own status as an individual state vis-à-vis Japan; it could be (one of) the final throes of a once independent kingdom attempting to exact some sense of sovereignty. We will see later this is not the case.

Article 5 was the basis for a Dutch cemetery; article 6 gave Ryūkyū the responsibility to appoint guides for ships to sail in and out of the port of Naha in exchange for an amount of Chinese currency already determined in the treaty; article 7 set the prices of wood and water. These are listed in Chinese currency, yet the article's last line says payment could also be made in gold or silver bullion or in 'foreign coin'. Bullion is understandable since it is universal, but Ryūkyū being open to foreign currency from a country they had barely any prior contact with is, again, striking.[123] Article 8 was a most-favoured nation clause, much like the one Japan had agreed to in the Treaty of Kanagawa. Nothing special, but it does show a shifting Dutch attitude. Coincidentally, it is also the second of two instances Hoffmann underlined something in red. In the official Dutch text, the most-favoured nation clause applies to 'all rights granted to foreign nations', whereas the translation from Chinese applies to all mercantile rights. Specifically, as underlined by Hoffmann, it makes mentioned 'a reduction of taxes' for other nations. This implies that Ryūkyū was open to extraterritoriality, but restrictive when it came to potentially snowballing treaties. Finally, article 9 determined that copies of the treaty had to be ratified and be back in Naha within two years.[124]

6.2. *To Ratify or Not to Ratify*

Less than a week after the initial signing at Naha, Van Capellen wrote his report. In it, he relayed to his superiors some basic information: Ryūkyū's governmental structure, economic system, and a few cultural elements. Details are sparse, but it is enough to get a fundamental grasp. Where he did dive into detail was the section about government. Of greatest importance to bilateral treaties is knowing whether the other signatory is even an equal partner or not, and van Capellen's opinion is crystal clear: Japan intentionally hides its administration over the islands, but 'Ryūkyū must be considered a Japanese colony, despite repeated denial (…) [and] has

[122] I. Ruxton, 'The Ending of Extraterritoriality in Japan', in *Turning Points in Japanese History*, ed. by B. Edstrom (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 84-101 (pp. 84-85, 94).
[123] UBL, BPL 2186 Q:1, pp. 6-9.
[124] UBL, BPL 2186 Q:1, pp. 8-9.

nothing to do with the Celestial Empire'; trade can only occur with the daimyō of Satsuma's permission.[125]

We can assume that the report – or conclusions based on it – made it to Batavia and from there was or were forwarded to the minister's desk in The Hague. In Rochussen's letter to Hoffmann he cites concern by the East-Indies' governor-general, concern that the Dutch king could not ratify any treaty with Ryūkyū as long as they did not know with reasonable certainty that Ryūkyū was completely independent. Rochussen requested Hoffmann look into the matter and send him a literally translated version of the Chinese text, presumably to verify there were no big discrepancies.[126] Hoffmann obliged and sent two replies. The first one consisted of a letter, the literal translation (presented in parallel with the official Dutch version), and attached notes. From a translation perspective this is interesting,[127] but relevancy to the pressing question of Ryūkyū's sovereignty is lacking. Hoffmann's observation that Toemai/Tomari cannot be found on any of his maps would have prompted follow-up questions for Ryūkyū by Rochussen, but he decided not to ratify.[128] In terms of relevancy, Hoffmann's second reply is more noteworthy. This second reply does not appear to have been based on Van Capellen's report, instead drawing on Japanese historical sources. Not that these are the most neutral, yet Hoffmann chose to use only them anyway; maybe there were no other texts available to him. These sources told a history of how Ryūkyū came under Japanese domination, under a triumvirate of daimyō. The daimyō of Satsuma kept the prince of Ryūkyū permanently out of sight, and the prince's supposed regent governed along the lines of mainland Japanese wishes.[129] Nowhere in this letter is Hoffmann as explicit as Van Capellen, but the implication that Ryūkyū was not a partner of equal sovereign status is obvious.

Having consulted reports from Batavia and exchanged letters with Hoffmann, minister Rochussen at last made the call on 21 March 1960. In his last letter to Hoffmann, he announced that even though Ryūkyū had significant amounts of freedom, the Netherlands did not see it as an independent state and that thus the Netherlands would not ratify. Rochussen was adamant that the *contents* of the treaty were not objectionable, and therefore proposed that the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies resume the conversation with Ryūkyū. Since this contact would be lower-level, that made any agreement reached acceptable. This agreement just could not bear

[125] Leiden, Leiden University Library (UBL), BPL 2186 Q:14-15.
[126] Leiden, Leiden University Library (UBL), BPL 2186 Q:10.1.
[127] A copy of the official Chinese tekst is part of BPL 2186 Q, but was not included with the edition because of unfamiliarity with the language.
[128] Leiden, Leiden University Library (UBL), BPL 2186 Q:10.2; Q:12.
[129] Leiden, Leiden University Library (UBL), BPL 2186 Q:10.3.

the title of "treaty" and be signed by the king, and Hoffmann was never to speak of the agreement in such terms. On the other hand, Rochussen did allow Hoffmann to publish his findings from his second reply. He even encouraged Hoffmann to do so, since it would serve as a useful tool for the Dutch consuls in China and Japan to more deeply look into the nature of the relationships between Ryūkyū and those countries. What is more, Hoffmann was also permitted to talk about articles from the Dutch original and his Dutch translation of the Chinese original treaty – as long as he did not speak of them as coming from a royal treaty, of course.[130]

6.3. *Motivations*

Hoffmann's and Van Capellen's writings raise a counterpoint to the earlier remark that it was as if Ryūkyū signed the treaty to assert its individuality. If that is true, there would have needed to be a faction within the Ryūkyū government powerful enough to make moves without any control by Satsuma or the triumvirate. However, reading these archival sources gives the impression that this control was so tight any such moves would have been nigh impossible. So, if it was not about Ryūkyū's relationship with the mainland, either there was a hidden power struggle in Satsuma's administration or the mainland simply allowed the treaty to be signed. Hoffmann says in a footnote that Ryūkyū lost much of its prior importance after Japan reopened and that the daimyō of Satsuma must have known this.[131] Then the question: why would this daimyō consent to extraterritoriality and a most-favoured nation status for the Netherlands in Ryūkyū? He must have hoped to gain something from it and wanted it enough to endure political humiliation. Real power was held by the daimyō's father, Hisamitsu Shimazu. Crucially, the previous daimyō (Hisamitsu's brother) had a secret plan to open up trade with the West in order to acquire wealth, arms, and knowledge.[132] That article 7 left the door wide open for payment in foreign currency is telling. As explained before, Japan had faced decades of incidents and intentional pressure, and five years prior to the Dutch-Ryūkyūan treaty had finally been forced to open. Deeply disappointed with the Tokugawa's weakness, Satsuma was one of two most important domains involved in the Meiji Restoration; Hisamitsu's efforts were the Meiji era's policy of 'rich country, strong army' *avant la lettre*.[133] From Hisamitsu's perspective, the way to get richer and stronger was essentially to do precisely what critics of the shogunate did not

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[130] Leiden, Leiden University Library (UBL), BPL 2186 Q:13.
[131] UBL, BPL 2186 Q:10.3.
[132] P. Beillevaire, 'Accounting for Transient Hopes: The French Involvement in Shimazu Nariakira's Plan to Open Trade with the West in Ryūkyū'*, IJOS: International journal of Okinawan studies*, 1.2 (2010), pp. 53-83 (pp. 58, 70).
[133] S. Kitaoka, 'The Significance of the Meiji Restoration', *Asia-Pacific Review*, 25.1 (2018), pp. 5-18 (p. 10); Beillevaire, 'Accounting for Transient Hopes'*,* p. 59.

like about the government's frail stance, a frailty which was on full display in the events surrounding aforementioned Anglo-Japanese treaty; the irony is palpable.

Now we know why Satsuma wanted a treaty, but why did the Netherlands? A good, if superficial beginning, is the 'lasting peace and friendship' mentioned in article 1. According to Q:14's introduction, it was indeed the *Van Bosse*'s bad fortunes and the subsequent good care of the locals that inspired this wish. In addition, this introduction reveals that in 1856 there apparently was also a Chinese junk that sank and whose crew was saved by a Dutch ship. Based on Q:14, it was the positive experiences following the accidents of the *Van Bosse* and the Chinese junk together with the growing number of ships bound for Japan that motivated the Dutch government to get a treaty.[134] We will return to the second reason shortly, but first there is a bit more to the desire for peace and friendship. Firstly, looking at the first half of the treaty, one gets the impression that most of it was carefully designed to ensure that everyone involved knew what to do in the event another Dutch ship stranded. When the *Van Bosse* marooned at Tarama, there were no rules in place explaining what would happen, and there was a possibility of people on either side not receiving fair financial compensation. As good as the locals' care was, there must also have been confusion since they had never been in this position before; not with people from a Dutch ship anyway. The treaty's first half should have fixed most uncertainties by providing some framework in which to operate. Secondly, as opposed to the past accident-inspired first half, the second half of the treaty is oriented towards the future. After all, if there was no intention for Dutch merchants to return to Ryūkyū, why else go through the trouble of establishing a cemetery? Why else be anxious about subjecting Dutch citizens to local justice? Why else would they have gotten Ryūkyū to appoint naval guides? Why prepare for rights granted to other countries through the most-favoured nation clause? Why do all that if not for plans to visit again? In other words, yes, the Netherlands wanted peace and friendship, but not just for peace and friendship's sake. Specifically, it was amity in reaction to what Ryūkyūans did for the 27 of the *Van Bosse* and in service for a future relationship.

