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**Masonic networks, material culture and international trade : the participation of Dutch Freemasons in the commercial and cultural exchange with Southeast Asia (1735-1853)**

Kroon, A.A.

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**Author:** Kroon, Andréa Angela

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**4. INDIA AND CEYLON**  
**ORGANISATION, COMMUNICATION AND MEMBERSHIP BODY OF OVERSEAS LODGES**



*Fig. 4.1.: Map of India and Ceylon, indicating the location of lodges. Reproduced from: Gaastra 2002, p. 49; altered by the author.*

**4.1. India (1757-1796)**

From 1605 onwards, the Dutch funded factories on the Coromandel Coast with permission of local rulers, who welcomed the trade.<sup>1</sup> Fort Gelria in Paliacatte became the seat of the VOC in 1610, and from 1616 another trade post was established in Suratte. Most important between 1635 and 1795 would become the third VOC foothold in India, located at the Hoogly River in Chinsurah, in Bengal (see figs. 4.1, 4.6-4.7). By the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century this was, together with Batavia and Ceylon, one of the three main ports with a direct trade route to the Netherlands. Between 1690 and 1781 the Dutch also had an substantial settlements in Negapatnam on the Southern Coromandel Coast, where the military were stationed which made up a large section of the circa 500-800 Company employees present.<sup>2</sup> Seamen were deployed on

small boats to transfer between the various settlements and collect goods, which were kept in the larger offices to be transported onwards to Batavia.

From Fort Gustavus in Hoogly the Dutch traded in spices and opium amongst other goods, but the main trade was in textiles. While coarse Indian textiles were used in the slave trade and as exchange goods, fine Indian textiles were popular with the European elite, used to furnish homes. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, coloured and patterned Indian cotton was used in clothing. Competitors were nearby: the British in Madras, the French in Pondicherry, the Portuguese in San Thomé and the Danish in Tranquebar.

In 1755, Adriaan Bisdom (1710-1771) was installed as governor of Bengal. Under his rule the first lodge activities would take place in the region. Shortly after, Bisdom was replaced by Louis Taillefert (died 1766, in function 1760-1763). The *Almanach des Francs-Maçons* (1766) commented on the swift expansion of freemasonry to India at the time:

Elsewhere England, France, Holland and the nations of Northern Europe who have some considerable trade in the East Indies have established several lodges. Of this number there are those that are in Bombay, in the Kingdom of Visapour; in Madras on the Coromandel Coast, in Chandernagore in the kingdom of Bengal; the three Lodges of Calcutta in the Malabar lands and several others.<sup>3</sup>

Ten lodges in the region were listed in the yearly overviews of Dutch lodges, published in masonic almanacs in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was assumed by later scholars that these were short-lived. The war with the English severely impacted the Dutch ships and the overseas trade, so the Dutch had to hire French ships to sail to Batavia. The English were strong enough to take over many Dutch assets in Asia in 1780, including Bengal. The Treaty of Amiens in 1784 meant that the Dutch regained control, but had to hand over Negapatnam to the British and allow them to trade freely in the East Indies. The next conflict ended even worse for the Dutch: the English gained permanent control over India in 1796. It has therefore been assumed that all Dutch lodges in the area must have disbanded around this time. Only a handful of articles was published on the subject by masonic historians John Rawdon Dashwood (1948, 1950) and Schultink (1987). While the British Dashwood did not have access to the fragmentary but relevant lodge archives in the collection of the CMC, the Dutch Robert Schultink must have been aware of them, but did not explore them in any depth. A very insightful genealogical study by Lutter/Christiaans (1994) concentrated on the founding members only, and little else appeared for the next 20 years.

While most of the archives of the lodges in the Indian region (1758-1825) were lost, correspondence received by the Grand Lodge in The Hague fills in some of the gaps and allows us a glimpse into the rise and fall of these lodges, even if we do not learn the whole story. These previously unpublished letters were written by Company employees and others, and give information on both business and personal matters, ranging from money transfers to much lamented shipwrecks. The surviving letters, most of which are published here for the first time, are comparable to 18<sup>th</sup> century letters made accessible by the recent *Sailing Letters* project of the joint National Archives in The Hague and London.<sup>4</sup> They provide a new insight into the founding and closing dates of the lodges, and evidence that at least two Dutch lodges in the Indian region remained active well into the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One even continues to this day, although it no longer resides under the Dutch Grand Lodge (see Table 4.A).

This chapter aims to demonstrate how the organisational structure of the Dutch Grand Lodge functioned overseas: how lodges were founded and regional representatives appointed (usually followed by a struggle for power), how communications were established and how the membership body was built up. A short overview is provided of the founding and activities of each lodge in the region, focusing on the correspondence with the Grand Lodge. By showing the overlap with Company employees, as well as the intense traffic between lodges in the Netherlands, India and other parts of Asia, it becomes clear how masonic networks were interwoven with international trade channels. On first sight, membership of a lodge may seem like just another pastime for the colonial elite, but there are recurring themes in the letters - ranging from masonic ideals to less enlightened topics such as jealousy and greed - which help us understand how much more the lodge membership meant to the individual travellers.

It was possible to reconstruct a membership list of more than 324 names between 1758 and 1825, which - considering the fragmentary sources - suggests the actual volume of members within the small

60  
Duplicaat

Van den zeer Eerwaarde Groot Meester  
over de Vrije en Aangeneem Metelaaren  
en der het Noort van den Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden  
doen zeer Waarde Broeders

Hecht Nicolaas Barm van Arson  
Beijeren bijheer van Hogerweide  
Heer van Triangel Heemstede  
Piet wijke en Piet wyster Kort  
Erenerens

Alle de Leden der Groot Logie La Soyal  
Ree Sidevrienden, Gemenen

Spreukage

eer Eerwaarde en waarde Broeders

Waarom Meesters hebben wy e' Com d'it's Zwaer bevaarde  
kunnen te goren als dat wij op den 12<sup>en</sup> April laatste geopen  
nau hebben alhier te fundeeren een Logie van vijfen aasijene  
a mine Metelaaren dewelke wy te vier tijt hebben aangegaan  
en dewelke zij voort met de hulpe van de waer naomene Broeders  
Masters

Fig. 4.2: Request for the Constitution of lodge Salomon in Hoogly by Jacobus Larwood van Scheevikhaven, 8-1-1759. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

**Table 4.A: Dutch lodges in India and Ceylon, founded before 1800**

EC = English Constitution; FC = French Constitution

India	Active years
<b>Bengal</b>	
<b>Hoogly/Taldanga (Chinsurah)</b>	
Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon	1758-after 1783
Chapter Concordia	ca. 1766-after 1775
Lodge De Standvastigheid	1770 -after 1774
<b>Coromandel Coast</b>	
<b>Negapatnam (Negapattinam)</b>	
Lodge De Langgewenschte	1772-after 1778
<b>Pullicat (Palliacatte)</b>	
Lodge Voorzegtigheid	1794-1796
<b>Surat</b>	
Lodge St. Jean [de] la Concorde	Before 1774-after 1777
<b>Ceylon (Sri Lanka)</b>	
<b>Colombo</b>	
Lodge De Getrouwigheid	1768-after 1775
Lodge De Vereeniging	1792-1825 (continued as L'Union 1825-1838 FC, and as St. John's Lodge 1838-present EC; relocated to Kandy in 1858)
Lodge La Réunion Neuchatelloise	1790-after 1796 (ambulant military lodge)
<b>Galle</b>	
Lodge De Opreghtheid	1771-after 1804

Dutch communities in the region was rather impressive. Below only the key players are discussed, while the full list of names is provided in Appendix II. Hopefully it will prove a useful basis for future research.

#### ◆ **Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon in Bengal**

As discussed above, Abraham de Labat was given a commission by the Grand Lodge in The Hague to found a lodge in Bengal in 1757<sup>5</sup>, while Jacobus Larwood van Scheevichaven was given the same commission as Provincial Grand Master in 1758.<sup>6</sup> It remains unclear whether this was the result of a request received from Bengal, or an initiative of the Grand Lodge itself. According to Hageman, Bengal counted about 200 employees of the VOC around 1770. Traffic centred on Chinsurah, an important trade post at the river Hoogly (a side river of the Ganges), where textiles, saltpetre, indigo and opium were traded. Competition from the French, Danes, British and Belgians made the position of the Dutch difficult. Hageman assumed that Van Scheevikhaven was a ship's captain, part of a military expedition of around 700 Europeans sent from Batavia to Bengal in 1759 to defend the VOC positions against skirmishes between the British and local rulers. The expedition intended to land on the coast of Coromandel, but ended up in the Ganges.<sup>7</sup> The British succeeded in installing their Bengal ally, Mir Jafar, as the new *Nawab* or regional ruler. In 1759 they beat an attempt by the Dutch to break their power, making the Dutch both economically and politically dependent on the British in the region.

Hageman was wrong. In fact, Van Scheevikhaven had first arrived in Bengal in 1751, held the position of Fiscal in Hoogly by 1759 and as such co-signed an agreement with the British after their victory.<sup>8</sup> But before all that, on 7-9-1758 he wrote to the Grand Lodge in The Hague: 'Having had the advantage of raising a lodge here, which the Patents handed from you to me by brother Tissoot Prenus made right, regular & perfect, I did not want to fail in having this communicated to you immediately'.<sup>9</sup> Van Scheevikhaven must have meant the aforementioned Tissot [de] Grenus, who had arrived in Bengal in July 1758 and carried papers from the Grand Lodge.

Apparently the Grand Lodge did not send a Constitution in response, because Van Scheevikhaven made a (second) request for a Constitution on 8-1-1759 together with Jacques Rivière (died 1763), bookkeeper and *afpakker in de Kledenzaal* (a function in the textile warehouse), and Jan Carel Kist (died 1766) Second in the *Kledenzaal* (fig. 4.2.).<sup>10</sup> This time he mentioned explicitly that a lodge under the name Salomon had been founded in Hoogly on 7-4-1758.<sup>11</sup> As founders Van Scheevikhaven listed himself and Rivière, as well as lieutenant Dominicus van Staden (died 1790), and several men of whom only the surnames were provided: Jambon, Creuset, d'Urville and Florin.<sup>12</sup> Their names sound French so they could have well belonged to the nearby French settlement in Chandernagore (see fig. 4.6). On the day the lodge was founded, several members were accepted and initiated, including the aforementioned Kist and the following men: Arent Jacob de Wilde (1723-1761), a merchant; Cornelis Rietveld (1732-1768), a bookkeeper of wages; Lucas Cramer (died 1780), a chief surgeon; Jan Schwendler (died 1763), another bookkeeper; and Emanuel Hendrik Kantzou[w], a provisional assistant.<sup>13</sup>

According to Van Scheevikhaven, by January 1759 of these founders only himself, Rivière, Kist, Rietveld, Schwendler, Kantzouw, Cramer and Von Staden remained. Most of the newcomers were also in service of the VOC: assistant Albert Tobias (died 1773), flagbearer and engineer of artillery Claude Ogerdias, sent to inspect Fort Gustavus and prospect a site for a new fort at Banquibazar; as well as the junior merchants Jean Eli de Mourin [Meaurin] [van Yperen] (1745-1766) and Jean Jacques Babtista Trembley (died 1760).<sup>14</sup> Both Tissot Grenus, having arrived in July 1758, and De Labat, having arrived in September of the same year, had also joined the lodge. According to Van Scheevikhaven they had:

[...] shown the power that Your Most Honourable have given them to both in batavia and here be able to found a Regular Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, though these brethren having found our lodge already properly founded, have therefore not used their Patents [= temporary Constitution?] but handed these to us in to be kept carefully in our archives and have then at their request been accepted as members of this lodge.<sup>15</sup>

Van Scheevikhaven further elaborated that lodge Salomon convened every two weeks at 18.00 o'clock 'on Tandalga', an area at the Hoogly River below Chinsurah, near the French settlement in Chandernagore. He requested not only a definite Constitution for lodge Salomon, but also the title of 'Grand Master over the whole of Dutch-India' for himself.<sup>16</sup> (He already possessed this title for the Dutch East Indies.) As a fee, Van Scheevikhaven then transferred 100 Ducats to the Grand Lodge in 1759 (circa € 2.600,- today), to be delivered via captain Jeronimus Jongenberg (died 1765) of the ship Jerusalem, which sailed to the Netherlands on 15-1-1759.<sup>17</sup> In the accompanying letter Van Scheevikhaven informed what the yearly contribution would be and requested a masonic law book for lodge Salomon.<sup>18</sup>

Jongenberg arrived in the Netherlands on 4-8-1759<sup>19</sup>, but the Grand Lodge did not grant the requested title and Constitution until 1-12 and 3-12-1759.<sup>20</sup> Grand Secretary François Willem Ravens (in function 1760-1763)<sup>21</sup>, replied on 11-6-1761 to Van Scheevikhaven, alerting him to the new law book which had just been commissioned by the Order:

From which necessity it seemed to the Grand Lodge, that it would not be unpleasant for the Brethren in the East to participate in the distribution of these Laws. Therefore sending hereby 100 Copies of the same Bound at 22 Stuivers per piece; (being the Price of the preregistration, such as all Lodges have paid, of which the absent Brethren are profiting, as the same are by now available for no less than 33 Stuivers) with the request to send and distribute these, locally where there are Lodges and Brethren to be found.

[...] Going also hereby some separate Frontispieces, serving as Ornament or Jewel for the Lodges, as the meetings are held, with a Copy of the Explanation of the same, such as a Lover of Poetry, in haste, expresses himself by the French Language. (As well as some separate Processions, which are only for the Masters of the Lodges) enabling the Brethren to have the aforementioned Plate framed as they can see fit. The copies with [a border of] glued Chintz Paper should be reserved for the Masters only; as on Page 40 the Procession can be found therein.<sup>22</sup>

The wording of the letter implies that the Grand Secretary assumed there were Dutch lodges (plural!) in the region in need of a law book. Sending a hundred copies to a lodge of just fourteen members also gives that impression, as it is more than the number of members any first lodge in any area would expect to attract.<sup>23</sup>

The book in question was *De Pligten, wetten of algemeene reglementen der Vrye metzelaaren* (1761)

by Grand Secretary J.P.J. Dubois (see chapter 2, fig. 2.15). On page XL of the book, there is indeed a reference to the processions held in the lodge when a new Grand Master was elected. Lodge Salomon may have been unpleasantly surprised, as it only requested one book and received a hundred, along with an unexpected bill. Raven's letter continued on financial matters, such as the costs that the Grand Lodge had to make to maintain international contacts, the state of its finances and the level of yearly contributions:

Above and beyond these relevant matters and urgent reasons of interest, the Grand Lodge cannot fail to bring to Your Honourable's attention, how painfully and sensitive the loss has been, of the Hundred Ducats, which Your Honourable has sent to us, and with which the captain, to whom the sum was trusted, went off; just in a time that this would have come in so useful, and which was already so eagerly awaited, to be put to a good use. Because barely had the aforementioned Captain announced himself with this for us most pleasant tidings, or one was busy with the execution of matters which supported the weakness. But very surprised one was, as one flattered oneself with a transmitted Receipt, to receive the payment of that feigned promise, one instead of cash received a very bad message in answer, that this Knight of Industry, had eclipsed with the Northern Sun, without one having been able to become aware to this day, where this pretended honest Man has taken up domicile with it.

[...] the Grand Lodge after more consideration having agreed, to put this before the good Brethren, belonging to the Lodges in the East Indies and give them into consideration if it would not be reasonable, that they, who were inspired with such Noble Sentiment, and so generous as resolute, consistent signs of their sincere Diligence and affection, by sending the Lost Hundred Ducats, now again in this matter would act Brotherly, to repair the loss, and by a Liberal Gift, help to repair the weak? To Honour and Glory of the Society.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, captain Jongenberg, the courier of the *Don Gratuit*, had committed fraud and lodge Salomon was kindly asked to cough up the loss. Raven even suggested a buyout deal ('Uitkoop te doen'): he asked the lodge to consider advancing the contribution for the next ten years in one payment. He also asked to send regular updates to the Grand Lodge and make sure to keep an administration of the members' names to 'give them a memorial to the Progeny'. These membership records over the years 1764-1775 have indeed been preserved.

On 20-10-1762 the Grand Lodge sent a second letter dealing with the disappearance of the *Don Gratuit*:

[...] hoping that one and the other would be sent to Your Honourable Lodge, with the ship Voorland, at the time destined for Batavia. But to our great surprise, we have become aware only Fifteen months later, that the Package with the Letter, was still in Amsterdam, with the Brother [Jean] Durege, who had neglected such. So that We for the present refer ourselves yet to the aforementioned Letter, of which the original is included.

By ourselves We have determined these days, a closer clarification in the matter [...] We having discovered, that he [= Jongenberg] still had some Money kept at the Company, have had this impounded. Although we have been much prepared for it, he had frivolous excuses, by which he managed, with only fl. 250 to pay on credit; under the pretence, that he had the least knowledge, nor could deduce from his books, having received money for us. And we having well been forced, to give the Receipt thereof, before he was willing to pay out such, so that he by remainder of fl. 275 stayed indebted. Leaving us not the least hope ever to regain it; after which later was reported, that he, after having presented himself several times, to be employed again even Three degrees less as he has sailed before, having been rejected every time, is now penniless.

We hereby send with the ship Jerusalem a Hundred Copies of the aforementioned Law books.

[...] As our Admitted Bookseller, Brother R. van Laak has now had printed a very neat and complete Collection of all the Free Masons Songs, he will add this number for Your Honourable Lodge hereby.<sup>25</sup>

The man referred to here is probably Jean Durège, Worshipful Master of lodge La Paix in Amsterdam. The songbook is probably the first edition of the *Lire Maçonne*, which would prove so popular that many subsequent editions and translations were printed (fig. 4.3-4.4).<sup>26</sup> Rutgerus van Laak (1723-1788) was a publisher and merchant, specializing in commissions for the Grand Lodge in The Hague.<sup>27</sup>

The communication with and payment to the Grand Lodge would prove a problem for the lodges in Asia during the next century, not just because so much time passed between question and answer, or between order and delivery. As most masonic matters were considered secret, some things could not be trusted to paper and had to be conveyed orally. Because of the high death rate of travelling members and

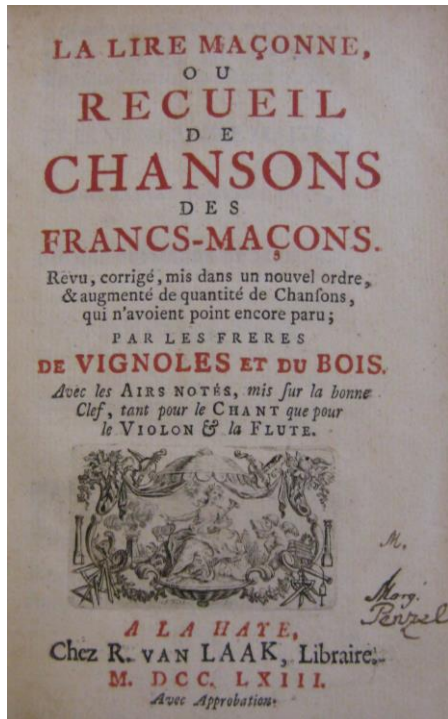


Fig. 4.3: Frontispiece of *La Lire Maçonne* (The Hague 1763) with an engraving by Simon Fokke.

Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 212 B 76. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

Fig. 4.4: Cover of *La Lire Maçonne* (The Hague 1763), copy belonging to J.J. Voute in a leather binding with masonic symbols embossed in gold. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague. Reproduced from: [vrijmetselarij.nl](http://vrijmetselarij.nl).



Fig. 4.5: Otto Willem Falck (1738-1814), member and Worshipful Master of lodge Salomon, ca. 1810-1814, oil on canvas, 39 x 30.5 cm. Private collection. Reproduced from: [rkd.nl](http://rkd.nl).

frequent shipwrecks, the chance that such an oral message actually reached the Grand Lodge, was less than good.

On the further fate of lodge Salomon and its members, little is known. Apart from a handful of membership lists, only the formal correspondence to the Grand Lodge survived, which mainly dealt with (late) payments. Incidental mention of lodge Salomon in the correspondence of the lodges in Batavia shows that it was active in Bengal until the 1780s. So what can we reconstruct?

In February 1764 lodge Salomon wrote to the Grand Lodge that it had finally received its letters dated 12-1-1761 and 20-10-1762. By the negligence of a lodge member [= Durège] they had arrived two ships later than planned. The law- and songbooks had arrived, but the promised plates were missing. Salomon enclosed a membership list and explained that there had been a change of lodge Officers:

Since the transmission of our solemn [letter] in January 1759 the then functioning [Worshipful] master Jacobs Larwood van Schevichaven, being called to Batavia by a higher hand, in his place on the 2 December 1760, having been elected by us as [Worshipful] Master the enlightened Brother Pieter Brueijs, who has therefore ruled the lodge with much praise, until the 12 September 1760, as when his Honourable in our meeting, communicated his appointment as Second of Kassembazaar and also asked for his resignation [from the lodge] [...] has on a certain day been chosen as his successor the Brother Otto Willem Falk, who therefore was installed on the 15<sup>th</sup> thereafter with the usual ceremony.<sup>28</sup>

Pieter Brueijs (1730-1783) was junior merchant in Bengal, before his posting to Cassimbazar.<sup>29</sup> Otto Wilhelm Falck (1738-1814, a cousin to the governor of Ceylon, Imam Willem Falck, and to the Director of Bengal, Adriaan Bisdom), was at the time working as secretary of justice and police (fig. 4.5).<sup>30</sup>

Salomon continued the letter with complaints about the state of its finances, as not once but twice payments to the Grand Lodge had been lost. This had affected the housing of the lodge 'so that our meetings, which used to be held on a steady location, are now circulating and taken in turn by the brethren, who this suits best'.<sup>31</sup> On 12-9-1763 the lodge decided to send another fl. 275,- to the Grand Lodge as compensation, and agreed to advance its contributions for the next 10 years. This amounted to 20 Ducats per year and fl. 10,- for each Master raised, assuming there would be one initiation per year, as 'in the last three years, only two [members] were raised as masters'.<sup>32</sup> No doubt this generosity was also a strategy to get a specific request approved. Salomon asked:

[...] to see titled this our lodge here, as a Provincial, or even, if it is possible, as the grand Dutch lodge of the East Indies, under which all the other Dutch lodges in these lands /: by all those that in future, may be erected somewhere, have to resort [...] to by this gain glorifications, and all the more respect, in the eye of the brethren of strange Nations seated here.<sup>33</sup>

A total sum of fl. 707,10 (covering late and advanced contributions, as well as payment for the books received) was sent as 'assignation' provided by lodge member George Louis Vernet (1711-1775), Director of Bengal between 1763 and 1769, to the gentlemen Evert Schaasberg (a relative of Vernet) and Benjamin Gibert in the Netherlands.<sup>34</sup> The sum says much about the wealth and status of the lodge. According to the list sent to the Grand Lodge in 1764, Salomon counted 12 members at the time. Besides the aforementioned Tissot Grenus, Kist, Falck, Vernet, Cramer and Ogerdias, these included Paul Gibou Castel (died 1773), an enseign; Jan Pieter Humbert (1725-1785), the warehouse master at Cassimbazar; Frans Lamij (1732-1786), an assistant; Johannes Matthias Ross (1730-circa 1788) trade bookkeeper and 1<sup>st</sup> warehouse master in Hoogly, as well as Jan Hendrik Zinner (died 1775), a military captain-commander.<sup>35</sup> The list noted that Brueijs and Humbert were in Cassimbazar and Tissot Grenus had travelled to Patna as commander of the fleet.<sup>36</sup>

In January 1765, the new Grand Secretary, Radermacher (to whom we will come back in the next chapter), sent a letter to lodge Salomon. He asked for a report of its activities, as its 'state' was unknown in the Netherlands at that time.<sup>37</sup> On 30-9-1765 Radermacher wrote again, letting it be known that he had finally received two letters<sup>38</sup>, written by George Steendekker (died 1773) on behalf of the lodge, to which he now replied:

[...] which made us, not without reason, decide, that the Bottom [= ship], on which that letter was located, must have shipwrecked; and though one is used to sending with a Duplicate Letter, also a Duplicate Money Transfer, We can lightly suppose, that such in the case of Your Honourable Assignment of f 707,10 on the Gentlemen Evert Schaas Berg and Benjamin Gibert, will have been left out by some mistake or forgetfulness.

So we see ourselves, for the Second Time, partially robbed of the highest needed support [...] We shall also very gladly [...] send the longed Constitution or Provincial Charter; as that Charter of Provincial Grand Master, already provided on the 1st December 1759 to the honourable Brother Van Scheevikhaven, due to the unforeseen summons of that Brother to Batavia, there since ceased, and was therefore put out of effect.

Though we have founded, this year, in the aforementioned Capital of the Dutch East Indies, a new Lodge, under the Name of La Choisie, whose members would also desire a similar privilege [...] are of the opinion it would in such a case be more useful [...] to be brought under Batavia, the Easterly, and under Bengal the Westerly Quarters, als being very wide and far from each; so that the Honourable Lodge Salomon, apart from the Mogol and Persian Kingdoms over the Coasts of Coromandel, and Malabar, as well as the Island Ceylon; likewise the Honourable Lodge La Choisie, over Java, Sumatra, Malacca, Makassar, Ternate, Ambonia, Banda &c would have the rule, each independently, with this dignity annex to the body of the Lodge and no longer to the Person, of the actual Master of the same [...].<sup>39</sup>

The history of Provincial Lodge La Choisie is discussed in chapter 5. For lodge Salomon the foundation of this rival may have been an unpleasant surprise, as it clearly did not expect to have to share the rule over the region. About Steendekker little is known. He became a member of lodge La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam in 1760 and came to Batavia in 1762 as a mate on the ship Voorland.<sup>40</sup> He would make it to skipper and play an important role in the earliest years of the lodges in Asia, before he went missing when his ship was lost in 1773.<sup>41</sup>

Radermacher promised to send several copies of the new, second part of the *Lire Maçonne*, to complete the first.<sup>42</sup> In a second letter dated 1-1-1765, he added that Salomon would have to pay the Grand Lodge for the Constitution of a new lodge: 20 Ducats for a first lodge in a town, and 10 Ducats for any further lodge in the same town. Lodge Salomon was allowed to collect yearly contributions of these new lodges, as well as fees for initiations (of Masters) as it saw fit. On 23-10-1765 lodge Salomon was officially named 'Provincial Grand Lodge for Bengal, Indoustan, Persia, the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar, as well as the island Ceylon'.<sup>43</sup>

On 27-5-1766 Radermacher sent another letter for lodge Salomon to his brother Samuel via Steendekker, who was travelling as first mate on the ship Jerusalem to Batavia and Bengal.<sup>44</sup> This time he warned to follow the English customs to 'prevent many frauds' and admit only freemasons in possession of a membership certificate with the seal of the Grand Lodge. For each certificate a sum of 12 Stuijvers had to be paid to the Grand Lodge for the seal, and another 12 Stuijvers in material costs to the Grand Lodge bookseller, Van Laak. (An indication many imposters were indeed at large or another reason for the Grand Lodge to charge a fee and keep a tight grip on its membership?) When handing a certificate to a member, the seal of lodge Salomon and the signatures of all the board members had to be added. Radermacher also pleaded to send yearly overviews of members.

In a letter dated 10-1-1768 lodge Secretary Ross wrote a belated 'thank you' to the Grand Lodge for the title of Provincial Grand Lodge. He mentioned that Falck, because of his leave for Patna, had been replaced as Provincial Grand Master by Tissot Grenus, and that the lodge had transferred a sum of fl. 937,10 to cover its dues, transferred by money order from Vernet to Cornelis Erkelens and Albert Nack, merchants in Amsterdam.<sup>45</sup> He continued:

For different reasons our lodge has been very small in number, during five years, but that will change. [...] It has been several years since we have formed a Scots Lodge under the name of Concordia, which we have also given our Building, we have forgotten to give you notice thereof, please pardon this mistake, which has surely been made without intention.<sup>46</sup>

If the founding of an *Écossois* or Scots lodge took place 'several' (meaning more than one) years ago, that suggests a founding date in or before January 1766. The name of this lodge, Concordia, was in later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century lodge overviews mistaken for a lodge of the basic degrees and listed separately from Salomon.<sup>47</sup>

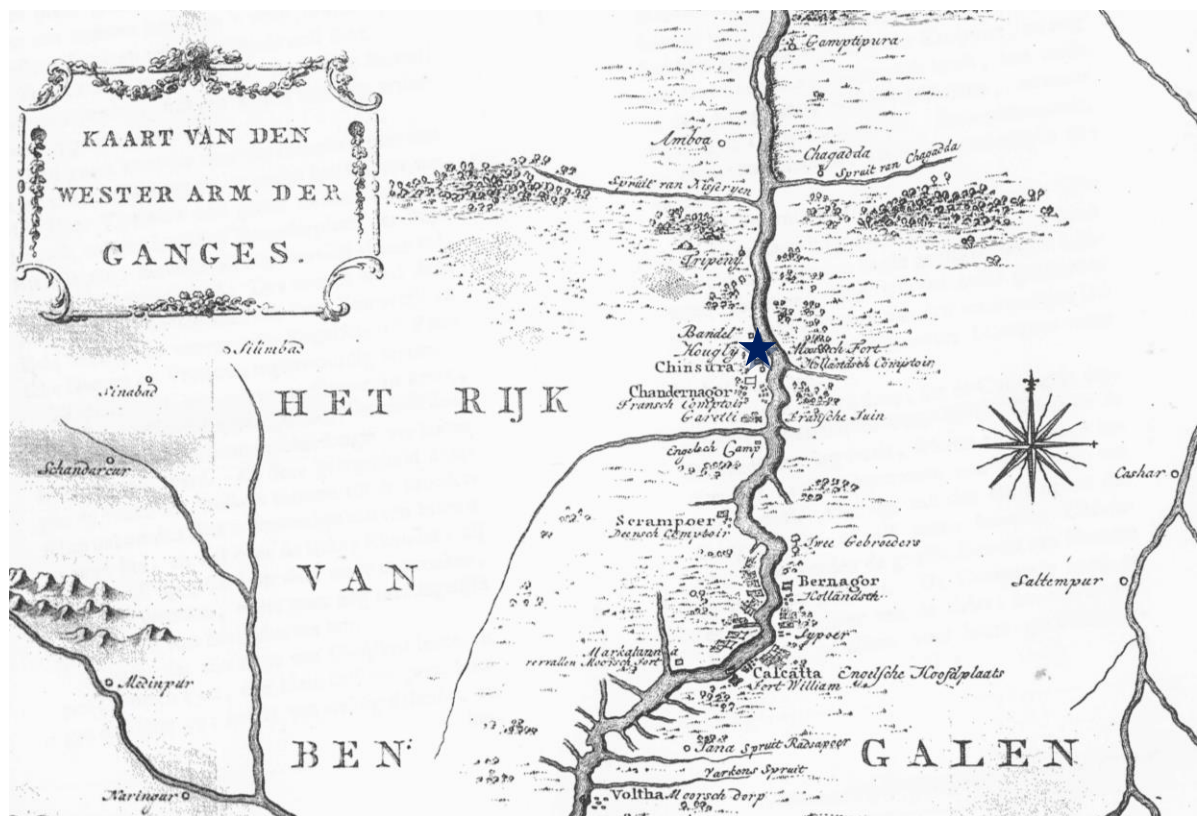


Fig. 4.6 (detail): Map of the West arm of the Ganges (Den Wester Arm der Ganges), as published in Johan Splinter Stavorinus, *Reize van Zeeland over de Kaap de Goede Hoop, naar Batavia, Bantam, Bengalen, enz., Leiden 1793, dl. II*. Collection: National Library, The Hague. Blue star added by the author to mark the location of the lodge.



