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Fort Cochin in Kerala 1750-1830 : the social condition of a Dutch community in an Indian milieu

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FORT COCHIN IN KERALA 1750-1830
THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF A DUTCH COMMUNITY IN AN INDIAN MILIEU

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
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Anjana Singh

geboren te Patna - India
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	prof. dr. J. Lucassen
	dr. M. de Lannoy

Cover page:
Detailed plan of Cochin, bird's-eye view
Dated c. 1665
By Johannes Vingboons
NA, The Hague, 4 VELH 619-47

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL:	British Library (London)
CCD:	Cochin Commissioner's Diaries
CDNI:	*Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*
CNWS:	Centre for Non-Western Studies
CZOHB:	*Committee tot de Zaken van de Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen* (Archives of the Committee for the Affairs of East Indies Trade and Possessions), the National Archives, The Hague.
DR:	Dutch Records
EIC:	(English) East India Company
Fl.:	*Florijnen* (Florins)
GG&C	Governor General and Council
GG:	*Gouverneur-Generaal* (Governor General)
GM:	*Generale Missiven* (General Letters from Batavia to the Netherlands)
HRB:	*Hoge Regering te Batavia* (Archives of the High Government at Batavia)
IOR:	India Office Records, British Library, London
KITLV:	*Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Royal Netherlands Institute of South-East Asian and Caribbean Studies)
Lbs.:	Pounds
MSA:	Maharashtra State Archives (Mumbai)
MvO:	*Memorie van Overgave* (Memoir of handing-over charge)
NA:	*Nationaal Archief* (National Archives)
OBP:	*Overgekomen brieven en papieren* (Letters and papers received in the Netherlands)
OED:	Oxford English Dictionary
OIOC:	Oriental and India Office Collection, British Library, London
PRO:	Public Record Office, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, London
Rs.:	Rupees
Ryxds:	*Rijksdaalders* (Rixdollars)
SPDD:	Secret and Political Department Diaries
SS:	*Stadhouderlijke Secretarie* (Secretariat of the Stadhouder)
TSA:	Tamil Nadu State Archives (Chennai)
VEL:	*Verzameling Buitenlandse Kaarten Leupe* (Nationaal Archief, The Hague)

VOC: *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (United East India Company) Dutch East India Company

WIC: *West-Indische Compagnie* (West India Company)

WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND CURRENCY

D.: Dutch, E.: English, P.: Portuguese, M.: Malayalam

Weights

1 Pound /*Pond* (lb.)	(E. / D.) Equals 500 grams. It is a unit of mass.
1 Candile / *Candijl*	(E. / D.) 450 to 500 Amsterdam lbs. approximately. The values differed in different regions in India.
1 *Parra*	(M.) In Malabar equals 40 lbs. It is a unit of measurement with different values in different parts of South Asia.

Both candile and *parras* were also used to measure land. Normally land was valued according to the amount of grain (in volume) that could be cultivated from it.

Measures

Rijnlandse roede	(D.) 3.75 meters (approximately)

Currency

1 *Rijksdaalder* / Rixdollar (ryxd)	(D. / E.) Equals 48 *stuivers*
1 *Gulden* / Guilder (Fl.)	(D. / E.) Equals 20 stuivers
1 *Stuiver*	(D.) Equals 16 *penningen* (pennys)
1 *Fanum*	(D.) Equals 10 s*tuivers*

GLOSSARY

D.:Dutch, E.:English, P.:Portuguese, H.:Hindi

Casado	(P.) Married Portuguese men living in Asia
Castiço	(P.) Portuguese persons born in Asia from European parents
Castizo	(D.) Dutch persons born in Asia from European parents
Ghat	(H.) Valley
Gomasta	(H.) An 'appointed delegate', an agent or a factor
Gouverneur-Generaal en Raden	(D.) Governor General and Council of the VOC at Batavia, also called the High Government
Heren XVII	(D.) Gentlemen XVII, the directors of the VOC
Kachachri	(H.) A judicial court or an office of administration
Kamer	(D.) Chamber, one of the constituent organs of the VOC
Lascorijn /Lascar	(D. / E.) Person of indigenous origin who served in the army of the European Companies
Malabari	(H.) An indigenous person from the Malabar Ccast
Mestiço	(P.) People of mixed Portuguese and Indian descent
Mestizo	(D.) People of mixed Dutch and Indian descent
Plakkaat	(D.) Decree, edict or proclamation
Sepoy	(E.) An indigenous India employed as soldier, and dressed and disciplined in the European style
Shahbandar	(H.) Chief officer of a port
Toepas /Tupas	(D. / P.) Dark-skinned or half-caste claimants of Portuguese descent who followed Roman Catholicism
Vrijburger / Free-burghers	(D. / E.) Europeans who lived in VOC settlements or around it, not as Company servants but as "free" persons

INTRODUCTION

"History to me is placing a man in the context of his times".[1]

Ashin Das Gupta

During the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, on an average, for every one hundred persons who emigrated from Europe on a VOC[2] East Indiaman heading towards Asia, only thirty-three returned back home. In the second half of the eighteenth century this number fell to twenty-seven persons per every hundred.[3] This book is about a very small number of the vast majority of Europeans, who never saw the face of Europe again. Their gravestones still stand in an Indian port city by the Arabian Sea, namely Fort Cochin[4] in Kerala, India. The book is also about their families and their descendants. What was the social condition of these migrants in Cochin in the second half of the eighteenth century? How did the individuals cope with the changing political and economic scenarios between 1750 and 1830? This study attempts to answer these questions and place the institution – the VOC – and the individuals – the company servants – in the context of their times.

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[1] Bhaswati Bhattacharya, 'History is placing a Man in the Context of his Times: An Interview with the Late Ashin Das Gupta (1932-1998)' *Itinerario* Vol. xxiv (1/2000) 13-20, especially 15-16.

[2] The *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or the United East India Company, popularly known by its Dutch acronym VOC, was established on 30th March 1602. In the Netherlands, it functioned as a conglomerate of six chambers, namely Amsterdam, Zeeland, Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. These chambers had their own establishments in the respective cities from where they functioned. Thus, in the Netherlands, the Company was decentralised. The Gentlemen XVII (also called directors) were the representatives of the various chambers. They co-ordinated the workings of the various chambers and supervised and sent instructions to Asia. In Asia, the so-called High Government at Batavia was the central organising and administrative authority. It comprised of the Governor General who was helped as well as checked by the Councillors of the Indies. So, in Asia, the Company was centralised. Governors, directors, commanders or chiefs were the men on the spot throughout the Dutch overseas empire in Asia and Africa. In total, the VOC had about 300 establishments. These ranged from wooden lodges manned by a few servants of the VOC to huge forts, or even a town with civil and military servants numbering in thousands, and institutions as varied as inns, gambling and drinking taverns, orphan house, legal court, prison cells etc. Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003), *passim*.

[3] Between 1602 and 1795, about 973,000 persons left Europe, of which only 322,500 returned. In the second half of the eighteenth century the numbers returning were even lesser. Between 1740 and 1795, 399,700 persons began their Asia wards voyage and only 112,800 returned, that is, only 27.3 per cent. J. R. Bruijn, F. S. Gaastra, I. Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Vol. I (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1987), 170.

[4] Situated at 09.58 degrees North and 76.20 degrees East, Cochin is a port town on the Malabar Coast of India. It is one of the main towns in the State of Kerala. The current official name of Cochin is Kochi. Here Cochin has been used, both for historical reasons and for the sake of convenience. Fort Cochin is a small part of Cochin.

The mass movement of people, by the VOC, from the west to the east, fuelled by the hope of economic gains and pushed forward by violent means, has two aspects. First and foremost, this voluntary migration was an institution-based one. It was supposedly a temporary relocation of people attached to the VOC. It was grounded on legal contracts between the individuals and that the institution. Secondly, the personal experiences of numerous individuals got entangled with the institution they had joined in order to benefit economically. These men chose a certain kind of peripatetic life which the service of the company demanded.

Whether of institutions or of individuals, history gets written with hindsight. This study attempts to place the VOC and its personnel in their socio-historical background. I have attempted to find something human and endearing about the individuals who undertook the treacherous eight-month sea voyage from Europe to Asia, to serve the company: in this case specifically those in Fort Cochin.

Lured by Kerala's promises of pristine backwaters and sparkling beaches, many present-day travellers who arrive at Cochin are, in a small part of the city, faced with a few edifices, which are connected to the city's extensive history. Wandering about the place, seeing the numerous churches, buildings, playgrounds, Dutch period houses and graveyards is a unique experience, as there is no other place in India which still has vestiges of three former European colonial powers at the same spot, namely the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English. This was the site of the first European establishment in India; a place of lasting impression and importance.

Geographically, Cochin is rather complex. It consists primarily of Ernakulam, Fort Cochin, Mattancheri, and the three islands of Vaipin, Bolgatty and Willingdon. Vaipin is north of the fort, while Ernakulam on the mainland is the main business centre and railway station for Cochin. Willingdon is a man-made island, created by the British from material left from the dredging of the mouth of river Periyar.[5] Present day Cochin is a curious potpourri of Chinese fishing nets, Dutch houses, antique silver-coloured street lamps and huge old tropical trees in Fort Cochin, a Jewish synagogue in Mattancheri, the densely populated Vaipin Island, the commercial and judicial hub of Ernakulam, and the waters around these and Willingdon Island harbouring the commercial and Naval dockyards, a shipbuilding centre, a key base of the Indian Navy, and a busy port.[6]

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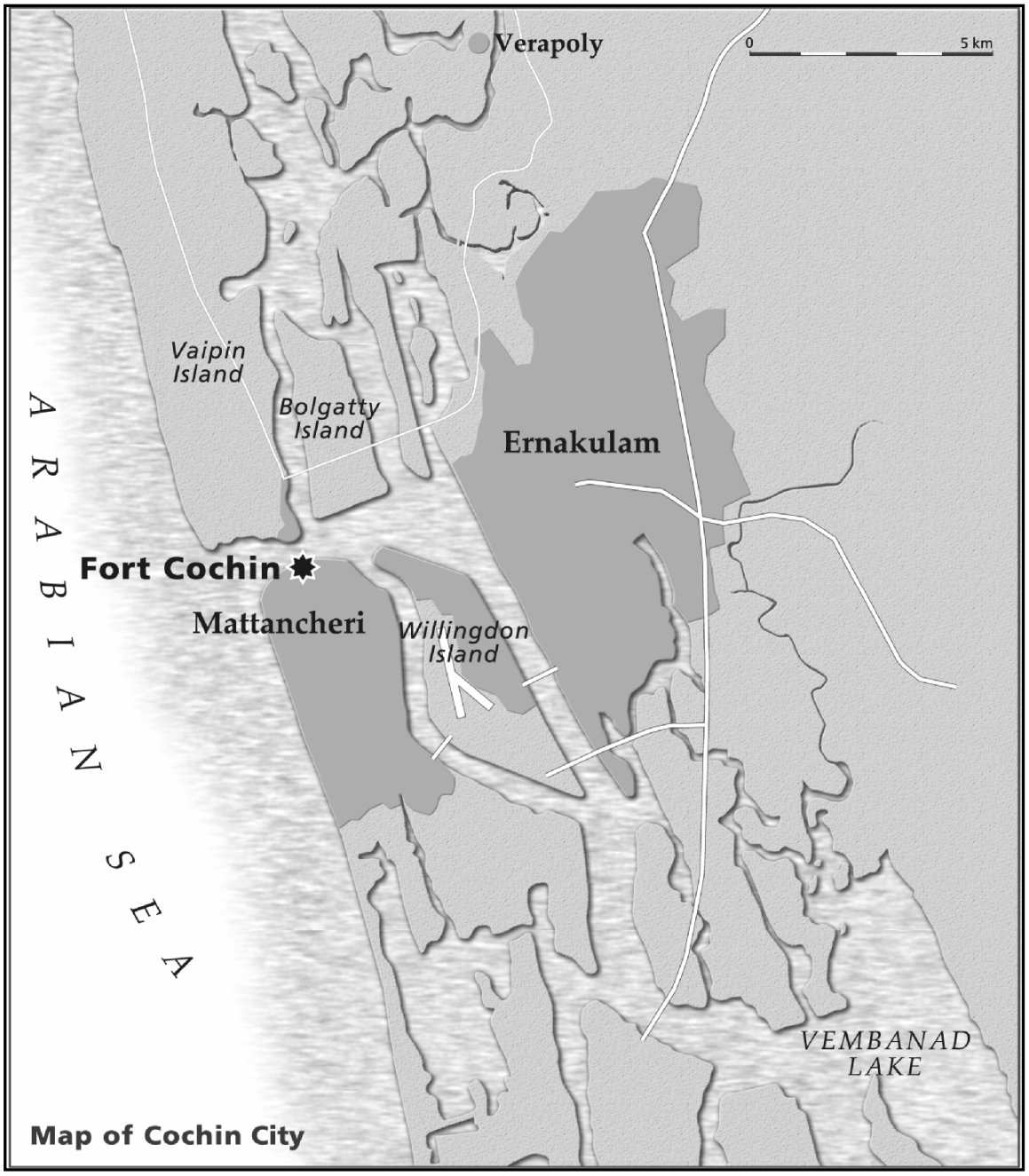
[5] Sir Robert Bristow, *Cochin Saga: A History of Foreign Government and Business adventures in Kerala, South India, by Arabs, Romans, Venetians, Dutch, and British, Together with the personal narrative of the last adventurer and an Epilogue* (London: Cassell, 1959).