The line about an increasing number of ships sailing to Japan can be interpreted in two different ways. The first is that Ryūkyū could act as a convenient stopping point. Look at figure 1 again, and it is not hard to imagine how ships on the way to Shanghai or mainland Japan could make good use of Ryūkyū ports. The second way that line can be interpreted is an awareness of the expanding international interest in Japan. As highlighted earlier in relation to the most-favoured nation clause, the Dutch attitude had started to shift. No longer were the Netherlands

[134] UBL, BPL 2186 Q:14, p. 1.

as passive as they had been for too long. Admittedly, it goes too far to claim that this single provision means that the Netherlands now had a grand strategy to rival the USA, UK, or Russia. Still, the fact that a clause like this is in the treaty is a sign of growing Dutch awareness of the changing times; especially in contrast to the more educational establishment of Nagasaki's naval academy and gifting of the *Soembing*.

Negotiating and ratifying a treaty are two very different things. There were reasons why the treaty materialised in the first place, but then, during the two-year ratification period, new information came to light that made the Dutch powers that be completely reconsider their course of action: Ryūkyū was not a sovereign state. And in the turbulent landscape of the time, the most logical reason for why the Netherlands chose not to ratify it would be to save king and country the embarrassment of signing a treaty with a non-qualifying party. If it had received royal assent, politicians from within and outside of the Netherlands might have mocked them for doing bilateral business on the highest level with a mere backwater colony. However, we can also hypothesise a secondary reason. As said earlier, that line from Q:14 about more vessels coming to Japan can refer to expanding international interest in the country. We know the Dutch were aware of such moves as Japan's new unequal treaties. As said in an earlier chapter, the Netherlands was one of these unequal partners. While the Netherlands had not taken enough initiative in the face of bigger powers' attempts to take a piece of the Japanese pie, they had not missed all the clues they should have gotten. Moreover, the Netherlands-assisted Nagasaki naval academy – a major project for the Netherlands – closing and moving to the capital in the same year as Van Capellen signed the treaty should have been a wake-up call like nothing else. All this is to say that the Netherlands was late, but the Dutch had to have had the realisation that they were left way behind in the race to be or stay an influential player in the quickly reshaping Japan. And knowing this, they were extra careful not to upset the already poor balance even further. In this environment, signing a treaty with Japan or an area Japan considered its own would have alienated a nation where the Netherlands already was rapidly losing influence. With the benefit of hindsight we can see that a Dutch treaty with Ryūkyū was precisely what Satsuma wanted, but it is doubtful the Netherlands were in the know. Hence, Ryūkyū and the Netherlands managed to negotiate a treaty with the approval of Ryūkyū's Satsuma overlords, but the Netherlands let the two-year ratification window expire.

7. Conclusion

'There is no real ending. It's just the place where you stop the story.'[135]

– F. HERBERT, *Interview with Frank and Beverley Herbert*

The place of the 1859 treaty in Dutch-Japanese history, or even world history, is an interesting one. It is unremarkable and yet deserving of attention at the same time. On one hand, it is understandable why it is not a part of future exhibitions like *Turbulent Times*. After all, Ryūkyū is an archipelago on the periphery of Japan. It once had some strategic significance, but Ryūkyū was far removed from the centre of the seminal turmoil Japan found itself in during the middle of the 19th century. What is more, the treaty did not even end up being ratified. After it did not get the Dutch king's signature, the treaty had been in effect for a short while before the situation went back to normal. Moreover, the events surrounding the treaty do not appear to have an immediate connection with the political spectacle that was unfolding over on the Japanese mainland. On the other hand, this is only partly true.

Granted, in the grand scheme of things this treaty is a footnote. At the same time as the *Van Bosse* shipwrecked at Tarama, and while the subsequent treaty was being negotiated, signed, and analysed, more impactful events were happening elsewhere. However, disregarding the treaty and its surrounding documents because of this would be to disregard a tangible symbol of how the Netherlands tried to navigate the 19th century's geopolitical waters, how the Satsuma domain reacted to the impactful events of that era, and of the position of Ryūkyū. The treaty might not be a Treaty of Kanagawa, but as this thesis demonstrated it most certainly can be a window unto pre-Meiji Revolution international history, currently unused though it may be. In regard to Ryūkyū and Satsuma, it shows how after centuries it had become a political tool for Satsuma. Satsuma had used it to gain access to luxury products from China, but now saw an opportunity to use the archipelago to get richer and stronger. It did not end up happening on account of the Netherlands not ratifying, but the intention was there. As for the Dutch strategy, the treaty with Ryūkyū allows us to see how the Netherlands attempted to deal with an international arena that was no longer what it once was. The phrase "Too little, too late." characterises the Dutch stance well. The Nagasaki naval academy failed, the Dutch representatives did not exchange Nagasaki for the capital in time, and not enough was done in reaction to British, American, and Russian competition. But let no one say that the Netherlands was not aware, and that they only followed in their rivals' footsteps.

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[135] F. Herbert, 'Interview with Frank and Beverley Herbert', int. by W. McNelly, *The Internet Archive*, 3 February 1969 <https://archive.org/details/cfls_000091> (28 November 2024).

The sources housed by the Leiden University Library are valuable remnants of this episode in history, a chance encounter with which this research was kickstarted. Yet, they are not all extant witnesses and do not tell the story as completely as remains possible. The Dutch National Archives in the Hague harbour a significantly more expansive collection under number 2.21.008.01 202. Part of the old De Constant Rebecque family archives, all items in it are related to Van Capellen's mission with the *Bali*. Clocking in at more than 232 pages, it contains a wide variety of documents: from maps to Japanese phrases, from foreign translations to sketches, and from reports or letters (such as from the ship's doctor) to conversions from Japanese measures of distance to Dutch ones. Incidentally, this collection also seems to have some originals of the documents in BPL 2186 Q. For example, pages 64-73 are the original report the excerpts of Q:14 and Q:15 come from. Due to its sheer volume, NA 2.21.008.01 202 was deemed too much to take into account for this thesis. Nonetheless, a selection of non-public, commissioned scans is made available in Appendix A for the interested reader to browse at their leisure.

The goal was to make the 1859 treaty between the Netherlands and Ryūkyū and some closely-related documents more accessible to those unfamiliar with this time period, as well as making people aware of this oft forgotten part of history. With a brief history of Ryūkyū as connected to its sovereignty, an outline of Dutch-Japanese history, and a recounting of the shipwreck of the *Van Bosse* based partially on archival sources, this goal has been achieved. Furthermore, a TEI-encoded edition of 11 historical documents has been made, justified, and explained in a reflection on digital editions and encoding, thereby making the work of other scholars easier. There still is work to be done. Instead of a definitive reconstruction of the events leading up to the treaty, the current research should be considered as a jumping-off point for a deeper enquiry. Now that the sources have been uncovered and a historical foundation established, it is up to future research give us a more comprehensive understanding of the *Bali*'s mission and the initial creation of the treaty.