Fig. 4.7: Johannes Rach (1720-1783), *Gezigt van 't Revier van Bengalen* (View on the river of Bengal), 1772-1775. Pen and ink drawing, 35.5 x 52 cm. Collection: National Library of Indonesia, inv.no. BW 79. Reproduced from: [atlasmutualheritage.nl](http://atlasmutualheritage.nl).

Ross noted that Tissot Grenus, Breijs, Vernet, Ross, Cramer and Humbert already possessed the degree of *Maître Écossois* or Scots Master. They had all been initiated into the *Élu* degree within a month, for which occasion the ceremony was led by Steendekker, a brother Dalencon (= d'Alençon?), not mentioned in earlier documents, 'and another brother'.<sup>48</sup> According to Ross, the degree of *Écossois d'Europe* ranked below that of *Élu*, while some French brethren were claiming the opposite. He asked the Grand Lodge to judge on the issue. Steendekker, who was about to repatriate, was to personally deliver the letter.<sup>49</sup>

On 8-11-1768 lodge Salomon wrote to the Grand Lodge, trusting that its letter dated 10-1-1768 with a money transfer of fl. 1000,- had by now been delivered by Steendekker. The lodge noted:

However much we apply ourselves, to keep house in the most Frugal manner, we can only just make due with the earnings; which is therefore the reason, that we find ourselves unable, this year to transfer any remittance, to Your Very Noble, of which the cause is, the costs, which we necessarily have to make to finish the Garden Concordia [= the Lodge building].<sup>50</sup>

The letter continues with the news that Tissot Grenus gave up his position as Provincial Grand Master on 5-10-1768 because of his nearing departure for the Netherlands. He had been released from service in 1766 and would now repatriate as a private citizen.<sup>51</sup> Deputy Grand Master Vernet had been chosen as his successor and was installed on 4-11-1768. The letter was handed to Tissot Grenus for delivery in The Hague.

Meanwhile on 30-3-1768 the Grand Lodge sent an *Elucidatie* or 'Enlightenment' on the subject of the higher degrees. It referred to its formal decision dating back to 18-12-1757 concerning the degrees of *Élus*, *Écossois*, *Irlandois* and *Chevaliers de l'Aigle*, to:

[...] keep these separate, and not mix them with the ancient free Masonry [...] So are those, who would want to appear with the Ornaments and distinctions at the National Grand Lodge [meeting] of this Land, not admissable there.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore the Grand Lodge acknowledged the receipt of the money transfer 'charged to the Gentlemen Cornelis Erkelens and Albert Nack in Amsterdam', finally erasing the debt. The expected arrival of Tissot Grenus was also confirmed.

In 1769 the well known travel diary of the Dutch captain Johan Splinter Stavorinus (1739-1788) includes a description of the lodge building Concordia:

A long quarter of an hour from Chinsura on the side of Chandernagor, under the rule of the Gentleman Vernet was built a large and splendid house, as a Lodge or Meeting place of Free masons, which during my stay there was finished and consecrated. In the evening this ceremony was concluded with a beautiful Firework and Ball, at which the Genteel English and French Gentlemen and Ladies were present.

This house, that was named Concordia, had cost thirty thousand Rupees, which was paid by the Members of the Hoogly Lodge from their purse. At occasions the women, whose men belonged to the brotherhood, wore the sign of the order on a blue or red ribbon, and such over the left shoulder: they are strongly prone to flaunt it, and other women, whose men are not yet drafted, fiercely encourage this.<sup>53</sup>

Stavorinus probably became a freemason himself a few years later.<sup>54</sup> From his description is clear that the inauguration of the building was not secretly, but publicly celebrated, with fireworks visible to all, and that the lodge had international contacts. As Stavorinus' map of the area shows, the English camp and the 'French Garden', were close to Chinsurah.

Steendekker, who as a courier of correspondence had gained the confidence of the Grand Lodge, was appointed 'foreign Deputy Grand Master' on 13-5-1769.<sup>55</sup> At the time, he was captain of the company ship *Lycochton* (also spelled *Lychoston*) and heading to Batavia for the Chamber of Amsterdam. Between 1769-1773 he would be involved in the founding of lodges in Asia. In 1773 he repatriated via Bengal with on the ship *Vrouwe Margaretha*, but his ship perished.



Fig. 4.8: Jacob Eilbracht (1738-1804), member of lodge Salomon in Bengal. Collection: RKD, The Hague.  
Reproduced from: Lutter/Christiaans 1994, p. 106.

According to the membership list of 1770, the number of members of lodge Salomon had reached 23. The lodge met each first and third Wednesday of the month at 17.00 hours.<sup>56</sup> Tissot Grenus, Vernet, Kist, Cramer, Oger Dias and Lamij were no longer members, but Falck, Ross, (Gibou) Castel, Zinner, Breuijs and Humbert remained. Newcomers Anthony Hardy (1739-1810), a fiscal and village master, and Jacob Eilbracht (1738-1804), who acted as secretary of police, cashier and junior merchant (fig. 4.8), would both become important figures within the Order in Bengal. They were joined by a large number of civil servants and tradesmen, including Anthony Bogaardt (1740-1788), a merchant and trade bookkeeper; Isaac Huybregt Gerrein [= Guerin] (1745-1785), a sworn clerk; Pieter Hoff, (died 1788), a provisional assistant and First Clerk; Leonardus Verspeijk (1734-1819), a bookkeeper of wages; and Fredrik Thott, another bookkeeper and clerk who was to be fired from Company service in 1771. Interesting is the name of Swedish junior merchant Johan Fredrik Lindstedt, which in 1764 already appeared in the visitor books of lodge La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam. Frederik Briks [Brix] was a lawyer or solicitor, while Thierry Reijnard (1733-1778) had the position of Secunde at the *Kledenzaal* (textile warehouse), where Gerardus Roghe (1747-1788), a bookkeeper, also worked as Second *afpakker*. The background of new member I.L. Vix [Fix] has not been identified. Lastly the chief surgeon Johan Christiaan Hoen and his junior surgeon Johan Christoffel Willekes (died 1780) were added.<sup>57</sup> Other new members were stationed outside Hoogly, such as Gregorius Herklots (1739-1787), First at the Mint in Cassimbar, and Johan Willem Salomon von Haugwitz (1744-1796), Secunde in Patna).

According to the correspondence register of the Grand Lodge, a letter was received on 26-1-1770:

A Letter containing a notice to several Brethren Free Masons who were inclined to erect a lodge there [Bengal] [stating] that they had acted wrongly and against all reasonableness to address themselves to the Grand Lodge in holland, While this Lodge [Salomon] as a provincial Lodge was given the power, to give Constitutions to lesser Lodges who wanted to Establish themselves in this region &c.<sup>58</sup>

The letter itself was lost. Lodge Salomon wrote on 12-1-1771 that she trusted its letter dated 8-7-1768 had by now been handed in by Tissot Grenus. It promised to send fl. 600,- to the Grand Lodge via member Abraham van der Weijde (died 1773), who had come from Batavia to Bengal in 1769 as captain of the ship *Ritthem*<sup>59</sup>:

Said Brother has told in one of our meetings, having heard that the Brother Steendekker with a letter by Your Very Honourable had been represented to us, though that said Brother Steendekker had encountered our former and departed Grand Master Louis Vernet, on Batavia, who after having held [a] Scots Lodge, opened [the] Letter; that Brother van der Weijde with the Brother Mesterton thereafter went to the Brother Vernet, by the latter Brother having been told, to provide Brother van der Weijde with a letter to our Lodge before

his leave hereto, which did not come to pass, so we have therefore not been able, if any Letters were sent to us by Your Honourable, to answer these.

[...] Our very worshipful Grand Master George Louis Vernet, because of his leave to Batavia, naming as his successor, the Worshipful Deputy Grand-Master Johannes Matthias Ross, [...] while the latter his Worshipful, because of continuous indisposition combined with many activities, came to ask his resignation, [...] in his place had proposed, our worthy Brother, the Deputy Grand-Master Jan Pieter Humbert, who as such was favourably pleased to accept that dignity, and to his Deputy has appointed, the worthy Brother Jan Hendrik Zinner [...]

And meanwhile we have gained Experience, that on the Island Ceylon a Lodge of Free Masons was founded.<sup>60</sup>

The aforementioned Mesterton is probably the Swedish Archibald Mesterton, member of lodge La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam and working for the firm H. and A. Mesterton in the same city before his leave for the East Indies in 1767 (see also chapter 5).<sup>61</sup> He arrived with the ship Bartha Petronella later that year. The new Provincial Grand Master, Humbert, had made a career in the VOC and was now a merchant and First in the *Kledenzaal*.<sup>62</sup> The founding of a new lodge, named De Getrouwigheid, in Ceylon and the unrest this created in lodge Salomon, will be discussed below.

On 11-1-1771 the Grand Lodge indeed received a money transfer of fl. 600,- (400 Rupees) in Humbert's name through Van der Weijde. The cheque was made out to Van Laak, the bookseller of the Order.<sup>63</sup> Du Bois, by now appointed Grand Secretary, wrote a letter of thanks to Salomon:

We have ordered Brother Bookseller R. Van Laak, to deliver to Your Honorable all the requested Books, Parchments and Ornaments, according the contents of Your Worshipful Letter, and see with joy that Your Worshipful are always diligent, to observe the good order in every way.<sup>64</sup>

This suggests that, besides books and certificates, officers' jewels were in those early days also shipped from the Netherlands. Apparently Steendekker had experienced a lack of faith in his authority when he visited the lodges. The Grand Secretary assured him that he had the backing of the Grand Lodge, and sent him a 'Second and further Commission for the foreign Deputy Grand Master [...] to Constitute Lodges in the Eastern Quarters of the Indies', dated 20-9-1771.<sup>65</sup> Steendekker also received '25 pieces of sealed Parchments for Certificates', costing fl. 30,-.<sup>66</sup> To Steendekker's mention of irregularities, the Grand Secretary replied:

That there are in the East and elsewhere, as well as in the Home Country, Clandestine Receptions being executed, does not seem strange to us. We can not avoid this other than to exclude the like, and request all lawfully accepted Brethren to have no contact with them.<sup>67</sup>

Steendekker had to spend time in Malacca and Batavia on Company business. From Batavia, he wrote to the Grand Lodge on 20-5-1771 and 13-4-1772:

My last [letter] to Your High Enlightened was by ship Duyvenbrug A[nno] P[assato] in which I noted, the sad accident of mine on the 9<sup>th</sup> May being Ascension Day [caused] by the heavy thunderstorm [resulting in] the burning of my ship and a considerable capital in goods of mine, was lost and burned. [...]

I long with much grief after those papers and documents and therefore I requested of Your High Enlightened, for which I during my stay to the Gentleman Cornelis Jacobus van der Lijn transferred the Two hundred Gold ducats to the Treasury of the National Lodge, which requested Constitution and Papers of Your High Enlightened were, However, until now [not] received by me nor anyone else, about which I am much embarrassed, [as] before my leave from the Indies [I] will be forced, to reimburse these funds to their Honourables [= to the lodge], if those Papers requested from Your High enlightened do not arrive.<sup>68</sup>

The Constitution was probably meant for a new lodge in Malacca, as discussed in chapter 5. Grand Secretary Dubois replied on 1-10-1772:

We have, with regret heard, that the Ship, run by Your Honourable, was burned and that Your Honourable suffered great damages, which we hope Your Honourable will soon recover from.



Fig. 4.9: Anonymous, portrait of Samuel Radermacher (1748-1816), ca. 1770-1790. Oil on canvas, 76 x 64 cm. Whereabouts unknown. Reproduced from: rkd.nl. (Also reproduced in: Lutter/Christiaans 1994, p. 115.)

From the same we also make out that Your Honourable wishes to know, whether the sent Two hundred Ducats were remitted to us [...] of which We can now acknowledge that the same [...] has been paid to us.

[...] Brother Van der Weijde, running the ship *De Paauw*, destined via Batavia to China; with whom, if Your Honour should meet him, Your Honour can in all safety communicate, as he is qualified by us, to visit the Indian Lodges in Your Honourable's absence and judge affairs; likewise he has succeeded, with the Constitution of a Lodge, on Cape of Good Hope [...].

So we have on that point made progress, that this case wherefore Your Honourable's Commission was partially arranged, has now been fully implemented [...].<sup>69</sup>

Steendekker may not have been comforted by the news, that someone else had succeeded in his task and that he was now effectively being replaced. But the Grand Lodge did not withdraw his title in favour of Van der Weijden. Instead, a 'Qualification as courier of Books, Letters and Documents, for the Lodges' was given to Van der Weijden on 20-9-1771.<sup>70</sup> This document requested all lodges under jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge in The Hague to treat him with all courtesy and arrange their affairs with him as replacement for the Provincial Grand Master.

On 27-10-1771 lodge Salomon notified the Grand Lodge that on 15-10-1771 the theologian Johan Temmink had preached in a local church. He had spoken 'against a society that, amongst others, sought to make the people, in society, equal and admitted all sects'.<sup>71</sup> A transcript of that part of the sermon was copied in the letter. The lodge members assumed it was directed against freemasonry, and the Treasurer, Jacob Eilbracht, wrote a detailed *Apology*.<sup>72</sup> In September 1772 the Grand Secretary replied 'concerning their Apology against a certain Sermon, and their request to make this public by print' that the plan was ill advised, because Temmink had only directed himself to the 'Hernhutters and Moravian Brethren', not freemasonry.<sup>73</sup>

On 11-1-1772 lodge Salomon had to admit to the Grand Lodge, that it could not meet its obligations and pay contribution:

Furthermore we have the Honour of informing Your Honourable, that we are currently holding our meetings within Chinsurat, and have left the garden Concordia, both because of its remoteness, as the heavy costs.<sup>74</sup>

It is not clear whose house the lodge now used for meetings. According to its membership list of 1772, Salomon met 'within the village Chinsurat' every first and third Thursday of the month and now counted 28 members.<sup>75</sup> Among the newcomers was the aforementioned Samuel Radermacher, Second warehouse master and son of the first Grand Master, as well as brother to La Choisie's Worshipful Master, Radermacher. (fig. 4.9). He was joined by Casparus Leonardus Eilbracht (1740-1807), bookkeeper and translator, and brother to the aforementioned Jacob Eilbracht.<sup>76</sup> Hans Carel [baron] von Arnim (died 1773), the overseer of buildings; Adrianus Dingshoff (1743-1783), a bookkeeper; Diederik Marquard, whose background remains unidentified, Jan Mijndt Rudolf (died 1793), a gunner, and David de la Roche (died 1775), bookkeeper and Second *Resident* (colonial administrator) in Abaath, also joined the lodge.<sup>77</sup>

Abraham van der Weijde had left from Delft on 31-12-1771 with the ship Pauw, and arrived in Batavia on 12-7-1772, traveling on to Bengal.<sup>78</sup> He brought supplies for Salomon, for which Samuel Radermacher thanked the Grand Lodge:

[...] the twelve orders in silver with their ribbons sent to us and the chest with books and certificates have become us very well and are completely to our taste [...] We are much obliged to Your Honour for the Jewels sent to us as mentioned above but would have liked to have seen each of them numbered to know to which Officers they belong, and request therefore to send us the same again in drawing and number each separately so we cannot make a mistake when handing them out.<sup>79</sup>

One can wonder how many lodge members had any previous masonic experience, if they were so unfamiliar with the regalia. On the other hand, the Grand Lodge did send 12 jewels while most small lodges had no more than about eight Officers (Worshipful Master, two Wardens, Secretary, Treasurer, Terrible, Orator and Master of Furniture).

Despite their high ideals, conflicts often erupted amongst lodge members, between members of different degrees or between whole lodges. As will become clear below, a dispute between Masters (3<sup>rd</sup> degree) and Scots Masters (*Écossois*) would hamper the functioning of the lodge for almost a decade. The lodge was divided into two camps, with Verspijck, Roghe, the Eilbracht brothers, Reijnard, Hoff, Bogaardt, Guerin and Dingshoff representing the basic degrees. Hardy, Lindstedt, Fix, Ross (by now chief of Cassimbar<sup>80</sup>), Radermacher, Von Arnim, Marquard, and two new members, C.F. Schumann and Wilhelm Freiherr von Dankelmann (1741-1782, merchant and warehouse master), represented the higher degrees.<sup>81</sup>

In a letter dated 5-7-1772 the new Provincial Grand Master, Anthony Hardy, reported to the Grand Lodge on events within Salomon, that had taken place on 24-6-1772: '[...] to the regret of all of us occurred disturbance, caused by nine Brethren, who [acted] from an unheard envy of some of our most prominent members, who have reached a higher Degree in our Royal order as that of Master'.<sup>82</sup> These nine members supposedly withdrew themselves and despite a prohibition to do so, met as a lodge of the basic degrees and chose a board. Hardy promised to send a more detailed report and asked the Grand Lodge - in case it would be approached by the rebel brethren - to reserve its judgement until that report had arrived. Hardy's letter was co-signed by the other members of the higher degrees.

As Hardy expected, the Grand Lodge indeed received a second letter, dated 4-9-1772 and written by Verspeijk on behalf of the nine, explaining the view of the other party on the situation. He spoke of 'an occurrence, both unheard of and unpleasant, [which] took place on the last day of St. John Baptist, and caused by the brethren that call themselves Scots [...]'.<sup>83</sup> Verspeijk named the members of the higher degrees (particularly Hardy, Humbert, Linstedt, Radermacher and Von Dankelman) as the guilty party. The cause for their conflict seems trivial: in autumn 1770 Worshipful Master Humbert proposed a set of bylaws, which included the instruction that members of the Master's degree would wear a blue bandolier to meetings. Soon after Humbert considered this a mistake and instructed the members that this was only allowed in the *Écossois* degree. On 16-6-1772 a discussion evolved about which regalia were suitable for the members of which degrees: 'This went so far that they requested our Grand Master on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June to call a meeting'.<sup>84</sup> The intention was to have the matter cleared up before the planned St. John's Day

celebrations on 24-6-1771, so everyone would know what to wear. But it went wrong, 'the result being, that the intended ball was fully cancelled'.<sup>85</sup>

Worshipful Master Humbert requested his resignation from the lodge. Some members wanted to attend further meetings in their (red coloured) *Écossois* regalia, but Provincial Grand Master Hardy decided only 'the Colour Granted to us' (= blue) was to be worn. In other words: it was not allowed to wear regalia of the higher degrees to meetings of the basic degrees. He ordered Humbert to send a message to all the members and also included the new rule on the convocation letter for the next meeting. However, this was followed by a second convocation letter, signed by Humbert, now in his new function of Grand Master of the *Écossois* degree (= lodge Concordia), notifying the *Maîtres Écossois* to wear their (red) regalia to the next meeting. The *Écossois* were of the opinion that they outranked the members of the basic degrees and as such the decision about which regalia was appropriate, was up to them.

At the next meeting, the objection of the members of the basic degrees was voiced by one of the Wardens, who was promptly relieved of his function by Hardy. Radermacher and Dankelman were installed as new Wardens, and it was made clear that anyone who protested would be asked to leave. The nine who disagreed did so, as did Van Arnim and Marquard, but the latter two later changed their minds. The nine then took the lodge archive and in their own words kept 'representing' lodge Salomon, even though Hardy still had the Constitution in his possession. After having let it run its course for a month, the nine then decided to inform the Grand Lodge, because 'they [= *Écossois* lodge] started to treat us [= basic degree lodge] more and more insolent, and even stretched their animosity to private matters'.<sup>86</sup> The nine also decided to choose a new board. In their complaint to the Grand Lodge, they referred to its earlier letters dated 10-1-1768 and 30-3-1769 with instructions for the higher degrees. They also noted that a last attempt at a compromise had been rejected by the members of the higher degrees.<sup>87</sup>

Because of the distance and protocol, the Grand Lodge did not formulate an answer until August 1773. It consented to wait for Hardy's report, before coming to any conclusions, but strongly disapproved of a conflict on such futile matters:

We will show not to digress from what we have acknowledged before about the so called Scottish and other distinguished brethren [...] that is in the First Three Degrees of the Order is the kernel and core of Free Masonry, and the other Degrees have mainly been thought out, because of the extra costs, that one is forced to make to obtain them, be able to distance themselves from wicked Brethren, whose education is proportional to their birth, and whose conduct does little honour to our Order.

On the other hand however, Dear Brethren, it matters little, whether one wears Red or Blue Sashes and Free Masonry does not consist of Ornaments, but of deeds.<sup>88</sup>

The nine separated members would eventually form the new lodge De Standvastigheid. Salomon remained active as Provincial Grand Lodge in an administrative sense. In practise, its members met as a lodge for the higher degrees under the name of Concordia, while De Standvastigheid limited itself to the basic degrees. (Over time Salomon would accept new members again and go back to practising the basic degrees alongside De Standvastigheid). That the disagreements within a lodge could get so out of hand because of trivial matters like dress and colour, seems very petty at first. However, that the membership of the Order and the following of its traditions called up such strong emotions, also shows how important the lodge membership was to these men. Apart from the pleasant aspect of social gatherings, the membership was taken very seriously. The close bonds that were created within the group by the rituals, the social function of the lodges within the small colonial settlements and the safe haven they offered on a dangerous journey eastward, no doubt contributed to the emotional investment of the members in their Order.

Hardy wrote to the Grand Lodge on 10-1-1773:

We can with as much Joy, as our Hearts at the time were squeezed with pain, let Your Honourable know that this difference, to the internal satisfaction and Honour of the Bengal [lodges], and so we are Assured in our Hearts, of the whole Brotherhood, is amended, from one Lodge, by multiplication of members, a second was founded, and by us was given By the power invested in us, to a perfect number of Brethren, a lawful Constitution for the founding of a working Lodge, under the name of de Standvastigheid.<sup>89</sup>

At the same time lodge member Reynard wrote to bookseller Van Laak, to thank him for his letter of 31-9-1771 accompanied by 'Ornaments, books and parchments' as well as a bill for fl. 290,-.<sup>90</sup> Reynard indicated with 'painful sorrow' that the lodge had decided to send fl. 600,- as payment and contribution to the Grand Lodge, but that it had failed to secure a money transfer or courier for that sum, which meant they would not be able to pay until the next year:

We assure you of our commitment for the presentation received for the delivery of Aprons of the grand officers; and request thereunder, to have us sent six pieces as the First Grand Officers wear the same with also 20 others without gold and silver.<sup>91</sup>

Reynard wrote a second letter to Van Laak the same day, promising to gather funds, and complaining:

[...] this separation [between the old and new lodge] did not make much difference, as we did not visit the other at all, but especially the bad times we are now experiencing, Yes so bad with everything going more backwards than forwards, and this is an expensive place in every respect.

[...] regarding the p.n. the cloth is commissioned but not yet finished. Because when it is finished, the weavers are not masters from the English, who are strong in Decca, and have everything under their control, arresting [them], and saying or ordering to deliver to no one but them or heavy punishment [follows but next Year [I] hopefully will be able to deliver [it,] but concerning the Green monkeys [= members of the *Écossais* degrees] the conditions are not as such here[;] about disputes, & installing the new lodge our honourable brother Joosten who is courier of letters can inform you[. I can] convene Your Honourable [that] this Noble [Joosten] is a very worthy brother, if Your Honourable can please him, that will be dear to me.<sup>92</sup>

The meaning of 'p.n' is unclear, but the reference 'green monkeys' confirms that the degree practised was *Maître Écossais Vert*, which regalia were red and green. This specific degree, transferred to Europe from England in 1742, had a history of privileges being awarded and therefore causing trouble.<sup>93</sup>

On 7-9-1772 lodge Salomon put to the Grand Lodge 'a request [...] to have priority above the Lodge La Fidelle Sincerite in Batavia regarding the appointment of a Provincial Lodge &c'.<sup>94</sup> Apparently Salomon was afraid to lose its position as a result of the ongoing attempt of lodges in Batavia to gain the title of Provincial Grand Lodge, as will be discussed in chapter 5. Salomon must have gotten more worried when in December 1772 word came from the Grand Lodge, that a second lodge had been installed in Ceylon, named De Opreghtheid, for which the Constitution had been arranged without involving Salomon. Then came the news that, again without involving it, another had been established in the Dutch fort at Negapatnam. Correspondence of 1773 shows that lodge Salomon, much to the annoyance of the Grand Lodge, took some irregular steps in order to obtain a Constitution for De Standvastigheid. We will come back to all these lodges later.

About 1773 Grand Secretary Du Bois informed Salomon that the aforementioned Abraham van der Weijde had died at the Cape.<sup>95</sup> According to the membership list of that year, nineteen men remained: Hardy, Lindstedt, Thott, Radermacher, Van Dankelman, Reijnard, Marquard, Schuman, Brueijis, Falck, Ross, Humbert, J. Eilbracht, Zinner, Verspijk, Roghe, Fix, Herklotz and Van Arnim. Meetings were held 'day and time unspecified' in the 'Garden Concordia'.<sup>96</sup> As these were mainly members of the higher degrees who had taken up residence in Concordia again, they chose the same name for their *Écossais* lodge.

The lodge La Fidèle Sincérité in Batavia (see chapter 5) wrote on 12-7-1773 to lodge Salomon in order to congratulate it with the founding of De Standvastigheid. This letter, delivered by [Willem?] Kerkman, merchant and member of De Standvastigheid<sup>97</sup>, shows that the lodge(s) in the Dutch East Indies did consider Salomon as a regional authority, with whom it was important to establish friendly relations. The formal reply, dated 31-1-1774, was written by Guerin as Provincial Grand Secretary. He wrote that Falck, Hardy and Roghe had left from India to 'yonder', meaning Batavia. Roghe would carry the letter for delivery to La Fidèle Sincérité.<sup>98</sup>

In 1774 the Grand Lodge received a money transfer from lodge member Lindstedt for fl. 324,5. An accompanying note from Provincial Grand Secretary Guerin to bookseller Van Laak, shows it to be a payment for 'fine poems', as well as a new order of law books, song books and speeches for lodge Salomon. Guerin wrote that the finances of the lodge were still in bad shape and that 'everything here is equally in decay'.<sup>99</sup>

Lodge member Reynard wrote a private letter to a friend, presumably Van Laak, on 10-1-1775. He thanked him for the goods the lodge had received along with this friend's correspondence of 19-11-1773.<sup>100</sup> Reynard gave his message to freemasons Pieter Balans from Delft, repatriating with the ship Lam, and its captain Olke [van] Andringa (1741-1812) (see fig. 4.11). Reynard wrote that Balans had just received the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees in Bengal, and asked his friend to allow him the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree. Reynard had read in the newspapers that 'a French booklet had been published, writing about the Order of the Ecosse, Elu, Chevalier d'Epee &c', of which he would like to receive a copy.<sup>101</sup> The only title on the subject available at the time, was *Les plus secrets mystères* (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1766) (see chapter 2). Because of an 'indisposition' he had resigned as Warden and member of Salomon in October 1774. The lodge continued to use the building 'In the Outside Court, Concordia'.<sup>102</sup>

On 27-12-1774 a delegation of Salomon, consisting of Verspijk, Guerin, Schuman, von Danckelman and Brueijns, attended the St. John's Day meeting of a British lodge in Calcutta. This was celebrated with a public festival, including 'as usual' a play on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, followed by a ball. For the closing banquet no less than 300 guests attended. Special guests were 'Mohammed Raza Cawn [or Khan], the black Zamindar [= local ruler] of Calcutta, his two sons and the sons of Meeran'.<sup>103</sup> Invitations had also been sent to the 'gentlemen in Calcutta, and to the Officers in the Army, especially those who are Masons' and of course 'the Ladies of Calcutta' including those who were 'Sisters'.<sup>104</sup> In other words, non-freemasons were present for (public parts of) the festivities. The question is, whether the term 'sisters' was used here strictly to indicate members of adoption lodges or, in more general sense, the wives of 'masons' as opposed to the 'ladies' of uninitiated 'gentlemen'.

Celebrations began on the 29<sup>th</sup> at 20.15 hours with the opening of the lodge meeting in the local Masonic Hall, after which a silent procession of members and visitors in their full regalia walked from the lodge to a nearby church. The Dutch delegation closed the procession. In the church a religious service was held, attended by the public, followed by a sermon. The members went back to the lodge to close the meeting in masonic fashion. The planned play had to be cancelled for unclear reasons. On the 30<sup>th</sup> December a second procession was held, this time accompanied by music and directed to the Courthouse, where a banquet was held. The participants danced minuets before they dined. Circa 60 women were present, mostly 'sisters of the Honourable Order', who wore blue ribbons.<sup>105</sup> The fact that these sisters so clearly distinguished themselves from the other ladies present at an important social gathering, raises all sort of questions on the social connotations, status and desirability of this distinction for women in colonial society.