[6] Traditionally, the region's main exports have been pepper, coconut, coir and coir products. In the twentieth century the rank of Cochin, as a major port town in India, increased considerably from 9th in 1920 to 4th in 1950. Today, she is ranked next to Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras) and Vishakhapatnam in terms of shipping, tonnage, harbour facilities etc. Atiya Habeeb Kidwai, 'Concepts and Methodological Issues: Ports, Port Cities and Port-Hinterland' in Indu Banga, (ed.) *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India 1700-1970* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992), 7- 43.

MAP 1: MAP OF PRESENT-DAY COCHIN



Armand Haye, Amsterdam.

The two shades of grey depict the build on (darker) and non-build on areas (generalized).

Ever since Vasco da Gama's first anchorage at Calicut on the Malabar Coast of India in May 1498, the area has had constant contacts with European maritime powers. The first European fort in India was built by the Portuguese in Cochin in 1503.[7] Mattancheri[8] is south-east of the fort and the place where the indigenous merchants lived.[9] During the seventeenth century, the VOC strove constantly to curb Portuguese trade in Asia.[10] On 8th January 1663, Cochin was taken over by the VOC from the Portuguese, along with all its dependencies, papers, artillery, ammunition and all types of articles for trading, goods and slaves.[11] The Dutch were in Fort Cochin for the next hundred and thirty-two years, after which the town passed into British hands.

Historians are urged to attempt to ask big questions in order to attain an understanding of the historical processes. This, it has been said, could be done by seeking to understand 'the life experiences of at least some of the individuals involved in the historical processes.[12] Much has been written about the VOC as an institution.[13] Yet, there is little available about the Dutch individuals who, within the historical process of European overseas expansion, left an imprint of in the form of buildings and tombstones in Fort Cochin. This research unravels the institutional, as well as the individual experiences of the Dutch in Cochin between 1750 and 1830. It brings forward the personal interactions in the expansion process.

The study of the social aspect of the Dutch in Cochin will contribute to a better understanding of the Dutch presence in India, and when comparisons made, their presence in

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[7] A. Shreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History* (Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd., 1967), 209-13. In 1527, the town of Santa Cruz of Cochin, as it was known then, was raised to the juridical status of a city. Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India 1500-1663* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 77.

[8] Mattancheri is also spelled as Mattancherry, which is its modern name.

[9] The Portuguese referred to Mattancheri and adjoining areas as *Cochim de Cima*, meaning higher Cochin. This was the 'native' Cochin. The fortified area was referred to as *Cochim de Baixo* literally means lower Cochin. Hugo K. s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin 1663-1720: Kings, Chiefs and the Dutch East India Company* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2000), 13 and Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin*, 74.

[10] The earliest Dutch contact with Malabar is dated as 1603 in Calicut, when Steven van der Hagen visited the coast on an official VOC assignment. In 1604 he signed a treaty with the Zamorin of Calicut for mutual co-operation and trade. The Zamorin was an enemy of the Portuguese. After firmly establishing themselves in the worlds foremost spice centre, Maluku (Ambon 1605, Ternate 1607 and Banda 1622), and at Batavia (1619), the VOC captured the Portuguese bases of Galle (1640), Malacca (1641), Colombo (1656), and Jaffna (1658). After Ceylon, efforts were focused on coastal south India. Nagappattinam was established in 1660.

[11] NA The Hague, HRB 732, fo. 13. CDNI, 2, 231-232. M. Antoinette P. Roelofsz, *De vestiging der Nederlanders ter kuste Malabar* (('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1943), 336-338.

[12] P. J. Marshall quoting Ashin Das Gupta in his 'Introduction' to Ashin Das Gupta, *India and the Indian Ocean World: Trade and Politics*; with contributions from P. J. Marshall and Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. vii.

[13] With the commemoration in 2002 of the 400th year since the establishment of the VOC in the Netherlands, numerous books were published on the general history of the Dutch Company. Leo Akveld and Els M. Jacobs (eds.), *De kleurrijke wereld van de VOC* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Thoth, 2002); Blussé Leonard, etc. (eds.), *Ontmoeting Azie* (Bussum: Uitgeverij Thoth, 2002); Leonard Blussé and Illonka Ooms (eds.), *Kennis en Compagnie* (Leiden: Balans, 2002). The most recent and comprehensive work on the VOC is Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*.

other places that were once under VOC control. It will lead to an insight into eighteenth century Dutch institutions, customs and culture that were transferred into India, especially in the case of Cochin. The attempt has been to understand through the life experiences of at least some individuals who were part of the historical process, a maritime port town in its social context. It will place Fort Cochin in the larger web of VOC establishments across Africa and Asia and add new data and perspective to European expansion.

Inspiration for Research

This research draws heavily on previous works on European expansion in Asia. C. R. Boxer is one of the most admired and credited historians who has added extensively and vividly to the knowledge of the European expansion in Asia.[14] Yet, in his work on the Dutch overseas neither Malabar, nor Cochin as such are mentioned. This shows how ignored and overlooked the Dutch in Malabar have been. Since Boxer, numerous scholars have taken this field of study to new heights. But his oversight has not been fully corrected in the last four decades.[15] The present study contributes to two important subject areas in history writing: 'Dutch overseas history' and the 'Europeans in India history'.

Reading about the Dutch overseas expansion one can learn about Dutch social life in Batavia, Ceylon (Colombo and Galle) and Cape Town.[16] India until now however is not on the map of Dutch overseas social history. Whereas, there is a vast literature on the British in India[17] and a

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[14] C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415-1825* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1969) and C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800* (London: Penguin, Reprint 1990).

[15] There is not yet a book that offers a comprehensive view about the Dutch presence in India except a rather general compilation by Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch in India* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1981). A more detailed region specific work is Om Prakash, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India* (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and specifically on the Dutch George D. Winius, and Marcus P. M. Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified. The Dutch East India Company and its Changing Political Economy in India* (Delhi: Oxford, 1994). For Surat see Ann Bos Radwan, *The Dutch in Western India 1601-1632* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978).

[16] To name a few: Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social world of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986), Hendrik E. Niemeijer, *Batavia Een koloniale samenleving in de 17de eeuw* (Amersfoort: Balans, 2005), Remco Raben, 'Batavia and Colombo: The Ethnic and Spatial Order of Two Colonial Cities 1600-1800' (Ph D thesis, Leiden 1996). Lodewijk Wagenaar, *Galle: VOC-vestiging in Ceylon* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994). Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen, Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: the making of a city: an illustrated social history* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998).

[17] From the nationalistic histories of the 1940s to revisionist trends in the 1970s, copious volumes have been brought to print regarding expansion, reaction, and its political, economic and social implications both in Europe and in Asia. Percival Spear, *The Nabobs A Study of the Social Life of the English in 18th Century India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).Writings that dealt with the interaction history at personal or non-political level can be found in works like James Lawrence, *Raj: The Making of British India* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1997). Also see P. J. Marshall, 'British Society under the East India Company' in *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol. 31, no. 1, 1997. For specialised gender and race related social histories during British India see: Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their critics 1793-1905* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980). Biographical studies of British civil servants serving in India proved to be the most useful tool in the understanding of the British social life in India. In this sphere, the works of Archer Mildred and Toby Falk cannot be missed. Archer Mildred and Toby Falk, *India Revealed: The Art and Adventures of James and William Fraser 1801-1835* (London: Cassell, 1989). For an

couple of works on the Portuguese,[18] there emerges a very obvious lack of anything near to a social history of the Dutch in India.[19] The concept 'social' is taken as 'of or relating to society or its organization' and society as 'living together of people in organized communities'.[20] But then, why research Fort Cochin and why not the VOC in other places in India, namely Surat, Coromandel or Bengal? The answer lies in the availability of sources. Archives of the VOC created in Fort Cochin offered opportunities for a case study of the Dutch institutional and individual experience in India. Similar case studies on Surat, Bengal or Coromandel are less inviting, as there are hardly any archives comparable to the Dutch records concerning Fort Cochin.

Further, it must be stressed that the VOC in Cochin occupies a unique place in the history of the Dutch involvement or presence on the Indian subcontinent. Firstly, the VOC's Malabar establishment was the largest after Batavia and Colombo.[21] Secondly, while other VOC establishments in India were "shared" either within a city (as in Surat), or functioned in close proximity (as in Bengal and Coromandel) with other European powers throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Fort Cochin was a large fortified town, where all employees and their slaves and families lived within the walled area continuously from 1663 to 1795: a hundred and thirty-two years. Most other VOC settlements in India like those in Bengal and Coromandel were constantly involved in wars, and therefore existed for shorter periods and faced frequent transfers of power.

If one thinks of history writing, Dutch sources and Kerala, the name of Antoinette Roelofsz (later Meilink-Roelofsz), comes to mind.[22] Meilink-Roelofsz was the first scholar to point out the

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interesting read on British social life in Delhi see William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns*: *a year of Delhi* (New Delhi: Indus, 1993). The same author's *White Mughals*, a refreshing narrative of an English East India Company servant and his noble Muslim wife during the last decades of eighteenth century India. This description of the life journey of a Scotsman posted as an English Resident at the court of the Nizams of Hyderabad and many other Europeans like him living throughout India around the same time, comes up as an inspirational work for studying the interaction at a personal level, thereby creating a piece of Anglo-Mughal India. Though the main backdrop of the book is in Hyderabad under Nizam Ali, there are also numerous other examples of English men mixing with Indians elsewhere on the subcontinent. See William Dalrymple, *White Mughals, Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (New York: Viking, 2003). Also Chris Bayly illustrates how the interactions led to gaining knowledge from both sides. C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[18] Teotonio R. de Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History* (New Delhi: Concept, 1979) and recently Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin.*

[19] Two works that deal with the Dutch in India (Surat and Bengal) and are biographical in nature are: H.W. van Santen, *VOC-dienaar in India, Geleynssen de Jongh in het land van de Groot-Mogol* (Franeker 2001) and Christiaan J. A. Jörg, 'Jan Albert Sichterman, A Groninger Nabob and Art-Collector' in *All of One Company: The VOC in Biographical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Mrs. M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz under the auspices of the Centre for the History for European Expansion* (Utrecht: Hess Uitgevers, 1986).

[20] For discussion on social history, see Eric Hobsbawm, 'From Social History to the History of Society' in *On History* (London: Reprint 1997), 94-123.

[21] NA The Hague, HRB 735, fo. 277, Report of Jan Schreuder delivered to Council of Indies and Governor General Petrus Albertus van der Parra dated 20th December 1763. See Appendix to Chapter One; Table 1 and 2.