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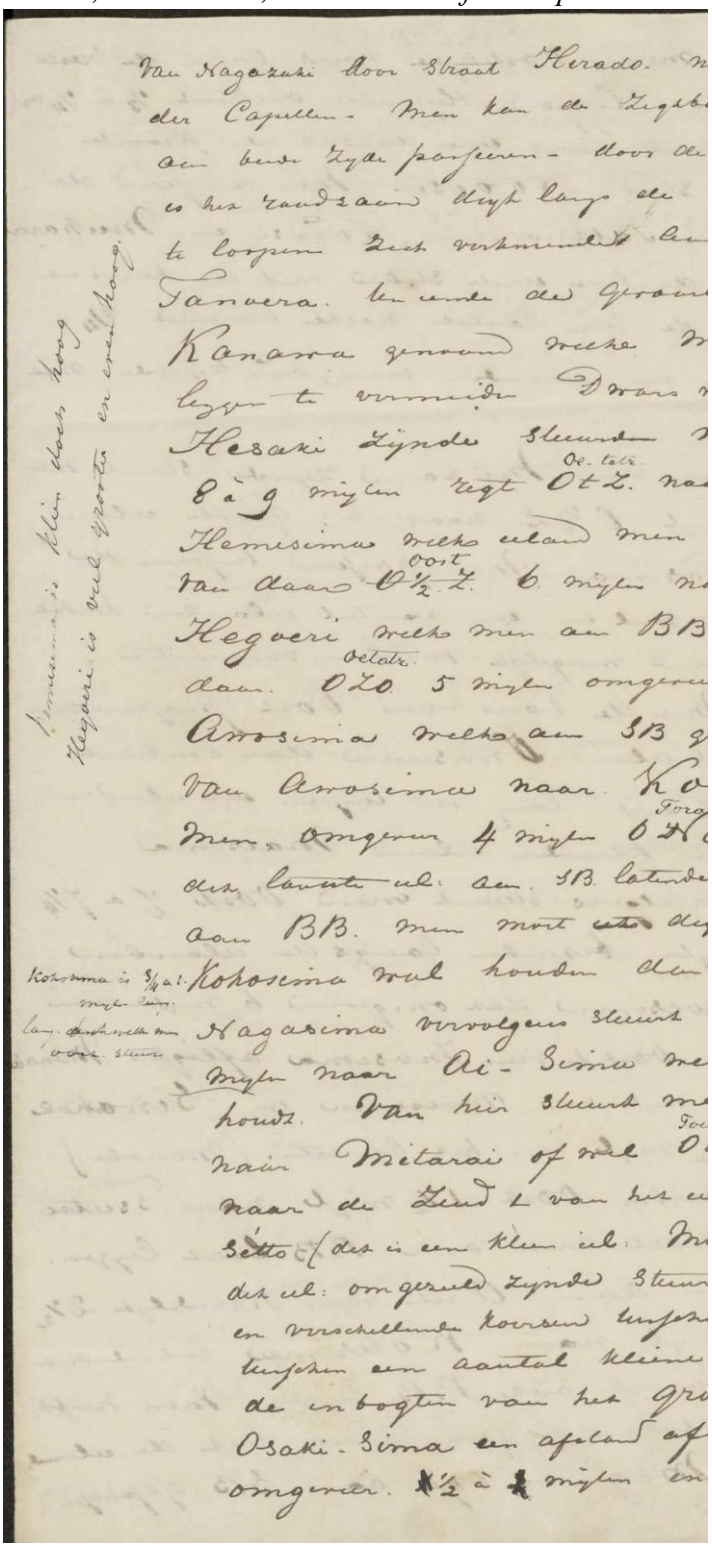
Appendix A

This Appendix features a selection of pages found in NA 2.21.008.01 202. Because there is no official sub-numbering, all page numbers are based on a commissioned scan; the order of the scanned pages is identical to the original folder's order. Double-paged spreads have one page number instead of two.

A.1 – *Coordinates, conversions, and sketches of the Japanese coast. pp 34-42.*



Oshyi 1/2 mijl
Mes eene mijl Ooshelyke Koers Onder de Vaste
Wal van Hippon Hyrende ombrent 1/3 à 1/4 Mijl
uit de wal voors eene uitstekende drempe
bij de Stad Hoodsi. Men passeert de
Steden Tatanomi - Hoodsi en Mukarat
tusschen welke een berg
tusschen de twee eerste Steden met de koers na
Oost. de tong Landen welke ombrent 3/4 à
1 Mijl van elkanden verwijderd Zijnde met
O t N. Van Hoodsi Oshi tong 1/2 Mijl
D'waas van Mukarat Zijnde Steunt men
1/2 mijl O 1/2 Z. naast het groote eiland
Inosima. Men passeert tusschen de
vaste wal en een aantal eilanden, houdende
Zoovrel mogelijk midden vaarwaters.
Mes de Koers naar Oost. passeert men
het eiland Inosima dat ombrent
2 1/2 mijlen lang is. tusschen dit eiland en
het kleinder eiland Maisima
vervolgens Steunt men Oost Z a Z 1/4
Mijlen besunden langs de eilanden
Moesima dat on. gevaar 6 mijlen van
de Oost L van Inosima afligt. Manabe
1/2 mijl van Moesima en Sivakal
1/2 mijl van het laatste. (Manabe).
verder Oost. 1 1/2 mijl naar Sacutsi
meet men ook BB Land liggen.
en dan O uit. Jora de mes Hoodsi 2 1/2
Mijl naar Kotesima welke dat
land ook BB. ligges. Men mijst
alsdan in dese Landen het eiland
Megi en Oji aan SB. gepasseerd.

Van Kotesima. Steunt men mes de
Koers van O Zo langs het eiland.
Sjodosima welke groot eil. mede
aan BB. zijde Land liggen.
Sjodosima gepasseerd, Steunt men
9 mijlen de Koers van Jora de O NO naar
de Stad Akasi tusschen het
Eiland Awadji voorna en
SB. en het gezigt.
tusschen Hippon en Awadji is
het vaarwater Zuiver mes de Koers
van Oost. Steunt men naar de
uitstekende Landpunt bij Hiogo
van waar men Noord en beneden
naast de ankerplaats Steunt.
en en 4 à 5 vadem anker.
Van Hiogo het vaarwater onder
Awadji nemen om door Straat
Lenschoten te steven —

van Inosima naar Hakonosemisaki.
Steunt men tatz 9 ri.
Sjodosima Gora. 22 ri.

groolsche afst. tusschen Nepa en Tetoh is 10 mijl
kleinste. 3½ mijl = Zynde. tusschen Semotsui
en Hakono misaki. – Sewako bijvoorbeeld in 't midden
zeer hoog sewako.

Hakono misaki is een berg achter uit stekende
punt.

Hokonomisaki naar Sjodosima. 22 ri.

Aagt langs Tanoura
dwars Hesaki regt door sturen naar Hemesima
OtZ. = 18. ri lalende dat eel: SB.
van daar. O½Z. 13 ri naar Heguri
lalende dat eel: BB. dan OZO. 11 ri
naar Awosima - lalende SB.
van Awasima naar Kokosima
ONO 8 ri lalende SB. hebbende
dan Nagasima aan BB. digter aan
Kokosima dan NNO sturen 4 ri.
naar Ai-sima BB houden vervolgens naar
Mitarai ONO. 5 ri. of OtN. 8.
ri naar ZL Okamero. Sitto (is
klein eiland.) dan Noord en verschillende
kaarsen langs dat eiland en het groote
Osaki-sima lalende en aantal
eilanden aan SB. 3 ri - dan kaarsen
aan de kust van Nipon, waar twee
steden liggen Fattanomi en Noodsi
by welke plaats het onderwijs is en men
ombrent ¼ mijl uit de wal moet blijven

Oost langs de kust van Jeden de 2 steden.