The membership list for 1775 was down to 17 men.<sup>106</sup> The old guard, consisting of the brothers Eilbracht, Lindstedt, Humbert, Verspijk, Zinner, Marquardt, Hoff, Thott, Radermacher, Reijnard, Guerin, Dingshoff and Schuman, had been joined by two former members of De Standvastigheid: Adrianus Gerardus Kraijenhoff and the aforementioned captain Andringa. On 11-1-1775 Salomon wrote another letter to the Grand Lodge, replying to correspondence of August and November 1773. A detailed report of recent events began with the announcement that Provincial Grand Master Lindstedt had been replaced by Jacob Eilbracht.<sup>107</sup> In 1774 'differences had arisen' with De Standvastigheid about the election of the new Deputy Provincial Grand Master, but in fact it was the resurgence of the earlier conflict. We will come back to that later.

Because the lodge was threatened 'by decay' measures were proposed on 13-6-1774 in order to tie members closer to the lodge. It was decided that candidates had to become a member of the lodge after their initiation, instead of joining a lodge elsewhere. Resignation would only be possible with permission and only after a 'lawful reason', to be judged by the lodge, and would not be possible at all if one was not yet a Master Mason. The Grand Lodge was asked for permission. It was also decided to have the Provincial Grand Master 'continued in that quality during his stay in Bengal, following the English [custom]', in order to limit the growing number of Past Provincial Grand Masters.<sup>108</sup> In other words, he was appointed for life, while before he had been chosen by members at the (yearly) board elections, as was the case with Worshipful Masters. It was stipulated that he could only resign with permission of the Grand Lodge. A new charter for the new style Provincial Grand Master was requested in the Netherlands on behalf of Jacob Eilbracht. It would be interesting to know how many of these new ideas came from Eilbracht himself, as it would give him a stronger position than his predecessors.

Under Eilbracht's lead Salomon continued to overplay its hand. The Grand Lodge in The Hague had earlier decided that members of all lodges in Bengal would be represented, but only Master Masons had the right to vote. Salomon now proposed that the lodges would be free to raise their contribution fees:

[...] [if one] would want to build a reserve from it. Why else would a Reception in the Indies cost up to 100 Rupees, which in the Homeland is done for 8, 10 or 12 Ducats. It is the same with the Yearly Don Gratuits [= contributions to the Grand Lodge].<sup>109</sup>

This shows the costs of initiations in Asia were higher than in the Netherlands, and that the lodge membership was therefore probably only accessible to the (VOC) elite. Also mentioned were 'Complaints about those [lodges] of Nagapatnam [= De Langgewenschte] and Ceylon [= De Getrouwigheid and/or De Opreghtheid], that these do not recognize the Provincial Grand Master, and request to be maintained [in their independence]'.<sup>110</sup>

The Grand Lodge wrote its reply to a letter by Salomon dated 4-1-1774 (enclosing a money order of fl. 675,15) more than a year later, on 19-4-1775.<sup>111</sup> It emphasized that Salomon had the wrong perception of its power: it was only allowed to give out temporary Constitutions, which still had to be ratified by the Grand Lodge, while new lodges remained free to address requests for Constitutions directly to the Grand Lodge:

Yet now we will confess, that the Ceylon Brethren did not act kindly, when they first requested Your Honourable for a Constitution, and did not reply to the received admission, without notifying us thereof in their Request. But it also surprises us, that Your Honourable did not inform us at the time; to give the necessary Ratification to the granted Constitution; so We had considered these Ceylon Brothers as wholly ignorant, of the Provincial status of Bengal; And which surprises us more, is their silence without transferring Contributions, (meaning those in Colombo [= De Getrouwigheid]) which We will at this occasion discuss with them.<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, the Grand Lodge wrote about the annual contributions, an unpaid bill by Van Laak and the planned election of a National Grand Master, 'as chief of all other Orders as Élus, Écossais, &c'. In addition, it asked Salomon to send a list of members of the higher degrees 'in order to register these also'.

Andringa, former lodge Secretary of Salomon and captain of the ship Lam, carried the correspondence of Salomon dated 11-1-1775 to the Netherlands. In December 1775 the Grand Lodge wrote in response:

By the Brother Olke Andringa was handed to us Your Honourable's Letter dated 11th of January this year, with the Addenda and Money transfer, amounting to f 873,5- from which to Brother R. Van Laak will be paid f 400 - for deliveries made [...]

Besides the objections in the aforementioned Letter raised and requested explanation thereof, We will answer these Articles, and immediately begin to show what a National or Provincial Grand Lodge is, and how the appointment of its Officers should be treated [...].<sup>113</sup>

The Grand Lodge specified that, when Salomon wanted to call an [annual] Grand Lodge meeting, it would have to convene the Masters and Wardens of the lodges in the region, in accordance with Article 4, p. 30, of the Laws of the Order:

[...] and then it is legal, but in no way like a particular Lodge, under the name of Provincial, would want to rule over itself and others, which contradicts the nature of things themselves.

It is true that people in the past were of other understanding, and that We accordingly raised Your Honourable to a Provincial Grand Lodge; though having further considered the matter, We are in complete agreement with the Grand Lodge of England, that this is a mistake, like Your Honourable itself will have to confess, or have already done at the intended Election of a Provincial Grand Master sent to us for approval [...] for a Charter now vested on the person of Jacob Eilbracht until apparent cancellation, Twenty Ducats are to be paid. - Provided that this granted Power is given to the person, as a representative of the High Noble Grand Master, and not given to any Lodge [...].<sup>114</sup>

This meant Salomon had lost its dominant position in Asia, also because the letter stated that the function of Provincial Grand Master could not coincide with that of Worshipful Master or Officer of a lodge. Until then, the Provincial Grand Master had always been the Worshipful Master of Salomon. At his resignation any successor would first have to be approved and confirmed by the Grand Lodge. The Provincial Grand Master could appoint the Grand Officers himself, with the exception of the Grand Wardens and Grand Treasurer, which had to be chosen by the meeting of lodges. That too severely limited his power. Furthermore it was stipulated that a Grand Warden could not be Worshipful Master of a lodge at the same time, but that he could take the place of the Provincial Grand Master or his Deputy if a vacancy occurred. The letter continued:

Regarding the Ceylon Brethren, namely those of Colombo [= lodge De Getrouwigheid], We will very gladly acknowledge, that they are acting very irregularly, towards both us and Yourself.

About which We have, in a serious manner made our sensitivity known to them, that it surprises us very much, after Five years since they have been constituted by us, having received no sign or token of their existence, much less the annual Contributions. Which is why We have reprimanded them to take note of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Article of the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter, Page 66, As We would otherwise have to execute the Law, and declare the same [lodge] erased [...].

Regarding the binding of Members to the Lodges, not [allowed] to leave them unless with consent, and to sustain, that no Master Mason can resign, only after having been Warden or Worshipful Master, is such an overly harsh Bylaw, that even with the 1<sup>st</sup> Article Chapter 7 Page 84 of the Constitution cannot exist; And if the reasons for such a request for dismissal are fair, it may not be denied; because Free Masonry should indeed be Free, and not make tyranny.

Likewise it is with granting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, about which the same Resolution cannot always be kept, especially when some People cannot remain long in one place, one is sometimes compelled to confer the Three Steps on one Day. For which reason one in this Country yearly grants a Dispensation to the respective Lodges, according to the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter Page 70 how much should be taken as possible precautions in this respect. [...] Remains us no more than to recommend Your Honourable to maintain a good relationship, and to acknowledge the authority of the high Noble Grand Master and preserve in the person of Brother Jacob Eilbracht as his Representative and Authorisation, with the necessary honours investing in him in that Quality.<sup>115</sup>

The letter suggests that lodge Salomon insisted on unusual practices, which strengthened its position. This display of ambition combined with the failure to bind new lodges in Ceylon and Negapatnam to the Provincial Grand Lodge, probably prompted the Grand Lodge to appoint a (travelling) representative, in order to maintain full control itself.

At the same time, the Grand Lodge wrote instructions for Jacob Eilbracht in his new function as Provincial Grand Master. He was instructed to organize a 'Grand Lodge' (a meeting of all regional lodges) twice a year, and to collect contributions to be forwarded to The Hague.<sup>116</sup> The certificate of Provincial Grand Master in Eilbracht's name dates from 20-12-1775.<sup>117</sup>

On 8-5-1776 the English Provincial Grand Lodge in Calcutta received a letter from lodge Salomon, noting its displeasure about the activities of a John Richards, a Frenchman, 'making masons unduly' (= practising irregular initiations).<sup>118</sup> The English replied that it had cautioned its members to only accept men who could proof a regular membership, for instance by a lodge certificate. John Richards was dismissed from membership of the English Order, together with Joseph Littard and a mister Busch, who had all confessed they did not have the right papers.

The Dutch trade in Bengal had declined. According to the governor Johannes Bacheracht (in function 1771-1776) by 1776 there was no trade worth mentioning anymore. His successor was the aforementioned Johannes Matthias Ross (in function 1776-1781), a member of lodge Salomon. He did not resist the involvement of the British and kept friendly relations with them, but did not manage to improve the situation.<sup>119</sup> Of course this affected the lodge activities. On 15-11-1777 Salomon wrote to the Grand Lodge:

The suspension of our lodge, which at the most recent St. John's Day was feared to be final, the declaration made by the Grand Master Jacob Eilbracht in our meeting at the First of this [month], of which the execution is

soon to take place [...]. For now only noting, that the Last two Years no Receptions or other income, for which we should give an Account, have taken place.<sup>120</sup>

The letter indicated that by now the lodge had run up a debt of 10.000 Rupees, which kept rising with interest, and that an expected contribution by the members of the *Écossois* degrees would not make much difference. A copy from the lodge minutes of 24-6-1777 was enclosed:

[...] much was said about the current condition of Masonry in Bengal, and especially that of this Lodge, with the little cordiality that many Brethren seemed to feel for it, and that by the small number of Members of this Lodge one had to fear that soon it would no longer be able, to continue its regular activities [...] for which reason his High Worshipful proposed to the Brethren, whether it would not be better to wholly close the Lodge and to return the Constitution to Europe, to the National Lodge in The Hague.<sup>121</sup>

Although all members already had agreed, lodge member Hoff proposed to first wait for a reply from home. It was decided to postpone a final decision until the winter St. John's Day. Meanwhile, the financial position was bad:

Lastly the High Worshipful Grand Master decided, to keep the money, which this Lodge is about to receive from the Scots Brethren, for its share in the sold house Concordia, as an obligation for himself and let an interest of six percent benefit the lodge.<sup>122</sup>

The letter included a membership list, from which it is clear that besides Eilbracht and his brother Caspar, Guerin, Dingshoff and Hoff remained members. Andringa was listed as a visitor, and four former members of De Standvastigheid had joined Salomon: Van Midlum, Regel, Wieman and Heyning.<sup>123</sup>

On 30-12-1777 Eilbracht himself wrote to the Grand Lodge that he had received its instructions, but not his certificate of Provincial Grand Master. Problems had again arisen between members of the Master and Scots Master's degrees. The *Écossois* kept away from lodge meetings and this lack of attendance now threatened the existence of lodge Salomon. Eilbracht blamed the problem on the fact, that the Provincial Grand Master (= himself) had not been initiated further than the Master's degree: the members of the higher degrees did not recognize his authority. He wanted to obtain the higher degrees, but could not afford the initiation fees involved. The Grand Lodge had given him the rule over the basic degrees by letter, but a copy of this letter had not been addressed to the *Écossois*, allowing for confusion on the issue.

Eilbracht proposed a solution to the Past Provincial Grand Master and now director of the trade post, Ross, but things did not develop as he expected:

Brother Ross assured me, following that his wish extended to this, that the Brotherhood in Bengal would flourish as before, and that his Honourable could agree with my proposition; but that the feelings of others [= the *Écossois*] were not so easily turned. The event of 1772 was still too deeply embedded in the memory, and the little satisfaction one had given the Scots masters and rather important had been the expectation, with the feeling that I should be the man, who had for the nine Brethren of Salomon's Temple, at the time, stood up the most strongly, all this made the animosity against me lasting, whenever there was any discussion about this case; at last came in the last days of October the decision down to this, that one [= the *Écossois*] would join the lodge [= Salomon], provided that I lay down my Grand Mastership, and that it was passed to the aforementioned Brother Ross, who was elected as Provincial Grand Master.<sup>124</sup>

Eilbracht at first felt offended and refused to let go of his position, but after 'much deliberation with himself', decided to do so anyway, because he did not want to be responsible for the decline of the lodges in Bengal. The members of Salomon were shocked when in a meeting on 1-11-1777 he announced to step down. At the same meeting, his brother Caspar, Hoff, Dingshoff and Regel for various reasons also asked to be dismissed. It was decided 'to have made for the new Grand Master an apron and jewel, after the model that his High Honourable currently uses'.<sup>125</sup> This implies that Eilbracht was allowed to keep his regalia and wear them as Past Provincial Grand Master. A list of members of the higher degrees was enclosed with Eilbracht's correspondence. Humbert had acted as Grand Master of the *Écossois* and *Élu* degrees, but he too would relinquish his position to Ross. Other members of the higher degrees were Brueijis, Guerin,

Reynard and Radermacher, as well as Johan Carel Lodewijk Blume (1727/28-1797) a free burgher in Bengal.<sup>126</sup>

Eilbracht wrote to the Grand Lodge that time would tell if Ross would keep the peace between the newly united members, also because he was forced by company business to leave lodge affairs to his Deputy. Ross was formally installed on St. John's Day, 27-12-1777, and he let it be known that he would only be available for a year. Eilbracht's farewell speech, calling for obedience to the Order's laws and for unity, has survived.<sup>127</sup> In 1778 Eilbracht left lodge Salomon, but remained a member of De Standvastigheid. In 1781 he was appointed to the general secretariat of the governor general in Batavia. He visited the local lodges and the farewell speech he gave on 1-2-1783 in La Fidèle Sincérité in Batavia before he headed back to India also is in the CMC collection.<sup>128</sup>

After 1777 the Grand Lodge no longer received communications from Salomon, according to its correspondence register. According to Maarschalk's history of the Order, lodge Salomon was erased in circa 1782, like other lodges in the region, as a result of the capture of Dutch assets by the British in 1780-1784.<sup>129</sup> The Dutch masonic almanac did not note any loss of communication until 1808.<sup>130</sup> The most recent overview of Dutch lodges states that communications ceased in 1783.<sup>131</sup>

From circa 1783 indeed dates a last letter by Olke Andringa, written on behalf of the Provincial Grand Lodge (= Salomon) to lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia as a farewell before his leave for Europe.<sup>132</sup> The fact that he still used the formal title of Provincial Grand Lodge, suggests Salomon probably kept using the abolished title to maintain its authority in the region. The personal letter does not refer to the closure of the lodge in any way, as one might expect if that was the case. From 1784 onwards, the next four Dutch governors were freemasons:

- the aforementioned lodge member Herklots (in function 1784-1785);
- Isaac Titsingh (in function 1785-1792), a Past Master of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia, discussed below, initiated into the *Élu* and *Écossois* degrees<sup>133</sup>;
- Cornelis van Citters Aernoutszoon (in function 1793-1795), a member of lodge St. Jean de la Concorde in Surat, also discussed below;
- the aforementioned lodge member Von Haugwitz (in function 1795).

This would have provided a favourable 'climate' to renew the lodge's activities. The correspondence of lodge Salomon suggested a good relationship with the English Provincial Grand Lodge. Masonic historian Robert Freke Gould claimed:

The Provincial Grand Lodge of England seems to have worked in perfect harmony with a similar body under Holland, 'The Grand Lodge of Solomon at Chinsura' (Dutch settlement) and the officers and members of the two Societies exchanged visits and walked together in processions.<sup>134</sup>

More recently Jessica Harland-Jacobs also emphasised that the Provincial Grand Lodge of England regularly organized dinners and celebrations in Calcutta in the 1780s, to which Dutch freemasons were invited.<sup>135</sup> As the following chapter will show, political events did not prevent lodges in the Dutch East Indies from continuing their activities. It therefore seems probable that Dutch freemasons in Bengal would have transferred to a British lodge after the takeover, or that an ailing Dutch lodge would have fused with a British one. In 1804 the accounts of Grand Treasurer Johannes Adrianus Bichon van IJsselmonde (whose family was involved in the WIC and VOC), still listed the contribution status of Salomon as late since 1776, indicating that the Grand Lodge did not yet consider it permanently erased.<sup>136</sup>

#### ◆ *Lodge De Standvastigheid in Bengal*

As mentioned above, the founding of lodge De Standvastigheid in Hoogly was the direct result of a conflict between members of the basic and higher degrees of lodge Salomon in 1770.<sup>137</sup> It must have been some time before Salomon was ready to acknowledge this new lodge and its members. None the less, on 27-12-1772 Provincial Grand Master Hardy signed a Constitution, in which the aforementioned Verspijk, Roghe, the brothers Eilbracht, Reynard, Bogaard, Gerrien [= Guerin] and Dingshoff are listed as founders (fig.

658-1

Copie der Constitutie der nieuwe Loge  
 De Standvastigheid,

Pet. A. Hardy  
 G. M. Prot.  
 daer neer, 1772, gelyk  
 te gelyk

Aan alle en een ygelyk van onze  
 Zeer Edelbare, Verminde Broederen,

Wij Antony Hardy Groot M<sup>r</sup>. Proximiël  
 van de al Oude en Zeer Eerwaarde  
 Societeit van Nye aangerommene Me-  
 laaren, Over de Westelyke gedeelte van  
 India en t'yland Ceylon, en de Groot  
 Officieren van de Groot Proximiële Loge,  
 Sabonnon in Bengalen, Salut

Dat de Broederen Leonard Ver Spijk  
 Gerhardus Roge, Casparus Leonardus Elbracht,  
 Jacob Elbracht, Thierry Reijnard,  
 Antony Bozaard, Naack Aubrecht Perrier  
 en Adriaenus Dinghoff, alle meede-  
 leeden van onze Loge, mit hoofte van het  
 groot getal onze leeden, ons met behooryke  
 Resolvente verloft hebbende, om alhier te deesen  
 plaats, een Separate en alleen, werkende  
 Loge te mogen opregten, onder de naam  
 van de Standvastigheid, en dat deselve  
 moegt gefunctioneerden, om het werk van  
 onze Edele Maat Schappij alhier alleen, onder  
 ons oog, op een Reguleere en Wotlige wyze  
 met alle yver en Eyd voort te zetten, Zoo  
 is t' dat wij, Nyt bragt vand. ons gegave  
 magt

Fig. 4.10: Copy of the Constitution of lodge De Standvastigheid in Hoogly, Bengal, 27-12-1772.  
 Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 656-1. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

4.10).<sup>138</sup> Jacob Eilbracht was appointed Worshipful Master.<sup>139</sup> The reason for the foundation was given as 'the large number of our [= Salomon's] members'. One of the stipulations in the Constitution, not normally mentioned in those of the Dutch Grand Lodge, was:

Furthermore, until cancellation, for Contribution money to be Handed to us five-eighth parts of the Reception of Masters, and fines, and a quarter of those of Apprentice and Fellow-Craft.<sup>140</sup>

Salomon had instated this measure, because by the founding of the other lodge it would miss out on a number of new members and therefore on income.<sup>141</sup> In the Grand Lodge archive are some 'Remarks on the contents of the Bengal letters and especially, about their manner of Constituting [a lodge]', which reveals the annoyance felt by the Grand Officers. Notes added to the memo in a sideline by a second reader are given in Italics below:

The Constitution provided for the founding of a Lodge under the name of de Standvastigheid, although they themselves stipulate only to be allowed to work within the District and their [= Salomon's] supervision, seems to have been given with an excluding power, without Ratification by the National Grand Master; which is not at all according to the intention.

*to reject the manner, in which de standvastigheid was constituted, especially also the agreements*

How will one now here give the Ratification with the stipulation of a yearly Don Gratuit [to the Grand Lodge], if it is already fixed in the Constitution, that this Lodge [De Standvastigheid] will have to pay to Lodge Salomon 5/8 of Master Receptions and Fines [and] 1/4 of those of Apprentice and Fellow-Craft. Besides this novelty (or Prussian way of counting) one is overstepping the terms of the Law, which clearly prescribes that a Constitution for a place where there is a Lodge already, should cost 20 Ducats.

*This absolutely has to be annulled*

[...] By this despotic power that of the National Grand master lapses, which has been made so powerless, that it receives the Laws instead of providing them.

It seems as if the Bengal Brethren have thought out this expedient, to constitute this new lodge, to heal the wound of the tear, which was caused by the Scottish Order, about which they are very enthusiastic (as a [Scots] Master Reception costs 100 Rupees), and because of which they had partially separated. And having thus made a shift who would belong to the Scots and who would not, that new Lodge was probably founded to exist of such Members who can have received the 3 Ordinary Degrees.

And as those Brethren, belonging to the Scots Order, hold a separate Cash register, the incomes of which are very substantial, as a [Scots] Master Reception costs a Hundred *Daalders* [= 150 Guilders] then a Don Gratuit to the National Lodge of f 600,- should not harm them much.

The obstacle to Reimburse, is easily cleared, because even if no-one can be found who will take care of it [= inning/transfer], the money can be put into the Company's Cash register. Provided that what is registered there is also paid, without being subject to a delay of a Year or more.<sup>142</sup>

In September 1773 the Grand Lodge wrote on the matter to Salomon:

After We had already formulated our answer [...] We were most pleased, by the contents of Your Honourable's latest Message, dated 10 January 1773, whereby We have learned that the conflict has come to an end, and calm rules among You again.

[...]. By this same Letter We have become aware that Your Honourable saw fit to grant a Constitution, for the founding of a Lodge, under the name of De Standvastigheid, and thereby stipulated 5/8 part of Master Receptions and Fines; as well as 1/4 of the Apprentice and Fellow-Craft Receptions, for the benefit of your Account; and moreover to allow those Brethren, that they may distinguish themselves by the Light Blue Colour.

Truly Brethren, a manner absolutely conflicting with our Laws, and in no way in accord with the contents of your [own] Constitution, dated 23 October 1765.

Had Your Honourable realised this, you would not have erred yourself so; to act contrary to the intention of the high Worshipful Grand Master. So We cannot but reject the manner, in which that Lodge was Constituted; with request to withdraw that diploma given, and to supply the enclosed, as our Ratification, of the acts by Your Honourable, to these Brethren.

[...] And concerning the Light or Sky Blue Colour the same belongs to the Grand Officers of the National Grand Lodge alone; with this change however, for the Provincial Grand Masters, who are distinguished by a White Star.<sup>143</sup>

So Salomon overstepped its limits, concerning not only the contributions but also the colour symbolism. The reply of the Grand Lodge shows it followed the example of the English Grand Lodge in that Provincial Grand Masters were Grand Lodge Officers and as such wore the sky blue colour. Not until much later, in 1775, would Salomon respond to this letter and transfer half of its revenue to the Grand Lodge - with the assurance that this had always been the intention.<sup>144</sup>

The definitive Constitution sent to De Standvastigheid by the Grand Lodge in August 1773, mentioned besides the founders also several other members that had joined in the meantime<sup>145</sup>: Johan Willem Salomon von Haugwitz, a former member of lodge Salomon,<sup>146</sup> Hermanus Jotz [Jeths] (1743-1779), surgeon,<sup>147</sup> and C. Wilke, not identified further.<sup>148</sup> The earliest known membership list of the lodge dating from 1772 further mentions David de La Roche, a former member of Salomon.<sup>149</sup> The 1773 version however, shows that by then as few as eight members were left: of the old guard Verspijck, Roghe and Jeths were still present. Among the newly admitted members was the aforementioned captain Andringa (fig 4.11). He was joined by Joan Werner van der Velden (born 1744), a 2<sup>nd</sup> warehouse master; the (British?) David Kinlock, an assistant; Adrianus Gerhardus Kraijenhoff (1745-1827), a junior merchant and *ordinair gecommiteerde* (ordinary commissioner), as well as Frans Re[e]gel (1746-1781, a bookkeeper and 2<sup>nd</sup> *afpakker in the Kledenzaal*, and Willem Jan van Midlum (1748-1791), another ordinary commissioner.<sup>150</sup> According to the membership lists the lodge met until at least 1775 'in the garden Concordia', outside Chinsurah, where the lodge for the higher degrees of the same name also gathered.<sup>151</sup>

As mentioned above, lodge La Fidèle Sincérité in Batavia wrote to Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon on 7-12-1773 requesting friendly correspondence with De Standvastigheid. Besides the formal answer by Provincial Grand Secretary Guerin on 31-1-1774, La Fidèle Sincérité also received a letter from De Standvastigheid, signed by board members Verspijck, Roghe, Bogaardt, Jotz and Van den Velden, again noting that Salomon tried to rule with an unnessacerily tight grip:

[...] the lodge which constituted us here locally and is therefore superior [= Salomon], does not allow us, or its subordinates, correspondence with other lodges, as with special permission.<sup>152</sup>

There is very little other information on De Standvastigheid. On 17-4-1774 its foundation was announced at the annual Grand Lodge meeting in The Hague.<sup>153</sup> In April 1774 the Grand Lodge received a money transfer, registered as: 'Debited the Provincial [Lodge] Salomon in Bengal; for A Constitution on parchment for the [lodge] De Standvastigheid in Hoogly f 105'.<sup>154</sup> But from that moment on, there were hardly any lodge activities, as is shown by a memo of the Grand Lodge, which had to take 'Measures to counteract the heavy decay of the Two Lodges in Bengal following the Resolution of 13 July 1774'.<sup>155</sup> The last known membership list dating from 1774 includes one of the founders, Caspar Eilbracht, as well as the aforementioned members Kraijenhoff, Van Midlum, Andringa, Reegel, Kinlock and Jeths. New were two former members of Salomon, the aforementioned Thott and Brix, as well as captains Thomas Alex[ander] de Witt (1745-1776) and Simon Both (died 1776), and chief enseign Mattheus Bosman (1745-1789), the latter possibly related to the governor of Suratte, discussed below. Other newcomers were assistant Johannes Cornelis Heyning (1754-1810); bookkeeper Jan van der Linden (died 1788); the former First *factoor* (local manager) of Dhecca, Willem Kerkman (died 1774); junior merchant Gozewijn Willem Hendrik de Vriese (1752-1812) (fig. 4.12); as well as book keeper and sworn clerk at the Council of Justice Frederik Wieman (1750-1791).<sup>156</sup> The visitor book of lodge La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam includes the name of first mate Arent de Zeeuw (died 1777), who signed in on 9-11-1774 as being a visitor from lodge 'De Standvastigheid in Bengal'.<sup>157</sup> It illustrates that the surviving membership lists, on which he is not included, only provide a part of the picture.

A conflict arose with lodge Salomon about the manner in which officers were elected.<sup>158</sup> Provincial Grand Master Jacob Eilbracht wanted to stop the Worshipful Master of De Standvastigheid 'having rank and seat immediately after the Provincial Deputy Grand Master and therefore above the Provincial Grand Wardens'.<sup>159</sup> On 24-6-1774 during the yearly Grand Lodge meeting, at which representatives of both Bengal



Fig. 4.11: Anonymous, silhouet portrait of Olke Andringa (1741-1812), member of the lodges Salomon and De Standvastigheid, ca. 1775-1791. Whereabouts unknown. Reproduced from: rkd.nl. (Also reproduced in: Lutter/Christiaans 1994, p. 100.)

Fig. 4.12: Portrait of Gozewijn Willem Hendrik de Vriese (1752-1812), member of De Standvastigheid. Collection unknown. Reproduced from: Lutter/Christiaans 1994, p. 121.

lodges were present, it was proposed that the Worshipful Master of De Standvastigheid should be chosen from the Grand Wardens one year and from the Wardens of either lodge every other year. An objection was made by three officers of De Standvastigheid - Worshipful Master Verspijck and Wardens Jeths and Boogaard - because they thought that their members should be free to elect a Worshipful Master from their own midst. However, the proposal was approved by a majority vote. Verspeijck accepted the position of Deputy Provincial Grand Master and proposed Boogaardt as his successor as Worshipful Master, but Jacob Eilbracht insisted the new rule would be applied immediately. This meant one of the Grand Provincial Wardens, either Thierry Reynard or Caspar Eilbracht, had to be elected for this position. Reynard declined his candidacy due to 'indisposition', from which automatically followed that the Provincial Grand Master's brother was now Worshipful Master of De Standvastigheid.<sup>160</sup> A happy coincidence to say the least.

Boogaard complained about the procedure and resigned as Warden. He demanded an explanation and threatened to contact the Grand Lodge himself. On 7-9-1774 his complaint was heard in a meeting of De Standvastigheid. On the question why he was not considered fit as Deputy, he was assured there would have been no objection. It was then discussed that Warden Jeths had to resign as he was about to leave for Kassimbazaar, proposing Van der Velden as replacement. He wanted to decline the offer in favour of Boogaard, which everyone accepted. The case would have been resolved quietly, were it not that lodge Salomon disapproved the decision on 24-10-1774 on the grounds that Boogaard 'instead of submitting himself, wanted to submit the whole Lodge'.<sup>161</sup> In turn Van der Velde objected to this decision after which the discussion got so out of hand that the Provincial Grand Master requested that he would take off his jewel. Van der Velde then stormed out of the meeting.

The minutes of these meetings were sent to the Grand Lodge on 11-1-1775. The (somewhat coloured) accompanying letter of Salomon announced that Boogaard had been 'finally disapproved' or expelled on 24-10-1774, while Van der Velden 'had misbehaved in the most offensive manner in a full Lodge'.<sup>162</sup> Salomon wrote about him:

[..] who would not have hesitated, despite [being a] Past Warden, to mock in public the measures taken, and with uninitiated to glorify himself as a deported Freemason.