[22] Roelofsz, *De vestiging.* This deals with the VOC's seize of the Malabar establishments. Some works concerning the Malabar and the VOC are: K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch* (Bombay: D. B.

lack of information available about the personal characters participating in the expansion. She worked on the careers of company servants like Steven van der Hagen, bringing their point of view into focus. She undertook the study of common officials of the company who implemented its policies at the local level. Thus, her work set in motion a trend towards biographical studies, adding a personal touch to VOC history. Roelofsz compiled the first detailed monograph of the Dutch in Malabar. She made extensive use of the VOC archives at The Hague to write the history of the Dutch seizure of the Portuguese forts on the Malabar Coast. As she admitted, it was only a story of the Dutch attempts to take over Cochin from the Portuguese up to the departure of Rijcklof van Goens. There was another 130 years of Dutch history in Malabar that needed to be written about.[23] Under her guidance scholars began detailed works on the Dutch connections with the Indian subcontinent providing, to begin with, first an entry into the study and later a broad understanding of the Dutch presence in South Asia with the help of the Dutch archives.[24] As early as 1977, she remarked that "there is a wealth of archival material – especially for the eighteenth century containing social data on the servants of the company".[25] A general compilation on the Dutch in India has been made by George Winius and Markus Vink. [26] But the most pioneering work using the Dutch archives and adding immensely to India's mercantile and maritime history has been by Ashin Das Gupta.[27]

Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1931) and *History of Kerala* (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1960). The later refers to both the Portuguese and the Dutch in Malabar. M. O. Koshy, *The Dutch Power in Kerala 1729-1758* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1989) gives information on the Dutch in Kerala and their relations with local sovereigns. Jan van Lohuizen throws light on the political and commercial relations of the Dutch with the rulers of Mysore. J. van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore 1762-1790* ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1961). T. I. Poonen covers the entire stretch of Dutch presence, that is, from 1663 to 1795, and formulates the basic historical paradigm. T. I. Poonen, *Dutch Hegemony in Malabar and its Collapse: A.D. 1663-1795* (Trivandrum: Dept. of Publications, University of Kerala, 1978). Other works on the Dutch in Malabar are: H. K. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala 1663-1701: De memories en instructies betreffende het commandement Malabar van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1976) R.G.P., kleine serie. It looks into the first ten commanders of Malabar Command and their points of views on the political, economic, social, administrative and numerous other aspects of the Dutch in Malabar. The work of Mark De Lannoy traces the rising power of Martanda Varma of Travancore and the diminishing influence of the Dutch on the Malabar Coast. Mark de Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore: History and State Formation in Travancore from 1671 to 1758* (Leiden: CNWS, 1997). Also see s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*.

[23] Roelofsz, *De Vestiging*, p. iv.

[24] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala.* F. Lequin, 'Het Personeel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Azië in de Achttiende Eeuw, meer in het bijzonder in de vestiging Bengalen', 2 vols. (Diss., Leiden University, 1982).

[25] See 'The Lady in the Glass Box: Reminiscences of Scholar-Archivist M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz (1905-1988)' in Leonard Blussé, Frans-Paul van der Putten and Hans Vogel (eds.), *Pilgrims to the past: private conversations with historians of European expansion* (Leiden: CNWS, 1996), 21-31, especially 22. For list of complete works of M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz see Jaap de Moor, 'Bibliography of Mrs. M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz Compiled for her Eightieth Birthday' in *All of One Company: The VOC in Biographical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Mrs. M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz under the auspices of the Centre for the History for European Expansion*, (Utrecht: HES Uitg., 1986).

[26] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified.*

[27] For a complete list of his works see *Itinerario* Vol. xxiv (1/ 2000).

In 1967, Ashin Das Gupta wrote his *Malabar in Asian Trade*.[28] He was the first scholar to use Dutch documents for studying western Indian maritime history. When the book was published, it attracted the attention of numerous scholars from all over the world, who had been busy with maritime trade and expansion of the Europeans and the reactions to it. In his review of the book, Holden Furber's closing remarks were: "Microfilming of Dutch materials for the Indian National Archives will, one hopes, promote further studies in this field by Das Gupta and others who follow his example".[29] But, further use of Dutch documents for writing Indian history remained a challenge. Although the National Archives in New Delhi and the Tamil Nadu State Archives in Chennai (Madras) have Dutch documents, they have rarely been used in the past in subsequent studies. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, there were no avenues open to young scholars to learn modern or seventeenth century Dutch in India. Secondly, specifically for the case of Malabar, Das Gupta referring to the year 1800 and medieval Asian traders ended his book with the dramatic lines – "Medieval Asian trade along the coast called Malabar had sounded its last retreat".[30] This is plain truth, in simple words, backed by superb storytelling, excellent writing and flawless research. Nevertheless, it does not mean that there was nothing more to say on the Dutch in Malabar. Probably Das Gupta's conclusion on Asian traders was incorrectly taken to mean that all had been said on the whole subject-matter of Malabar in the eighteenth century. Considering that, during those days, history writing was focussed on the necessity to bring forward the Asian trader, few scholars would dare to pick up a topic for research which concerned Europeans in India. In fact Das Gupta's book raised some basic questions: What happened to the Dutch company as decline was setting in on the Malabar Coast? Why did the company continue to function there, even when business opportunities were drying up?

In 1994, George Winius and Marcus Vink took up the larger enterprise of researching the whole endeavour of the VOC in South Asia.[31] Specifically, they dealt with the nature of the company's presence there. They defined the company as Merchant-Warrior (pacified) and brought out the emporialistic nature of the VOC's trade in South Asia, and notably in Cochin. It was concluded that the VOC's defeat in the battle of Colachel in 1741 and subsequent negotiations with Travancore, reduced the company to a pittance of their former trade. Although a rise of regional states in the name of Travancore and Mysore surely cannot be denied, one still wonders why a trading company would hang on to its establishments after facing such defeats? The rise of regional states is thus not a convincing enough argument for the decline and disengagement of the VOC in Malabar, if it can be characterised in those words. This study is set on the period after 1750 when, as proposed by Winius and Vink, the mercantile importance of

[28] Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967). This book as well as his *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c. 1700-1750* were re-published posthumously as Das Gupta, *India and the Indian Ocean World.*
[29] Book review of Das Gupta's *Malabar in Asian Trade* by Holden Furber. *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 40, No. 3/4 (Autumn, 1967-1968), 418-419.
[30] Das Gupta*, Malabar in Asian Trade,* 136.
[31] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified.*

Cochin had declined. The study will analyze the functioning of the company after the 1740s. This research has been done with the spirit of giving answers to these problems, which have arisen from the researches and writing of Das Gupta and Winius.

The subject of characterising European expansion in Asia is a well discussed issue. Jan Heesterman has broadly pointed out the common experience of the Portuguese and the Dutch on the Indian subcontinent, suggesting there was much to learn from the experience and reactions of both of these European powers. While comparing the Portuguese and Dutch presence, he restricted himself to the political and commercial entanglements and concluded that, while the Portuguese gelled in, the Dutch remained aliens. He also put the Portuguese into an 'empire and warrior' uniform and the Dutch into a 'trader and merchant' one.[32] The Dutch presence in Malabar will be tested against this general concept, but attempts to go beyond these terminologies.

Parting ways from Ashin Das Gupta who spent a lifetime trying to bring out Indian merchants from the European sources, this work brings forward the lives of Dutch persons in India in the eighteenth century. It is about the servants of the VOC and not the indigenous merchants who traded with them. As the two entities surely cannot be isolated from one another, the latter do figure regularly in this work as well. Continuing with the institution-individual theme, this book looks into the relations of the company with the indigenous merchants as well as the interactions between the Dutch company servants and the local indigenous merchants. It is not a history of trade, but a social history of the inhabitants of Fort Cochin in the setting of the Indian milieu around it.

On a larger scale, this is a brief history of a society that was formed by a trading company in a port city. It looks into the issue whether this social formation later developed its own dynamics apart from that of the company. The society under the administration of the VOC existed from 1663 to 1795, but naturally these dates are not, and cannot be, the "birth" and "death" of a society. Individuals that is, people were there before the company came and after it was thrown out. To map what happened to the individuals after the institution lost ground, has been attempted here.

The nature of this research project is socio-cultural. To understand the character of European-Asian interaction, it is essential to study it in the social setting. In this case, this has been done through a microscopic study of the VOC establishment in Fort Cochin. The choice to focus on the period 1750 to 1830 is based on two considerations. First and foremost is the fact that, while the Dutch in Batavia continued their settlement, albeit in the form of colonial rule, their establishment in Cochin had come under British governance. Thus, servants of the

[32] See J. C. Heesterman, 'Warriors and Merchants', in *Itinerario* Vol. xv (1/1991), 37-49. This issue of the journal was published with the theme 'Two systems of European Expansion; a Tribute to George Winius' and therefore contains other comparative essays between the Dutch and the Portuguese: P.C. Emmer, 'The Two Expansion Systems in the Atlantic' and Robert Ross, 'The Portuguese and the Dutch in Southern Africa'.

company had to make a choice between repatriation to The Netherlands, shifting to Batavia, going elsewhere in Asia, or to continue their lives in Cochin. Thus their dilemma was to be sojourners or settlers?[33]

The aim is to add to the existing literature on the social aspects of European expansion on the Indian subcontinent and partially fill the lacuna of this facet of historiography. It is hoped that a research of this scope will add to the debate on Indian-European 'partnership'[34] in the sixteenth, seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century and on 'colonialism' in the second half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. We will also have to say a few things on the well-developed fields of research like 'colonial cities' and 'colonial empires'.[35]

A Note on Sources

"All these different Colleges have their respective archives and their records ought to be carefully preserved".[36] These are the thoughts penned down in 1796 by a British official in Cochin, who was reading the Dutch documents of the different institutions like the orphanage and the hospital of the VOC and their administrative boards. This study of the VOC in Fort Cochin in its socio-cultural setting is primarily based on these locally created archives. The organisation and functioning of the company was such that some documents and their copies can be traced at many levels: in Cochin, at Batavia and in the Netherlands. A large part of the archives consulted are documents created at the local level of the VOC office in Fort Cochin and in the homes of people living there. There are no copies to be found elsewhere of most of these documents. This holding, which is a very rich collection of original Dutch manuscripts, is presently housed at the Tamil Nadu State Archives (TSA) in Chennai, India.[37] The Dutch Records there consist of manuscripts from Surat, Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal. The records pertaining to Cochin remained in Cochin under the English administration until 1891. They were then sent to Chennai.[38] Other Dutch Records were collected by the English and kept in Calcutta and

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[33] The two terms are used to categorise all Europeans who ventured into Asia at different times between 1600 and 1947. Sojourners refer to those who spent a part of their lives in Asia but returned to their homeland afterwards. Settlers refer to those who chose to continue living in Asia, for the rest of their lives, even when their term as servicemen had ended. In Dutch historiography, the terms *Trekkers* and *Blijvers* are also used for the same purpose. C. van Heekeren, *Trekkers en blijvers: kroniek van een Haags-Indische familie* (Franeker: Wever, 1980).

[34] As enunciated by Holden Furber and later developed in Blair B. Kling and M. N. Pearson, *The Age of Partnership: Europeans in Asia Before Dominion* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979).

[35] See Robert Ross, and Gerard J. Telkamp, (eds.), *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context* (Leiden 1985). C. A. Bayly and D. H. A. Kolff, *Two colonial empires: comparative essays on the history of India and Indonesia in the nineteenth century* (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1986).

[36] TSA Chennai CCD 2030, Memoir of an English officer on the VOC papers, 18th February 1796, fo. 33.

[37] Working in the archives in Chennai, confirms that a socio-cultural history cannot be written about other VOC settlements in India like Surat, Coromandel and Bengal, as their archives have either not survived the ravages of time, or remain hidden somewhere and are yet to be brought to the notice of archivists and historians. Few bundels of the Dutch Records at the Tamil Nadu State Archives have pagination.

[38] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. xx.

Bombay. In the year 1931, they were also sent to Chennai.[39] To supplement the Dutch Records, I have used other archives of the VOC housed in The Netherlands.[40] For the post-1795 period and sometimes to collate the information, I have used the records of the English East India Company.

A socio-cultural history of the Dutch in Cochin from 1663 to 1795 would be ideal, yet availability of source material, apart from other considerations discussed above, have played a role in deciding that 1750 should be the take-off point of this project.[41] There are abundant VOC manuscripts housed at the TSA pertaining to the period 1750 and 1795, which are related to issues concerning this research.[42] In fact they are available only for this period and regrettably not for the earlier period of time. Manuscripts relating to the pre-1750 years are in such an advanced state of physical decay that they are not usable anymore. Sadly the ones still remaining are also in a frighteningly fragile state and need immediate restorative attention.