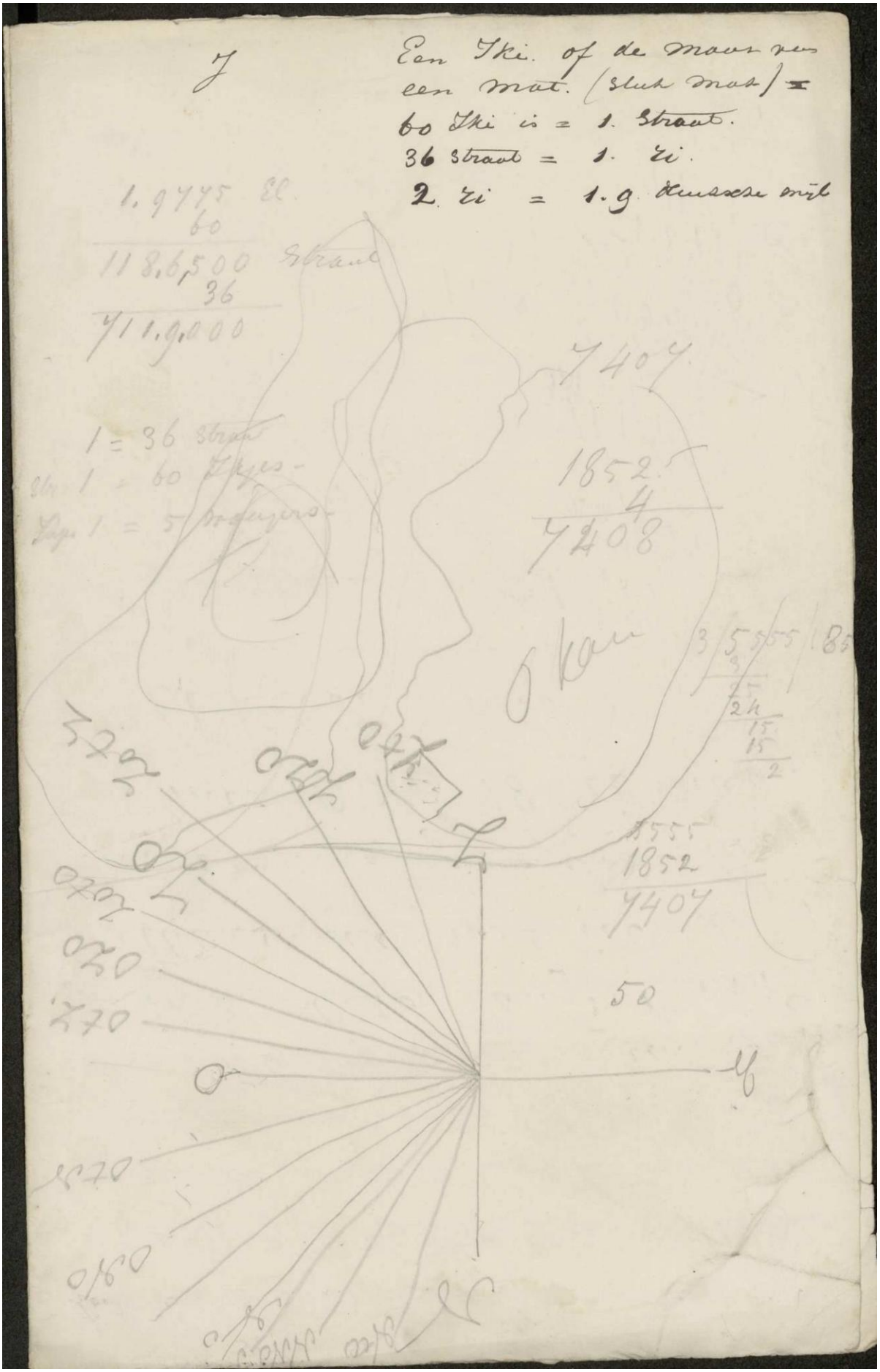
van Noodsi Stuurt men OtN naar
Muhara. 1½ ri -
van Muhara. naar Inosima O½
Z. 1 ri dit is een groot eiland
hebbende onder de kust bij Muhara
kleine eilanden tusschen welke en de
kust het 't mal is doch midden
vaarwater Zuiver - Men
gaat tusschen Inosima en
Maisima (kleinder eil: dan
het vorige). met de kaas
van Oost. langs de kust naar
Inosima ombrent 5 ri.
dan naar Moesima Oost
13 ri. dan naar Manabe
oost 1 ri latere beide aan
BB. dan oost 1 ri naar
Siwakoe. dit eil. oot. BB
laten dan oost 3 ri naar
Tsutsi oot BB laten.

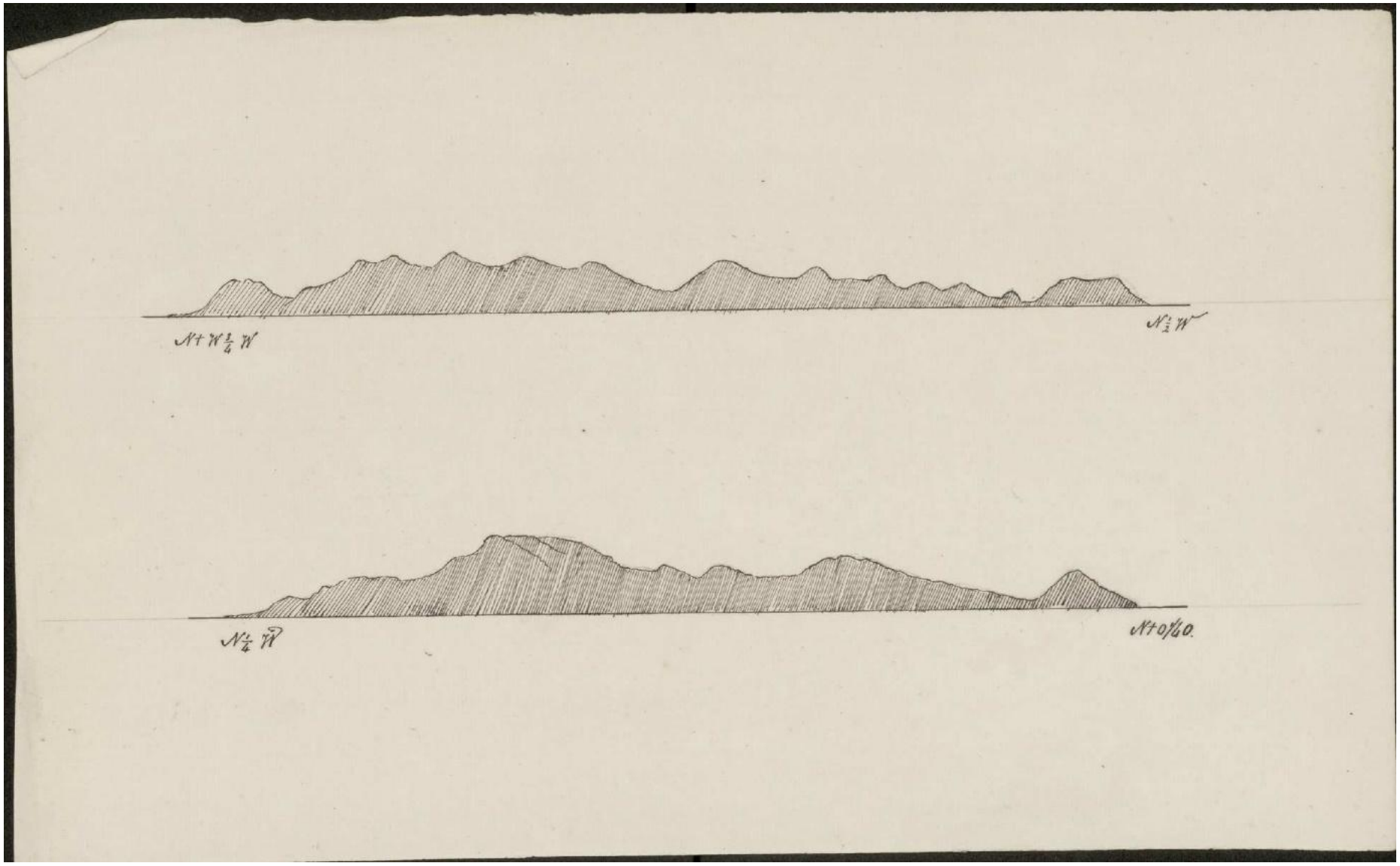
van Tsutsi naar Kotesima
Oost uits Noord. 5 ri - Reeds
laatste ook aan BB. passeerden
hebbende alsdan Megi en Ogi
aan SB gepasseerd. dan Stuurt
men DZO. langs Chaudosima
latende dit groot eil: aan BB
Sjodosima gepasseerd Stuurt
men ONO 18 ri naar
Akasi (stad

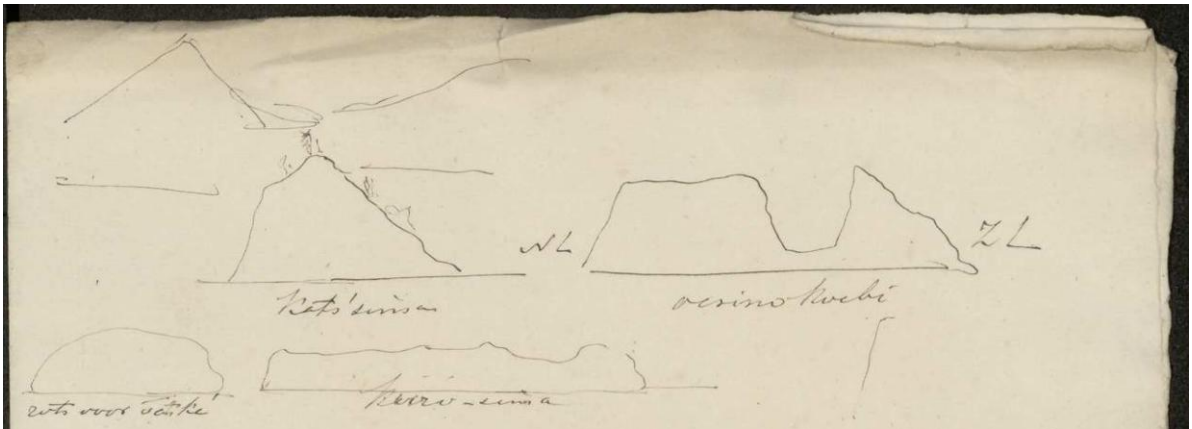
0.5765
18
46120
5765
10,3770

1,9,775
6
118,650
36
711900
355950
42714 0,57
370350
567900
518490
494100

7407 | 42714 (05 7407 |
37035


7
Een Tki. of de maat van een mat. (stuk mat) =
60 Tki is = 1. Straat.
36 straat = 1. ri.
2 ri = 1.9 Huizsche mijl
1.9775 El.
60
118.6,500 Straat
36
711.9,000
1 = 36 straat
Str 1 = 60 Tages
Tage 1 = 5 Wagens
7407
1852
4
7408
Okan
3 5555 185
3
25
24
15
15
2
5555
1852
7407
50
O
U

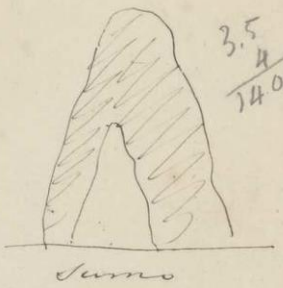

N + W 1/4 W
N 1/2 W
N 1/4 W
N + 0 1/2 0.



van Iwo-sima. NW. 1. el: aan SB. als voorbij Ohosahi Sumo el. BB. het el. Ike aan BB. Matsima aan SB. regt op de ZL van de Saketo eilanden aan 5½ mijl. dan NtO½O. passerende Katsima el. aan SB. in Kurosima aan BB. 2½ mijl. dan Noord en NtW. langs de GG. eilanden. met N en N als oost naar de straat Herado. omtrent 3 mijlen 1½ mijl verder is men weder uit de straat.