On which irregularities the Resolution of Seclusion taken on 24-10-1774 had been communicated to the English Provincial Lodge in Bengal, with request to report it to all lodges under its rule; requesting this Sentence be confirmed in the National Grand Lodge, and to deny the aforementioned Brother J.W. van den Velde access everywhere.<sup>163</sup>

In December 1775 the Grand Lodge replied:

Considering the misconduct of the Brother Johan Warner van den Velde, We assume, that Your Honourable has ruled well and just, following the 4th Article of the 7th Chapter, Page 86. Compared to the 2nd and 6th Article of Duties, Page 16 and 20, and take such for Notification. [...]

Furthermore noting the serious procedures concerning this Brother, to even go outside our limits, and then to request the English Provincial Grand Master in Bengal to write to all Lodges, in his District, in order to refuse the aforementioned Brother Van Den Velde and keep him from access, does make it known to us that Your Honourable lives in a good understanding with that authority, which so far We can approve, but cannot unfeign to convey to Your Honourable our regret, on the support which you seek from strangers, as the power of confirmation and even the research of the grievances, according to the 4th Article of the 1st Chapter Page 30 belongs only to us.<sup>164</sup>

Probably Van der Velden was vocal about his feelings more often than was good for him. On 28-7-1778 the VOC also had him 'suspended from his function, to be sent to Batavia at the opportunity'.<sup>165</sup>

Lodge De Standvastigheid was not formally installed by Salomon until 2-11-1774.<sup>166</sup> This gave cause for another conflict, this time about the representation of lodges in the annual Provincial Grand Lodge meeting, suggesting that the members of Salomon still bore a grudge over past events. Salomon asked the advice of the Grand Lodge, which decided the lodges in Bengal were represented at the annual meeting 'Ergo, those of De Standvastigheid as well'.<sup>167</sup>

The lack of documents relating to De Standvastigheid after 1774, raises questions. Would Eilbracht, by installing his brother as Worshipful Master, have succeeded in merging De Standvastigheid back into lodge Salomon again? After all, it was not uncommon for lodges to merge to keep up sufficient membership numbers in difficult times. Remarkable is that the correspondence between Salomon and the Grand Lodge dating after 1774, does not mention De Standvastigheid or its demise.

On the precise moment the lodge was erased, masonic historians have not yet agreed, putting the date between 1782 and 1815.<sup>168</sup> The Grand Lodge correspondence registers were detailed and survived, so the lack of registered correspondence after 1774 does suggest the lodge ceased its activities in or shortly after 1774. This would also explain why lodge members Kraijenhoff, Andringa, Van Midlum, Wieman, Regel and Heining transferred to lodge Salomon, where they are mentioned as members in or after 1775. Considering the files of the Grand Treasurer still listed the contribution of De Standvastigheid as overdue since 1777 in 1804 that suggests money was still received in 1776.<sup>169</sup> However, he did note 'No overview whatsoever of how much behind'.<sup>170</sup>

#### ◆ *Other freemasons in Bengal*

Archives of several lodges refer to lodge members departing for India. Schill's *Gedenkboek* (1843) mentioned a meeting of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia in 1769 'at the occasion of a farewell meal for the Brother Faure at his leave for Bengal'.<sup>171</sup> This was most likely Boudewijn Versewel Faure (1734-1770), appointed as director of Bengal in 1769 (fig. 4.13).<sup>172</sup> He may have visited or intended to visit lodge Salomon, but died shortly after his arrival in India.

A number of Dutch freemasons were active in Bengal way after the closing of the lodges Salomon and De Standvastigheid. On 24-11-1786 the English Provincial Grand Lodge in India called for the members 'of all foreign lodges and the sisters of the Foreign Settlements' to attend the celebration of St. John's Day.<sup>173</sup> As discussed above, the term 'sisters' is open to interpretation. Between 1785 and 1792 the Past Master of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia, Isaac Titsingh, was in Bengal as director of the Dutch trade post in Chinsurah.<sup>174</sup> His life and work, and his role in cultural mediation between East and West, have been well described by Frank Lequin.<sup>175</sup> As a freemason travelling between Batavia, Bengal, China and Japan, Titsingh was in a unique position to facilitate contact between the lodges in the area and arrange the commission of special objects. As there was no Dutch lodge available during his time in Bengal, Titsingh may have



Fig. 4.13: Mourning plate for Boudewijn Versewel Faure at the Dutch Church in Chinsurah, after 1770. Painted wooden panel, 100.5 x 100 cm. Collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.no. NG-113. Reproduced from: Stevens 1998, p. 91.

frequented those of the British. The fact that his presence was well known to British freemasons, is clear from an invitation to join the St. John's Day celebrations of the Provincial Grand Lodge in the Harmonic Tavern in Calcutta on 8-1-1787, which he politely declined.<sup>176</sup> On 17-12-1788 Titsingh and 'other Masons of that Colony [= Chinsurah]' were invited again.<sup>177</sup> He did attend the St. John's Day gala in the Court House on 14-1-1789, organized by the lodge East Indian Arms that had been active in Bengal since 1730<sup>178</sup>:

[invitations were sent to] Bro. Titsingh, Governor of Chinsurah and other Masons of that Colony, to Bro. De Bretel and the other masons of Chandernagore; also to the masons of Serampore (Danish settlement) and to the Sisters of these Colonies; according to what had been customary on such occasions formerly.<sup>179</sup>

The Past Provincial Grand Master, Jacob Eilbracht, remained in Bengal until 1790. When he left, Titsingh said about his 'brother':

[...] the merchant Eilbracht has been appointed by the Government as Authority on the [Coromandel] Coast, the whole colony is thanking God to be rid of such a pest of society. Only his brother [Caspar Eilbracht] remains, who it is also necessary to remove from here, if peace and harmony are to be restored again.<sup>180</sup>

As discussed below, Eilbracht would be involved in the founding of another lodge in Paliacatta. Titsingh kept in contact with his mother lodge in Batavia during his stay in Bengal. The minutes of La Vertueuse recorded on 21-6-1792 that a payment of 400 Spanish piasters (a reimbursement of money lent to French prisoners of war to be able to return home to Mauritius, see chapter 5), would be transferred via captain Jan Craaij of the ship Schaagen. He was about to leave for Mauritius and after collecting this sum was to deliver it to Bengal, to the aforementioned freemason Cornelis van Citters Aertnoutszoon 'to find out the costs of ordering some Table wares from there, for which the Brother Titsingh will supply an estimate of the necessities to said Brother van Citters'.<sup>181</sup> Van Citters had several years earlier become a member of a lodge in Surat, discussed below. In 1784 he was appointed Chief of Cassimbar and Patna (Bengal). By 1787 Van Citters was given the title of senior merchant, and in March 1792 he succeeded Titsingh as director of the factory in Bengal.<sup>182</sup> Titsingh left for Batavia in 1792. Van Citters continued his business for the Company under difficult circumstances, until the trade post in Bengal was eventually taken over by the British in 1795. On 17-3-1795 the minutes of La Vertueuse recorded the news that Craaij had indeed collected the money 'and so handed it over to van Citters, who had Table wares made for it, and so received the remainder'.<sup>183</sup> Today we can barely imagine it was common to have to wait patiently for three years for basic goods like new table cloths.

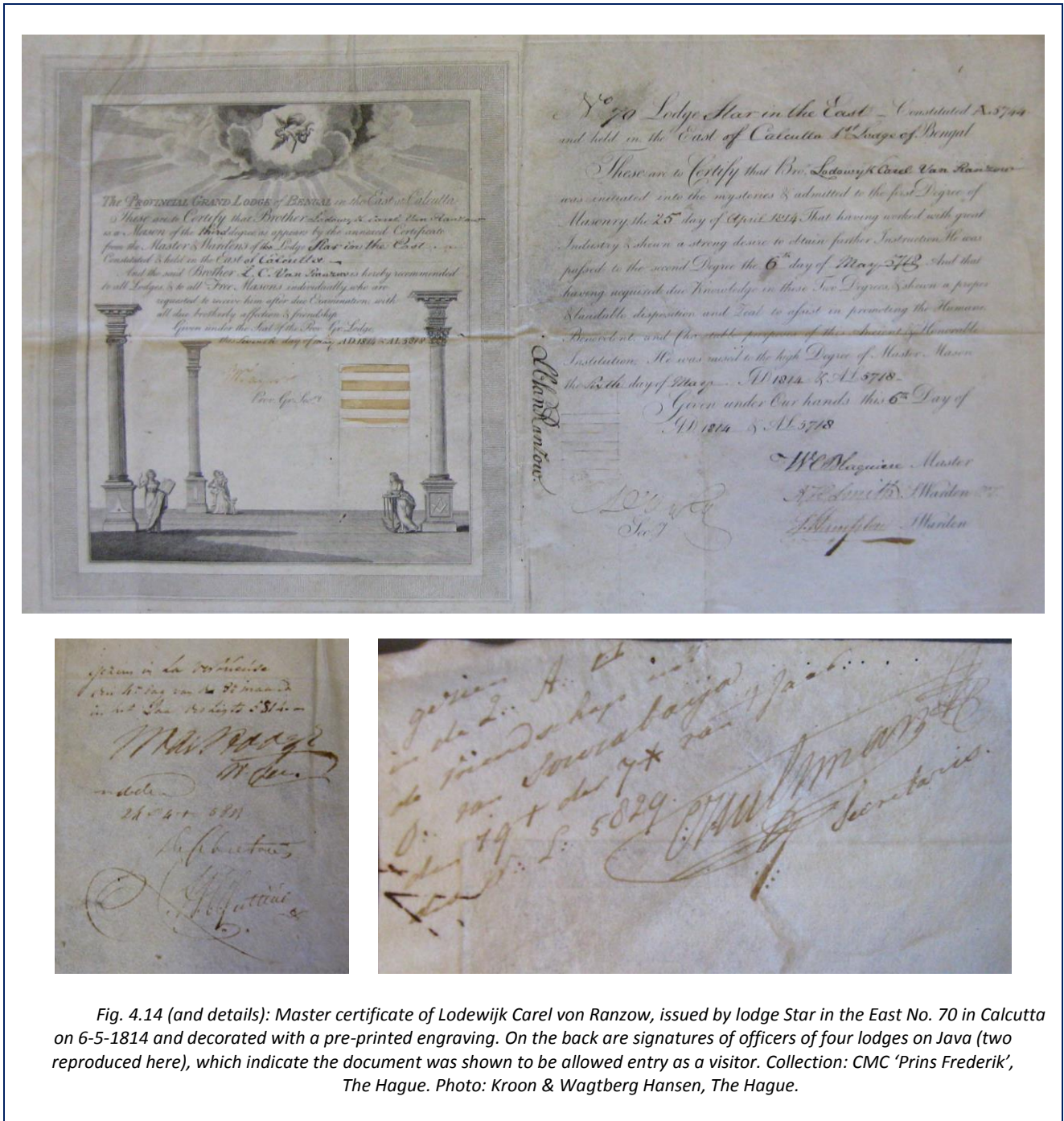


Fig. 4.14 (and details): Master certificate of Lodewijk Carel van Ranzow, issued by lodge Star in the East No. 70 in Calcutta on 6-5-1814 and decorated with a pre-printed engraving. On the back are signatures of officers of four lodges on Java (two reproduced here), which indicate the document was shown to be allowed entry as a visitor. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

Such contacts must have given the members of La Verteusue a better insight into the situation of the lodges in Bengal than the Grand Lodge. Indeed the lodge wrote to The Hague on 3-2-1797:

[...] the Venerable Lodge Salomon that was in Chinsura in Bengal favored with this title [= Provincial Grand Lodge], despite attempts made recently to restore it again under the name of Salomon, and there is no realistic outlook anymore, that this place will be of any importance to our homeland ever again.<sup>184</sup>

The minutes of the lodge then recorded on 10-10-1802:

[...] the Worshipful Master exhibited a letter written by the so called Brother Imbert in Bengal which after being read one felt that the necessary verification of it was lacking, to recognize said Imbert as Brother, it was agreed for now not to pay any attention to it until the Worshipful Master has corresponded with the Brother Bruer in private.<sup>185</sup>

On 11-12-1813 the governor general of British India, Francis Edward Rawdon-Hastings, Earl of Moira (1754-1826), past Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, was welcomed in the lodges in Calcutta. He was to fulfil the position of Provincial Grand Master for the British lodges. At the occasion of his leave for India he had been presented with a jewel made by Johan Christiaan Burckhardt (1772-1848), son of the aforementioned silversmith of lodge La Vertu in Leiden (see chapter 2).<sup>186</sup> A membership list of the newly erected Moira Lodge [Freedom & Fidelity] of that year included a Dutch name: J[acob] A[ndries] van Braam (1771-1820), earlier a member of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia.<sup>187</sup> In the archive of La Vertueuse is also a letter by the English C[harles] Assey, dating from circa 1814, requesting a masonic certificate on the evening of his leave for India, to be able to show it as proof of membership on his arrival. Assey asked the lodge if any commissions were needed, such as carrying correspondence, payments or goods. This shows that, although the Dutch lodges and the VOC were no longer active, the same network of relationships remained in place, even in times of war and occupation. A second letter by Assey dated September 1814 noted that he had conveyed formal greetings to the Earl of Moira on behalf of the Dutch lodges. Assey also noted that part of the correspondence carried by him was written in Dutch and therefore sent to Chinsurah for translation.<sup>188</sup> That implies Dutch freemasons were still present there, for it was not allowed to show a non-initiate masonic correspondence. On 9-5-1816 it was proposed to make sir William Grant Keir (1772-1852), Past Master of Moira Lodge, an honorary member of La Vertueuse in Batavia.<sup>189</sup>

In the CMC collection is a lodge certificate belonging to Lodewijk Carel von Ranzow (later *Resident of Riouw*), issued by lodge Star in the East No. 70 in Calcutta on 6-5-1814 (fig. 4.14).<sup>190</sup> The certificate was signed on the reverse by officers of the lodges Von Ranzow visited during his stay on Java: De Vriendschap in Soerabaya on 4-8-1814 and 19-7-1819, as well as De Ster in het Oosten in Batavia on 19-6-1837. This again illustrates how a masonic certificate functioned somewhat like an international passport.

On 17-9-1814 lodge La Constante et Fidèle in Semarang wrote to lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia, regarding a letter received by a brother G. Gaudin in Chandanagore (the French settlement post near Chinsurah), addressed to the lodges in Batavia, Soerabaya and Semarang. La Constante et Fidèle requested to forward the letter to lodges De Vriendschap and La Fidèle Sincérité.<sup>191</sup> The letter itself was lost, but this example again illustrates how lodges communicated along the trade network.

Archives of (former) British lodges in India and Ceylon are preserved in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London. Future research of these documents could bring more information to light on such international relationships, and perhaps even about such 'key players' as Titsingh.

#### ◆ *Lodge De Langgewenschte in Negapatnam*

Reynier van Vlissingen (1734-1783), former senior merchant and Worshipful Master of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia, was appointed in 1771 as director and governor of the Coromandel Coast. His office was located in the Dutch fort at Negapatnam (= Negapattinam).<sup>192</sup> His appointment probably helped to create the right circumstances for the founding of a lodge, which would be called De Langgewenschte (sometimes also called Le Longtemps Desirée, meaning: the since long desired). Adam Gotlieb Hen[c]k (1737-1780), enseign and surveyor, sent a request for a Constitution to the Grand Lodge on 10-9-1772<sup>193</sup>:

The Great Architect of this whole area, in his great well-kindness has finally pleased, to shine upon us with the glowing Light, and allow us to found a capable Lodge, which we have started under favorable permission of the Highness of these lands [...].<sup>194</sup>

This wording as well as the lodge name, suggests that there must have been a desire to do so earlier, but the number of required freemasons (seven Masters) may not have been reached before. A concept-Constitution was dated 9-11-1773 by the Grand Lodge (fig. 4.15).<sup>195</sup> The founding members included, apart from Van Vlissingen and Henk, the following men: Hendrik Ambrosius Johnson (died 1781), a merchant; Johan Hendrik Strouck (died 1773), a bookkeeper at the *negotiehuis* (trade house); Broerius Brouwer (1745-1791), a provisional wages bookkeeper and secretary of the *Weeskamer* (an administrative body dealing with the legates of deceased VOC employees); Jan Apingh (died 1779), a dispenser; Pieter Willem Gee[c]ke (died 1789), a junior merchant, and Johan Frederik Samuel Neitge, a provisional assistant.<sup>196</sup>

In the financial administration of the Grand Lodge, listing all international money orders received, the costs of the foundation were recorded. In September 1772, a sum of fl. 480,- was transferred via member Jan van Eijdsden, to be delivered in 1773:

For A Constitution on Parchment		f 105	
Sealing and Signing of 25 Certificates		<u>f 35</u>	
			f 120 [sic] Grand Lodge
	18 paperback	at 50 Stuivers	45
24 Lire Maconne	-   6 french binding	at 65 Stuivers	19,20
24 Code Macon	8 paperback	at 40 Stuivers	48
25 Sheets Parchment		at 12 Stuivers	15
For the Chest			<u>2,10</u>
			f 130 Van Laak
Remainder considered as Don Gratuit			<u>f 230</u>
	Thus		f 480. <sup>197</sup>

The new lodge had apparently ordered copies of song and law books, *La Lire maçonne* and *Le code maçon*, as well as certificates to provide to new members. The colours of the lodge were white and green, as stated in a letter informing Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon of the formalities on 19-11-1773.<sup>198</sup> (This did not please Salomon, which on 11-1-1775 complained to the Grand Lodge that De Langgewenschte had not formally corresponded and 'Only in an indifferent manner recommended some Brethren recipiated by them'.<sup>199</sup>) On the same day the Grand Lodge sent the Constitution to Negapatnam, informing De Langgewenschte that things had not gone according to plan:

Although We could have postponed the expedition of this Diploma, until Your Worshipful's original Letter, with the sent f 480 had been handed to us, we think; that if the Brother Jan Van Eijdsden does not show, And those Payments, which Your Worshipful has trusted to him, to remit to Us, will not come to the right destination, Your Worshipful in such unexpected case will be willing to replace that amount, having been informed, that said Jan Van Eijdsden was kept laying sick at the Cape, without one knowing if he is alive or dead. Meanwhile We have hereby, wanted to well enable Your Worshipful, to continue the Masonic work.<sup>200</sup>

On 30-3-1774 the Grand Lodge sent an 'Instruction to the Brother Johan Snijders, Captain of the ship De Paauw, for the Chamber of Delft destined to Batavia':

Arriving at the Cape of Good Hope, to inform where the Brother Jan Van Eijdsden, who was to repatriate on the ship Alkemade, has gone? If the same, having been ill there has died, or transferred to another ship, that is missing!

Also if there is no-one, who has any knowledge, or could explain, where the Payments [...] entrusted to him [...] have gone? Whether that supply, at his passing at The Cape of Good Hope, has been given into custody [...]; or that such has to be sought from the estate of his Family or other confidants.<sup>201</sup>

Snijders left Delft on 11-5-1774 and arrived in Batavia on 25 October of the same year.<sup>202</sup> Meanwhile, lodge De Langgewenschte wrote to the Grand Lodge on 18-9-1774, that it had received the correspondence of 29-7-1773 via the ship Bovenkerker Polder.<sup>203</sup> The lodge was grateful to have been constituted and promised to reimburse the money if Van Eijdsden 'against hope and expectation' would be confirmed deceased:

[...] though we have from Cape of Good Hope received correspondence from said Brother van Eijdsden, that [he] was fit again [and] about to leave from there with the ship Duijnenburg, which keel according to news has arrived safely.

We will at the first opportunity make ourselves known to the Lodge in Bengal [= Salomon] which would have happened immediately, were it not that our letters were returned.<sup>204</sup>

The lodge also promised to send a *Don Gratuit* of fl. 120,-. The earliest known membership list of De Langgewenschte dates from 1774 and still includes all the founders, except Strouck. Newly added were the

652-2

N<sup>o</sup> 50.  
 Concept Constitutie  
 voor de Loge  
De Langgewenschte  
 te Nagapatnam,  
 op de kust Coromandel.  
Wit met Groen.  
 9 November  
 1773.

Repreteerende onder het District  
 van de Prins Groot Meester  
 in Bengalen.  
 Zoowel als de Gevoornigheid  
 te Colombo, en d'oprechtheid  
 te Punto Gale, beide op  
 de kust van Ceylon.

Wij allen ende een iegelyk  
 van onze zogenoemde  
 Broeders.  
 Wij zaren Baron Van Doetelaer  
 Colonel van d'Infanterie en Majoor  
 van de Hollandfche Gardes te voet,  
 in dienst van H. H. Mogend de Storm  
 Staten Generaal der Vereenigde Nederl.  
 &c. &c. &c. Kapudant van zyn Doorlugtige  
 Hoogheid, den Heere Prince van Oranje  
 en Nassau, Erfstadsouder &c. &c. &c.  
 Heer d'Ingeland van Zynland, &c.  
 Groot Meester Nationaal van  
 d'Aloude en zegerde Maatschappij  
 der Vrije en zengeromene Metzelaers,  
 in de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden,  
 Report van de Generaliteit en in verhoor  
 Volkplantingen Salut

Doen te weten dat de Afgbare Broeders,  
 Reynier Van Eshingen, Hendrik Ambrosius  
 Johnson, Johan Hendrik Stuck, Broerius Bruwer,  
 Jan Spingh, Adam Gottlieb Henck, Pieter Willem  
 Geelke, Joh. Fred. Samuel Neitge &c. zig met schuldige  
 eere, by Request, aan ons geadenstort en verzogt  
 hebben, om met een wettig Constitutie voorzien  
 te mogen worden, ten einde te Nagapatnam, op de  
 kust van Coromandel een zogenoemde Loge op te richten

over

Fig. 4.15: Concept Constitution of Lodge De Langgewenschte in Negapatnam, 9-11-1773.  
 Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 652-2. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.



Fig. 4.16: Master certificate of Willem Verhaage, issued by lodge Social Friendship no. 4 E.C. in Madras on 23-8-1803. The calligraphy was done by hand and the border design was drawn in pencil. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

names of Johannes Abraham Bronsveld, the First sworn clerk of Police; Willem Luyken, a commissioner at the Mint and Gerradus van Haeften, probably a member of the Justice Department. They were joined by two men who can probably be identified as soldiers: Christoffel Hoffman and Johan Hendrik Trip (died 1775).<sup>205</sup> According to this document, the lodge met each Thursday at 18.30 hours 'in its Own House at the beach in Nagapatnam'.<sup>206</sup> Bronsveld, who had taken the position of Secretary, wrote to The Hague on 11-1-1775 and transferred the *Don Gratuit*.<sup>207</sup> Meanwhile the Grand Lodge conveyed the unfortunate news that Van Eijsden 'had perished' on 19-4-1775.<sup>208</sup> It asked to resend the earlier payment, as well as the contributions the lodge owed since. As a special Grand Master was to be elected in the Netherlands to preside over the higher degrees of *Élu* and *Écossois*, the Grand Lodge also demanded a list of members who had obtained those degrees.

The lodge dutifully transferred another fl. 120,- on 11-1-1776 by means of money order made out by Van Vlissingen to Jacobus Swarth and Hans Nicolaas Lunge, merchants in Amsterdam.<sup>209</sup> The membership list of 1776 mentions founding members Van Vlissingen, Henck, Geeke, Neitge, Bronsveld, Brouwer, Appingh, Van Haeften and Luijken. This time seven new names were added. Bronsveld probably proposed his colleague Marthinus Stoffenberg (died 1779), Secretary of Police and cashier, while Luyken probably did

the same for Jacob van Tessel, commissioner and pupil at the Mint. The others were bookkeeper Jacob Beijster; three military men: enseign Emanuel Gregoor, captain Gijsbertus Zeegelaar and corporal Johan Fredrik Schols; as well as the Secunde of Palicol Jacques Theodore Vaucquet de Tan.<sup>210</sup>

Bronsveld wrote to the Grand Lodge a last time on 15-10-1777, enquiring if the payments and letters of 15-10-1776 had arrived safely.<sup>211</sup> He mentioned a new money transfer of fl. 120,-, and noted that no initiations or changes in the officer's functions had taken place in the past year. The next surviving document is the last membership list, dating from 1778.<sup>212</sup> This again includes founders Van Vlissingen, Henck, Geeke, Bronsveld, Brouwer, Appingh, van Haeften and Luijken, as well as later members Stoffenberg, Gregoor and Van Tessel. The only new name was that of Joost Lammerts, who was initiated and appointed Servant. The lodge was still using a house at the beach.

It is not clear if, and if so how long, the lodge was still active after 1778. In 1781 the fort in Negapatnam was taken over by the British under general Munro. It was definitively transferred to English rule in 1784 according to the Treaty of Paris.<sup>213</sup> Masonic historians have assumed that this and other lodges in the area stopped their activities, but put the closing date between 1782 and 1788.<sup>214</sup> The administration of the Grand Treasurer still listed De Langgewenschte in 1804 among other lodges whose contributions were overdue, again indicating the Grand Lodge was not one to give up soon, and it was not until 1809, that the Dutch masonic almanac listed the lodge as 'out of communication'.<sup>215</sup> Here too, Dutch freemasons probably had to turn to British lodges after the decline of their own. For instance, Willem Verhaage received the three basic degrees in lodge Social Friendship No. 4 E.C. in Madras, as proof of which he received a masonic certificate on 23-8-1803 (fig. 4.16).<sup>216</sup> The document, kept in the collection of the CMC, is calligraphed by hand and decorated with drawings of masonic symbols. Verhaage then travelled to Batavia, where he became a member of lodge La Fidèle Sincérité.<sup>217</sup> He also visited lodge De Vriendschap in Soerabaya in 1810, as indicated on the back of his certificate.

#### ◆ *Lodge St. Jean de la Concorde in Surat*

Between 1768 and 1777 Martinus Joan Bosman held the position of director in the Dutch factory in Surat, at a time when few Europeans were present there. Hageman suggested that a lodge was probably founded with the help of French freemasons, which was therefore named St. Jean de la Concorde (also listed as Sint Jan Concorde).<sup>218</sup> It is unclear when exactly the lodge started its activities, but this must have been before 1-12-1773. That is the date on which a certificate was issued by the lodge for the higher degree of *Maître Élu des Neuf* to Cornelis van Citters Aernoutzoon (1749/50-1798) (fig. 4.17).<sup>219</sup> Van Citters travelled at the age of 18 to Batavia on the ship Willem de Vijfde in 1768. He was sent on to Surat, where he held the office of Secretary of Police in the years 1768-1770. He was then appointed merchant and Chief of the factory in Brootchia (1770-1773), followed by the function of warehouse master (1773-1780).<sup>220</sup> Van Citters' certificate was signed by what must have been the five main officers of the lodge. Acting as Secretary was Nicolaas Kyronius (1742-1818), also using the surname Holmberg, a provisional merchant (fig. 4.20). The Senior Warden was Willem Lodewijk Sontag (1749-1780), a junior merchant and cashier. Jacob Goverts Tirion, First clerk of Police and Secretary of Justice, did not state his function in the lodge. Neither did the last two men who remain to be identified further, with the surnames De Cary and Blain des Cormiers. The latter was probably a captain or officer of a French ship from Ile de France.<sup>221</sup> They both added 'GE' to their signatures to indicate they possessed the degree of *Grand Élu*.<sup>222</sup>

In 1774 Holmberg wrote to lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia, asking for assistance in obtaining a Constitution.<sup>223</sup> Remarkably, this was another lodge that did not contact Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon on the matter. Perhaps Holmberg was unaware of its existence or had other reasons not to do so. La Vertueuse then wrote to the Grand Lodge, as can be deduced from a draft in a copybook of correspondence, which contains some dotted lines and is only partially readable:

In answer to... [your] letter though again postponed [by] the leaving of the return ships in January, we let this [letter] serve as an accompaniment to [that] of the brother Nicolaas Holmberg, who during his time in office has given us the strongest proof of diligence for our Noble science, & will apply himself much to... from [you] obtain & diploma for the erected Lodge in Surat named St. Jean la Concorde of which he is a brother & worthy member.