The archives pertaining to various institutions, which the VOC established in Fort Cochin for the governance and welfare of their servants and residents of the fort, give valuable information on individuals, who were using the elaborate administrative and judicial system of the Dutch. The institutional archives also throw light on the administrative and judicial practices of the VOC. These documents have never been used before.

General and secret letters, reports concerning mercantile and defense matters, daily reports and resolutions, orphanage records, hospital records, name-roll of lepers, shipping lists, lists of deserters, civil and criminal case papers, wills, land lease papers, estate papers, auction rolls, marriage and baptism records, a few private letters and exchanges of notes among the inhabitants of Fort Cochin, and occasionally those living outside it, etc. have been dug into in order to recover and understand the details of its socio-cultural existence. In this way, an insight was gained as to the various forces at play there and at the higher echelons of power, namely the High Government at Batavia and the directors in the Netherlands.

Of the above-mentioned large sets of archival manuscripts, the judicial records at Chennai were most interesting, informative, exhaustive and exhausting to work with. With no detailed inventory and no specific system of binding them together, these manuscripts presented a labyrinth from which information could only be gathered with the humble tool of patient reading. There were indictments and depositions, cross examinations and confessions, medical

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[39] A. J. M. Heyligers, *Press List of Ancient Dutch Records, From 1657 to 1825. Beschrijvende catalogus van de hele Hollandsche massa te Madras* (Madras s.a) jointly with *Supplementary Catalogue of Dutch Records Madras Record Office* (Madras: Government Press, 1952).

[40] The National Archives in New Delhi has a collection of un-catalogued microfilms of many VOC manuscripts. The original documents are in the Nationaal Archief, The Hague.

[41] See Lennart Bes, 'Hundreds of Rosetta Stones and Other Patient Papers: The Dutch Records at the Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai (Madras)' in *Itinerario* Vol. xxvii (1/2003), 93-112. The author wishes to thank Lennart Bes for providing a complete catalogue of the Dutch Records at Chennai. This catalogue prepared in 2001, arranged thematically and geographically, gives a realistic picture of usable documents from the collection.

[42] Out of a total of 1345 bundles, only 55 are from the seventeenth century. The judicial and notarial papers form a bulk of the collection. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. xxi.

reports and murder charges, all of then yielding minute details of the lives of individuals. The judicial records are preserved chronologically yet bundled arbitrarily. Information found was quite patchy, many case papers being scattered in many different bundles and series. Some case papers were probably brought together, indexed and sewn together, at a later date. Yet, reading the unorganised wills and case papers of the VOC servants and others at Fort Cochin was very rewarding in terms of factual information on individuals. They also often gave deep insights into the lives of the people, their friends and relatives, issues that were close to their hearts and minds and sometimes their last wishes.

For the post-1795 period, the English records at TSA and also Maharashtra State Archives (MSA) in Mumbai (Bombay) have been used to complete the picture and the lives of the individuals after the Dutch institution finally wound up business on the coast. From the Chennai repository, Malabar Diaries and the Cochin Commissioner's Diaries (CCD) have been used. At Mumbai, the records of the Secret and Political Department were most useful.

Among the VOC manuscripts preserved in the *Nationaal Archief* (NA) at The Hague, The Netherlands, formerly the *Algemeen Rijksarchief* (ARA), documents that give an insight into social and economic aspects of the company on the Malabar Coast have been looked into. Here the research began with the letters received by the Amsterdam Chamber (*Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* OBP) which include reports and daily registers. These are the letters and papers received by the Gentlemen XVII from the offices in Asia mainly via Batavia. For general information on the VOC employees at Cochin the Land Pay Rolls of the Amsterdam Chambers (*Landmonsterrollen*) were used.[43] Obviously, to collect information on the complete careers of the servants of the company, the Ship's Pay Rolls (*Scheepssoldijboek*) could have been used, yet they have not been consulted as adequate information on their recruitment was available in the Land Pay Rolls. Also the information on the servants of the company at Cochin as a group as compared to information on their individual careers is more compact in the Land Pay Rolls than in the Ship's Pay Rolls. Both Land and Ship Pay rolls are part of the Pay Office (*Soldijkantoor*) archives of the VOC. The 'Memoirs of Handing over Charges' (*Memorie van Overgave* MvO) for the period have been used to get a general picture of circumstances in Cochin. These documents were received by the High Government in Batavia from Cochin. A number of documents pertaining to settlements that the Dutch lost to the English were brought to The Netherlands in 1863 (*Hoge Regering te Batavia* HRB).

Then, the general letters (*Generale Missiven* GM) were read to ascertain important developments and trace important families or individuals. Special reports on political, economic and military matters have been collected from here. Other holdings referred to are the Secretariat

[43] For the years missing in the archives of the Amsterdam Chamber, it is now possible to consult the Pay Rolls of the Zeeland Chamber, which are now accessible with the help of indexes.

of the Stadhouder (*Stadhouderlijke Secretarie* SS) and Committee regarding East Indies Trade and Possessions (*Comité tot de Zaken van de Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen* CZOHB).[44]

For the post-VOC period, to complete the entire picture of Cochin society between 1795 and 1830, a number of collections in the United Kingdom have been used. First and foremost were the Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC), now named Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections, housed at the British Library (BL), London. The India Office Records (IOR), which are the archives of the administration in London of the pre-1947 Government of India have been used. For the purpose of this study, the most important holdings here, are those of the East India Company (1600-1858), those of the Board of Control or Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India (1784-1858), along with the Orme and Mackenzie Collections, provided interesting insights on the VOC and Malabar. Documents and maps from the National Archives, Kew, have also been used.

Points of Discussion

The main objective of my study, out of which several sub-themes flow, has been to enquire into the socio-cultural life of Cochin from mid-eighteenth century onwards to the early decades of the nineteenth century. This study involves Dutch, Indo-European and Indian social and cultural life in its connectedness and interdependence, as well as its peculiarities. I have concentrated on a variety of specific aspects such as ethnic composition and boundaries, inter-marriage, wealth, status and rank differences, social stratification, occupations, household and family composition - along with cultural factors relevant for the shaping of local civic society such as language, religion, social care, education and material culture.

Chapter One is an introduction to the places and people of Malabar and specifically Fort Cochin. This is the launching ground for the next four chapters, which deal with the institutional and individual economic, political, social and cultural aspects of the Dutch in Cochin. Here, information is given about the entire Malabar Coast and the numerous places and people there. Describing mid-eighteenth century Malabar, Das Gupta wrote: 'It was also a country where wars came easily. If you moved down the coast you had to pick your way through constantly feuding principalities and four main kingdoms.'[45] So, this was the general circumstance in which the Companies and their personnel found themselves at the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century in Malabar. The implications of this on the Dutch company and the inhabitants of Fort Cochin have been discussed here. What was the population composition of the walled town? Who were living around it? Issues such as these, as well as the local politics and the relations among the various people in and around the Fort Cochin have been discussed.

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[44] M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, R. Raben and H. Spijkerman, *De archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie: The Archives of the Dutch East India Company 1602-1795* ('s-Gravanhage: Sdu Uitgeverij, 1992).
[45] Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 3.

Historians have described the 1750-1795 period in dismal words. Ashin Das Gupta's book begins in 1740 with 'crisis in Malabar' and ends in 1800 with the period being described as 'the last phase of glory'. Winius and Vink characterise the period between 1748 and 1795 as that of 'disengagement and decline'. In other researches on the VOC, Cochin has been categorized as one of the 'less important settlements'.[46]

Chapter Two deals with the period between 1750 and 1784, and answers to the question as to why the company stayed on in Malabar for another half century after the 1740s. Why the Malabar Command of the VOC was suddenly showing profits during a few decades of this period and what were the plans and ideas of the VOC servants in Fort Cochin and those in Batavia regarding the future of the company on the coast? The chapter also deals with the changes in the functioning of the VOC in Malabar.

The main themes in Chapter Three are pertaining to the social aspect of the Dutch presence in Malabar. By 1750, the VOC had been in Cochin for a good 87 years. There had probably grown a society with interests of its own. To what extent did the company servants form family systems and networks of relationships? It may well be thought that a society of Dutch men and women evolved in Fort Cochin which consisted of people who were born and raised locally and were European only in name. They may well have developed a distinct social culture. Keeping this in mind, the servants of the company, the female section of the population, and the household and family units have been analysed. Further, the relations between those living inside the fortified enclave with those outside it have been looked into. The chapter investigates the main social characteristics of those living in Fort Cochin and asks what was unique about this society.

Archival research into institutions like the orphan house, the leprosy house, the hospital etc. has yielded interesting results about the company's administration. The differences and variations in functioning and policies of these somewhat typical Dutch institutions, yield insight into the European-Asian interaction. Individual needs and the benefits of accepting novel institutions are discussed in this chapter. Elements of social relations, like marriage, have been studied in detail to understand the depth of social relations between the Dutch and non-Dutch population. The dynamics of European-Asian social interaction and reaction in Fort Cochin at the individual, as well as the institutional level is dealt with. What were the levels of interaction among the people? How did the social networks of the servants of VOC spread and with which indigenous groups did they interact most?

Chapter Four first outlines the changes in Cochin in the 1780s and 1790s and then looks into the individual and collective reactions to the changing forces. How did the VOC servants react to the growing English power? Research into these issues was undertaken beyond the 1795 point of

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[46] Das Gupta*, Malabar in Asian Trade.* Winius and Vink, *Merchant-Warrior,* Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*.

the transfer of power. How did they deal with the dilemma posed by the transfer? While social history cannot be segregated from economic and political developments, it is clear that no understanding of the relations between Europeans and Asians is possible, unless it is grounded in the economic and political conditions that generated and maintained these connections. How deep and dependable were such associations in the case of the Dutch people living in Cochin towards the end of the eighteenth century?

How did the people adapt to the changing circumstances? Keeping this hypothesis in mind, the post-VOC social condition of the Dutch community was researched. Most of the VOC established institutions like school, hospital, and orphanage etc., continued even after the Dutch company ceased to exist. What were the changes in their functioning under the English administration? What happened to the company servants and their families after the company wound up its business there? How did they maintain themselves and how did they adapt to the new English administration? These issues are address in Chapter Five. The study of the period from 1796 to 1830, attempts to elucidate the basis of choices made by people when they are caught in a historical process almost completely beyond their control.

More than on countries, companies, and commodities, the emphasis is on individuals. I have endeavoured to re-create the world of Fort Cochin from the archives created there by the people themselves. Their letters, wills, reports, and depositions when they fought civil and criminal cases, all gave insights into their lives. The aim was to create '*the social world of Fort Cochin*'. The most important thing was to bring back to life and tell the lost stories of individuals: the inhabitants of the fort, who once walked and talked and who could once be seen and spoken to, in the fort and beyond it.

In the following pages readers will dive into the world of the VOC in Fort Cochin to discover the institutional changes and the individual journeys of the people living there. Since there is next to nothing written about the Dutch social life in India, readers will miss a constant exchange of thoughts with other research. The reason is that Fort Cochin had to be reconstructed from scratch before a comparison would be possible. Therefore, only in the conclusion some remarks could be made to compare Fort Cochin with other Dutch overseas social formations in Asia and Africa, specially Galle, Colombo, Cape Town and Batavia.

So, the reader will meet men, women and children from all walks of life and from all religious, ethnic and class backgrounds: Portuguese, Dutch, French and British, Jew, Armenian, Chetti and Baniyas. One will also come across exceptional European and indigenous women, people of mixed European and Asian descent, rich and poor widows, orphan children, lepers and runaway soldiers.