NNO ¾O. 2¾ mijl naar het el. Madura dan NOtO 9 à 10 mijl dwars van Kosimé-no-Osima.

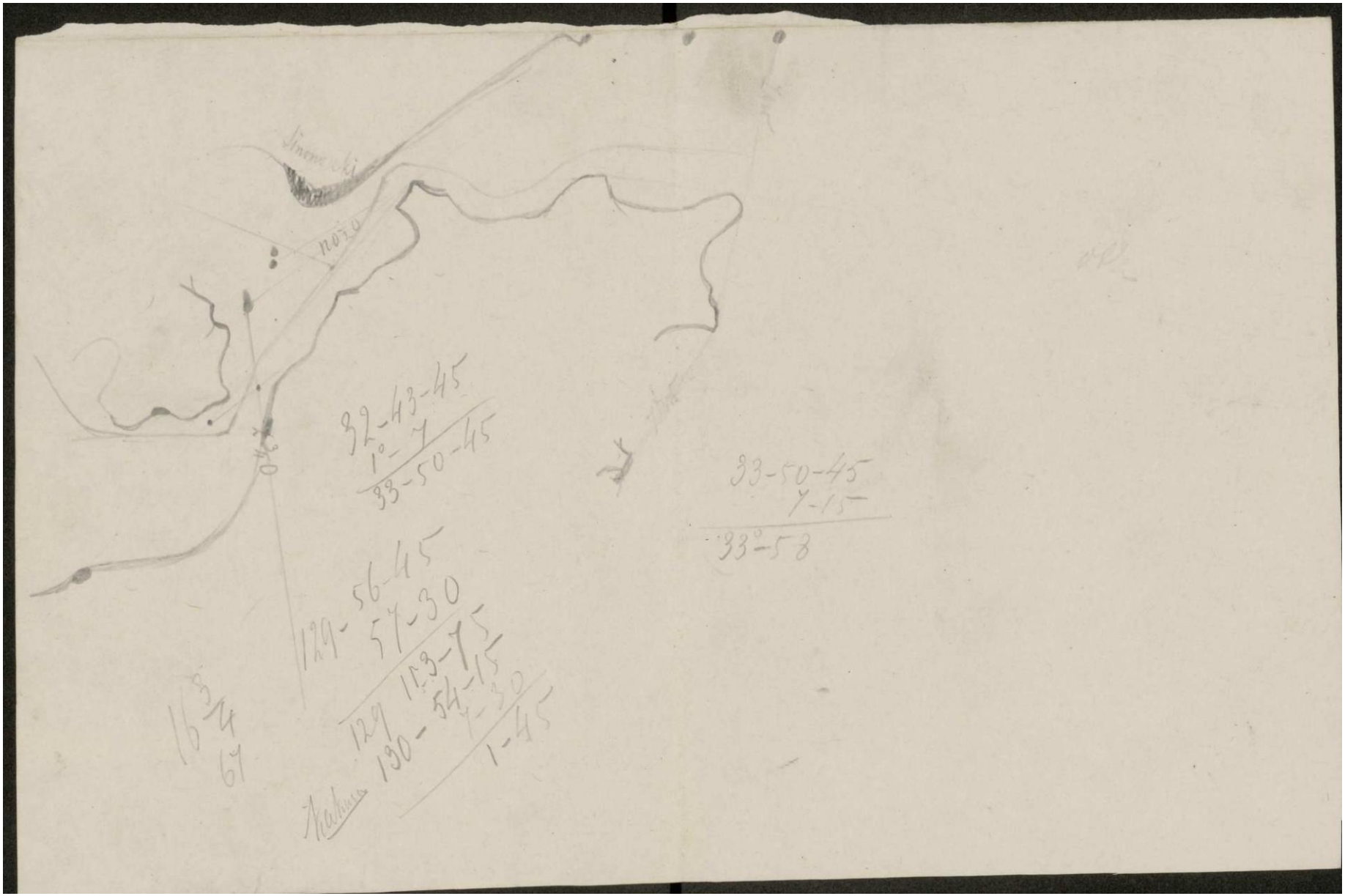
van Nagasaki tot voorbij Str: Herado 13 mijl dan 22 mijlen naar Str: van der Capellen



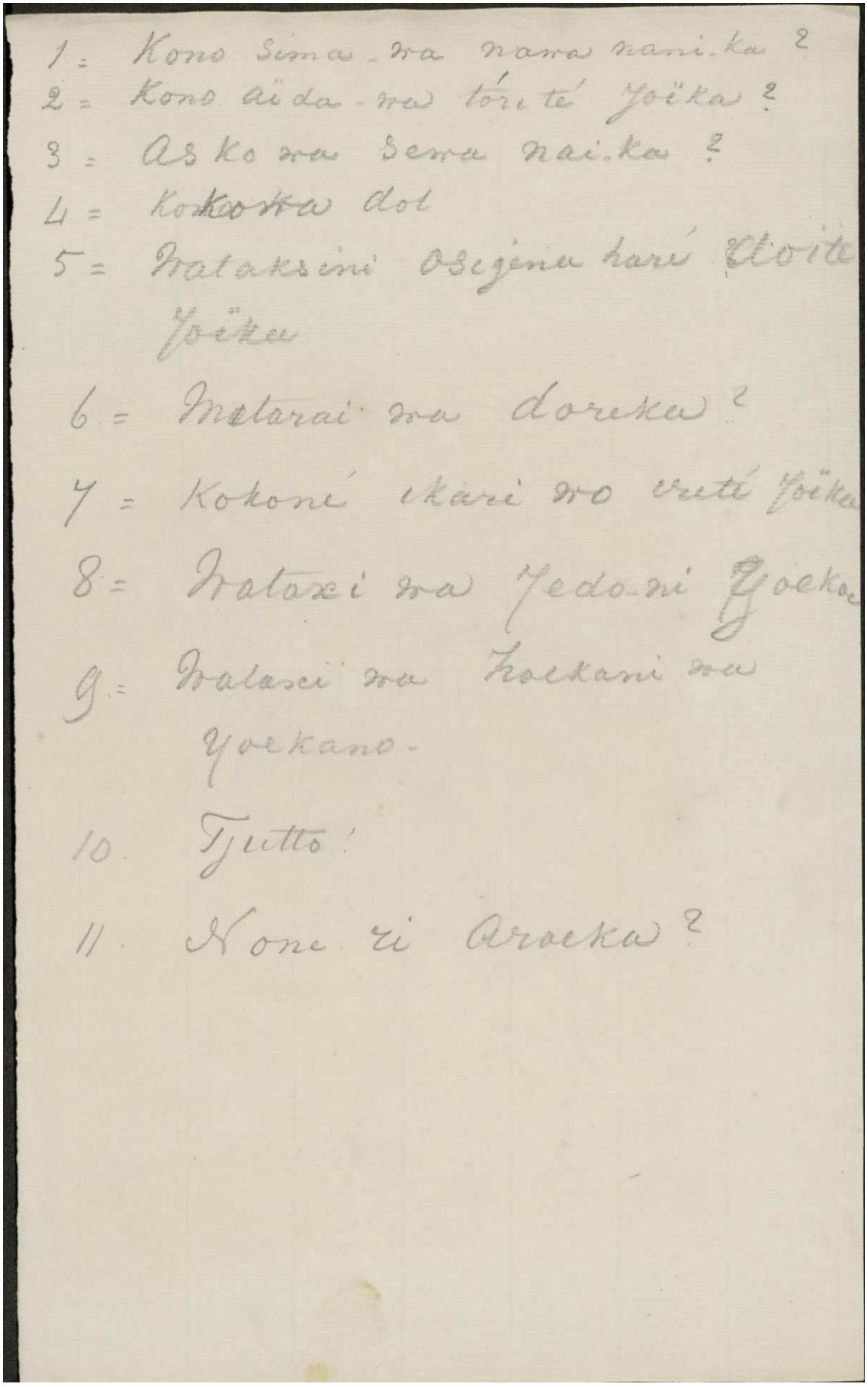
3.5
4 19
140 68

32° 43' 45
1 08
33° 51 45

32° 43' 45
14
32° 57 45


32-43-45
1°-7
33-50-45
33-50-45
7-15
33°-58
129-56-45
57-30
129 113-75
130-54-15
7-30
1-45
16 3/4
67

A.2 – *Multiple pages of simple Japanese example phrases and words. pp. 43-45.*



1 = Kono Sima-wa nawa nani-ka ?
2 = Kono aïda-wa tóri té Joïka ?
3 = Asko wa Sewa nai-ka ?
4 = Kokowa dol
5 = Wataksini Osigena haré doite Joïka
6 = Matarai wa doreka ?
7 = Kokoné ikari wo iretí Joïka
8 = Wataxi wa Jedo-ni Joeka
9 = Walasci wa Zoekani wa Yoekano.
10. Tjutto!
11. None ri Aroeka ?