The task which... [they] give themselves is the expansion of our royal art, though we do not doubt the wish for the so honoured Constitution for these brothers, we add our request to their not [?], about which we

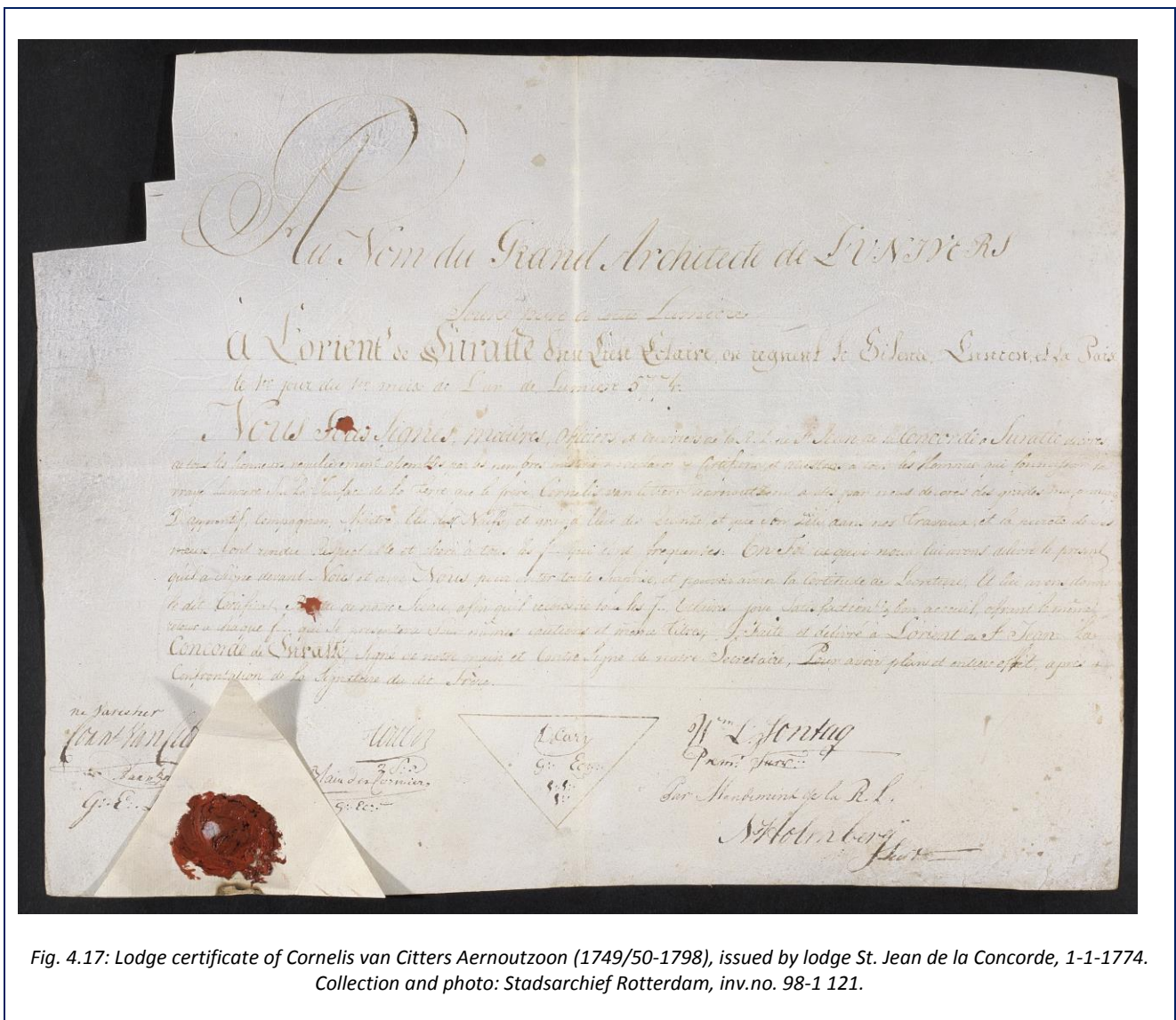


Fig. 4.17: Lodge certificate of Cornelis van Citters Aernoutzoon (1749/50-1798), issued by lodge St. Jean de la Concorde, 1-1-1774. Collection and photo: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, inv.no. 98-1 121.

hope [?] your worshipful will your... lacking a direct opportunity to send Thither, to already please us to bestow the preliminary of those papers.<sup>224</sup>

Of course La Vertueuse was not permitted to grant Constitutions and simply forwarded the request to the Grand Lodge, adding that it would be happy to assist. Holmberg repatriated on 29-7-1774 with the ship Mars, probably couriating the request and La Vertueuse's recommendation himself.<sup>225</sup> A request for a Constitution dated 11-9-1775 was signed by him in The Hague (fig. 4.18), and was submitted on behalf of Van Citters and the aforementioned lodge officers, as well as captain and equipment master Abraham van der Heggen and sailor Matthias Monté. They were joined by two men who remain to be identified further, but again have French sounding surnames: Moncrif de la Grange and Le Chevalier de Grenier. It would be interesting if the latter could be identified as Jacques Raymond Vicomte de Grenier (1736-1800), a famous French navigator, born on the isle of Martinique. The last signature was of a mister Thomassen, may belong to (a relative of) Joh[an] Martinus Thomasse[n], a third mate who would later become captain and join lodges in Trinconomalee and Rotterdam.<sup>226</sup>

The concept Constitution dated 1-11-1775 includes the same names.<sup>227</sup> It was sent by the Grand Lodge with an accompanying letter:

On the instant request by the Brother Nicolaas Holmberg, who signed the Request in Your name; and the favourable recommendation by the Brethren of the Venerable Lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia [...] We are inclined to give a favourable permission therefore; and to provide Your Worshipful the requested Diploma, which is enclosed hereby.<sup>228</sup>

711-1

Aan de zeer Edele zeer Verlichte  
 en heere Emaansigelen Nationale  
 Lands Groot Meester en verveer  
 heere Edele Groot Officieren der Orde  
 &c. &c. &c.

Geeren verzoentelyk te kennen de Broeders Willem Lodowijk  
 Vonlag, Cornelis Van Litter, Amis, Firion, Morenif  
 de la Grange, Abraham Van Der Heeggen, Matthias  
 Monte, Le Chevalier de Gronier, Thomassen, Klein  
 du Senior, De Cary, Nicolaas Holmberg, meermalen  
 Meesters Metzelaers, alle domicilieerende te Surat, en elders  
 dat verzoeken door een opzigten yver aangewort, tot het  
 openen der vriendlyke Kunst, voornemens zyn een wettig  
 Loge ter plaatse vormcent op te reghen; verzoekende ten  
 dien einde met de daar toe nodige Constitutie voorzien  
 te worden, en des van het Nationaal Lichaam der Broederschap  
 in Holland, als wettig erkent te mogen worden; wilkens  
 zynse zig aan derzelver Wetten en Reglementen in alle  
 opzigten te onderwerpen &c.

In welk doende &c.  
 Ter ordonnantie van de verzoeken Broeders  
 N. Holmberg  
 j. v.

In de naam  
 van St. Jean de la  
 Concorde

Schramm Sage  
 den 11 Sept 1775.

Fig. 4.18: Request for a Constitution by the founders of lodge St. Jean de la Concorde in Surat, 11-9-1775. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 711-1. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.





Fig. 4.20: Anonymous, Portrait of Nicolaas Kyronius Holmberg de Beckfelt (1742-1818), member of lodge St. Jean de la Concorde in Suratte, ca. 1775-1800. Pastel, 16 x 13 cm. Private collection. Reproduced from: rkd.nl.



Figs. 4.21: Series of silk aprons, probably for the Écossois degrees, belonging to the Holmberg de Beckfeldt family in the East Indies, early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The right apron is missing rosette in the lower left corner. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.nos. 5529, 5532 and 5530. Photos: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

So strictly speaking, the lodge worked before 1775 without a valid authorisation, making its activities illegal and Van Citters' *Élu* certificate invalid.

The lodge wrote a thank you letter for the mediation efforts of La Vertueuse on 7-4-1777, acknowledging the receipt of the formal document (fig. 4.19), but it is not clear how long it remained active.<sup>229</sup> Activities may have been hindered by the English takeover of the Dutch and French posts in the region in 1781-1784, until the Dutch regained their rule over the area, which would last until 1795.<sup>230</sup> In 1804 the administration of the Grand Treasurer noted St. Jean de la Concorde as behind with contributions since 1778<sup>231</sup>, and the Dutch masonic almanac of 1808 noted it was 'out of communication'.<sup>232</sup> However, a memorial publication of 1843 recorded that 'Both before and after the war in 1796 La Vertueuse regularly corresponded with several lodges in [India], such as [...] St. Jean La Concorde'.<sup>233</sup> The surviving correspondence of La Vertueuse does not confirm this statement. According to Hageman, the lodge was dissolved in 1783.<sup>234</sup> The most recent overview of lodges under Dutch rule considers St. Jean de la Concorde as 'out of communication' since 1788.<sup>235</sup>

Lodge member Nicolas [Kyronius] Holmberg was raised into Swedish nobility in 1789, adopting the surname De Beckfelt. There are several aprons and other regalia in the CMC collection, which belonged to him and his descendants in the Dutch East Indies (fig. 4.21a-c).

#### ■ *Lodge De Voorzigtigheid in Palliacatte*

After the takeover of Negapatnam by the British in 1781 the Dutch trade post was transferred to the fort in Palliacatte (Pulicat) on the Coromandel Coast. Hageman wondered if lodge De Langgewenschte may have also relocated there.<sup>236</sup> In 1785 the area came back under Dutch control, after which the number of local freemasons must have increased again and supported a wish for an active lodge. Half a century later, the *Madras Freemasons Herald* of June 1848 recalled:

[...] a Lodge of Freemasons was formed and opened in the Fort Pulicat under the guidance of the Governor Jacob Eilbracht and others. It was named 'Voorzigtigheid' and its opening was celebrated by a grand ball and supper given on St. John the Baptist's day, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1794. It is added that on the surrender of the Fort in 1795 the Lodge was moved to Coopum, where it flourished for about a year and was closed in 1796, the members being scattered as the Dutch power declined.<sup>237</sup>

The chosen lodge name literally meant carefulness and referred to the cardinal virtue Prudence. Indeed Past Provincial Grand Master Jacob Eilbracht held the function of senior merchant and provisional governor of Coromandel between 1790 and 1795. A drawing published with the article shows the remnants of a gate found in Coopum (a village in Pulicat), decorated with a pair of compasses and a set square underneath an arch. These are symbols associated with freemasonry and its Royal Arch degree (fig. 4.22). A letter by Caspar Eilbracht to the Grand Lodge, dated 10-10-1798, also indicates masonic activities were still ongoing in the area:

The Worshipful Provincial Grand Master over all Lodges around the West of India and the Island Ceylon, my Very much loved Brother Jacob Eilbracht, intending to return to the homeland, and, in saying farewell, having installed me interim in the aforementioned dignities [= Provincial Grand Mastership] [...] so I take the honourable freedom to solicit from Your High Enlightened and Worshipful to confirm the same, and to be allowed to receive therefore a diploma in forma, ad vitam; thereby stipulating according to the Higher degrees that I possess, to be able to keep and practice the same dignities in all orders of the Indies, found lodges everywhere, both in ancient and modern Masonry, and to be able to provide all the degrees known to the Brotherhood, until Knight of the Red Cross in the modern, and until the Royal Arch Chapter and Knight of Jerusalem or Knight Templar in the ancient Constitution;

[...] PS requesting also to include with The diplomas to send the necessary jewels of the various higher degrees, and the bandoliers and Aprons therefore.<sup>238</sup>

The phrase 'ancient and modern Masonry' is a reference to developments in British freemasonry, where Grand Lodges of the Ancients and the Moderns were competing with each other from circa 1751 until their unification in 1813. The higher degrees mentioned here, such as the Royal Arch and the Knights Templar, are also associated with British freemasonry. Eilbracht was requesting the Dutch Grand Lodge to grant him powers over degrees that were not commonly practised in the Netherlands at the time and that only the English masonic bodies could bestow. It may be an indication that lodge Voorzigtigheid had members of both nationalities and worked with English style rituals, causing the lines to be blurred for Eilbracht, who was clearly unaware how things worked back home. As far as the Grand Lodge was concerned, it had received no word from Bengal or Coromandel for years, and it must have seemed odd that Jacob Eilbracht had acted as if he still had any official masonic capacity, let alone installing his own brother as his replacement. Not surprisingly Caspar Eilbracht's request was denied. Around the same time a new Provincial Grand Master was appointed for both the basic and the higher degrees in the Dutch East Indies (see chapter 5). The repatriation of Jacob Eilbracht would be postponed, and both brothers would eventually pass away in Pulicat.<sup>239</sup>

Little else is known about the activities of this lodge and its members. However, the visitor book of lodge La Charité in Amsterdam recorded on 15-1-1800 'G.E. Hoffman, de Voorzigtigheid', and on 17-7-1800: 'F.E. van Lawick van Pabst, Lodge de Voorzigtigheid'.<sup>240</sup> The fort in Pulicat was demolished in 1804 by the

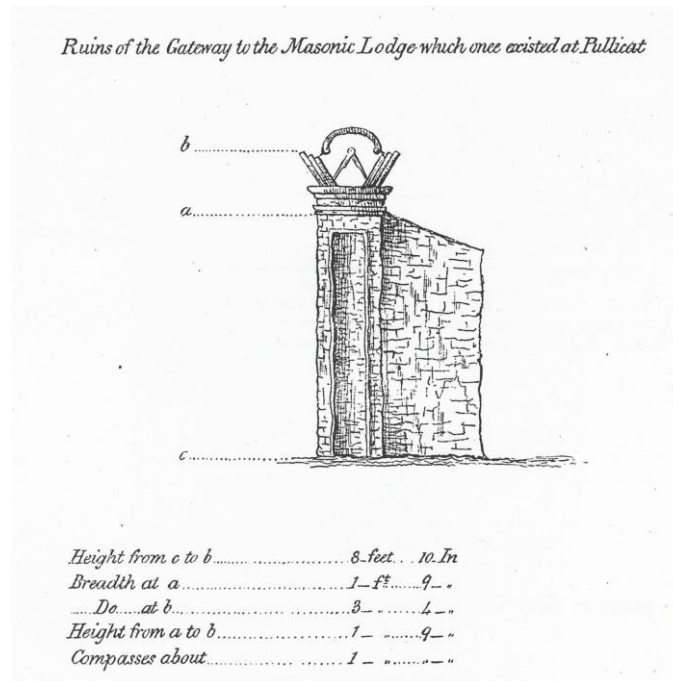


Fig: 4.22: Ruin of a gate in Coopum, as depicted in *The Madras Freemasons Herald* (1848).  
Reproduced from: Bradley 1921, p. 179.

English, and the area did not come back into Dutch rule until 1818-1825. In the archive of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia is a letter dated 25-4-1808, written by what from the signature seems a mister G.L. Dosreijn in Pullicat. He identified himself as a 'Master in the Ancient and Modern Lodges', again indicating association with English freemasonry. Dosreijn requested support for his family:

I offer Your Worshipful my apologies in advance, if the names of the Lodges today have changed [...] during Thirteen years as prisoner of war with a small or insufficient monthly sustenance in a place where high prices of provisions prevail created by the internal war of Various inland Rulers of this Coast.

Having to see with good eyes [my] family and Household struggle with a glaring hunger until almost perished [...].<sup>241</sup>

This impoverished brother asked La Vertueuse for a gift from its charity fund, to be transferred via the company of J. Obdam and Son, and/or the Brethren Jan Hendrik Meijer and Adolph Strengen. Many similar requests for assistance can be found in the archives of the lodges in Asia, illustrating that the charitable function of freemasonry was widely known and often called upon. The author of this particular letter, based his plea on information received 13 years earlier, in 1795, when lodge De Voorzegtigheid was still active.

## 4.2. Ceylon (1768-1825)

In 1638 the Dutch became allies of the King of Kandy against the Portuguese, and gained a presence in Ceylon from which they could trade cinnamon (fig. 4.23).<sup>242</sup> From 1640 the Dutch gained control over the port of Galle, followed in 1656 by Colombo, but did not hand them back to Kandy. Yearly diplomatic missions to the court were strained and resulted in war, until a new treaty in 1766 gave the Dutch control over the coastline of the island. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the competition from the English East India Company became fiercer. The first lodges were founded in the Dutch forts on Ceylon under Governor Willem Imam Falck (1736-1785, in function 1765-1785), but meanwhile the British became a greater political threat. Assistance from the French military was needed to keep the port of Trincomale in 1782. In 1785 Falck was succeeded by Willem Jacob van de Graaff (1736/37-1834).

In 1795 the Netherlands came under French rule and Prince William V fled to England. Governor Johan Gerard Van Angelbeek (1727-1799), who had only just been appointed in 1794, received conflicting instructions from the Netherlands and England. As a result the rule over the coast of Ceylon was handed over to the British without resistance in 1796. The inland remained independent under the King of Kandy. Dutch citizens had a choice to leave for Batavia or stay behind. Many kept their positions, in particular people of mixed parentage. Until 1802 only prisoners of war were sent away. As a result of the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 the whole island came under British rule, and a slow exodus of Dutch residents started, which lasted until circa 1807.<sup>243</sup> Dashwood noted that between 1800 and 1867, nine military lodges were active on Ceylon under Irish, English and Scottish Constitutions.<sup>244</sup> Any remaining Dutchmen may have visited these.

### ◆ *Lodge De Getrouwigheid in Colombo*

From correspondence received by the Grand Lodge in 1772, it is clear that a lodge was founded in Colombo several years earlier:

In the year 1768 by the arrival of our brethren Frederick Dankwaard, Johan Leonard Remmers, Frans Lodewijk Bergman and Johan Godlob Prenzel having been able to found an orderly Lodge on this Island, we did not want to waste any time to get to work and properly open our [lodge], we have also been so lucky as to accept new Brethren at our first meeting, and when we have met for the second time of the same year the youngest newly accepted Brethren were received as fellows, two fellows as masters, and again two Apprentices, thus our Lodge was already in a reasonably prospering state and we remained strong enough to continue our work even after the leave of our aforementioned [four] Brethren [...].<sup>245</sup>

The lodge first notified the Grand Lodge of its founding and name, De Getrouwigheid (sometimes translated as La Fidelité), meaning faithfulness or Fidelity, on 16-10-1768.<sup>246</sup> The letter was signed by the four aforementioned men, who all had relatively recently joined lodges in Amsterdam.

Bergman had become a member there of lodge De Resolutie in 1765 and left for Bengal as 2<sup>nd</sup> master on the ship Ganzenhoef in 1766, while Johan[nes] Remmers was a member of the same lodge since 1762. The more experienced Dankwaard had been travelling to Ceylon for the VOC since 1748, but was only registered as a member of the Amsterdam lodge De La Paix in 1766.<sup>247</sup> Prenzel's name is probably a misspelling of Johann Gotlieb Prentzler, who had become a member of lodge l'Espérance in 1763 and travelled to the East Indies for the first time in the same year. Their request may not have reached the Grand Lodge. Later correspondence suggests that a brother Durege (probably the aforementioned Jean Durege) from lodge La Paix and a captain Freine were involved in bringing a repeated request for a Constitution to the attention of the Grand Lodge in 1769.<sup>248</sup>

There is also a significant resemblance between the seal of lodge La Paix and that of De Getrouwigheid (compare figs. 2.24-2.25).<sup>249</sup> Both show a round design, enclosed by an indented border. The central image consists of masonic tools (compasses, square, plumb line and level) grouped around a blazing star. Above the pair of compasses is a dove holding an olive branch, accompanied by the sun and moon. It is topped by a banner with the lodge name. On either side of the design are cornucopias, from which not

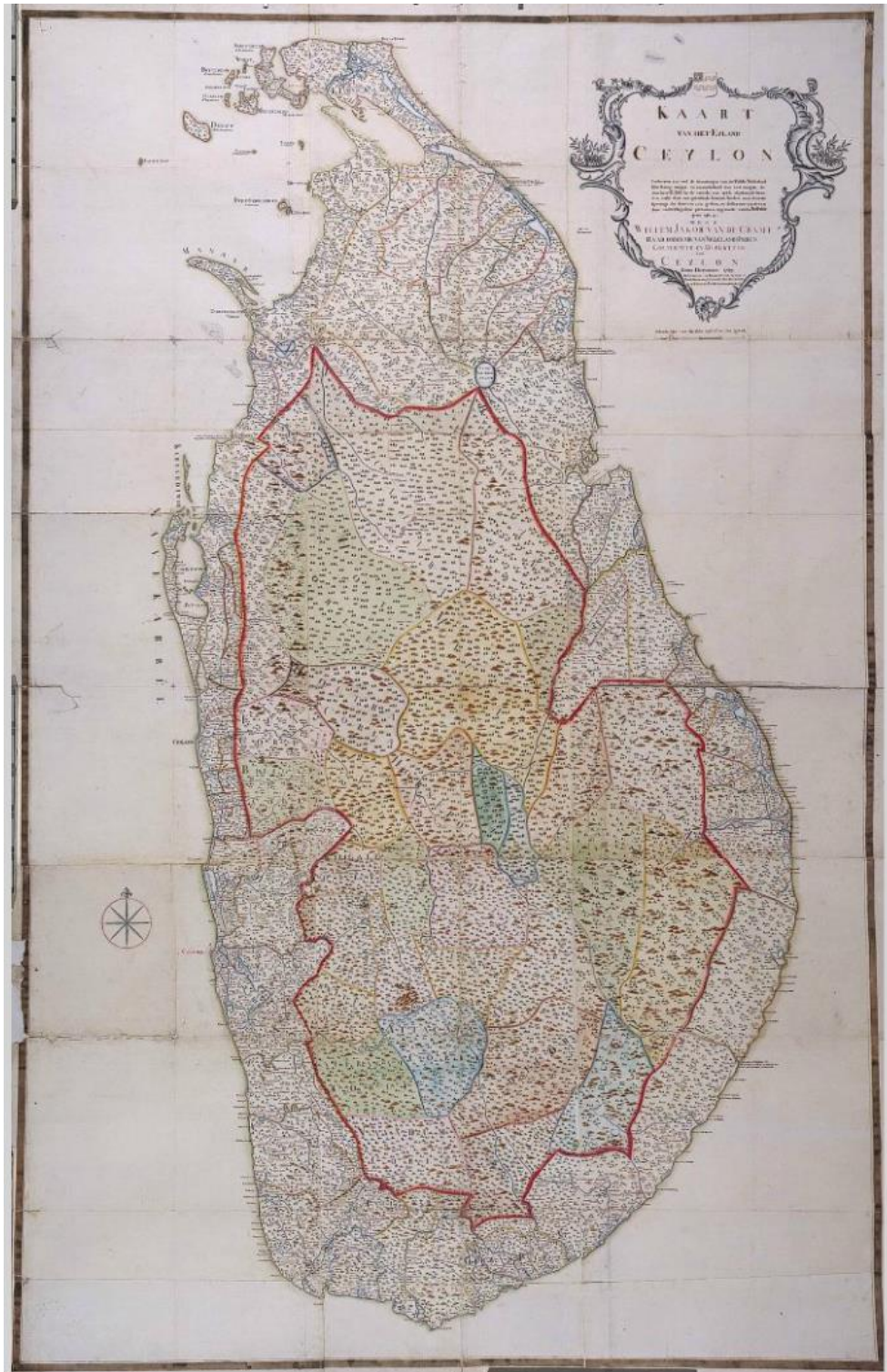


Fig. 4.23: Jean du Perron, *Map of the Island Ceylon* ('Kaart van het Eyland Ceylon, verbeterd zoo veel de bezittingen van de Edele Nederlandsche Komp. aangaat, en inzonderheid zoo veel aangaat, de aan de Edele by de vrede van 1766 afgestaande stranden ende daar aan grensende binnen landen, naar de nieuwste meetings die daar van zyn gedaan, in differente teyden en door ondergescheydene perzoonen opgemaakt vanden WelEdele groot agtb. Heer Willem Jakob van de Graaff, Raad ordinar van Nederlands Indien Gouverneur en direkteur van Ceylon'), 1789. Coloured drawing, 232 x 154 cm. Collection: National Archive, The Hague, inv.no. VEL0927. Reproduced from: [atlasmutualheritage.nl](http://atlasmutualheritage.nl).



Fig. 4.24: Print of the seal of lodge La Paix in Amsterdam. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague.  
Reproduced from: Treffers 2014, p. 1.

Fig. 4.25: Seal of the lodge De Getrouwigheid in Colombo. Reproduced from: Treffers 2014, p. 5.

bounty but hands are extended (in a gesture of friendship). These are flanked by an olive branch and an acacia sprig. In fact the only difference between them is a letter signifying the location of the lodge: 'A' for Amsterdam in the original and 'C' for Colombo or Ceylon in that of De Getrouwigheid. In both designs a hammer can be seen on the left side of the letter. All this suggests that De Getrouwigheid was a daughter lodge of La Paix.

On 1-9-1769 Grand Secretary Dubois wrote in answer to the founders' request, that the Grand Lodge required a sum of 20 Ducats for the Constitution. He also gave the lodge the usual instructions regarding yearly correspondence and contributions.<sup>250</sup> The 1772 letter summarizes the events that followed:

[...] in the year 1769 we were not less fortunate, as our brother de Freine had proposed his first and second mate so forcefully that we could not neglect to condescend this request and accept and admit both those people as Brethren. Shortly thereafter actually when we met for the second time in the year 1769, again after having obtained good references we admitted into our brotherhood one first mate, [and] one second mate and Extra ordinary fire worker, so that our Lodge started to grow from day to day. Also the year 1770 was in our favour as we found under the ships' crews some friends that had shown a particular interest for the order, and who also, after we had enquired meticulously after their behaviour and had found them to be worthy to participate in our happiness, were incorporated into the order. But the year 1771 was not favourable to us at all, as not only one in the [previous] year 1770 accepted brother changed the temporary for the Eternal, but also for the reason that after evil talk of the Profane we had to stop our meetings until we Finally had the ultimate joy to receive Letters of Constitution, whereby the Brethren who were already starting to doubt and waver, again found new courage, and joined us. [...] we have the Honour to inform [you], that we do not yet have a fixed location, and day, although the time of 6 o'clock in the evening has been agreed [...].<sup>251</sup>

This report underlines, how lodges in the region were mostly made up of the crew of Company ships. The earliest surviving membership list from 1770 no longer lists the founding members, but no less than 17 others.<sup>252</sup> Two had just 'arrived from the homeland': N. Nagttrap and Salomon van Keulen. The others were civil servants or military men, stationed locally, including François Albertus Prins (died 1774), a major; Jacobus de Bordes (1743-after 1780), a merchant, trade bookkeeper and First warehouse master; Mattheus [de Riveaux] de Boissevain, a lieutenant of Fusilliers; W. Hendrik van Bergheim (died 1789), the secretary of the *Landraad* (local judicial court); Frederik Bernard Giffenig (died 1779), a corporal and deacon of the Dutch Reformed Church in Colombo; as well as Carel Godlieb Haartz and N. Quiaart, who remain to be identified further. Eight other members resided outside Colombo at the time. Most notable was the aforementioned Samuel Radermacher, listed as 'in Bengal'. Adrianus van den Berg (died 1783), a customs

officer, was recorded as 'in Galle' and Jan Jacobus Schellus as 'in Jaffanopatnam'. Others were simply listed as 'travelling': first mate Lourens Buijs (died 1779), Paulo St. Martins, S. Roose, Jacob Leeuwer and Jan de Vos.<sup>253</sup>

When Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon learned of the lodge's founding, it wrote on 26-10-1770 to De Getrouwigheid demanding it should cease its activities, until it had received a Constitution from either the Grand Lodge or Salomon itself. On the same date Salomon made a formal complaint to the Grand Lodge that 'they [= De Getrouwigheid] had acted wrongly and against all reason' by addressing the Grand Lodge directly instead of their provincial authority.<sup>254</sup> De Getrouwigheid faithfully obeyed Salomon's order, explaining to the Grand Lodge:

[...] this was indirectly the principal cause why since that time [the receipt of Salomon's warning in January 1771] no meetings were held, so we hope that we will not be held accountable for this omission, all the more as we in the last year [1771] did not receive any European officers, and are awaiting at the first opportunity a Constitution from Bengal, though as we are finding ourselves honoured by that of Your Worshipful we hope that we are not in any way submitted to another than Your Worshipful's [Grand] Lodge, but will well be recognized as the Main Lodge of this Island and therefore empowered to grant [Constitutions] to all the Brethren who wish to found a new Lodge [...].<sup>255</sup>

In other words, the lodge immediately made its own bid for the title of Provincial Grand Lodge, this time for Ceylon. On 29-11-1770 Grand Secretary Du Bois sent a copy of his earlier letter to De Getrouwigheid, acknowledging the receipt of the membership list:

[...] we were pleased, with the request of Captein Siereveld, courier of this [letter], and by Your Worshipful ordered, besides Captain De Frein, to renew with us the request, made by Brother Durege in the year 1769, in order to obtain the requested Diploma, to found Your Worshipful Lodge [...] and now having understood, that Your Worshipful by the perishing of the Ship, with which our First provisional Rescription was sent, have also been deprived of our Resolution on the subject [...].<sup>256</sup>

Jan van Siereveld was first mate of the ship Borsele and a member of lodge La Compagnie Durable in his home town of Middelburg.<sup>257</sup> He advanced the founding fee for the lodge and carried the Constitution, as well as 50 blank certificates with the Grand Lodge's seal.<sup>258</sup> The high number shows the expectation of the lodge for an increase in membership. Meanwhile lodge Salomon continued its complaints on 12-1-1771, but the original letter was lost.<sup>259</sup> The Grand Secretary tried to calm the mood, when he wrote on 20-9-1771:

We hope not that Your Worshipful will give a misunderstanding or ill placed interpretation of our good intentions and correct thinking, in Constituting a Lodge in Ceylon. [...] We do not believe, that their request made to us, will have been done out of contempt for Your Worshipful Lodge, but far more out of ignorance.<sup>260</sup>

The Grand Lodge passed the letter to the aforementioned captain Van der Weijde of the ship Pauw. It again reassured De Getrouwigheid that its request had been fulfilled earlier and also informed about the function of lodge Salomon.<sup>261</sup> Then on 11-1-1772 came word from Salomon, that it too had sent a (concept) Constitution on 9-12-1771 to De Getrouwigheid.<sup>262</sup> Later that same month, Salomon once again repeated its warning to the brethren in Ceylon on 27-1-1772:

However pleasant it is to us, when we are allowed to hear of the diligence of Brothers Free Masons, in propagating our royal art, so unpleasant it was to us however, to hear that Your Honourables had proceeded to found a lodge, and execute such actions, as [are] only permitted to lawfully constituted Lodges, all the more displeased because we imagined that Your Honourables could not well be unaware of that to the here in Bengal constituted Grand Lodge Salomon alone, was granted the privilege, of allowing lesser Lodges, located in all the possessions of the Dutch Company, around the West of India &c and so it was evident that Your Honourables should have asked permission from the same first, before proceeding with their work.

We had therefore already intended, following our Duty, to Reproach your Honourables about this when opportunity presented itself, when recently we to our joy were informed, by the Brother Christiaan Wist, that Your Honourables' mistake in this, stemmed not from intent but from ignorance, and as proof thereof that Your Honourables had instructed him on his leave of your location, to request in Batavia from the Provincial

Lodge [= La Choisie?] a Constitution also informing us, of his unsuccessful attempt there, and his fiery desire to obtain such a diploma for Your Honourables from us.

We would, as we have the power to do so regarding Your Honourables' Island, taken this into consideration, had we meanwhile not been informed through another channel, that Your Honourables had addressed yourself already in Europe Anno 1768, but since we have reason to doubt your success in this attempt, we have well wanted to open the way for Your Honourables to obtain the same, by instructing Your Honourables hereby, of the power which resides with us to fulfil Your Honourables' desire, and so to be able to continue the procreation of our royal order.