CHAPTER ONE

GETTING TO KNOW PLACES AND PEOPLES: COCHIN CIRCA 1750

The walls are very strong, big and broad;
the place is airy and has unpaved streets provided with beautiful houses;
because of high buildings, churches and towers, it resembles a European city.
Francois Valentyn.[1]

A VOC ship heading to the roadstead of Fort Cochin in 1750 would in all probability have set sail from Batavia and put in at Galle in Ceylon before anchoring at the harbour of Cochin.[2] Heading towards the port of Cochin a traveller would have been confronted with a picturesque sight of the high stone walls and buildings of Fort Cochin emerging from a thicket of palm and coconut greenery in the background. In the year 1750, three Dutch East-Indiamen arrived from Batavia and dropped anchor at the port of Fort Cochin: the *Knappenhof*, the *Scheijbeek* and the *Schellag*. One VOC warship, *De Gerechtigheid* also anchored twice in Cochin in the same year.[3] Numerous other private ships anchored in the port of Cochin throughout the year.[4] On the ship the *Scheijbeek* five young servants of the company arrived in Cochin: Jacob Dirksz., Hendrik Oselet, Alexander Eijk, Hans Matthijs Barens, and Jacob Breyhaan.[5] The ships would enter into the mouth of a tidal opening which led to an immense system of back-waters.[6] They would drop anchor at the port of Cochin. The crew and passengers would disembark in a busy area called Calvetty with double-storeyed buildings which the VOC used as its warehouses. Walking on the

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[1] "*Het is zeer sterk van wallen, gelyk ook van groote, breede, en zeer luchtige ongeplaveide straaten, en van schoone huisen voorsien, gelykende, wegens hare hooge Gebouwen, Kerken en Torens, wel een Europische stad te zyn".* Francois Valentyn, *Oud en Nieuwe Oost-Indies… Beschryvinge van Malabar*, deel V/(2) B, 11.

[2] The distance between Batavia and Cochin was almost five hundred miles. Batavia sent ships to the subsidiary offices in India, Ceylon and elsewhere to collect products for Europe, before it was time for the ships from Europe to undertake a return journey. VOC ships normally departed from the Netherlands towards Asia twice a year. These were called the Christmas fleet and the Easter fleet. The former, which set sail in December and January, was more popular. The latter set sail in March and April. With time, a Fair fleet was also introduced which set sail in September and October. All ships broke journey at Cape Town. Often ships that were not seaworthy enough to undertake a return voyage to Europe stayed in Asia, sailing smaller distances between Batavia and the VOC's Asian settlements. See Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, Vol. I, 62 and 72-73.

[3] TSA DR 496. Arrival and departures of vessels in 1750. For details of the above mentioned ships see Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, Vol. II. All these ships were built in Europe but in the year 1750 they were serving the VOC in the intra-Asian trade. The ships would be on a regular bi-annual assignment from Batavia to collect products from Ceylon and Malabar and deliver products that were meant to be sold in these places. Malabar pepper always went to Galle to be shipped to Europe. If more pepper was still available, often a third ship was sent from Batavia to collect it. If and when extra pepper was left in Malabar, it went straight to Batavia.

[4] TSA DR 496. Arrival and departures of vessels in 1750.

[5] TSA DR 502. Criminal Proceedings.

[6] Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, 16.

quay, the new-arrivals would enter Fort Cochin through the gate at the port. Passing the commander's house, they would look for inns and other places to stay. Apart from merchandise and men, the ships delivered general and secret letters, letters of transfer and promotion, and instructions and requests: all from the High Government in Batavia or the Gentlemen XVII – the company's directors – in the Netherlands. The ships also carried with them private letters for the company servants from friends and relatives in Europe and other parts of VOC Asia. Some of the newcomers would be carrying letters appointing them to civil or military posts in Cochin.

In the following pages we shall get to know Fort Cochin – just as the new arrivals would have done – meet its inhabitants and learn about different places and people connected to it. We shall first acquaint ourselves with the Malabar Coast, then familiarize ourselves with Fort Cochin, and finally meet the people who lived in and around Fort Cochin. To facilitate a better understanding of places and people, whenever necessary the historical backgrounds of the places and peoples have been given.

The waters off the coast of Malabar were considered relatively safe. The coast was rich in many small natural harbours. These were frequented by traders from the surrounding areas. Some of the ports were at the mouths of waterways which formed the backwaters. These navigable backwaters or 'pepper highways' had always been used as an efficient means of transportation connecting the ports and the hinterland. It is through these channels that pepper grown in the hinterlands reached the traders visiting the numerous ports of Malabar.

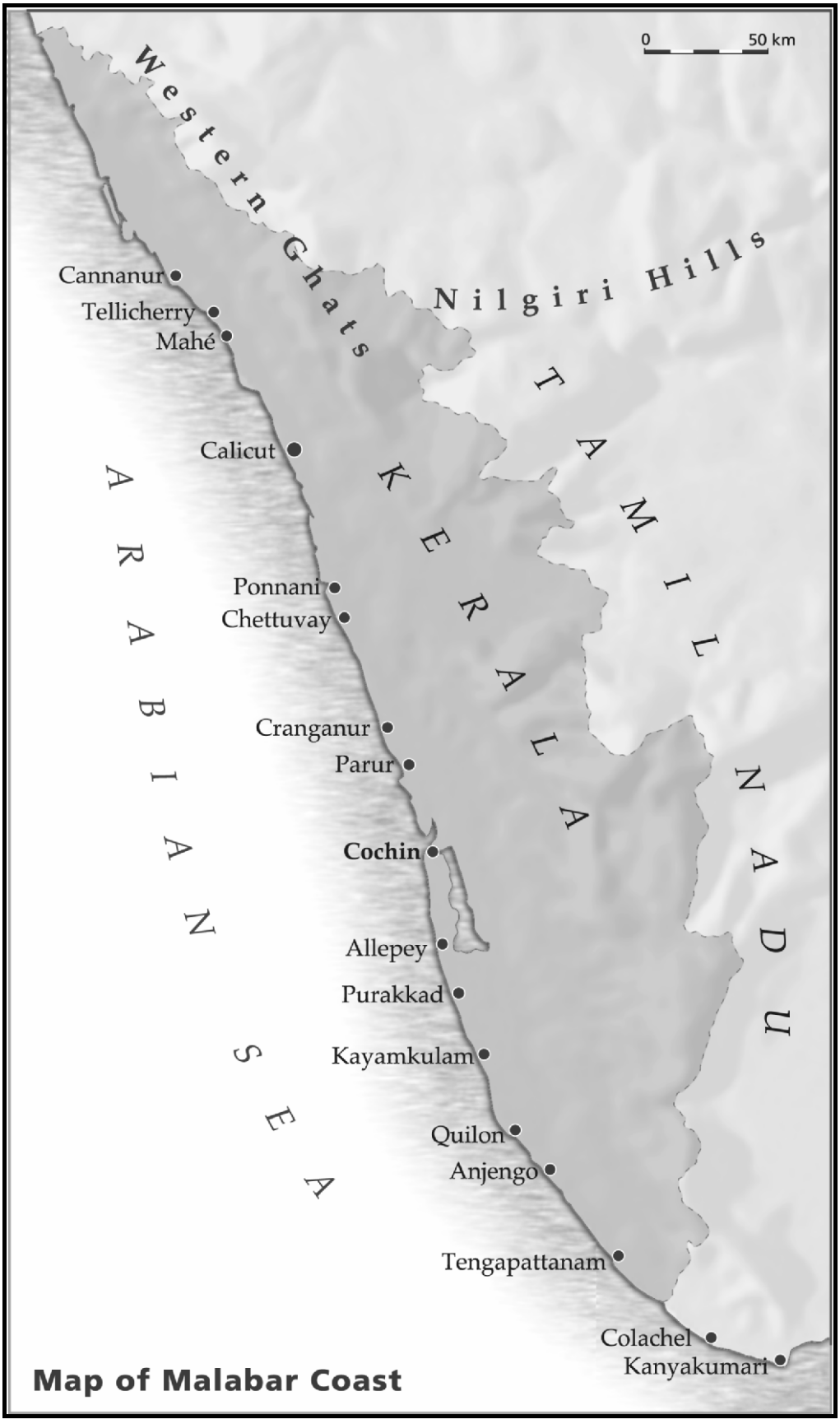
1.1 Locating Fort Cochin

A map by the Dutch artist Pieter de Bevere, painted sometime between the years 1752 and 1757, depicts – with the help of appropriate flags – the presence of Europeans in coastal southern India. The map covers the western coast of India from Goa, where the Portuguese had their headquarters of the *Estado da India*, to Kanyakumari, and from this southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, it depicts, further northwards the eastern coast of India up to Orissa.[7] This pen and brush illustration on paper, showing the entire east and west coast of India in the mid-eighteenth century, speckled with numerous European flags - representing forts - nestled on almost every port on the two coasts is evidence of the extent of the European presence in South India.[8] In this section we will assess the south-western coast of India.

[7] The western coast consists of the Konkan, Canara and the Malabar Coasts. The eastern coast consists of the Madura and the Coromandel Coasts.

[8] NA The Hague, Microfiche no. 110, Map of South Coast of India, between Goa and the Sangam River on the Coromandel Coast drawn by land surveyor Pieter de Bevere, c. 1752-7. Also see NA The Hague, *Ministerie van Koloniën* W 23, Microfiche no. 108, Map of Ceylon, south coast of India (Malabar and Coromandel) and the Maldives c. 1752-7.

MAP 2: MAP OF THE MALABAR COAST



Armand Haye, Amsterdam.

New arrivals at Cochin would have noted that the land abounded in fruits and vegetables, rice and marine products. Of course they were aware that they were entering pepper country. The land along the coast is on the whole, flat and fertile and is criss-crossed by many rivers, flowing from the inland and emptying themselves in the Arabian Sea. Fort Cochin was actually separated from the mainland by these waters. Because of its location at the mouth of a river, from Fort Cochin it was possible to move up and down the coast by using this natural infrastructure of waterways to travel from port to port in search of pepper and profit-making opportunities. The flora of the region is impressive. The land is full of coconut and banana plants which are a pleasant sight during the high tropical summers. The forests on the mainland also provided such products as timber, a valuable material for shipbuilding, bamboo, and gum. Coconut palms provided a variety of resources ranging from food to coir, and house building materials.

Talking to the people in Fort Cochin, the new arrivals would have come to know how determinedly Rijklof van Goens had captured this place from the Portuguese in 1663.[9] Having gained confidence from the slow and hard-earned successes in ousting the Portuguese from Ceylon, in 1661 the Gentlemen XVII had sent a big fleet with the express aim of driving out the Portuguese from their most important settlement in Malabar: Cochin. The Gentlemen XVII wanted Malabar because of its strategic importance: the defence of Ceylon.[10] Van Goens made this wish of the Gentlemen XVII come true by marching into the Portuguese Fort on 7 January 1663.[11] This moment of glory for the VOC, and the events that led to it, have been described and captured in a sketch by Philippus Baldaeus, a Dutch pastor in service of the company sent to Ceylon to propagate Protestantism.[12] Baldaeus had joined Van Goens on his Malabar expedition.

Malabar was also important to the VOC as it produced pepper. It was a highly profitable commodity with a rising demand in Europe. The Dutch wanted to establish an "absolute pepper monopoly", as they had done for finer spices in the islands of Maluku. Attempts had to be made by the VOC to create a similar monopoly on pepper.[13] Having Malabar under their control

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[9] The VOC conquest of Cochin was not an easy task to accomplish. It took the Dutch five campaigns to conquer all the Portuguese forts on the Malabar Coast. They could do so only with detailed strategic planning and blockading (1638-44 and 1656-63) of the Portuguese in Goa. This reduced communication between Goa and Cochin also prevented the Portuguese vessels (carracks) loaded with cargoes of pepper from leaving for Europe year after year. This in turn made pepper a highly sought-after commodity in Europe. For more on VOC's conquest of Malabar see Roelofsz, *De vestiging*, especially 297-375 for the conquest of Cochin. On Van Goens see Hugo K. s'Jacob, 'Father and Son Van Goens in Action: War and Diplomacy in the Relations between the Malabar Rulers and the Dutch East India Company 1658-1682' in K.S. Mathew (ed.), *Maritime Malabar and the Europeans 1500-1962* (Gurgaon: Hope India, 2003), 313-327.

[10] Roelofsz, *De Vestiging*, 363. Strategically, it was imperative that advances made by the Portuguese from Goa in the north be checked on the Malabar Coast before they could reach Ceylon. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. xl.

[11] s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 29.

[12] Philippus Baldaeus, *Naauwkeurige beschrijvinge van Malabar en Coromandel, derzelver aangrenzende Rijken, en het machtige Eyland Ceylon*… (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waasberge en Johannes van Someren, 1672), 121.