Stuurboord - Tori gadji
Bakboord - Omo gadji
Regts - — Joosoro Miki nohoni
Links - — — kidari nohoni
Regt uit Joósoro
Voor uit Mai nohoni

1 Hoe heet dat eiland ?
2 Kan ik tusschen dit en dat eil: passeren ?
3 Is het waarwater zuiver ?
Zijn er ook ondiepten daar ?
Hoeveel vadem water heeft men daar ?
4 Moet ik dat eil: regts of links passeren ?
5. Kan ik daar ankeren ?
Hoeveel uí's van hier tot dat eiland ?
Hoe ver is dat ?
Kan men hier digt langs sturen ?
5. Wijst mij hoe ik sturen moet ?
6. Wijst mij het eiland ..... ?
6. Waar is de stad ..... ?
Mag ik hier landen
Hebt gij hier een tolk ?
Ik zal U daarvoor een bon afgeven betaalbaar te
Desima by den Ned: Commissaris =
Ik moet water hebben ?
Ik moet kolen hebben ?
Ik moet een Dok hebben ?
Ik moet versche groenten hebben ?
8. = Ik ga naar Jedo -
9 Het is niet mijn intentie om ergens te landen
voor dien tijd -

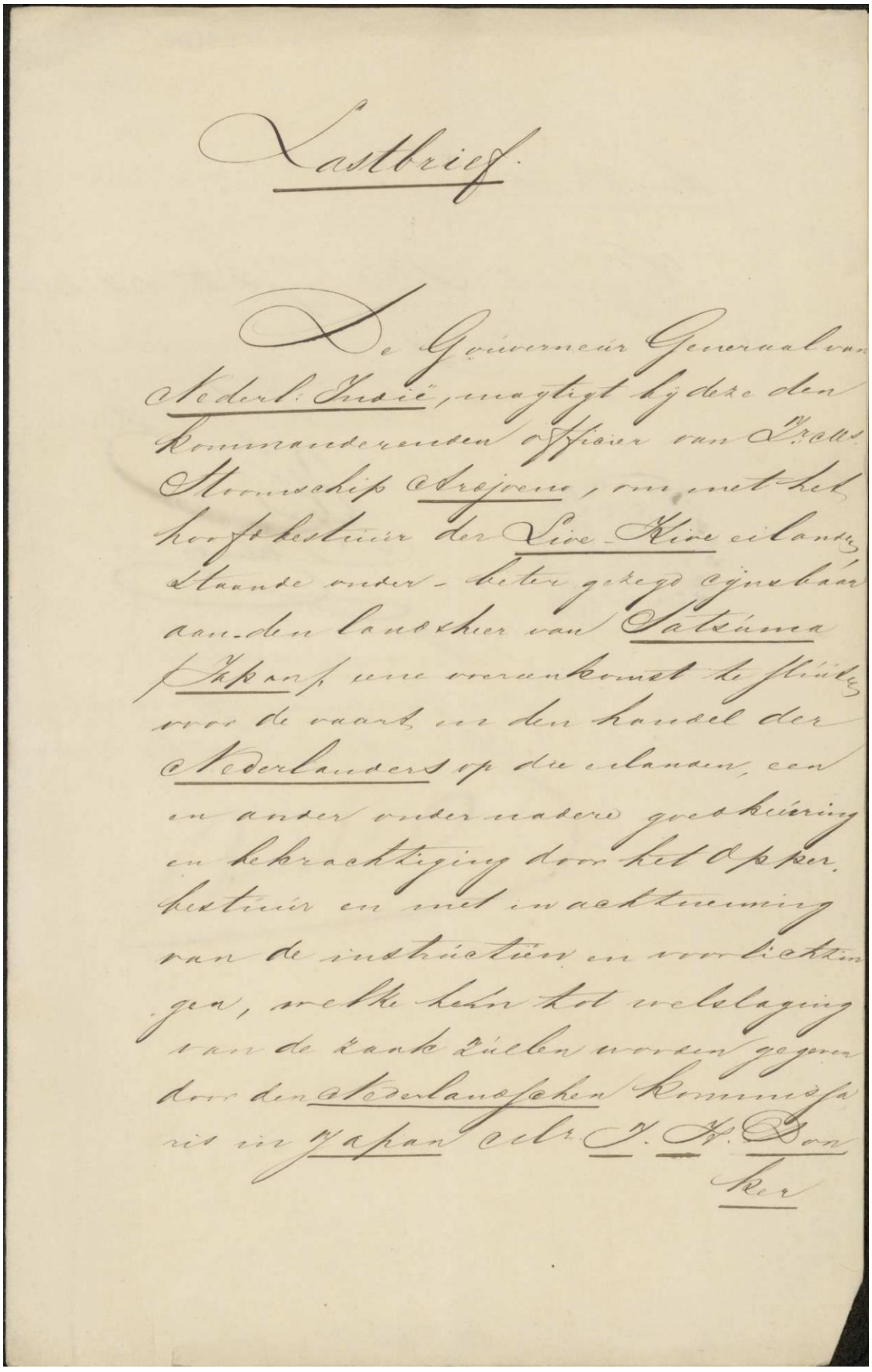
10 Kom hier -
11. Hoeveel uí -

Hoeveel = Skoeto.

Ik verstaa!	Wakata.
Ik verstaa niet!	Wakarang
Het kan niet!	tSemarang
Goed!	Yoka!
Slecht!	Warka.
Ik weet niet.	Sirang
Ik weet wel.	Stur.

A.3 – *Order to negotiate an agreement. pp.195-196.*

Note how the *Bali* is not the ship mentioned. The *Bali*'s orders are on pp. 208-209.



Lastbrief.

De Gouverneur Generaal van Nederl: Indië, magtigt bij deze den kommanderenden officier van Z.M. Stoomschip Ardjoeno, om met het hoofdbestuur der Live-Kive eilanden staande onder - beter gezegd cijnsbaar aan den landsheer van Satsuma (Japan), eene overeenkomst te sluiten voor de vaart en den handel der Nederlanders op die eilanden, een en ander onder nadere goedkeuring en bekrachtiging door het Opper-bestuur en met inachtneming van de instructiën en voorlichtingen, welke hem tot welslaging van de zaak zullen worden gegeven door den Nederlandschen Kommissaris in Japan Mr. J. H. Donker

ker Curtius.