While we on the other hand cannot neglect to interdict Your Honourables all such acts that are not allowed for an unconstituted Lodge, until the time Your Honourables will be allowed to do so by either the Grand Lodge in Holland or by us.<sup>263</sup>

Finally, after four years of failed attempts, letters signed by Prins, De Bordes, De Boissemain and Van Bergheim dated 26 and 27-1-1772 confirmed that the Constitution and other correspondence by the Grand Lodge had reached Colombo<sup>264</sup>:

We now wholly doubt the Delivery of our letters, all the more while we did not receive Your Honourable's original rescription to ours dated 16 October 1768, and the duplicate thereof only in the month September Last, but this triplicate was delivered to us by our much Beloved Brother Siereveld, while also a duplicate of A letter by our Honourable Brother R [van] Laak which was also dated 1 September 1769, arrived only in the Last month of September on the Ship Schollenberg [now] perished under the Mallabar coast, which was travelling to this place from

Batavia, and which was commanded by the skipper N.N. Ide, who is a Brother and the first mate Lourens Buis who is a Real child [= member] of our regular lodge [...].<sup>265</sup>

The lodge promised to transfer the contributions owed via Van Siereveld, now skipper of the ship Oud Haarlem, and that it would not hesitate to convince (travelling) freemasons that its lodge, 'however small and feeble' was now under the protection of the Grand Lodge. De Getrouwigheid also noted recent news:

Furthermore we may not omit to inform Your worshipful that in Gale some Brethren have gathered and formed a Lodge [= De Opreghheid], without having addressed us so far, although they are well aware that our lodge was constituted by Your Worshipful in good order, [so] we request to instruct us as well as the Brethren in Gale on how we should act towards them and how they should act towards our Lodge, namely whether we will communicate with them and if they are submitted to the getrouwigheid or not, for the latter article of which we must most insist, that from now on all Brethren who wish to form a Lodge on this island should address themselves first to us and report to us of their actions and the progress of the Lodge, the state of Brethren Etca, so and in the same manner as our commitment to Your Honourable implies.<sup>266</sup>

The lodge further requested 18 *Lire Maçons*, 18 books of law and 'all other documents and Books'. A membership list was enclosed with the correspondence, no different from that of 1770, with one exception: new member N. Ohlkers, who was noted as 'travelling' and has not been identified further.<sup>267</sup> The Grand secretary replied in September 1772:

The letter of Provincial Grand Lodge Salomon [...] is amicable and Brotherly written [...]. We order You to consider said Lodge Salomon as our Provincial [Grand] Lodge, consult the same in urgent matters, however without being dependant on the same. Being a Provincial [Grand] Lodge nothing else but the First Lodge in Rank, to whom it is permitted, to grant Constitutions on behalf of the High Worshipful Grand Master [...].

What the Brethren in Gale is concerned, which according to Your suggestion are meeting clandestine [...] serves as answer, that it were better, as they belong to our jurisdiction, if those Brethren addressed themselves in a fitting manner to Us, in order to obtain a Diploma; and [...] We have no objection, to qualify You as the oldest of that Island (unprejudiced however of the right of Provincial [Grand] Lodge Salomon in Bengal) to [help] Brethren find the way and provisionally accredit them, to be able to work in a regular manner [...].<sup>268</sup>

This implies that De Getrouwigheid had the same rights for Ceylon as Salomon had for India, in effect creating a third Provincial Grand Lodge (La Choisie in Batavia being the second). In December followed

another letter, in which the Grand Lodge confirmed the Constitution of lodge De Opreghtheid, discussed below. Meanwhile Salomon was still trying to vent its displeasure to the Grand Lodge. It wrote on 10-1-1773:

Regarding the Constitution of the Brethren on Ceylon we are well of one opinion [= agree] with Your Worshipful that the same have the power thereto, when they address themselves to Your Worshipful, however we cannot forbear, to submit our sustenance, that such direct provision of a Constitution to those Brethren seemingly can cause a breach of the Privilege of our Provincial [Grand] Lodge Salomon, granted to Constitute Lodges around all of the West of India (we only call this a sustenance) in which we have, however, all the more been acknowledged by the behaviour of these Brethren, in the last year, because although we have at their written request, firstly granted a Constitution, as well as sent them the necessary Law books and song books, they have nevertheless neglected to confirm to us their receipt, and also to inform us about the Constitution granted them by Your Worshipful, which we however consider to have been their duty, and of which we are so much more confirmed by the favourable Expression of Your Worshipful, that you will instruct them that they regardless of said diploma directly granted to them, resort under our Provincial [Grand] Lodge, and should address themselves to us regarding the delivery of such as they have to send to Your Worshipful, [and] we request [...] that these Brethren who perhaps may come to another idea of independence, be instructed of their Duty, to at least keep a proper correspondence with us [...].<sup>269</sup>

On 11-1-1775 Salomon complained again that it had since 1772 experienced problems with the lodge(s) on Ceylon, and wanted satisfaction.<sup>270</sup>

As money transfers and further correspondence of De Getrouwigheid never reached the Grand Lodge, it contacted the lodge again on 19-4-1775 and informed it that Van Eijdsden had perished, in case he had been carrying letters from De Getrouwigheid (as well as lodge De Langgewenschte). The Grand Secretary enquired if De Getrouwigheid had perhaps sent its contributions to Salomon for transfer to the Netherlands. He also requested an overview of members with higher degrees, regarding the planned election of a Grand Master for the *Élu* and *Écossois* in the Netherlands. In its correspondence with Salomon of the same date, the Grand Secretary also expressed 'what surprises us even more, is their silence without transfer of Contributions, (that is to say those of Colombo) about which We will remonstrate them at this opportunity'.<sup>271</sup> His next letter to De Getrouwigheid of 24-11-1775 had a less friendly tone:

Not without wonder and with the utmost surprise We regard Your Worshipful's behaviour towards us, and how irregular the works and control of household matters are conducted in the Lodge, without taking into consideration that which the Law dictates; and without offering us an insight into the state of your affairs. [...] For Five Years, since the Diploma was granted, to give no word nor sign of their thoughts and actions!<sup>272</sup>

The Grand Secretary threatened to dissolve the lodge in accordance with the laws of the Order<sup>273</sup>, and continued:

With regret we have also received the Complaints of the Provincial Grand Master in Bengal; that Your Worshipful does not dignify himself to acknowledge the same [...]. Much less to communicate to Us, that Your request therefore made in Bengal, had not been refused, but some remarks on the same had been made.<sup>274</sup>

Although clearly irritated, the tone of the letter does not suggest the Grand Secretary suspected the lodge had ceased its activities. After this date however, no documents relating to the lodge have survived.<sup>275</sup> According to Hageman the lodge dissolved in 1790.<sup>276</sup> The financial registration of the Grand Treasurer of 1804 lists the lodge among those behind in contribution without 'Any indication whatsoever how much behind', rather than erased.<sup>277</sup> Likewise the lodge was listed among those 'out of communication' in the Dutch masonic almanac of 1808<sup>278</sup>, while the more recent overview of Dutch lodges considers the lodge as such since 1788.<sup>279</sup> A possible explanation was offered by Dashwood, who pointed out that the lodge may have declined in 1790. Another lodge, De Vereeniging (discussed below), was founded in Colombo soon after and the Dutch community on the island may simply have been too small to sustain two lodges at the same time.<sup>280</sup> The name of that lodge translates as 'The Union', which could suggest it was the result of a merger, for instance between De Getrouwigheid and members of another (not necessarily Dutch) lodge.

### ◆ *Lodge De Opregtheid in Galle*

Hageman suggests that a second lodge was founded in (Point de) Galle in Ceylon in 1770,<sup>281</sup> under the rule of Arnoldus de Lij (1755-1784), who was commander of the trade post between 1768 and 1783.<sup>282</sup> In any case the Grand Lodge received a request for a Constitution in 1772, explaining:

As for a long time there had been several Brethren Free Masons here, who tried every time, to found a lodge where it was possible, but there were not enough [= less than seven Masters] to do so there, they were fortunate, that in the last year [= 1771] some Brethren were on the ships and were therefore able to hold a Lodge to receive the Candidates that had applied, which took place on the 12 February 1771.<sup>283</sup>

The lodge was named De Opregtheid (sometimes also called La Candeur, Sincérité or Sincerity). The request mentioned the following men as founders and Officers: Johannes Hermanus Francken, a military captain 'who for 21 or 22 years in the great lodges in The Hague had been initiated and next had climbed to the step of master in Antwerp'<sup>284</sup>; Jan Jacob Coquart (died 1786), a major who in 1767 had been present at the audience of ambassador Falck with the king in Kandy (fig. 4.26); Pieter Kalff (1735-1776), listed as 'unemployed', and Adrianus van de Berg[h] [Jr] (died 1783), a junior merchant.<sup>285</sup> The military men who were initiated at this occasion were also named: Pierre le Blanc[q], captain lieutenant, Jan Lodewijk Sche[e]de[n], a lieutenant, Estienne Guinot, a French enseign in VOC service, and Eijlert Bus[s]ing (?-1784), *soldijoverdrager* (civil servant at the wages office).<sup>286</sup> The letter continued:

The 21 June we were fortunate to recipiate our much loved and chief the most Honourable Venerable Lord Commander Arnoldus de Lij as apprentice and fellow [and] on the day of our protector St. John [= circa 24 June] as master, as well as the above mentioned Brethren le Blanq, Scheede, Guinnot, and Bussing. [...] and his Venerable the Lord Commander chosen as our Protector and also by his Venerable accepted. Since then several worthy candidates have been received, to many too name all of them here [...].<sup>287</sup>

However, the letter did reveal three other names of members: Paulus Marci, the chief surgeon in the Dutch hospital, Gerrit Joan de Moor (1732-1784), a junior merchant, and Pieter Sluysken (1740-1813), a merchant.<sup>288</sup>

The lodge requested a Constitution 'with all the Books and documents belonging thereby' through a letter carried by the aforementioned Siereveld on the ship Borsele to The Hague. The Grand Lodge was able to answer in December 1772:

After we already had been informed by the Brethren belonging to the Worshipful Lodge De Getrouwigheid, in Colombo, of the diligence with which Your Worshipful has since a long time, been working at the propagation of our Noble Sciences, albeit without a legal Constitution, and as they have asked us how to consider You, we have made no objection, to qualify those Brethren to provide you with a provisional Charter [...] and since that rescription having received Your Worshipful's Letter of the First of February of this Year, delivered by the Brother Captain Sierevelt, we have been advised, to honour Your request with a favourable answer.<sup>289</sup>

The reply and the Constitution itself were taken back to Ceylon by Sierevelt on the ship Oud Haarlem. The Constitution was dated 29-11-1772 and listed all the aforementioned members as founders.<sup>290</sup> The formal installation of De Opregtheid took place the following St. John's Day in June 1773.<sup>291</sup> The financial administration of the Grand Lodge recorded the receipt of funds in 1774: 'sent by Captain Jan Sierevelt a *Don Gratuit* for the Cash of the National Grand Lodge and to settle the sent Constitution of this Lodge f 250'.<sup>292</sup>

De Opregtheid wrote a thank you letter for the documents received on 30-1-1774.<sup>293</sup> Of 'a few candidates' initiated, the lodge only mentioned two by name: Jan Hendrik Heygel, a military captain, and Albertus Hornoet, merchant and administrator. The lodge remarked 'The few other Recipients that we since the aforementioned date [31-1-1772] have had, were *passanten* [= passers-by] and Ship's crew'.<sup>294</sup> As passers-by were quickly initiated and then left without becoming actual lodge members, no fee was owed to the Grand Lodge for them and they were not included in the overviews. The earliest surviving membership list also dates from 1774 and names 18 men, including all the founders except Coquart. Next to Haigel and Hornoet, the other newcomers were Cezar Boucher, a French jeweller; Johannes Hermanus



Fig. 4.26: Jan Brandes (1743-1808), Reception of the envoys of the King of Kandy in November 1785, 1785. Jan Jacob Coquart is in the row on the left, second from the top down. Watercolour over coloured pencil drawing, 32.5 x 41.6 cm. Collection: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.no. NG-1985-7-3-127. Reproduced from: rijksmuseum.nl.

Francken jr, the son of one of the founders of the lodge; Jan Christoffel Dijkvoet and Casparus Runsdorff, not identified further; as well as two soldiers, Jean Baptiste de La Maison (died 1779), and Petrus Andriessen (died 1784).<sup>295</sup>

The membership list further reveals that the lodge met on every first Thursday of the month at 18.30 hours in the 'country house' of De Lij.<sup>296</sup> From around this time survives a document, providing the 'Rules whereby the Grand Master, first and second Warden, Brother Terrible, Brother Speaker, Secretary, and all other Brethren have to abide, so with the opening of the Lodge as well as the acception of a new brother, in Lodge de Opreghtheid in Galle'.<sup>297</sup> It contains rituals and catechisms for the Apprentice and Fellow-Craft degrees.

While correspondence is missing, that De Opreghtheid remained active can be deduced from membership certificates and a handful of other miscellaneous documents. From 24-11-1774 dates a letter of recommendation, issued to third mate Justus Hendrik Pfeill (also spelled Pfijll), as proof of membership (fig. 4.27).<sup>298</sup> The document was signed by Francken as Grand [= Worshipful] Master, Francken Jr as Secretary, De Moor as Junior and Hornoet as Senior Wardens. A summary of messages by lodge Salomon in Bengal to the Grand Lodge dating from 1775, recorded 'Complaints about the [lodges] of Nagapatnam and Ceylon, that these do not recognize the Provincial Grand Master'.<sup>299</sup> Lodge La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam received a visitor on 13-9-1775, the Danish ship's mate Töger Abo from 'd'Opreghtheid in Ceylon'.<sup>300</sup> The next year Laurens de Sille, a third mate, frequented the same lodge, signing the book several times between 9-10-1776 and 14-1-1778 on behalf of De Opreghtheid.<sup>301</sup> Data for the next few years are missing, but the old, handwritten registration of the CMC collection describes a document dated 6-4-1782:

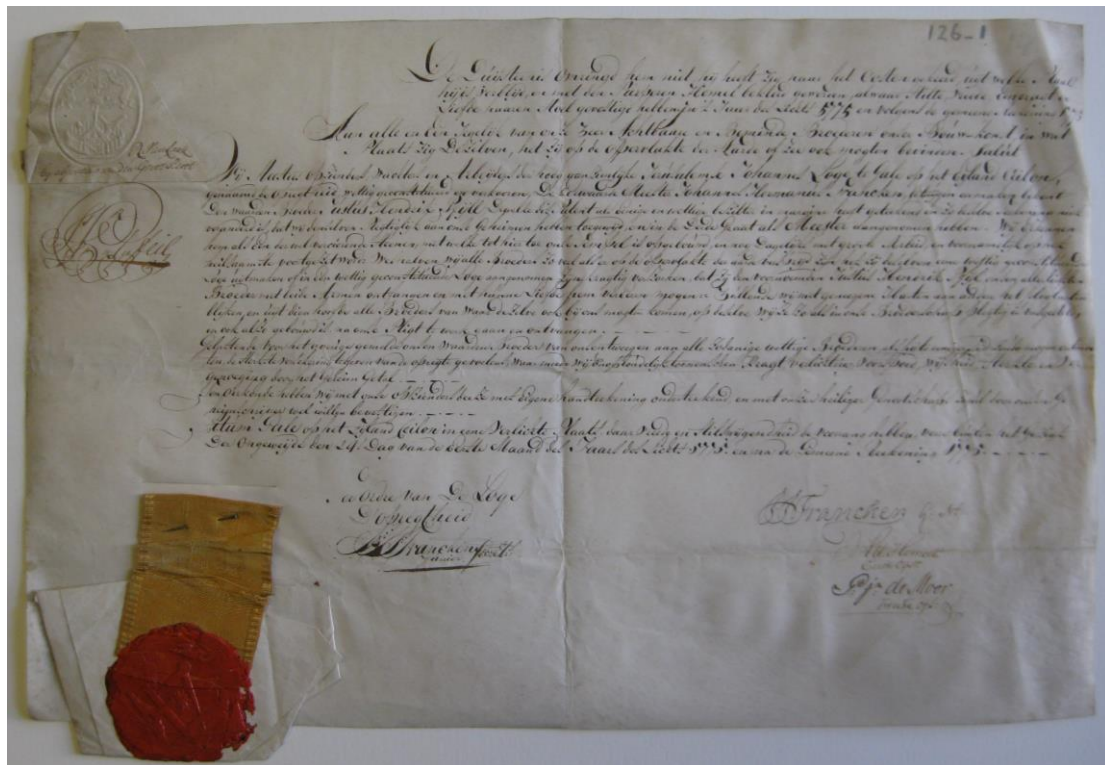


Fig. 4.27: Certificate issued by lodge De Opreghtheid in Galle to Justus Hendrik Pffijll on 24-11-1774. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 126-1. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

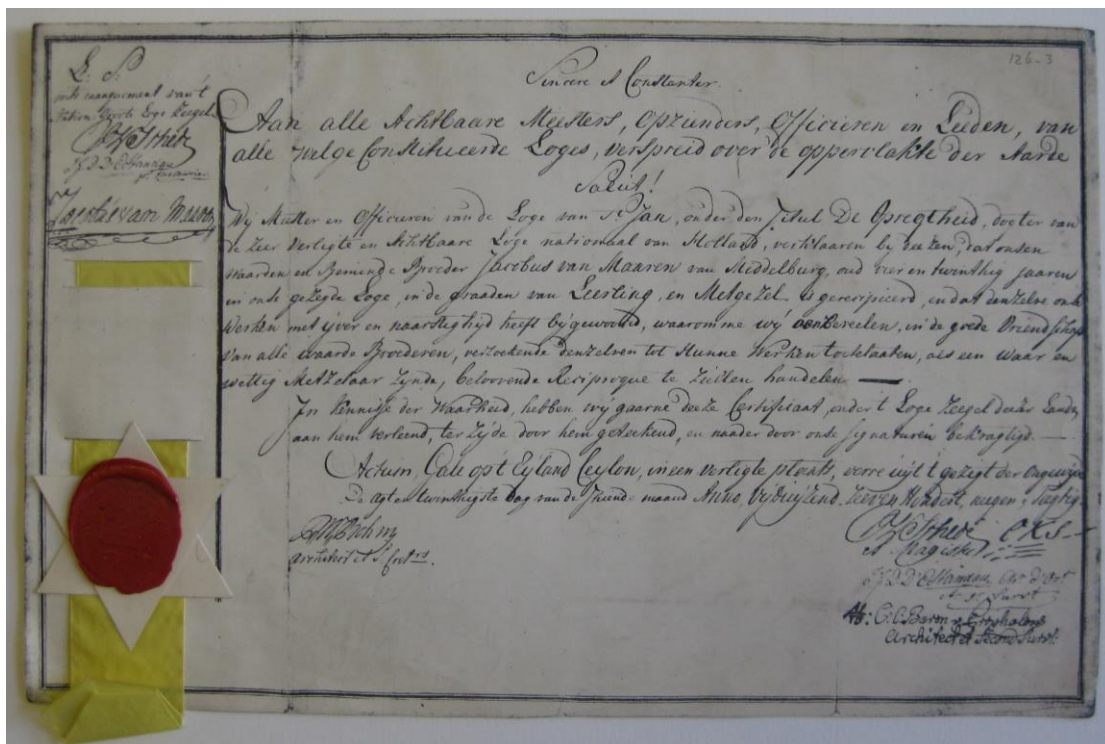


Fig. 4.28: Certificate, issued by lodge De Opreghtheid in Galle to Jacobus van Maaren on 28-8-1789 (replica/restoration). Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 126-2. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

Announcement concerning a temporary empowerment by [Grand Secretary] J.P. van der Haer on behalf of the Grand Scots Lodge issued to the members of Lodge La Sincérité (and L'Heureuse Rencontre [in Brest?]) to work in the Élu degrees dated 2-1-1779.<sup>302</sup>

The document itself went missing in the 1970s, but *La Sincérité* or *La Candeur* are French translations of the lodge name, also used in early Dutch masonic almanacs, which were published in French.<sup>303</sup> A (concept) Constitution for a higher degree lodge for the Élu and Écossois degrees was issued to De Opreghtheid by the Grand Chapter of the Netherlands on 1-9-1783, naming as founders the aforementioned lodge members Scheede, De Moor, Busing, Runsdorff, Francken and De Sille.<sup>304</sup> At some point these higher degrees were also given to a corporal Pieter Hoyer.<sup>305</sup>

By 1788 De Opreghtheid had attracted no less than 28 members, none of which are included in earlier membership lists. However, 15 of them resided elsewhere and two of the listed men were deceased by the time the list was submitted. The active members, stationed locally, were mostly military: Hieronimus Casemirus Carolus Baron van Prophalow, a captain; Pieter Wilhelm Behm, an enseign, Ernst Wilhelm Fuchs (born circa 1752), a soldier and Jean Francois Paul Rachard, an extraordinary lieutenant of Artillery; as well as two medical officers, *verbandmeester* Jan Hendrik Loudovici and assistant *oppermeester* Bernhard Johan von Bergheim. Three other men could be identified as members of the Regiment De Meuron, to which we will come back later: captains Pierre Hardy and Samuel Jequier (died 1789), and captain lieutenant François Montandon (died 1797).<sup>306</sup> Johan Hendrik Siemon and Franciscus Kolfenbag on the other hand, were listed as civilians, while Bernhard Hendrik von Bergheim (died 1778, probably a relative of the aforementioned Bernhard Johan) was a bookkeeper and Carl Ludwig Baron van Albedyhl (1756-1804) was a junior merchant and secretary. Most of the remaining names on the list were men residing elsewhere in the region. Three had travelled on to Colombo: Jan Kloprogge, city doctor<sup>307</sup>, Petrus Jacous Roosemalcoq, secretary of the *Landraad*, and Frans Diersen, extraordinary lieutenant of Artillery. Hendrik Anthony Stoete, sea captain, had gone 'to Bengal', while David Blume, military lieutenant, had gone 'to Trinkonemale' and Anthony Louis Migot de La Combe, captain in the Regiment Luxembourg, had left 'to the Malabar Coast'. Seven other members, mostly navy officers, were listed as staying 'in Batavia': the luitenants Pieter Guding (died 1789), Petrus Franciscus Gerbrands and Paulus Maagen Baerendszoon (died 1791); the captain luitenants Joost Masson and Jacobus van Maaren (born circa 1765); and the *oppermeester* (a medical officer) Dirk Hoytink and Second *oppermeester* Jacob van der Linde, the latter possibly a relative of the aforementioned Van der Linden in lodge De Standvastigheid. Two other naval officers and lodge members were listed as having left for Europe: Hermanus Driesman (died 1790), a captain, and Andries Andresje Spin, a lieutenant.

By 1789 only fourteen 'active' members remained, while former member Scheede had returned to Colombo and rejoined the lodge. Recorded newcomers were: Jan Jacob David d'Estandau (died 1815), a fiscal and cashier, Samuel Pieter Joenander, a *bosschieter* (ship's crew responsible for artillery), [Frans] Guillard [= Gaillard], fusilier, and Theodorus van Tijlingen, chief of the cinnamon department.<sup>308</sup> This membership list noted that the lodge had 'no regular location' anymore, meaning it probably met in members' houses, while day and time were also 'undecided'.<sup>309</sup> On 28-8-1789 De Opreghtheid issued a certificate to the aforementioned Jacobus van Maaren as Apprentice and Fellow-Craft (fig. 4.28).<sup>310</sup> It was signed by Scheede (as *Chevalier Kadosh* and *Magister* or Worshipful Master), d'Estandan (as *Chevalier d'Occident* and Senior Warden), Behm (as [*Petit* or *Grand*] *Architecte* and Secretary) and Prophalon (as [*Petit* or *Grand*] *Architecte* and Junior Warden). A handwritten note on the back of the lodge certificate, dated 8-10-1790, was signed by Behm and recorded Van Maaren was raised a Master. Interesting is that these officers possessed higher degrees which would not be incorporated into the Scottish Rite until 1803. These degrees were described in 1783 in the *MS Francken*, which grouped various degrees together into the *Ordre du Royal Secret*. The manuscript was written by Henry Andrew (Hendrik Andreas) Francken (1720-1795), and it would be interesting to know if there was a family connection with the aforementioned Johannes Hermanus Francken of lodge De Opreghtheid, to see if that could explain the transfer of these degrees to Asia around this time.<sup>311</sup>

Some masonic historians believe the lodge paused its activities between 1790 and 1794.<sup>312</sup> Hageman however, suggested the lodge did not become active again until 1804.<sup>313</sup> It seems unlikely the lodge would have issued a certificate on 28-9-1790 for the degree of Apprentice and Fellow-Craft to the aforementioned lodge member Fuchs, if it was inactive.<sup>314</sup> This certificate was signed by the same officers

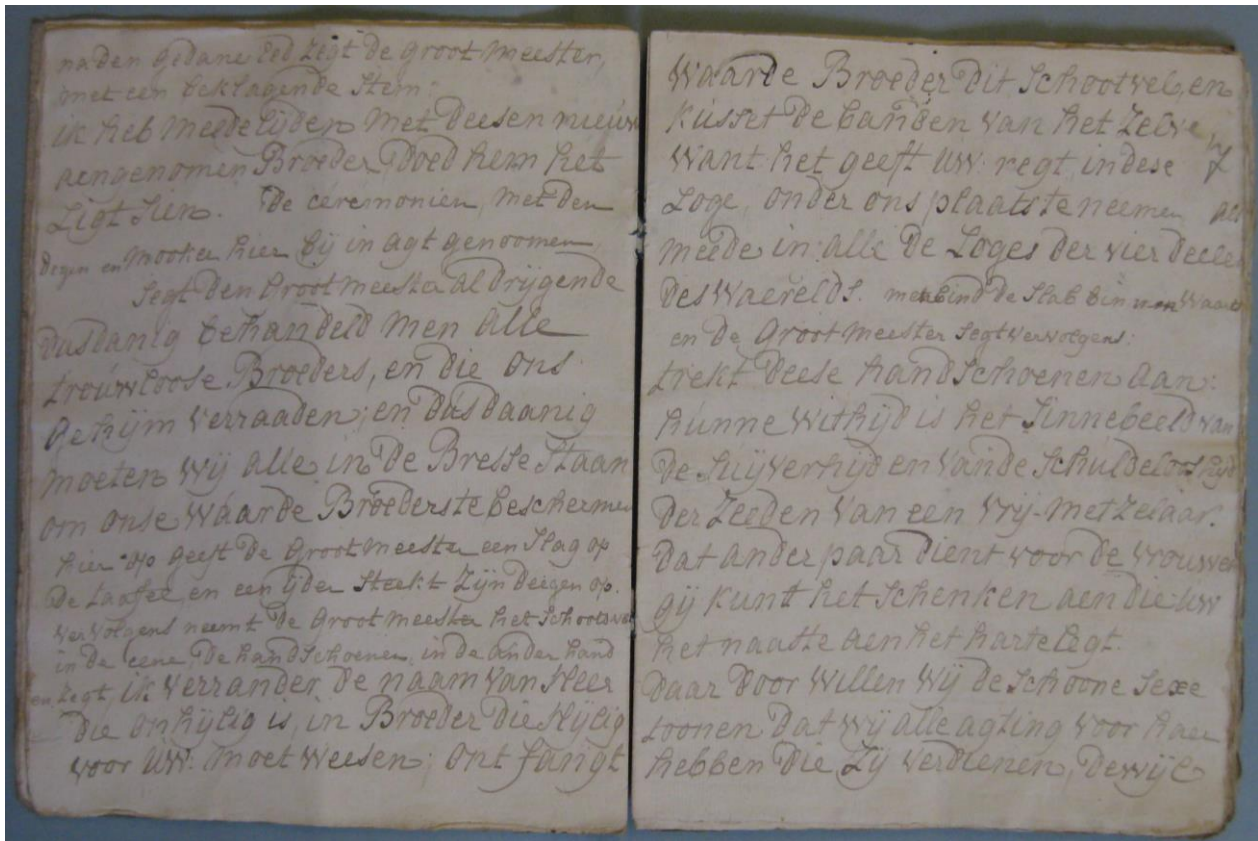


Fig. 4.29: Ritual for the initiation of an Apprentice, in the 'Rules whereby the Grand Master, first and second Warden, Brother Terrible, Brother Speaker, Secretary, and all other Brethren have to abide [...] in Lodge de Opreghtheid te Galle', undated (ca. 1774). Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 9128. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

as before (fig. 4.30). Notes on the back reveal it was shown by Fuchs in lodge La Paix in Amsterdam on 23-8-1793, lodge De Eendragt in Rotterdam on 4-1-1809 and lodge De Drie Kolommen, also in Rotterdam, on 1-6-1809. This again illustrates the contact between the lodges in the Netherlands and those in Asia. The document also reveals the seal of De Opreghtheid. It consists of a simple composition of a pair of compasses, a set square and a level, with a star in the middle. The tools are flanked by the sun and moon, and are topped by a dove holding a laurel wreath or crown.

Further evidence the lodge remained active, is a letter sent to La Vertueuse in Batavia, noting:

[...] not only the number of Members is increasing daily [...]. In order not to be forced to move our meeting every time, we have bought a house and its premises inside this City of Gale; meanwhile we don't know what to do to get a title of ownership thereof which will be ensured we are not Sinning against the laws of the Sovereign and do not have to undergo any *Chikane* because of it.<sup>315</sup>

The lodge asked La Vertueuse advice on the purchase of a building, as that lodge had some experience in the matter. The minutes recorded that the lodge would see to it at their earliest convenience.<sup>316</sup> A later memorial publication (1843) claimed that La Vertueuse remained in contact with De Opreghtheid 'both before and after the war in 1796'.<sup>317</sup> Lodge La Fidèle Sincérité must have also kept in contact. The archive of that lodge includes an undated 'instruction for officers' (actually a ritual and catechism) from the Opreghtheid (circa 1774), on the back of which is noted it was later also used in La Fidèle Sincérité (fig. 4.29).<sup>318</sup>

De Opreghtheid issued another certificate for Apprentice and Fellow-Craft on 18-8-1798, this time to Christianus Cornelius Uhlenbeck (1780-1845).<sup>319</sup> The document was signed by the aforementioned Roosemalecoq and several new lodge members: Carel [Friedrich] Hallwachs, a lieutenant, W.K. Schede, possibly a relative of the aforementioned Jan Lodewijk, as well as Johannes Wahlberg, a corporal.