[13] The other pepper-producing areas in the east, Jambi and Palembang, were already under the control of the Dutch in 1616 and 1624 respectively. If Banten could also be brought under VOC control, which eventually did happen in the 1680s, then with Malabar already safely within the fold, the Dutch would be

meant not only that the VOC could have a monopoly over pepper, but that it could destroy all other entities that traded in pepper.[14] Armed with these aspirations, after 1663, the VOC considered all trade in pepper on the Malabar Coast undertaken by any other party except itself 'illegal'. The pepper monopoly had to work, either through force or through contract.[15]

Within the walls of the fort, in the course of working with the company officials, the new arrivals would also have learned that Van Goens had very ambitious plans for Malabar. Van Goens spent time on the coast, and experienced first hand the potential of Malabar in terms of its pepper and rice-producing capacities. He nurtured grander plans: Malabar and Ceylon as a separate independent unit of the VOC factories in Asia. The Dutch presence on the coast had to be strong in order to prevent other European powers from grabbing a share in the pepper trade.[16] This would work to the advantage of the VOC and would facilitate the further growth of the company in the region. In Van Goen's opinion, Ceylon could be the nucleus of VOC trade in western and southern Asia. Along with other offices in western Asia, Surat, Malabar, and Ceylon could form a separate wing of the VOC.[17] Ceylon would then be the meeting and collection point for ships and cargo from the western factories and those of Malabar and Ceylon itself.[18] For this purpose, direct shipping between the Netherlands and Ceylon, independently of Batavia, was what the Gentlemen XVII desired.[19]

Yet, all this proved a dream, because Batavia objected to it. Batavia was alarmed by the attention lavished on Ceylon and Malabar by the Gentlemen XVII in the form of money and goods towards achieving the aim of controlling Malabar. The High Government wished to ensure that Batavia remained the nucleus of all VOC activities in entire Asia.[20] In 1669, the High Government decided that Malabar was to be a separate command directly under Batavia.[21] This

masters of the pepper trade. Jacobs, *De Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 51-54. In the 1630s there had also been discussions within the Company about capturing Malabar pepper for sale in Persia. See Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, 78.

[14] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 34.

[15] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 3-6. Instructions of Rijcklof van Goens to upper chief Pieter de Bitter.

[16] Van Goens was certain that Cochin could become a supplier of rice to Ceylon. Cow-hides from Cochin were also sent to Ceylon for the packing of cinnamon. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 12.

[17] The VOC offices in Persia, Arabia and Surat were part of what was known as the 'Western Quarters'. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 50-52.

[18] The VOC offices in Bengal and Coromandel were much older than those in Ceylon and Malabar. Because of the nature of the inter-Asian trade there – textiles in exchange for spices – Bengal and Coromandel were also more closely linked to Batavia than Ceylon and Malabar.

[19] After 1667, VOC ships from Europe often headed for Ceylon straight from the Cape of Good Hope. Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, Vol. I, 72-73.

[20] Once direct sailing between Europe and Ceylon began, pepper from Malabar was sent to Colombo or Galle to be shipped directly to the Republic. This also ensured that the cinnamon from Ceylon reached Europe faster. But the Gentlemen XVII reasoned that pepper should be sent to Batavia first so that they could decide whether pepper was to be sent to the markets of Europe or to those of Surat and Persia. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 122. Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, Vol. I, 132-136.

[21] Roelofsz, *De vestiging*, 372. For more on Van Goens and Batavia conflict also see Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 114.

was much against the wishes of Van Goens, who envisioned Ceylon and Malabar as one entity. The plans of Van Goens about Malabar never materialised.

In 1697 there were discussions about Malabar in the VOC circles again. All notions and proposals were taken into consideration but the opinions were so diverse that one wondered whether they were all taking about Malabar Command.[22] Nonetheless, in 1720 Canter Visscher, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Cochin reiterated that the importance of Malabar should not be undermined as it was also an important port for stop-overs and re-victualling for the Dutch East-Indiamen sailing between western Asia, Surat, Malabar and Batavia.[23] In a nutshell, there were differences in plans and policies right from the commencement of the VOC's Malabar project. At least everyone within the VOC agreed that the pepper monopoly had to be achieved.

Ports North of Fort Cochin

When stationed at Fort Cochin, if the new arrivals decided to take a trip along the coast of Malabar, to get an idea of the VOC presence on the coast and to access other European trading-posts, they would probably attempt to reach Cannanur.[24] In 1750 Cannanur was the northernmost post of the VOC on the Malabar Coast.[25] The company had a small fortress there. Situated about a hundred and seventy miles north of Fort Cochin, it would take a day or two to sail up the coast, keeping, of course, the seasonal winds in mind. The area was under the control of the Ali Raja of Cannanur, a trader-king of the Islamic faith.[26] It was a small maritime kingdom that boasted a bazaar, which was in part dominated by Islamic merchants.[27] This fortress,

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[22] NA The Hague, HRB 732 Secret memorandum about the Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1757-9.

[23] Jacobus Canter Visscher was chaplain at Cochin for five years. He wrote letters to friends which were published posthumously by his brother C. T. Visscher. Jacobus later went to serve in Batavia. He spoke Portuguese. Canter Vischer, *Malabaarse Brieven* (Leeuwarden: Ferwerda, 1743). The letters were later translated into English. H. Drury, *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher now first translated from the original Dutch* (Madras: Adelphi Press, 1862), 39.

[24] Its modern name is Kunnur. Other commonly used spellings are Cannanore and Kanoor. The total length of the coast from Cannanur to Kanyakumari – the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula – is approximately four hundred miles. Formerly Kanyakumari was called Cape Comorin.

[25] On the Canara coast, north of Malabar, the VOC had an establishment in Vengurla. It was built in 1637 in the hope that it would be the base for conquering Goa. It was initially directly under Batavia. Between 1673 and 1676, it fell under the administration of Surat and from 1676 until it was pulled down in 1693, it was under Malabar. Also see Om Prakash, 'The Dutch Factory at Vengurla in the Seventeenth Century' in A. R. Kulkarni, M. A. Nayeem and T. R. de Souza (ed.), *Medieval Deccan History* (Bombay 1996), 185-191. In the 1750s the Company also had a military post at Barsalore, which was north of Cannanur. MvO Breekpot, 2: dated 1768. This military post was held by a gomasta. NA The Hague, HRB 752 fo. 2, Ampliatie op de Memorie van Menage, met opzigt tot de Mallabaar. A gomasta or gomashtah was an 'appointed delegate', an agent or a factor. William Crooke (ed.), *Hobson-Jobson, A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases, and of kindred terms, etymological, historical, geographical and discursive by Col. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, Edition 1994), 384.

[26] Geneviève Bouchon, *'Regent of the Sea' Cannanore's Response to Portuguese Expansion, 1507-1528*, French Studies in South Asian Culture and Society II (Delhi: Oxford, 1988), 173-174. Also see K. K. N. Kurup, *The Ali Rajas of Cannanore* (Trivandrum: College Book House, 1975).

[27] The Ali Rajas enjoyed a special status in Malabar. They were important carriers of pepper, cardamom, timber, coconut, coir, cowry shells and rice to far-flung markets in India. Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, 313-17.

originally built by the Portuguese, was taken over by the Dutch in 1663 and rebuilt in 1667. On average, forty soldiers defended the fort, but it could hold up to one thousand civil and military personnel, if needed.[28] It was a fortress with two prominent bastions named Holland and Zeeland and other bulwarks named Gelderland, Groningen, Vriesland and Utrecht.[29] This system of naming bastions and forts after the provinces of the Dutch Republic was common practice in the Dutch overseas empire.

Since 1743, Godefridus Weyerman had been the chief of Cannanur. He had joined the VOC as a soldier for the Amsterdam Chamber in 1734. In 1741 he arrived in Cochin as a book-keeper and was soon appointed assistant merchant and secretary. In 1743 he took charge as chief of Cannanur.[30] In this capacity his primary concern was to ensure that the VOC received all the pepper which was produced in the region. In his personal capacity, he augmented and greatly substantiated his income by participating in coastal trade. He was probably making a profit from supplying goods to other traders who visited the port. Through his connections with other VOC officials and traders he managed a private business. Weyerman would have been friends with Willem Lucasz., the bookkeeper and warehouse keeper at Cannanur at that time. Lucasz., also often chartered a boat for his own private trade. In the other chapters we shall meet many such VOC officials who indulged in private trade.

Travelling south of Cannanur, on his way to Cochin, through the rice-fields fringed by coconut palms, the traveller would find himself in Tellicherry, where the English had settled in 1689. It was a small but important establishment of the EIC on the coast. It was a compact fortress with residences for the officials, ateliers, warehouses, hospital and other offices.[31] The servants of the EIC posted at Tellicherry held many different posts and served in numerous capacities to keep the functioning of the fortress going. The English paid for pepper in cash and competed very effectively with the VOC, considerably damaging their pepper monopoly.[32]

Leaving Tellicherry and travelling three miles south, would bring the traveller to the French fortress at Mahé, named after Bertrand François Mahé de La Bourdonnais (1699-1753), a key architect of French policy in India.[33] Mahé was constructed in 1724 after a contract had been

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[28] R. J. Barendse, *The Arabian Seas 1640-1700* (Leiden: CNWS, 1998), 54.

[29] A plan of Cannanur made between 1708 and 1709, by the order of the then Commander, Adam van der Duyn, and copied by the English in 1784 shows the fort with its wharf, the chief's house, a tower in which the gunpowder was also stored, lodgings for the officers, a hospital, the commercial warehouse of the Company, and a special pepper warehouse.[29] After Cochin, Cannanur was the second largest VOC settlement on the Malabar Coast. In many ways it was similar to Fort Cochin, although much smaller in scale.TSA Maps and Plans No. 191, Plan of Cannanore.

[30] W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op hare Buiten-Comptoiren in Azië* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Libaert, 1944), 194.

[31] TSA Maps and Plans No. 192, *Plan du Fort de Telichery*.

[32] Barendse, *The Arabian Seas*, 243.

[33] The French East India Company (*Compagnie des Indes Orientales*) was founded in 1642 and re-organized by Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1664. See Indrani Ray, (ed.), *The French East India Company and the trade of the Indian Ocean: a collection of essays* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1999). For how the Dutch protected their Malabar possessions from French attempts at taking a share of the Indian Ocean trade see, Glenn J. Ames, 'Batavia and the Malabar Coast, 1672: Frustrated Alliances and a Frustrating Start to the Anti-Dutch

signed with the raja of Bedagara. The French company tended to languish and ran into financial problems. The situation was exacerbated as the French and the English were sworn enemies and this enmity permeated the respective trading companies in India as well.[34]

Further south lay Calicut.[35] The English had first set up a factory there in 1659.[36] Calicut was located forty-two miles south of Tellicherry and the EIC establishment here was a lodge. The Zamorin of Calicut was the sovereign here.[37] Calicut gained its glory from the fact that the Chinese sailor Zheng He and the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama had visited the Zamorin's port. Calicut, an important independent port, was also a centre of pepper trade, and consequently it competed with Cochin in luring merchants. Relations between Calicut and Cochin had not always been cordial. Hostilities were often rife between the Zamorin and the raja of Cochin over trade and territory. The Zamorin always tried to extend his boundaries southwards. Since the VOC was an ally of the raja of Cochin, it automatically became the enemy of the Zamorin. After some battles, a peace treaty was signed in 1710 and 1717 between the VOC and the Zamorin.[38]

Further south, nestled between Calicut and Chettuvay, was the VOC lodge of Ponnani. This was another point the VOC maintained to curtail the 'illicit' pepper trade. The soil around here was sandy and the company had some gardens in the region where it grew areca nut. Leaving Ponnani and travelling south, the next place of importance for the VOC was Fort Wilhelmus at Chettuvay: a post on the frontline against the Zamorin. The traveller would now also have left the Zamorin's territory and entered the realm of the raja of Cochin. The Dutch gained access to build a fort at Chettuvay in 1710. The construction of a stone fort began in 1713 with the aim of tightening their grip on the pepper monopoly by having access to this port, which was one of the main openings to the Arabian Sea for the hinterland.[39] With the help of the rapidly expanding English, the Zamorin captured the fort in 1715. However, with the help of forces sent from Batavia, it was regained by the Dutch in 1717.[40] In the 1750s, this was not an establishment the VOC was proud of. It was small and decayed. Lying on the bank of a river, half of the fortress had been washed away and, although it had a warehouse, there was little in it.[41]

Crusades' in Glenn J. Ames, *Colbert, Mercantilism, and the French Quest for Asian Trade* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 109-125.