Gegeven te Buitenzorg, den 24e October 1858

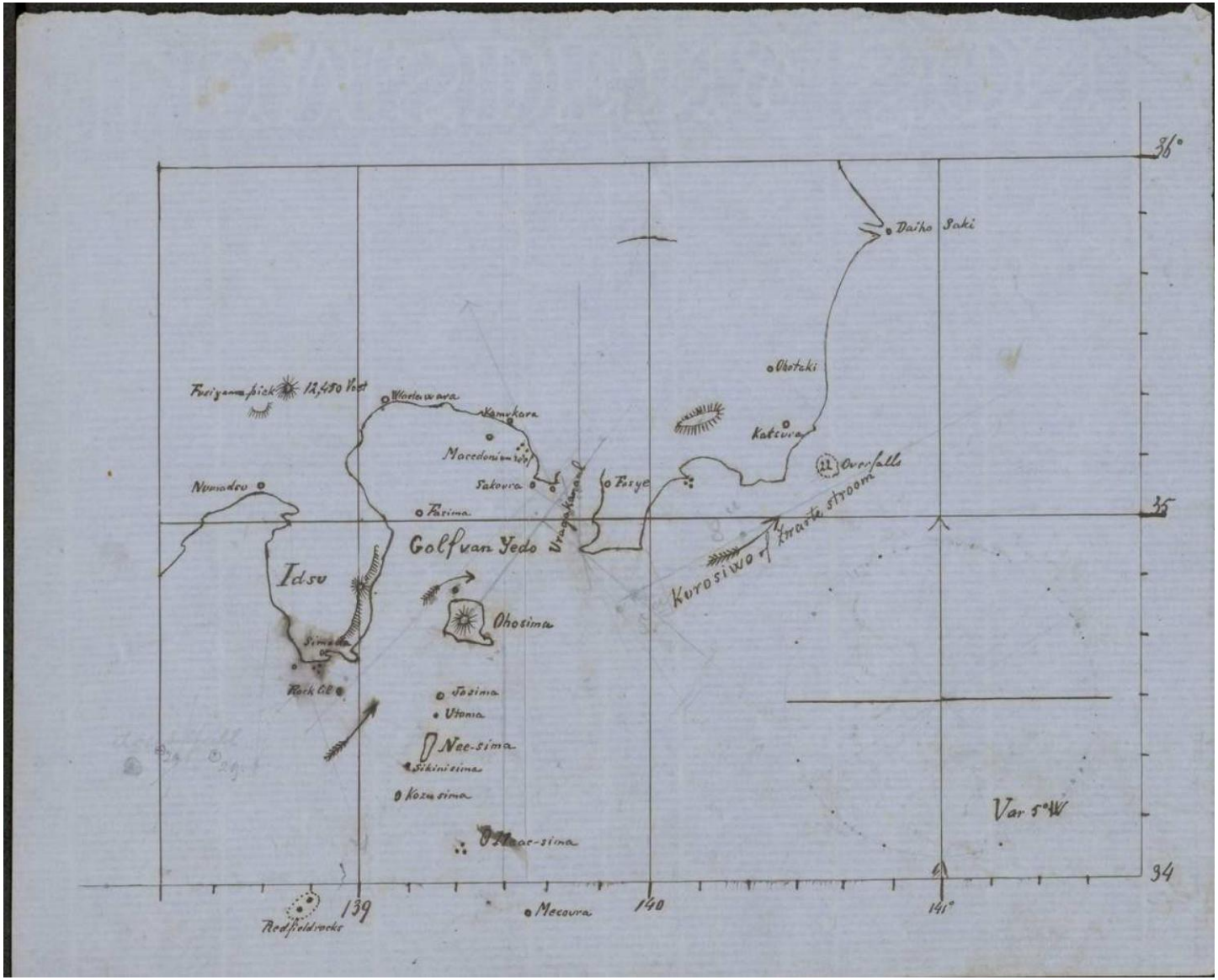
De Gouverneur Generaal
van Nederlandsch Indie

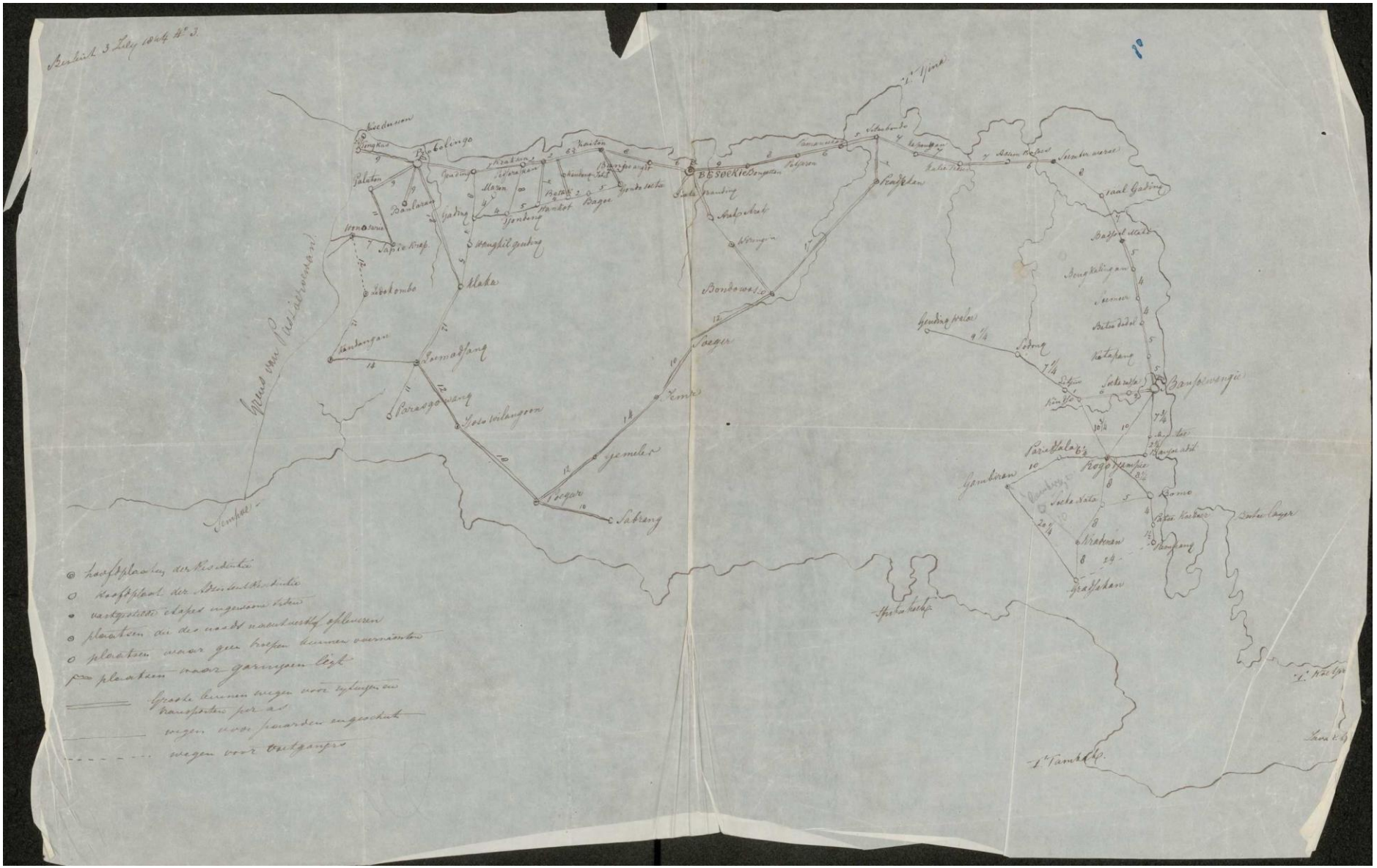
[signature]

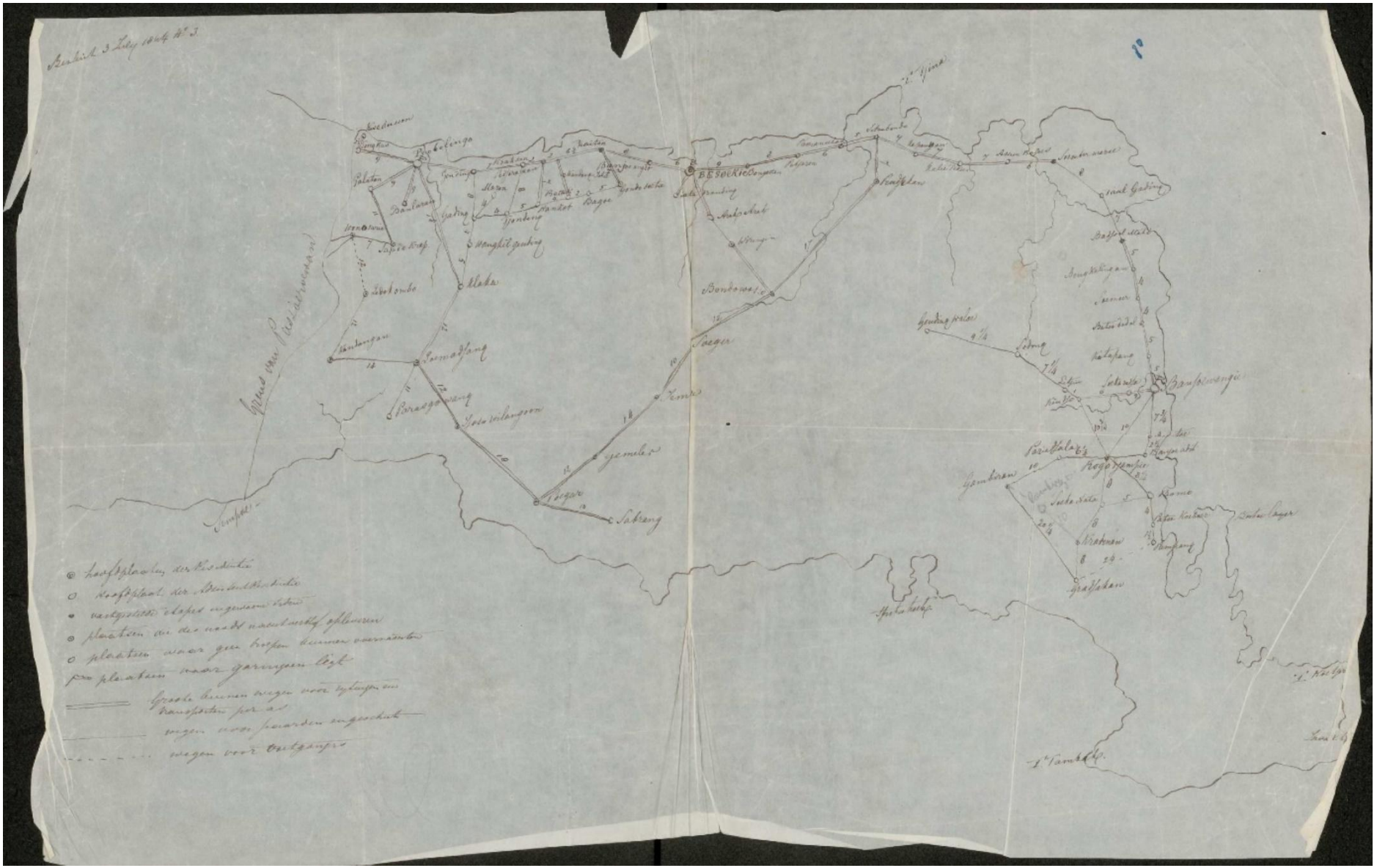
Per ordonnantie van
den Gouverneur Generaal
De Algemeene Sekretaris,