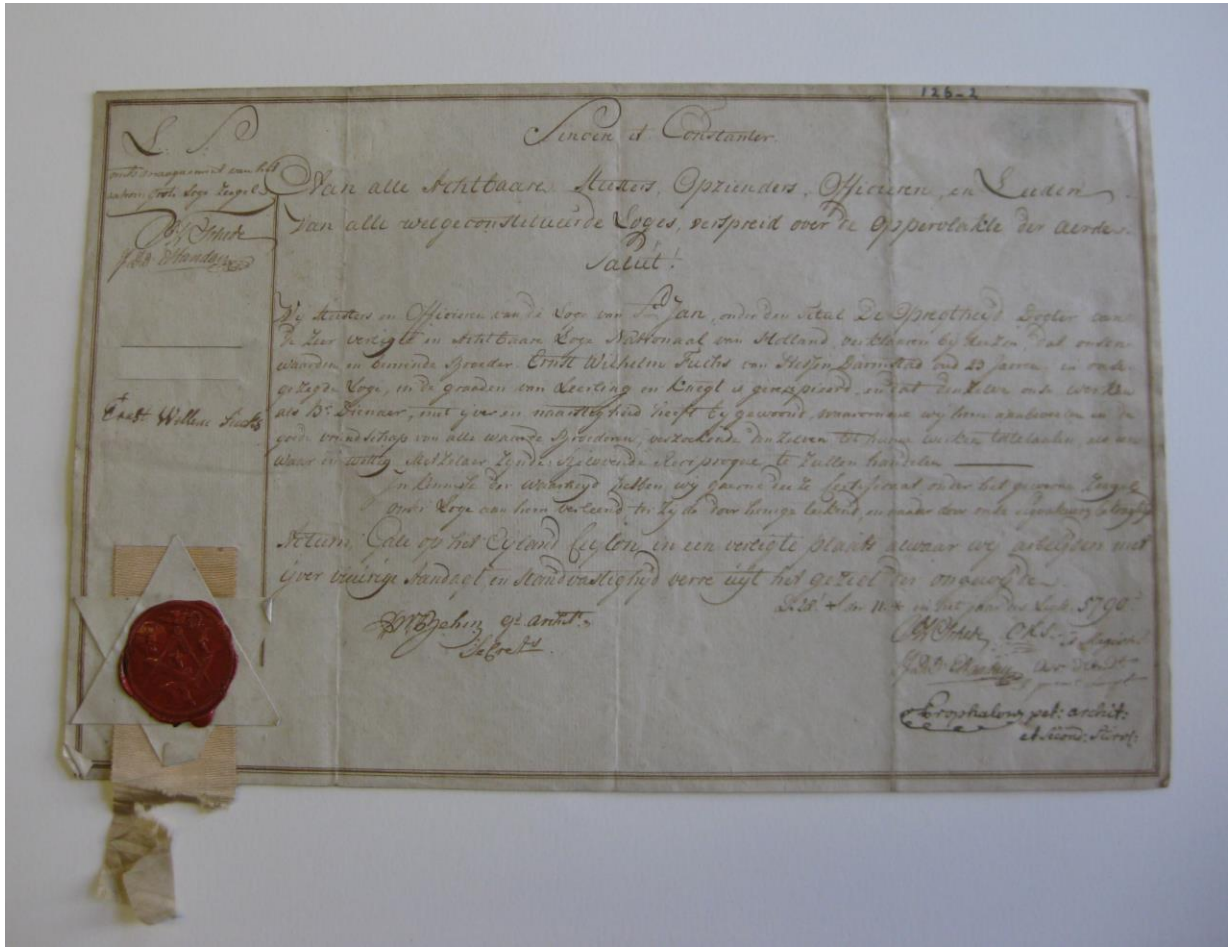
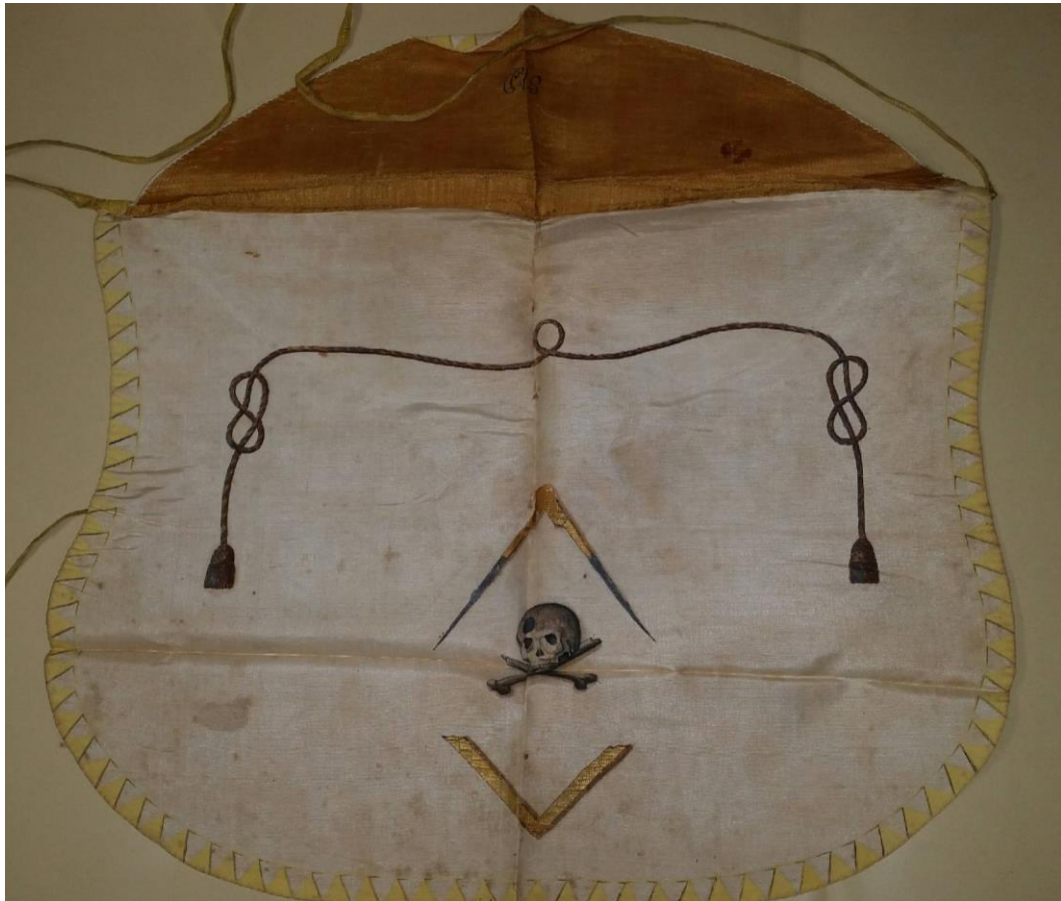


Fig. 4.30 (and detail): Certificate, issued by lodge De Opreghheid in Galle to Ernst Wilhelm Fuchs on 28-9-1790. Collection: CMC 'Prins Frederik', The Hague, inv.no. 126-2. Photo: Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen, The Hague.

Uhlenbeck showed the certificate a month later to lodge De Vereeniging in Colombo, discussed below. It was signed on 23-9-1798 by the Secretary. The short timespan shows that Uhlenbeck obtained the certificate shortly before his leave, anticipating visits to other lodges.



*Fig 4.31: Master apron belonging to Chr. C. Uhlenbeck, member of lodge De Opreghtheid in Galle, Ceylon, ca. 1800. Painted silk, size not listed. Collection: National Archive, The Hague inv.no 303 Uhlenbeck archive, A.2.a.2.11. Photograph by Ron Guleij.*

Uhlenbeck would receive a second certificate of the Master's degree on 15-4-1800, again signed by Hallwachs as Secretary of De Opreghtheid. This is one of the few instances in which the apron of a lodge member was preserved in a family archive, now in the National Archive in The Hague (fig. 4.31). It is painted with various symbols: a skull-and-bones between a pair of compasses and a set square, which is an iconographical 'shorthand' reference to the body of Hiram Abiff. Above it is a cord with knots and tassels (a reference to brotherhood). On the flap is an acacia sprig, representing Hiram's grave, flanked by the sun and the moon.

Lodges La Charité and La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam both received a visitor from De Opreghtheid between 19 February and 12 November 1800, who signed as A. van Hall Jnz.<sup>320</sup> The visitor books further show that two more members of the same lodge were received in La Charité: J. van der Plas, who remains to be identified, on 23-1-1801, and the aforementioned Stoete on 15-7-1801.<sup>321</sup> Another lodge certificate was issued in 1802, now to Frederik Wilhelmus Smith, who also remains to be identified further.<sup>322</sup> A last letter by De Opreghtheid was sent to the Grand Lodge on 11-8-1804, enclosing an overview of members accepted between 1800 and 1804 (replacing earlier lists that had not reached their destination) and the new list for 1804.<sup>323</sup> It was again noted that the lodge had no steady location or meeting times. Besides the aforementioned Smith, the following men had been initiated before or in 1804: Friderich Axen, who came to Ceylon as a junior sailor, John George Bruckner, a soldier; Willem Hendrik Andree (1764-1822), a magistrate at Gangebade and Talpe Patto; as well as Cornelis Arnoldus Prins and John Fredrik Lorenz, who both have not been identified further.<sup>324</sup> The list also included three new lodge members, who by 1804 had left Galle again. Jens Koefoed (1775-1833) was noted having left for Tranquebar, where he had been appointed governor of the Danish settlement. It is one of the few signs that the masonic network in the region may have also connected the Dutch and the Danes. Bookkeeper Lambertus van der Linden was 'in

Colombo' and Caspar Hendrik Leembruggen resided 'in Matura'. In 1804 two men were initiated to act as Servants to the lodge: Johannes Mayer and Bartholomeus Herwieus.<sup>325</sup>

De Opreghtheid seems to have been connected to a German regiment, formed by Duke Charles Eugen of Württemberg (1728-1793) in 1786 in order to serve the Dutch and protect its assets overseas. The regiment first travelled to the Cape, where it arrived in 1787. Parts of the regiment were then dispatched to Ceylon in 1789. The regiment fought the British at Trincomalee in 1795 and was in Colombo until the handover to the British in 1796. The regiment then changed sides and came into British service. Before 1804 two of the fusiliers, Johannes Huber (died 1804) and Johan Adam Gauder, had joined the Dutch lodge. They were followed in 1804 by more men from the same Regiment: Theobald von Hügel, commander colonel, John Godlieb Beutenmüller, a corporal, and Josephus van den Berg, a soldier. The aforementioned Hallwachs was most likely also a member of the Regiment Württemberg.<sup>326</sup> Parts of the regiment travelled to the Dutch East Indies and joined a lodge there, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

It is unclear how long the lodge remained active after 1804, and again the various sources are contradictory.<sup>327</sup> Hageman suggests De Opreghtheid was dissolved in 1790 and reopened in 1794, after which it was finally disbanded in 1806.<sup>328</sup> Other masonic historians suggest the lodge became inactive in 1806.<sup>329</sup> The Dutch masonic almanac of 1808 considered the lodge 'out of communication' in 1808, while the more recent overview of Dutch lodges dates the loss of communication after 1814.<sup>330</sup>

A list of visitors to lodge La Constante et Fidèle in Semarang, names the aforementioned Diersen as a member of 'Cencerite in Galle' in 1808.<sup>331</sup> In 1817 the aforementioned Smith was on his deathbed, when he gave his lodge certificate (issued in 1802) to his son, P.J. Smith, who was not a freemason.<sup>332</sup> He did this so his son, in need of support, could apply to any lodge for charity and may have expected his own lodge was still active in the region. Dashwood noted: 'The Dutch lodges, though now [= 1887] extinct, evinced great tenacity of existence. The two named above [Sincerity and Union] survived until within recent memory'.<sup>333</sup> He later claimed: 'We have strong grounds to believe that Lodge "Sincerity" at Galle continued well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century'.<sup>334</sup> No sources were provided for either statement, but it is of course possible that the lodges continued under the Constitution of another Grand Lodge.

#### ♦ *Lodge La Réunion Neuchatelloise in Colombo*

The Swiss Charles Daniel de Meuron (1738-1806) made a military career in French service.<sup>335</sup> He was probably already a member of a lodge in the 1760s.<sup>336</sup> In 1781 he received a commission from the VOC to form and command a new regiment for the Chamber of Zeeland, which had to protect Dutch assets in South Africa and Asia. De Meuron recruited men in his place of birth, Neuchatel in Switzerland. The regiment, named after him, consisted of circa 1.120 men (divided over 10 companies of 112 men).

Before their leave for the Cape, De Meuron and three other officers of his regiment applied for a Constitution to the Grand Orient de France on 25-11-1781 for an ambulant military lodge under the name Le Choix Helvétique.<sup>337</sup> The founders explained:

The ardent and sincere zeal that we have always manifested in the easts [= lodges] of which we have been members, as can be seen from the certificates of our labour in the Art of Freemasonry, and the desire we have to carry to the remotest regions the Royal - the Royal Art in fact - made us send you this letter to ask the favour, [from you] as the most enlightened east, to authorise us to constitute a particular lodge for our Regiment and at the same time the power to establish others in the places where we are going, in order to spread Freemasonry in the Townships where we will live. This is the case:

The Swiss Regiment de Meuron serving the Noble East India Company of Holland - until then in the service of France, it was stationed in Saint-Pierre [Isle] of Oléron -, of which we are officers, is about to depart for the Isle of Ceylon; we would like to have the ability to establish a lodge according to our desire and legally formed. Would you, our dear and worshipful brothers, give us an answer on this matter and your instructions on such an important subject?<sup>338</sup>

The request must have been ignored, because the founders wrote again on 19-8-1782:

The lodge du Choix Helvétique, desiring to be related particularly to the Grand Orient of France, longs to obtain the letters of constitution that she requested in February; it wants to take with them the protection that the King of France grants to Holland, to fraternize with the most worthy masons of Europe, and I have been

ordered to place into your hands the interest of a truly zealous lodge that has interest into combining masonic activities with a heartfelt dedication to the Fatherland... It is in Ceylon, the Coromandel Coast in Asia, that we hope to build a masonic Temple, under the auspices of the Revered Grand Orient of France. There, very dear brother, we will never forget the favours that you will grant us and the memory of your actions will be recalled among us every day.<sup>339</sup>

It is unclear if the lodge received a reply from the Grand Orient before it left for Ceylon.<sup>340</sup> A Constitution was granted on 17-10-1782, when the regiment had already left for the Cape, so De Meuron may have been unaware of his success.<sup>341</sup> The regiment arrived there on 7-2-1783.<sup>342</sup> While 33 men stayed behind, the rest travelled on to Ceylon in 1786. Because De Meuron was called back to Europe that same year, in order to solve problems with the payment of soldiers by the Chamber of Zeeland, the regiment in Ceylon came under command of his younger brother, commander colonel Pierre Frédéric Comte de Meuron (1746-1813).<sup>343</sup> Charles Daniel De Meuron collected flora, fauna, art and curiosities from Asia during these years, and corresponded with his brother Pierre and various Dutch officials on new purchases for his collection and their transport home. Many of these contacts were members of lodges at the Cape or in Asia. The collection of De Meuron would form the basis for the current Musée d'Ethnographie in Neuchâtel.<sup>344</sup>

As mentioned above, by 1788 the membership list of lodge De Opreghtheid in Galle included three men from the Regiment De Meuron: captains Pierre Hardy and Samuel Jequier, and captain lieutenant François Montandon.<sup>345</sup> Shortly thereafter a second attempt was made at creating a military lodge for the regiment. Charles Daniel de Meuron was in the Netherlands between January and June 1790. On 16-5-1790 he submitted a request for the Constitution of the ambulant lodge La Réunion Neuchatelloise in Ceylon to the Grand Lodge in The Hague.<sup>346</sup> He signed it on behalf of his brother Pierre and Jequier, as well as lieutenant colonel Chevalier Jean-Pierre de Meuron-Bulot (1744-1803); captains Pierre Renaud, Henry-David de Meuron [de] Motiers (1753-1804), Jean Gotlieb Stein (died 1793) and Samuel Gigaud (died 1795); Charles Frederic de Meuron de la Tour (1763-1797); lieutenant Louis Rene des Bordes de Jouy, '& others, all officers of this Regiment'.<sup>347</sup> The founders all claimed to be 'Brothers Master Freemason [...] all having the Aforementioned degree, acquired in a Lodge well and legitimately constituted'.<sup>348</sup> According to a handwritten note on the request dated 13-2-1792, the Constitution was 'not provided, for reason that the costs had not been paid, though afterwards resolved to have one drawn up, as was done on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month 1791'.<sup>349</sup> Charles Daniel de Meuron wrote to his brother Pierre from the Netherlands on 9-3-1792:

I am sending you the attached certificate of Constitution for a Dutch lodge in the Regiment. I asked for it two years ago, the Request was misplaced. Mister G[ui]ll[au]me Baron Bonstetten has just brought it to me. I want you to get it and make use of it, for the benefit & the appeal of the Regiment.<sup>350</sup>

The regiment travelled around Ceylon and the surrounding region, and Hageman noted that a garrison was in Colombo in 1794.<sup>351</sup> On 26-8-1795 two companies were taken prisoner by the British at Trincomalee.<sup>352</sup> On 13-10-1795 the regiment was handed over to the British when the Dutch capitulated their assets.<sup>353</sup> Pierre Frédéric de Meuron was appointed military governor of Ceylon in the years 1797-1798. Two battalions of five companies' infantry were then formed in 1798 under British rule and were subsequently moved to Madras.<sup>354</sup> In 1799 the regiment was under command of Arthur Wellesey (1769-1852), later Duke of Wellington, and involved in the third Mysore War. Between 1806 and 1813 the regiment travelled the Mediterranean, and then left for Canada. It would be disbanded in 1816.<sup>355</sup>

It is unclear how long La Réunion Neuchatelloise accompanied the regiment, and whether a transfer to British rule also meant a new British Constitution. For this lodge too, sources are contradictory. Hageman claims it was disbanded as early as 1796.<sup>356</sup> The Dutch Grand Treasurer recorded it among the lodges late with contribution 'without any indication whatsoever how far behind' in 1804.<sup>357</sup> The Dutch masonic almanac of 1808 listed the locations of every lodge and for La Réunion Neuchatelloise still noted: 'Currently in the [East] Indies'.<sup>358</sup>

It seems likely any lodge members remaining in Ceylon would be able to count on the protection of Pierre de Meuron as long as he remained governor, but there may not have been enough of them to



Fig. 4.32: Anonymous, Portrait of a man, probably Johan Gerard van Angelbeek (1727-1799), ca. 1775-1799. Private collection. Reproduced from: rkd.nl.

maintain a lodge. As the British may have considered any Dutch Constitution void as a result of the takeover, perhaps they visited a British lodge instead.

#### ■ *Lodge De Vereeniging in Colombo*

The longest surviving Dutch lodge that was once active in Ceylon, chose as its name De Vereeniging (The Union). In a letter to lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia dated 30-4-1794, the lodge recalled its founding and early years as follows:

Having met since the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the Year of the [True] Light 5792 and having, with the proper formalities founded a regular lodge, with agreement and approval of the in the East of Punto Gale well constituted Lodge de Opreghtheid, daughter of the Grand National Lodge of the Seven United Provinces, awaiting the constitution requested from the worshipful grand master National, we cannot let this happy opportunity pass by to take up correspondence with you.<sup>359</sup>

Johan Gerard van Angelbeek (1727-1799) was appointed governor of Ceylon in 1794 (fig. 4.32). That same year he applied for a Constitution, which was granted on 7 April according to a later notice given on 8 June.<sup>360</sup> The motto of the lodge was *Virtus Nostra Doctrix* (= Virtue is our Teacher) which was sometimes mistaken for its alternative name.<sup>361</sup> In 1796 Van Angelbeek handed control of Ceylon over to the British. He stayed on as a civilian, while many Dutch left the island. That the lodge remained active during this difficult time, is illustrated by a handful of documents and references. Although no membership lists survive, the signatures in letters do offer some insight into who joined the lodge. For instance, the aforementioned letter to Batavia was signed by A[ssuerus] Issendorp, a member of lodge La Bien Aimée in Amsterdam in 1779; Petrus Henricus van Cuijlenburg (born 1752)<sup>362</sup>; J.B. Hoyer, probably a relative of the aforementioned Pieter Hoyer of lodge De Opreghtheid; F. von Winkelman, most likely a member of the aforementioned Regiment WürttembergII; P. Adriaan Louman, who remains to be identified further, as well as two names which are barely legible P.P. Jehppen and military captain Charles E[tienne] Vaugine.<sup>363</sup> Von Winkelman may have been the lodge Orator, as a speech held by him at the celebration of St. John's Day on

24-7-1795 survived.<sup>364</sup> Between the correspondences received by lodge La Vertueuse is another letter from De Vereeniging, dated 14-4-1798:

Once again since the sending of our letters of 1 November 1792 and 8 January 1793 to the Worshipful and very enlightened National Grand Lodge in the free united Netherlands, whereby we have respectfully requested our constitution, having until now received no answer, and we are unsure, what may have caused it, so the worthy and beloved brother Pieter Mutz is hereby requested by us and from our midst deputed as speaker [on behalf] of our Lodge assigned, in order to show upon his arrival in Europe, all his well-known diligence and skill, so that we at the first opportunity, may receive both our constitutions, giving therefore all the power to the same, to make proposals and settlements, as a Representative can and may be given.<sup>365</sup>

This case again underlines the difficulty lodges experienced when communicating with The Hague. The fact that 'both' or two Constitutions are mentioned, suggests the lodge also applied for recognition of a Chapter. The letter was signed by five of the aforementioned men (Jehtten, Von Winckelman, Issendorp, Hoyer, Van Cuijlenburg), as well as others who had joined and/or been initiated in the meantime: Johannes Wilhelmus Uhlenbeck (1774-1810), a former military officer; Friedrich Wilhelm von Driberg (1764-1807), the captain commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Batallion of Malayians; Jan Hendrik Reckerman (circa 1768-1831), the Fiscal of Colombo; L.J. Broberg, about whom little is known and another name which is difficult to make out, possibly A.G. Usler.

The lodge received Christianus Cornelius Uhlenbeck, aforementioned member of De Opreghtheid in Galle and no doubt a relative of Johannes Wilhelmus Uhlenbeck, as a visitor on 23-9-1798.<sup>366</sup> The former's lodge certificate was signed by Reckerman as Secretary at this occasion. The next surviving document is a speech written for St. John's Day, celebrated in De Vereeniging on 24-7-1800.<sup>367</sup> What happened next is unclear. An advert in the *Ceylon Government Gazette* recorded the sale of the lodge building 'by public outcry on the premises', meaning by public auction, on 23-10-1802.<sup>368</sup> Dashwood quotes a contemporary account for a description of the building on Slave Island: 'there is also an excellent house built by the Dutch, which they employed as a Mason's lodge, with a very pretty garden attached to it'.<sup>369</sup> Cordiner's *History of Ceylon* (1807) mentions two villas on Slave Island:

One of these is built on a spot of land projecting at right angles from the body of the peninsula, and fronting the fort. It is a neat house of two storeys, which was erected by the Dutch as a Freemasons Lodge, but has now become the property of a private person. [...] The situations of both [villas] are eligible and retired; and their distance from Colombo does not exceed an English mile: but there is no road by which a carriage can drive to either, without making a circuit of several miles. The common way of going to the first-mentioned villa [= the lodge building] is through the sally-port, either on foot, on horseback or in a palanquin [= sedan chair], along the causeway, or across the lake in a boat.<sup>370</sup>

Several masonic historians, as well as the most recent overview of Dutch lodges, assumed the lodge was erased between 1794 and 1806.<sup>371</sup> That was not the case. Dashwood already suggested that the lodge passed onto French jurisdiction in circa 1810, when various Dutch lodges were incorporated by the Grand Orient de France, and was able to verify his assumption by 1962. He referred to a temporary French Constitution dated 21-3-1822 and a permanent Constitution provided by the Grand Orient de France on 21-11-1827 to a lodge under the name L'Union in Colombo.<sup>372</sup> In 1838 the same lodge obtained a third Constitution, this time by the Grand Lodge of England under the name St. John's Lodge of Colombo.<sup>373</sup> Dashwood was however unfamiliar with several documents, which prove that the lodge continued working under its own, Dutch name, until circa 1825. The Constitution from the Grand Orient probably related to the Chapter associated to the lodge. The documents also show, how the membership body reflected the changing political situation in the region.

Firstly, the minutes of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia of 7-7-1807 noted the receipt of a letter from its Provincial Grand Master at the time, Nicolaus Engelhard (see chapter 5). He wrote on 27-4-1807 from Semarang and forwarded a letter he had received from 'the [Worshipful] Master and the Members of the [Lodge] de vereeniging in Colombo, there dated the 20+ of 10\* of the year 5806 [= 20-8-1806], recommending the [following] Brethren': soldier Andries Wilhelmus Mottan, corporal Pieter Hoijer,

member of the High Council of Justice of the Dutch East Indies Benjamin Pieter Cornelis de Haart (1752-1808), A.L. Franz and finally C.A.E. Boone 'who had gone thither [= Java]'.<sup>374</sup>

Secondly, lodge La Fidèle Sincérité also received a letter from De Vereeniging, dated 5-12-1816, this time recommending its member Theodorus Cornelis Rudolph, possibly a relation to Jan Mijndt Rudolf of lodge Salomon.<sup>375</sup> The letter was signed by the aforementioned Cuijlenburg and Hoyer, as well as new members, mostly men who were now in service of the British: Gualterus Schneider (1772-1841), civil engineer and surveyor general; his colleague Lambertus van der Linde (circa 1763-1822), overseer of the civil engineers department; a number of clerks, including Johannes Camp (born 1779), assistant at the *Pen* (writing office), Hendrik de Haan, (died 1832), working for the deputy assistant commissioner, Johannes Bartholomeusz, a translator and First clerk at the registrars office; as well as J.H. Douwe, a civil servant at the supreme court registry. Others were not yet identified: W. Hillebrand, Jn. Johan Landsberger, R. Morgan, J.[J.?] Schumacher and C.A. Spaar.<sup>376</sup>

The visitor list of La Vertueuse of 24-4-1822 was signed by a member of De Vereeniging, whose hand is difficult to read but probably was the aforementioned A.L. Franz.<sup>377</sup> The same list for the years 1821-1824 includes a signature by a Brother Williams from lodge 'L'Union' in Colombo, which confirms the lodge had transferred to a French Constitution around that time and started to translate its name into French.<sup>378</sup>

Dashwood already drew attention to the masonic certificates of Rasmus Christiaan Rask (1787-1832), a famous Danish philologist, who travelled through Asia to study the local languages.<sup>379</sup> He arrived in Jaffna on 11-11-1821 and then travelled to Colombo, where he arrived on 30-11-1821.<sup>380</sup> Rask was a freemason and member of lodge Zorobabel og Frederik til Det Kronede Haab in Copenhagen (see chapter 7).<sup>381</sup> In Ceylon he had contact with the aforementioned Schneider from 6-12-1821 onwards, who also introduced him to Charles Frederick Baron van Conrady (1775-1833) and baron L[ambertus] W. van der Linden, mentioned earlier as member of De Opreghtheid.<sup>382</sup> These three probably introduced him to De Vereeniging and its Chapter, because during his stay in Ceylon Rask obtained four certificates for higher degrees.

On 15-1-1822 a certificate for the 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> degrees of the French *Rite Écossais Ancien et Accepté* was issued to Rask (fig. 4.33). There may have been another certificate for the 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> degrees, now missing, because the next certificate, dated 11-3-1822, was for the 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> degrees (fig. 4.34). On 23-3-1822 Rask received a certificate for the 19<sup>th</sup> degree of *Grand Pontiff et Sublime Écossais de la Jerusalem Céleste*. The last certificate was dated 1-3-1823 and was issued for the British side degree of Super Excellent Royal Arch (fig. 4.35). On this date Rask noted in his diary the words 'in the evening' followed by two lines in code, probably recalling his initiation.<sup>383</sup> Probably before receiving the Royal Arch degree, Rask was initiated into the Mark Master's degree and received a coin (the symbolical payment for his masonic labour), the front of which depicts a mitre, also depicted on the fourth certificate (compare figs. 4.35-4.36). Around it are the letters 'H\*T\*W\*S\*J\*T\*K\*S\*', an abbreviation of 'Hiram the widow's son journeyed to King Solomon' (more usual was the letter 'S' for 'sent' instead of the 'J'). The other side shows a miniature tracing board: a chequered floor with columns, an open bible between them, above which is a triangle topped by a crown and cherubs with the Arc of the Covenant. From the top on the left are depicted: a hand holding a plumb line, a level and a gavel. On the right are an ox' head (referring to the sacrifice at the consecration of Solomon's Temple), a pyramid-shaped monument (marking Hiram's grave) and a Jacob's ladder (with three steps representing Faith, Hope and Charity). Around it is the inscription 'E.C. Rask TemPle M[ar]k M[ason]n Union Colombo'. The odd depiction of various shapes may be due to the fact that the medal was made by a local (non-European) silversmith.

All four certificates were printed, providing the text in both French and English, anticipating international usage. The last two certificates were signed by Schneider in the margin, where he added 'Etabli par Les [lettres de] Const[itution] de la R[oyale] L[oge] du Phenix Seant a L'or[ient] de Paris' and 'Etabli par le G[rand] O[rient] de France'.<sup>384</sup> Dashwood assumed that the French Constitution was a sign the whole lodge had transferred to French jurisdiction<sup>385</sup>, but it is possible only the Chapter was French while the lodge for the basic degrees remained Dutch. A similar case in the Dutch East Indies will be discussed in the next chapter.