[34] Between 1740 and 1748, they took opposing sides in the war of Austrian succession. The people of Cochin knew about the 1748 Peace Treaty of Aachen (or the second Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle) which was signed after the war for Austrian succession. They must have heaved a sigh of relief after receiving the peace agreements. Because of this the Anglo-French rivalry in India also ceased temporarily and Madras, which was captured by Dupleix in 1746, was returned to the English. TSA DR 487, Extracts from Resolutions of Estates General of the United Provinces.

[35] Modern name is Kozhikode.

[36] N. Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power in Malabar (1665 to 1799)*, (Allahabad: Chugh, 1979), 25-27.

[37] The Zamorin or the Samudri Raja was the king of the seas. K. V. Krishna Ayyar, *A history of the Zamorins of Calicut* (Calicut: Publication Division, University of Calicut, 1929).

[38] CDNI IV, 340-346 and 505-513.

[39] s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 2 and 130-131.

[40] s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 152-156. Actually in 1756 the Zamorin retook Chettuvay and this time the Dutch could not do anything.

[41] MvO Casparus De Jong, 42: dated 1761.

Further south of Chettuvay was Cranganur,[42] another VOC establishment which was originally built by the Portuguese and taken over by the Dutch in 1662. It was also one of the key openings to a network of backwaters which connected the coast to the hinterland. It was therefore tactically necessary that the VOC had an office here in order to thwart others from exporting the pepper out of the region. If the company really wanted to implement its pepper monopoly on the coast, this system of waterways had to be strictly controlled to prevent traders from obtaining access to pepper. The port attracted many ships which often stopped here before heading further south to the port of Cochin. It was a small but strong fortress. It required little maintenance, which suited the VOC's retrenchment in expenditure. According to Commander Casparus de Jong, it was strong enough for defence against local chieftains.[43] Just on the opposite side of the mouth of the waterway was the fortress of Pallipuram.[44] It was situated at the northern extremity of Vaipin Island. Pallipuram and Cranganur together formed a gateway to the northern hinterlands of the Malabar Coast. The hinterland, consisting of the Ikkudi and Waynad areas, were the most important pepper producing areas.

From Pallipuram it was possible either to travel on land – the length of Vaipin Island which is about fifteen miles – or take a boat, over the backwaters to reach the tidal mouth at Fort Cochin. This river-like opening led down south to Vembanad Lake. Vaipin Island was special to the VOC. Having conquered Quilon and Cranganur in 1661, Van Goens first landed on this island in 1663 with the aim of capturing Cochin.[45] Here he found a Church and a large house belonging to the Roman Catholic bishop. Van Goens made this his headquarters and from here he oversaw the construction of Fort *Oranje*, a small fortification used to mount cannons trained on the Portuguese fort at Cochin.[46] From the southern tip of Vaipin Island the traveller would be able to see the ramparts of Fort Cochin looming across the river. From here he could take a boat to reach the fort.

Having covered all places north of Fort Cochin on the Malabar Coast, the traveller would now be back there. Outside the Fort was Mattancheri and across the river on the mainland was Ernakulam. We shall for now continue the journey further southwards, stopping momentarily to acquaint ourselves with the kingdom of Cochin. The kingdom of Cochin was ruled by rajas who belonged to one of the five *tavazhi*.[47] In 1750, Rama Varma was the raja of Cochin. He was the

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[42] The modern name is Kodungallur and the ancient name is Muziris.

[43] MvO Casparus De Jong, 42: dated 1761.

[44] A. van der Meyden, the then Governor of Ceylon, had conquered it on 16th February 1661. Although an octagonal castle had existed since 1507, the construction of the fort begun in 1600. The Portuguese had used this building as a seminary.

[45] The aim was to secure two smaller Portuguese bases in the vicinity of Fort Cochin: Cranganur which was north of Fort Cochin, and Quilon, which was south of Fort Cochin. Having these under his control Van Goens could aim at Fort Cochin itself.

[46] T. Whitehouse, *Some Historical Notes of Cochin on the Malabar Coast* (Cottayam 1859), 14-15.

[47] There were five important houses or *tavazhi* which had the right to rule over Cochin. These are the Mutta, the Palluritti, the Chazhur, the Elaya and the Madattumkil. The eldest male of all these houses became the Raja of Cochin. There were often conflicts among the houses and the European Companies took sides. The case of the VOC and Cochin Raja has been explained in detail in s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*.

most important sovereign along with the Kolathiri Raja, the Zamorin of Calicut, and the raja of Travancore and some small Brahmin princes. The area was a constant field of contest for power and territory among these sovereigns. The raja of Cochin also had authority over Tekkumkur, Vadakkumkur and Purakkad, the neighbouring principalities. Each of these was under the control of a local chief who owed loyalty and obedience to the raja of Cochin. Politically, the raja of Cochin was an ally of the VOC. Militarily he was dependent on the company.[48] In matters of finance too, the royal household relied on the Dutch company. By contracts with it, he was bound to sell all the pepper growing in his region to the company.

Other places, with which the people of Fort Cochin had contacts with, were Bolgatty and Verapoly. The island of Bolgatty was to the north-east of Fort Cochin. It had a huge Dutch mansion which had been built in 1744. Verapoly, a bit away from the coast and further inland, was also frequently visited by the people of Fort Cochin as it had a large Roman Catholic church.

Ports South of Fort Cochin

Just outside the walls of Fort Cochin, and towards the south eastern part of the island, is Mattancheri.[49] It was called *Cochim de Cima* by the Portuguese.[50] The name referred to 'native Cochin'. This was where the raja of Cochin had his seat of government and here stood the Pazhanyannur temple. Mattancheri was the settlement of the local people with a market of their own.[51] An adjoining area was called Canara Bazaar. Mattancheri was the area where many merchants lived. One of its streets was called Jew Street as it was home to many Jewish merchants. This area was also the dwelling place of the indigenous merchants who had trading contacts with the VOC. Other merchants visiting the port also lodged here. The Raja of Cochin had a palace and temple there.[52] Fort Cochin and Mattancheri together formed a twin settlement.

Going south of Fort Cochin, which was almost the mid-point between Cannanur and Kanyakumari, a traveller would arrive at Alleppey. This lay in the territory of the raja of Travancore. Since 1729, Martanda Varma had been the raja of Travancore. His reign saw the rise of Travancore at the expense of Cochin and other smaller principalities.[53] In the year 1750, it

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[48] s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 35-60.

[49] Mattancheri is also spelled Mattancherry, which is its modern name. I use Mattancheri which is the correct transliteration from Malayalam into English.

[50] *Cochim de Cima* literally higher or up-town Cochin, was the seat of local government. *Cochim de Baixo* or lower Cochin, which was the down-town area, was the Portuguese Fort nearer the shore. s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 13.

[51] Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and Maritime Trade of India*, 74. Also see A. M. Mundadan, 'Town of Cochin and the Portuguese', in *II Seminario Internacional da Historia Indo Portuguesa, Actas,* (Lisboa, 1985), 251.

[52] What is known as the Dutch Palace is located in Mattancheri and is one of the oldest buildings built by the Europeans in the oriental style in India. In fact it was built by the Portuguese in 1555 and gifted to the raja of Cochin, Vira Kerala Varma (1537-1565). The Dutch repaired it in 1663, after which it was known as the Dutch Palace, though it is a misnomer to call it so. The Raja also had a palace and temple in Tripunithura, which was further inland.

[53] M. de Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore: History and State Formation in Travancore from 1671 to 1758* (Leiden: CNWS, 1997), passim.

would be quite difficult for a servant of the company to travel farther south from here as Travancore had been at war with the VOC since 1739.[54] The port of Alleppey was in the region of Martanda Varma and it could become a competitor to Cochin. Master of his region, he ran his own pepper monopoly,[55] which worried the VOC officials, both in Malabar and in Batavia.

From there the next VOC post was at Purakkad. A smaller establishment of the VOC, it had been set up after a contract was signed with the local chief: the raja of Purakkad. It was a similar story in Kayamkulam: another important port with an inlet to the waterways and the first settlement that the VOC set up on the coast in 1647.[56] It was used only intermittently until the 1660s when the Dutch presence became more pervasive.

Farther south was Quilon, another port of consequence to the pepper trade. Since 1661, the fort had been under Dutch control. In 1750, Carel Kamron from Rotterdam was the keeper of the warehouse there. Kamron was spending time in Cochin defending himself in a criminal case as he had been charged with the murder, in Quilon, of Diego de Fonseca, a Mukkuvan fisherman, whose body he had hidden in the Tamara foliage. From the descriptions of witnesses in this case, in the 1750s the fortress seems to have been in a fairly dilapidated state with its walls in ruins and the fortified area covered with overgrowth of vegetation. [57] The fortress had been encroached upon by the sea. The guidelines from Batavia regarding this fortress were that 'all unnecessary expenses were forbidden, while essential expenditures had to be minimized'. Because of this the fort was in a poor state. In 1754 some repairs had been undertaken.[58]

To the south of Quilon lay Anjengo. Having been expelled from Cochin, the EIC, apart from moving north and setting up base in Tellicherry also set up a factory at Anjengo, in 1693, in the hope of getting pepper from the rich hinterland.[59] Martanda Varma of Travancore kept a watchful eye on the EIC officials to ensure that they paid the taxes due to him for the pepper they collected from his territory.[60] South of Anjengo and just north of Kanyakumari was the VOC office at Tengapattanam. Further south, the Dutch company also had a guard-post at land's end Kanyakumari.

Travelling from Cannanur in the north of the Malabar Coast to Kanyakumari, its southernmost point, the traveller would now have encountered numerous places and people. He would not be in any doubt that the VOC had tried its utmost to position itself in all the strategic locations on the coast. Mid-eighteenth century Malabar also had establishments of the English at

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[54] De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 61- 66.
[55] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 102.
[56] s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 20-21.
[57] TSA DR 498, Criminal Proceedings 1750. Mukkuvan, a community spread out along the Malabar Coast especially in the Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur, and Kasaragod districts of Kerala. T. Madhava Menon, Deepak Tyagi and B. Francis Kulirani (eds.), *People of Kerala* Vol. XXVII (New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press: Anthropological Survey of India, 2002), 971-977.
[58] MvO Casparus De Jong, 43: dated 1761.
[59] Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power in Malabar*, 44-45.
[60] De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 57.

Tellicherry, Calicut and Anjengo and the French at Mahé, all for pepper.[61] Nevertheless, it was the Dutch who dominated over the coast and had declared their monopoly on the Malabar pepper. The company maintained military and civil servants for this purpose. While other Europeans had trading offices, the Dutch in Malabar had a string of forts with canons and armies. The VOC in Malabar had followed a policy of 'conquer and adapt'. The formerly Portuguese stronghold of Quilon had been completely demolished and the walls adapted to Dutch needs. In Cranganur, too establishments of the Roman Catholics were demolished.[62]

In 1750, the Malabar Command consisted of the fortified town and headquarters of Fort Cochin and four smaller forts at Cannanur, Chettuvay, Cranganur, and Quilon and many smaller posts for procuring pepper as well as ensuring that other traders did not gain access to it. These included defence works and warehouses at Alleppey, Peza, Azhikode, Chennamangalam, Pappinivattam and Ponnani.[63] Two ruined forts at Castello and Pallipuram were also under Dutch control. The company also had posts at Aiwika, Calicherie Vicchur and Manicorda. In total, the Malabar Command, excluding Fort Cochin, had 274 canons.[64] Its forts, posts and personnel were militarily geared and well armed for controlling the pepper trade. Of all these places, Fort Cochin was the largest and most magnificent fort on the coast. Notwithstanding all the fortified establishments, it should be kept in mind that the Dutch power, in 1750 remained restricted to the littoral.