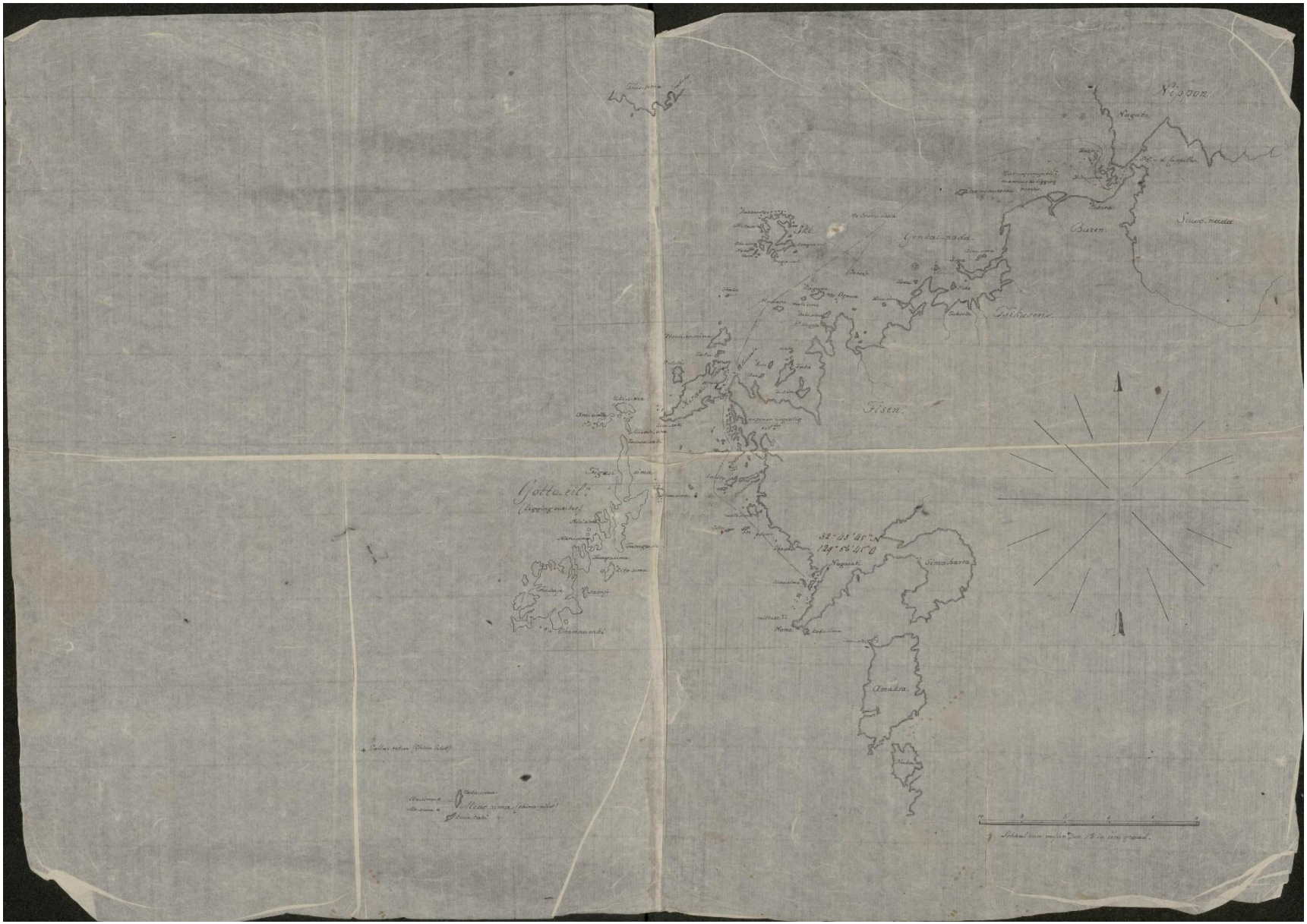
[signature]

A.4 – *Various maps. pp. 227-230.*




Besluit 3 July 1844 No. 3.
Probolingo
Palaton
Banlaran
Gading
Klaka
Zoemadsang
Paraggowang
Jogo Wilangoon
Poeger
Sabrang
Gemeler
Zemer
Soeger
Bondowoso
Pradjekan
Bangkalingam
Sodong
Gambiran
Bomo
Kradenan
Gradjekan
Sempoe
Gruis van Passaerwewan
hoofdplaatsen der Residentie
hoofdplaat der Adsistent Residentie
vastgestelde etapes ingewoone tiden
plaatsen die des noods naauwkeurig opleveren
plaatsen waar geen troepen kunnen overnachten
plaatsen waar garnizoen ligt
Groote kunnen wegen voor rijtuigen en transporten per as
wegen voor paarden en geschut
wegen voor voetgangers


Bestek 3 July 1844 N° 3
Bandoeng
Tjimahi
Tjitjalengka
Tjitjoeroek
Tjimindi
Tjikoedjoe
Tjikalongwetan
Tjikalongkoelon
Tjiwidei
Soemedang
Tandjongsari
Tjikeroeh
Tjikoeroet
Tjitjaloe
Tjikao
Tjikapoendoeng
Tjiroeas
Tjisaroea
Tjiranggon
Tjiamis
Tjitjapoes
Tjisompet
Tjidamar
Tjidolog
Tjipanas
Tjiheoelang
Tjiawi
Tjigaloeh
Tjiboeroeboeroe
Tjiseroeni
Tjimanggoeng
Tjisaat
Tjikaso
Tjikadoe
Tjikaroet
Tjikaroet
Tjikaroet


Nippon
Nagato
Buzen
Suwo-nada
Genkai-nada
Iki
Tsikusen
Fisen
Gotto-eil
Simabarra
Amaksa
Nagasaki
32° 43' 45" N
129° 56' 45" O

A.5 – *List of a few other items and their page numbers.*

Materials concerning Van Capellen's journey with the steamer *Bali*, 6 February 1857 – 3 November 1858 (p.1):

- Report to the captain-at-night (*schout-bij-nacht*) of Batavia in which he describes his findings and summarises his mission. The original report the excerpts of Q:14 and Q:15 are based on. Thirteen large pages (looks similar to A4). 9 July 1859, three days after he signed the treaty. pp. 64-73.
- A table with local prices for goods. The original table the one in Q:14 is based on. p. 77.
- Naval coordinates. p. 98.
- Japanese example sentences and conversions of local measures to Dutch miles and ells. p. 99.
- Part of the *Bali*'s course. Mostly text, only a few coordinates. p. 114.

Materials concerning the treaty between the Netherlands and the government of the Ryūkyū Islands, 24 October 1858 – 12 June 1859 (p. 131):

- A letter by Donker Curtius to Van Capellen. Seems like an introduction of sorts. Six and a half large pages (looks similar to A4). 16 April 1859. pp. 198-202.
- A letter by Donker Curtius to Van Capellen. An explanation about Ryūkyū/Naha, or something related to that. 4 June 1859. Six large pages (looks similar to A4). pp. 203-206.
- Two English copies of the treaty. pp. 210-212; 217-219.
- Three (partial) Dutch copies of the treaty, the first of which is rough and includes a significant number of notes and stricken text. pp. 212-216; 222-224.
- One French copy of the treaty. p. 220-221.
- A short note about Japanese coal. Came right before a map of the coast near Edo, see four pages ago. p. 226.