Rask left Ceylon on 30-3-1822 with the ship De Colombo, sailing to Tranquebar, but in early April the ship hit a rock near Galle and was towed back to the harbour. He returned back to Colombo and left a second time on 19-8-1822. Rask had no funds to his disposal and is thought to have been helped by British friends, and possibly lodge members, to pay for the journey to Denmark.<sup>386</sup> His certificates provide

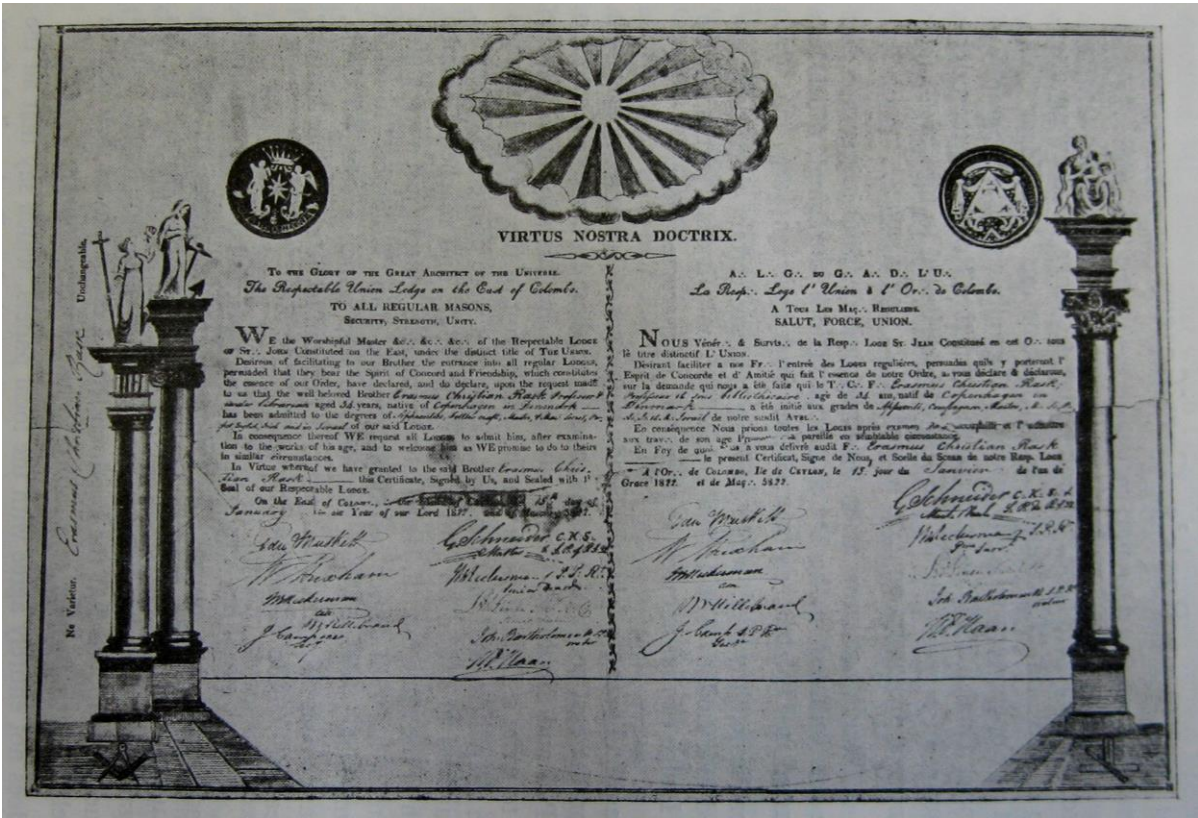


Fig.4.33: Certificate for the 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> degrees of the Scottish Rite, issued by Chapter L'Union in Colombo to R.C. Rask on 15-1-1822. Collection: Nationalhistorisk Museum Frederiksborg. Reproduced from: Dashwood 1962, p. 14.

Fig. 4.34: Certificate for the 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> degrees of the Scottish Rite, issued by Chapter L'Union in Colombo to R.C. Rask on 11-3-1822. Collection: Nationalhistorisk Museum Frederiksborg. Reproduced from: Dashwood 1962, p. 18.

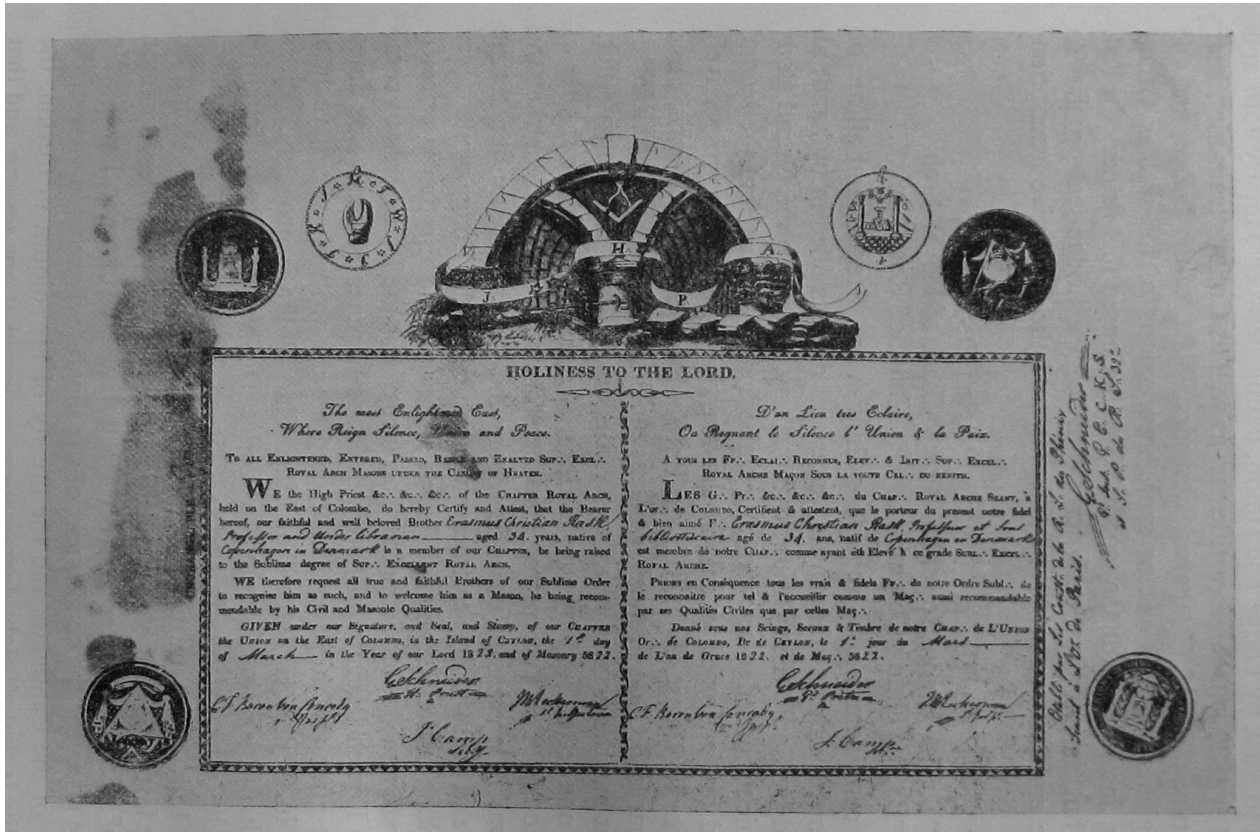


Fig. 4.35: (and detail, below left): Certificate for the Super Excellent Royal Arch degree, issued to R.C. Rask by the Chapter L'Union of Colombo on 1-3-1823. Collection: Nationalhistorisk Museum Frederiksborg. Reproduced from: Dashwood 1962, p. 16.



Fig. 4.36: (middle and right): Front and reverse of the medal issued by the Chapter L'Union in Colombo to R.C. Rask on 1-3-1823 for the degree of Mark Master. Collection: Den Dankse Frimurerodens Museet, Copenhagen. Reproduced from: Dashwood 1962, p. 20.

information on the lodge members at that time. They were signed by Schneider, who added abbreviations of various higher degrees, including the 32<sup>nd</sup>. The signatures of Reckerman, Van der Linden, Bartholomeusz, de Haan and Camp can also be recognized. Newcomers were the Englishmen Edward Muskett (died 1827), merchant of the firm Muskette & Young, and W. Huxham, merchant of the firm Beaufort & Huxham, importers of wine; as well as Charles Liard and Edouard Jean Silvat. Lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia received a letter dated 18-1-1825 from the aforementioned Johannes Camp, identifying himself as the son of a religious teacher, born in Colombo in 1770, and since 1793 working as a clerk for various offices. By now he was too old to work, and therefore applied to the lodge for assistance, explaining:

[...] the Worshipful Grand Master of the Free Masons Lodge De Vereeniging has for philanthropic reasons provided me with a small house pro deo, all the more because I am an old freemason, and for diligence and zeal honoured with the Sublime Degree of Sovereign Prince Rose Croix [...] And because the Freemasons of the Lodge of Ceylon are indigent, I take my refuge with Your Enlightened and Worshipful.<sup>387</sup>

Below Camp's letter was written a recommendation:

We undersigned, Grand Master, Warden and Secretary of the Lodge De VerEeniging in the East of Colombo, on the Island Ceylon, herewith ratify that the contents of this Letter regarding our Brother Johannes Camp, contain the truth, and that He deserves the compassion and the support of all worthy Brethren Freemasons.<sup>388</sup>

It was signed by Schneider, Reckerman and Bartholomeusz. A fourth signature, difficult to read, may be that of an Abr[aham] Mour. A last document, also from the archive of La Vertueuse, is another request for support. It was written by J. Welk Doendeyora on behalf of Mrs. C.M. Muller, widow of lodge member Johan Frederik von Meybrink. The letter explains how Von Meybrink passed away that August and asks to help his widow 'taking into account and under consideration that her Husband was such a noble Regent of the illustrious order of Free-Masons and Grand [= Worshipful] Master of the Venerable Lodge de Vereeniging in the East of Colombo'.<sup>389</sup> Underneath this plea was again added a recommendation, dated 3-8-1836 and signed by Schneider, Reckerman and Camp, as well as three new members: Chr. Ed. Juffer, Pieter Jacob Leopold Gratiaen (1795-1853), an assistant accountant general, and W.A. Kriekenbeek. However they did not sign as lodge officers like before, but privately, as Dutch freemasons in the same town. From this it can be concluded that the lodge no longer functioned in its original form. This corresponds with Dashwood's findings that the lodge transferred to another jurisdiction in 1835-1838. La Vertueuse replied on 5-7-1837, promising to send the widow Von Meybrink 100 Madras Rupees via a money transfer at the expense of the Messrs Mailame Watson & Camp to the benefit of J.J. van der Spar in Galle.<sup>390</sup>

The first time the lodge was mentioned explicitly as St. John's Lodge, was in a report in the *Freemasons Quarterly Review*. It described the ceremony for the laying of the first stone of the Rifle Regiment's Mess on 24-8-1835 in de Marandan Cinnamon Gardens, at which the lodge was present. Schneider was mentioned as Worshipful Master.<sup>391</sup> Also present was the lodge Secretary, captain William Gregory (also a member of St. John's Lodge No. 211 in Halifax). Another newspaper, the *Colombo Observer* of 28-8-1835, gave the following report:

The Worshipful Master and Members of the Union Lodge of Free-masons, having assembled in the Fort [...] were joined by several other Brethren, when Captain Gregory Royal Engineers was deputed by the Worshipful Master to perform the Masonic Ceremonies usual on such occasions.

The Whole of the Brethren in their Masonic Clothing then proceeded in carriages to the immediate vicinity of the Major General's residence where they aligned, formed procession and moved towards Kew House preceded by the Band of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment playing 'The Masons' March'.

On arrival of the Brethren at Kew House they were introduced to the Major General - a Procession marshalled as follows then proceeded to the Building with the Band in front again playing 'The Masons' March', the road being lined by the Ceylon Rifle Regiment.<sup>392</sup>

Masonic processions were not common in the Netherlands, but held in England up until the 1930s.<sup>393</sup> The procession consisted of two parts: first the officers of the regiment, followed by lieutenant colonel Vavassour with the building plans, then the lodge members according to a set pattern, carrying masonic tools and symbols (fig. 4.37). Between the last two members walked the major general, after which the procession was closed by four sergeants of the regiment. Having arrived at the building, everyone was seated and the bible, compasses and square were put in front of the Worshipful Master. After a prayer by the Reverend Bailey, Gregory requested the lodge members to check the cement, after which the major general was handed the trowel and other tools. A few coins were inserted into the wall and covered with a commemorative plaque by 'captain Vassal, Dr. Young, messrs Stewart and Black each holding a corner'.<sup>394</sup>

The meaning of the masonic symbols was explained to the audience by Gregory, after which he and Schneider laid corn, wine and oil on the upper stone and gave 'masonic honours'. The tools were handed by

<b>Tyler</b>	<b>The Worshipful Master</b>	<b>Tyler</b>
<b>Junior Warden</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Senior Warden</b>
<b>Junior Deacon</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Senior Deacon</b>
	<b>Brethren two by two</b>	
	<b>Brother J. Young carrying a Trowel and Corn</b>	
<b>Brother Vassal carrying a Mallet</b>		<b>Brother Steward carrying a Square</b>
<b>Brother W.H. Young carrying a Plumb</b>		<b>Brother Black carrying a Level</b>
	<b>Brother Gregory carrying a Bible, Square and Compass</b>	
	<b>on a Crimson Cushion</b>	
<b>Brother Gunn with a wand and carrying Wine</b>		<b>Brother Lambert with a wand and carrying Oil</b>

Fig. 4.37: Procession formation of the members of Union Lodge in Colombo at the occasion of the laying of the first stone of the Rifle Regiment's Mess, 4-8-1835. The order should be read from the top down. Copied after Dashwood 1962, p. 11.

lodge member Lambert to the major general with formal words, and by him passed on to Gregory and Steward. The Worshipful Master spoke the closing words to the major general, followed by a prayer led by Bailey. The ceremony was ended with a speech from the general to colonel Fletcher, commander of the Ceylon Rifles.

The participation of the lodge at the opening of the mess and the masonic ceremony, imply that the lodge intended to hold meetings there. Lodges met more often in societies and restaurants, and no doubt the regiment's officers were among the members. Participation of the lodge in the festivities underlines how visible freemasons were in local society and how involved in community events. As will be discussed in chapter 5, that was also the case in the Dutch East Indies.

The description of events provides an insight into the membership list of the lodge, which included seven officers apart from Schneider and Gregory: John Ebenezer Young, merchant, J. Young, an assistant surgeon and W.H. Young, surgeon, probably relatives; lieutenants James Stewart and J.R. Lambert, and captain R.J.P. Vassal. Men with the surnames Black and Gunn could not be identified and at least seven officers remained unnamed. On 21-2-1838 former Secretary Gregory was one of the applicants for a new Constitution for the lodge from the Grand Lodge of England:

We, the undersigned, being regular registered Masons of the Lodges mentioned against our respective names, having the prosperity of the Craft at heart, are anxious to exert our best endeavours to promote and diffuse the genuine Principles of the Art; and from the convenience of our respective dwellings and other good reasons, we are desirous to forming a new lodge, to be named St. John's Lodge of Colombo [...] The Letters of Patent under which the existing Union Lodge is at present working, are dated Grand Orient of France 21st November 1827, no. 8413.<sup>395</sup>

A further request was made to be allowed to practice the British Royal Arch degree. Most petitioners were described as former members of Union lodge, others were freemasons that had been initiated elsewhere. Among them were a number of men with Dutch names: Pieter Gratiaen, who had in 1836 signed the widow Muller's charity request, Abraham Cornelius van Cuylenburg (born 1790), probably a relative of the aforementioned Petrus Henricus Cuylenburg); Stephen Vertue jr., a merchant and member of lodge De Eendragt in Rotterdam<sup>396</sup>; Francis Albert Prins, a school master and former member of lodge De Getrouwigheid, Henry Carmichael Prins, a proctor, and John Theodore Prins, a goal doctor, probably all three related; as well as John Godfried Hillebrand (1778-1847), a proctor of the High Council and probably related to the aforementioned W. Hillebrand.

Most of the other petitioners were British, including the aforementioned Gregory, J. Young, Steward, as well as John Armitage (1807-1868), author of *The History of Brazil* (1836) and a member of Lodge Escudo Brasilense in Rio de Janeiro, by then a merchant at Armitage, Scott & Co who would come to play an important part in the financial sector; Colin George Lynd Campbell and Henry Edward Augustus Glasgow,

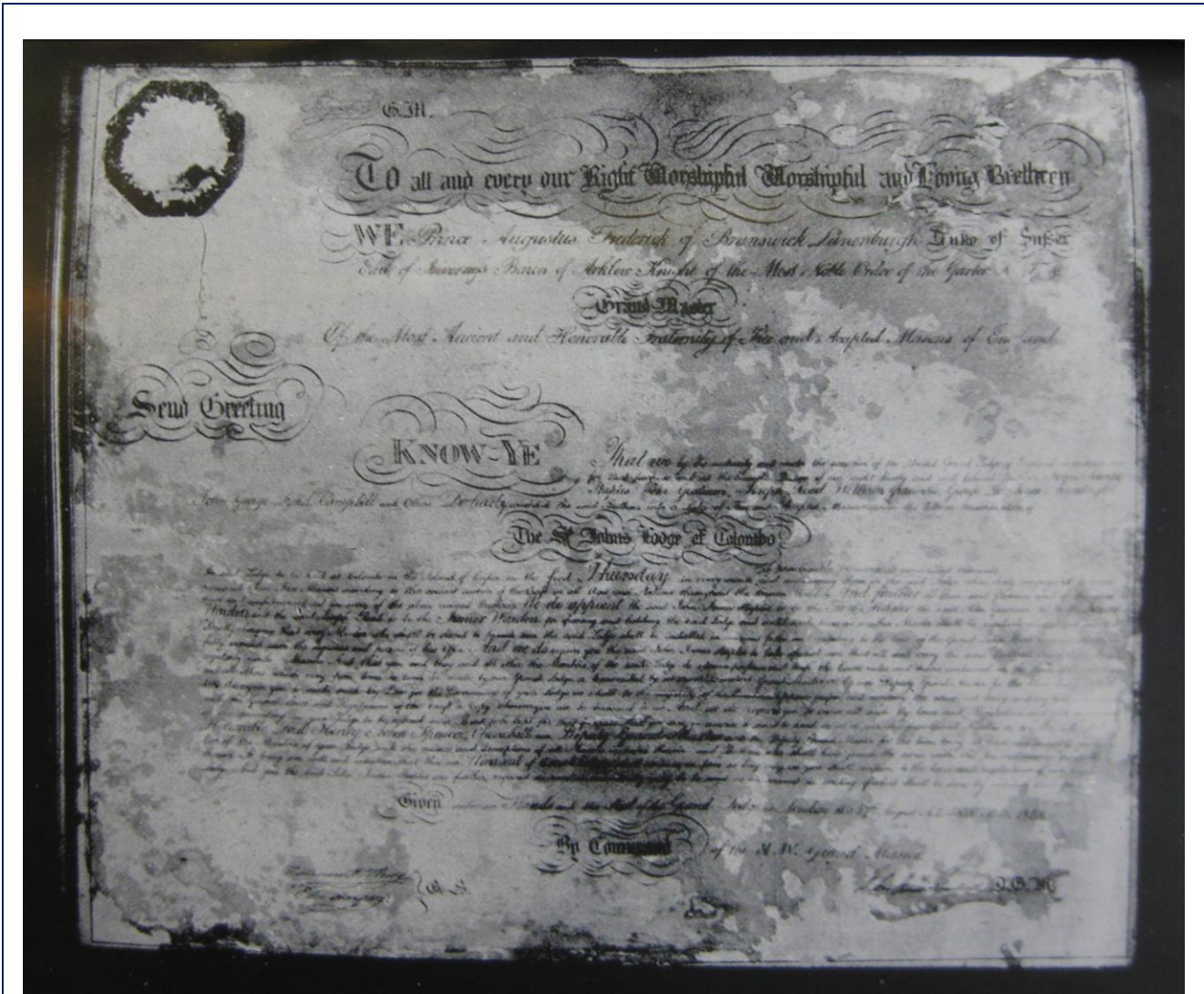


Fig. 3.38: Constitution for St. John's Lodge of Colombo, issued by the Grand Lodge of England on 27-8-1838. Collection: Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London. Reproduced from: Dashwood 1962, p. 25.

both working as clerk; William Granville (1767-1864), Colonial Treasurer; John Pierre Jumeaux, a fiscal; Joseph Read, a merchant and member of St. Andrew's Lodge in Perth, so probably of Scottish descent; John James Staples, a proctor, and Henry Joseph Staples, no doubt related; Cecil Arnold Morgan, probably related to the aforementioned R. Morgan; and George Lee, not yet identified.<sup>397</sup> The English Grand lodge granted their request and the Constitution was received on 7-8-1838 (fig. 4.38).<sup>398</sup>

The above confirms the continuity of the lodge from the Dutch to the English Constitution.<sup>399</sup> Later membership lists continued to include Dutch names for a long time. In 1841 the lodge was involved in the consecration ceremony of the Scottish St. Andrew's Church in Colombo, where again a procession and masonic ceremony were held, similar to the one described above.<sup>400</sup> By then governor J.A. Stewart Mackenzie (1784-1843) had become a member of the lodge. He was offered a silver trowel with an inscription as memento of the occasion.<sup>401</sup> The lodge met in a building at the Grand Pass in 1843.<sup>402</sup> It moved to Kandy in 1858 and remains active to this day. So the oldest, working lodge in Sri Lanka has Dutch roots. The minute books of the lodge have been preserved from 1865 onwards and are now kept in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London.<sup>403</sup>

#### ◆ Other freemasons on Ceylon

Documents in various lodge archives mention freemasons in Ceylon, without making clear to which particular lodge they belonged. The aforementioned Johan Martinus Thomasse for instance, became a

member of lodge De Eendracht in Rotterdam in 1791. He was registered as previously 'accepted in Trincomale on Ceylon', which suggests an initiation into a French lodge.<sup>404</sup> He may be the same man registered in lodge St. Jean de la Concorde in Surat as 'Thomasse' in 1776, or a relative.

The minutes of lodge La Vertueuse in Batavia of 25-6-1795 recorded how a brother Mulls, was 'confronted with the fact that he acted incorrectly by having himself initiated on Ceylon after he had been proposed here'.<sup>405</sup> This man had been proposed (and perhaps even balloted and approved) in La Vertueuse, but was then initiated in Ceylon, whereby La Vertueuse missed out on his initiation fee, but did have to admit him as a member.

The membership records of lodge l'Astre de l'Orient in Vlissingen (Province of Zeeland) in the Netherlands of 19-12-1801 include 'G[eorge] A[uguste dossit] d'Alban Apprentice Fellow-Craft Master on Ceylon', a lieutenant on the ship Zeeland, who registered as a new member.<sup>406</sup>

After 1800, several English, Scottish and Irish, mostly military lodges were active on Ceylon. Lodge No. 62 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot worked under an Irish Constitution until circa 1834. Among the members were several Dutch sounding names, such as Nicolas Bergmans, state printer between 1815-1830, Joshua Christoffelsz Weinman (died 1824), assistant shopkeeper in the Colonial Shop Department, and John William de Waas (died 1828), clerk of the Head of the Secretary.<sup>407</sup>

### 4.3. Organisation and membership body

Considering the development of lodges in India and Ceylon as described above, there seem to be some recurring patterns. The first Dutch lodges in the region were founded by men, both associated with the VOC and the lodges in Amsterdam. In almost all cases members of the government or the governor himself were involved in the founding activities, ensuring both protection and a desirable status for the lodge. Most of the regular lodge members were both seafaring men (ships' captains and crew or merchants), military officers and civil servants stationed locally. Contact with the Grand Lodge in the Netherlands, the Provincial Grand Lodge in Bengal and between the Dutch lodges themselves was maintained through letters, carried by freemasons who were either ships' captains or in the service of the VOC, travelling from the Netherlands to the Cape and throughout Southeast Asia.

The Grand Lodge stimulated the founding of lodges, motivated not only by masonic ideals, but also by the potential source of income from founding fees, yearly contributions and authenticated membership certificates. The Grand Lodge correspondence with lodges in the trade ports deals predominantly with (late) contributions and other financial matters, and less with ritual or other masonic issues. The Grand Lodge rarely refused a requested Constitution. When no payment had been received, it waited before acting or granted a temporary document, but as soon as the *don gratuit* and founding fee was transferred, it formally recognized a lodge. If refusals occurred, the relating documents have not survived.

Lodges seem ambitious. Every lodge that was the first to be founded in a specific area, tried to obtain the title of Provincial Grand Lodge. Of course this was considered an honour, but again masonic ideals seem to have gone hand in hand with a desire for a higher status and financial opportunities. If all is well, there is little need for correspondence or minute keeping, so inevitably surviving documents tend to relate to problems or conflicts. The bickering amongst lodge members about higher degrees or even the colour of regalia may come across as petty, but it does emphasize how seriously the masonic 'game' was played and how much status was attached to higher degrees.

Communication was difficult and even letters sent in duplicate or triplicate often failed to reach their destination. Because of the large turnaround in both Provincial Grand Masters, lodge officers and even lodge members, the Grand Lodge had much less direct influence on the activities of the lodges in the trade posts than those in the Netherlands. The laws of the Order were interpreted as members saw fit, and in some cases interpreted very loosely.

During most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the total of Europeans in VOC service in the whole of Asia was circa 20.000.<sup>408</sup> In the small Dutch settlements, such as those in India and Ceylon around the time that the first lodges were founded there, that amounted to just a few hundred men and several dozen women. In 1760 for instance, there were 518 Company servants in the port of Galle on Ceylon.<sup>409</sup> The research for this chapter has resulted in a list of 324 names of men, who were members or visitors of lodges in India and/or Ceylon before 1757-1838 (see Appendix II). As the archives of lodges in the region are incomplete and the membership records of lodges in the Netherlands have not yet been systematically checked for visitors or members initiated in Asia, many names may still be added in the future.

What can we conclude from the present overview? Frank Lequin published a list of the members of the 'Directorium' of the VOC factory in Bengal.<sup>410</sup> This board consisted of the Director of Bengal and a Council of mainly civil servants (administration, trade, justice).<sup>411</sup> For the years 1759-1795 this list contains 39 names, of which 24 can be traced in the lodge archives. The percentage of Directorium members which belonged to a masonic network during this time frame amounts to 61 %. Here too we should take the fragmentary nature of lodge archives into account, as well as the fact that membership lists of lodges in the Netherlands were not consulted.<sup>412</sup> Of all 324 men, at least 105 (32 %) of these can be traced in the *monsterrollen* (enlistment papers) database of the VOC up to 1794.<sup>413</sup>

Among those whose place of birth or hometown was listed, at least 16 (9%) were born in Asia, while 88 (47%) came from the Netherlands, with Amsterdam and The Hague cited most often. Almost just as many men, 82 men (44%), came from other countries: most from Europe (Britain, Germany, France or Scandinavia), and a small percentage came from Algiers or South Africa. This again illustrates the 'Dutch' lodges were more of an international meeting place.

It is difficult to give precise numbers of their social backgrounds, because some men started out in VOC or military service and later became merchants or civilians. Of 324 men, at least 14 ships captains (4%) were counted, as well as at least 62 merchants (19%) and 76 in military service (23%). A small, but very influential number, were the governors and directors among them: 10 (3%). These are only preliminary findings that deserve to be expanded on and have these network relationships visualised into interactive digital tools.<sup>414</sup>

The surviving documents illustrate the scope of the network at the disposal of freemasons in Asia and its social and economic potential for travelling Dutchmen. Considering their number, freemasons were an important group within the VOC directors and employees, in daily life closely involved in the government of the trade posts and the trade itself. The numbers have many implications for social, political and economic history. Was the involvement in a lodge beneficial or a prerequisite for the appointment to a particular office? Did masonic ideals influence the personal decisions of those in charge? Was the forming of strategic alliances, the outcome of trade negotiations or even the result of political conflicts influenced by the fact that some parties around the table were members of the Order?

Such questions may be answered by future researchers, who may want to focus on the archives of the lodges in the cities where the VOC had its 'Chambers': Amsterdam, Middelburg and Rotterdam (and the Besoigne in The Hague). Some of the key players listed in Appendix II have left either VOC archives, family archives or ego documents in such Dutch collections as the National Archive. Particularly the latter two categories may contain subtle references to lodge activities, which may have been previously overlooked by researchers, as they require knowledge of the typical expressions and signs used in masonic communication.

A recent international archive project (Tanap), especially aimed at identifying and preserving Dutch documents in former overseas trade posts, did not reveal significant masonic archives in collections in India and Sri Lanka.<sup>415</sup> Considering that Dutch positions in Asia were taken over by the British by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that the British and Dutch freemasons entertained friendly contacts and that at least one lodge transferred to British jurisdiction, the archives of lodges from India in the Museum and Library of Freemasonry in London might contain documents relating to the Dutch. The same goes for the archives of the Grand Orient de France in Paris, with which most Dutch scholars of colonial history may still be unfamiliar.

As there are only fragments left of the Dutch lodge archives from India and Ceylon, it is difficult to draw conclusions about their role in cultural mediation or the material culture they may have produced. Some lodge buildings and objects are mentioned in correspondence, but there are no inventories, no financial records and barely any objects left. That makes the apron of C.C. Uhlenbeck (fig.4.31) all the rarer. The few remaining documents, including orders of books and regalia, indicate that the lodges operated in much the same fashion as those in Batavia, from which such documentation *is* available. It is therefore logical to conclude that the lodges in India and Ceylon (temporarily) furnished lodge rooms in the houses of their Worshipful Masters and other prominent members, following traditions back in the Netherlands. What these could have looked like, will become clear from the next chapter.

What the above does illustrate very well, is how lodge membership and communication were interwoven with the VOC network. Becoming a freemason opened up worldwide travel and communication channels, which must have had tremendous social and economic potential. These channels have been used for the private trade in masonic export goods, as will also be discussed in the following chapters.