Whether it was Resident Weyerman of Cannanur who visited Cochin to have his children baptised or warehouse-keeper Carel Kamron from Quilon seeking justice, VOC servants on the Malabar Coast were connected to Fort Cochin. Other servants of the company from Cranganur, Quilon and other places on the coast also frequently visited Fort Cochin for work, to meet family and friends or in search of essential services like baptism and marriage. Fort Cochin, the headquarters of all VOC activities on the Malabar Coast, was the cultural and social hub of the Dutch in Malabar. The other places were merely military posts manned by a handful of servants from the mercantile services who oversaw the collection of pepper and kept an eye on the other European rivals on the coast who were also there to get pepper.

To sum up, the Malabar Command of the VOC consisted of numerous fortresses, warehouses and military posts spread along the coast and, in a few rare instances, in the hinterland. Cochin was the headquarters to which all smaller establishments reported. Cochin

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[61] The Danes were also present on the Malabar Coast but they were never a substantial power. They functioned as junior partners to the English, French and Dutch. They mostly offered arms in exchange of pepper. In 1752 they set up factory at Calicut and in 1755 at Colachel, but these fell into a decline in the 1780s. Martin Krieger, 'Pepper, Guns and the Scattered Existence of Danish Factories in Malabar' in K. S. Mathew (ed.), *Maritime Malabar and the Europeans*, 445-460.

[62] Jurrien van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism: The Dutch in Asia* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2004), 53.

[63] Batavia had ordered that Pappinivattam should have a new warehouse for storage of rice, but this instruction was not executed as the chief carpenter of the VOC at Malabar, one Mr. Van der Does, had died and the administration was wary of squandering money by asking someone less qualified to undertake the job. MvO Casparus de Jong, 43: dated 1761.

[64] NA The Hague, HRB 752 fos. 1-4. Ampliatie op de Memorie van Menage, met opzigt tot de Mallabaar.

itself was accountable to Batavia and received instructions from the High Government there on matters ranging from policies towards local chiefs to postings of its servants; from about pepper and its collection to the piece-goods obtainable in Malabar which could be sold profitably elsewhere, and from rice for Ceylon to young boys and girls to be sold as slaves in Batavia.

Being blessed with its inestimable asset of producing precious pepper, the Malabar Coast was dotted throughout with innumerable forts commanding the approaches to every possible port. The first and foremost duty of the VOC servants stationed there was to procure pepper. It was clear that Malabar attracted many suitors: the Dutch, the English, and the French, matched by an equally competitive range of indigenous merchants and ruling houses. By controlling the waterways through forts in Chettuvay, Cranganur, Cochin, Kayamkulam and Quilon, the VOC would have been in a position to fully implement its monopoly on pepper; but as the foregoing description illustrates, there were numerous other players in the field as well. Pepper was the black gold of Malabar and every European company wanted a share in this highly prized commodity. It was the bride for who all were willing to dance.[65]

An appraisal of the various places in Malabar proves that the VOC had numerous settlements in strategic locations but, because of the presence of other traders, both European and indigenous, it was barely possible for the VOC to fully implement its pepper monopoly. The Gentlemen XVII and the Governor-General and Council at Batavia were acutely aware that the company had many contenders on the coast and that the presence of the VOC in Malabar was dependent on how successful it was in walking the tightrope of maintaining good relations with the major indigenous powers: Kolathiri, Calicut, Cochin, and Travancore.

Keeping this in mind, in 1739, the VOC governor of Ceylon, Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, undertook a trip to Malabar especially for the purpose of signing a new treaty with Martanda Varma to secure supplies of pepper from his territory. But he was doomed to be disappointed, as Martanda Varma refused on the grounds that there were other buyers of pepper – specifically the British – who were willing to pay much higher prices than the Dutch company.[66] Martanda Varma found eager buyers of pepper in the English at Anjengo and the French at Mahé. Thus, Van Imhoff was unsuccessful in getting a commitment from Martanda Varma for supplying pepper to the VOC. Van Imhoff realised that the power of the VOC in Malabar was diminishing fast. He wrote to Batavia and the Gentlemen XVII that the Dutch company's position on the coast with respect to the pepper trade would have been desperate had it not been for the support of the raja of Cochin and the Jewish merchants there.[67]

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[65] H. K. s'Jacob, 'De VOC en de Malabarkust in de 17eeuw', in M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz, (ed.), *De VOC in Azië* (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1976), 85.
[66] De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 67-74.
[67] Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800:* Europe and the World in the Age of Expansion Vol. II (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 239. Also see De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 67.

Having failed to obtain pepper from Travancore, in 1739 the VOC joined an anti-Travancore alliance that opposed the growing power of Martanda Varma.[68] Van Imhoff requested troops from Ceylon and set about the task of soliciting allies against Travancore. The Kolathiri Raja – an enemy of the raja of Cochin – was a relative and an ally of Travancore. Through him, Travancore received a promise of help from the French at Mahé who were, naturally, interested in the pepper that Travancore could supply them. Fearing an attack on the English factory at Anjengo, which was in the territory of the Rani of Attingal, a Travancore supporter, the English decided to back Travancore against the Dutch-led coalition.[69] Naturally, the English were also afraid that they would lose their settlements and the pepper from Travancore to the French, who had already declared their support for Martanda Varma. After several months of uncertainty, nervous marching up and down the coast, and dealing with deserters who had joined Travancore, the Dutch were defeated at Colachel and Travancore emerged victorious.[70] One reason for the defeat of the VOC was that at that time Batavia itself was dealing with a rebellion: during 1741 and 1743, the Chinese sugar workers had besieged the city and scared its European inhabitants out of their wits. Batavia was unable to send instructions or military support to Malabar. On having learned about developments in Batavia, Martanda Varma gained in confidence, while the VOC lost hope.[71] In May 1743, the Dutch and Travancore signed the peace Treaty of Mavelikara. The VOC had to admit that the pepper monopoly was not theirs, and give Travancore their word that in future should there be other wars with the indigenous powers, the company would remain neutral.[72]

The EIC and the VOC were antagonists in India and the Malabar Coast was one of the regions where this antagonism and competition was being played out silently. Neither the administrators of the VOC in Amsterdam nor those of the EIC in London were unaware of the growing competition in Asia between them. This is corroborated by the fact that within the VOC circle in the Netherlands, a full report on the Anglo-Dutch competition in Asia was written. Although now missing, this report written by VOC advocate and historian Pieter van Dam reflects upon the concerns of the Gentlemen XVII about the growing English expansion in India as early as 1701.[73] On the English side, the EIC historian Robert Orme prepared a report on

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[68] The Dutch had tried their best not to get involved in local politics, but when they felt that their supplies of pepper would be considerably diminished because of the actions of Martanda Varma, they were forced to take up arms and join the local alliance against his growing power. The ruling houses of Desinganadu, Cochin, Purakkad, and Tekkumkur had united to fight against the expansion of Travancore into Desinganadu's territories. De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 75.

[69] De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 79-80.

[70] According to a secret letter from Commander Julius Valentijn Stein van Gollenesse to the High Government at Batavia, about three to four hundred VOC men had entered the service of Travancore. Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 104.

[71] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 104-105.

[72] De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 116.

[73] Femme S. Gaastra, 'War, Competition and Collaboration: Relations between the English and the Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in H.V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln and Nigel Rigby (ed.), *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Leicester: Boydell Press, reprint 2004), 49-68.

Dutch establishments in Asia. For a VOC servant – and investor – be they in Europe, Batavia, or Cochin, the report would have made for quite a glum reading. The English were confident that no Dutch settlement in Asia, owing to their poor military planning and infrastructure including Batavia could withstand an English attack.[74]

1.2 Fort Cochin: A Small Fortified Town

The VOC fort at Cochin was a polygonal fort, much reduced in dimensions compared to the original Portuguese fort.[75] The VOC had received rights to fortification from the raja of Cochin. In 1663, Jacob Hustaert advised the reduction of the large Portuguese fort to a small VOC fort, which could be easy to defend and maintain. Since the main threat would come from European fleets, it had to be strong enough to withstand modern artillery. The Dutch demolished several houses to make the town narrower and easy to control.[76] Unlike the Portuguese, the VOC was not interested in building and maintaining splendid churches, but, far more mundanely, wanted a commercial establishment with warehouses for goods, offices, residences for the employees, and a church: all on a utilitarian basis.[77] It was of overriding importance that its defence be easy and inexpensive.[78] It was built according to the Dutch system of fortifications and was designed to function as an independent unit.[79]

Consequently, the Dutch Fort of Cochin was a small town or, rather, a walled enclave. The walls marked the boundaries of the territorial and judicial limits of the company. The high walls were naturally there for defence, but they were also symbolic of the status and independence of the people enclosed within them. There was a functional division of the fortified space. The port area had the main entrances, warehouse and VOC offices. The rest of the fort was for residential purposes with a school, a hospital, a church and the like spread out within the enclave. A physically isolated entity in itself, the fort's gates – points of contact with the outside world – were narrow and guarded by the military. The gateways were further fitted out with wooden

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[74] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, 142-158. General Idea of the Government and People of Indostan by Robert Orme: dated September 1753.

[75] The original 1505 fort was later enlarged into the Portuguese fort which had the status of a 'city' and was called Santa Cruz. For more on the Portuguese fort see Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India*, 39-40 and 74-78. For the condition of the fort and its inhabitants at the time of (and just after) the Dutch takeover in 1663, see s'Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin*, 35-38. Canter Visscher describes the fort and the houses in it in detail. Drury, *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher*, 19-21.

[76] In 1757, Casparus de Jong calculated that the VOC spent fl. 5,193,603 on pulling down the huge Portuguese forts and building new ones on the coast. NA The Hague, HRB 731 fo. 13. Also see A. Shreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers: Ernakulam* (Trivandrum: Printed by the Superintendent of Govt. Presses, 1965), 154-155.

[77] The Portuguese fort and city of *Cochin de Baixo* had numerous churches. Since they were Roman Catholic, the Dutch destroyed many of them and used others as warehouses or offices. Van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism*, 53.

[78] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. liii.

[79] Ron van Oers, *Dutch Town Planning Overseas during VOC and WIC Rule (1600-1800)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000), 78-86.

doors that allowed only a handful of persons to pass at a time. The fort was built and maintained according to traditions of Dutch town planning. The mentality was to 'regulate and separate'.[80]

On the basis of just number of inhabitants, the fort seemed rather small: on average, 2000 people lived within its walls.[81] But when the strength of the VOC's personnel at Fort Cochin in the eighteenth century is compared to that of other VOC establishments in Asia, it appears that Malabar Command was among the larger settlements of the VOC. For example, in terms of personnel, in the year 1753, it was next only to Batavia (4860), Colombo (4652) and Java's East Coast (2822). Malabar, in 1753 had a strength of 1395 VOC employees.[82] These were naturally spread over the numerous settlements in every region. Fort Cochin in 1750 had 675 employees.[83]

In keeping with the common practice of VOC-Asia to name forts and bastions after places or provinces in the Netherlands, every bastion of Fort Cochin was named after a Dutch province.[84] Starting at the entrance near the port at the mouth of the river and walking eastwards one would come across the bastions Groningen, Friesland, Utrecht, Zeeland, and Holland. These were the five main bastions facing the land. Walking further along on the walls one would come to Gelderland. Then came the point Stroomburg and eventually one would arrive at the smaller bastion called Overijssel. Keeping in mind the rules of military architecture, each of the bastions were located at an approximate distance of two hundred meters: a canon's shot. Bastion Holland provided the best lookout point for ships arriving from the west and south. The one next to it, bastion Gelderland, guarded the entrance to the mouth of the river and from here vessels arriving from the north could be conveniently observed. The main riverside entrances to the fort – Water-Gate, Bay-Gate, and New-Gate – were flanked by bastions Gelderland and Overijssel.[85] These two bastions also protected the port. The fort was a single closed entity – 1.5 by 0.8 kilometres diagonally – surrounded by ramparts and moats.[86] The water in the moats that laced and lapped the fortification walls was drawn from the sea and controlled by a sluice near bastion Holland. Bastion Stroomburg guarded the port of Cochin and the Water-gate. The pepper warehouses of the VOC were located around here.[87]

The walls between the bastion Overijssel and the point Stroomburg, which was also the quay, were the most vulnerable to decay and dilapidation as the water from the river – and at high tide from the sea – constantly eroded the walls. The Dutch fought a constant battle to win strips of land between the river and the fortifications to prevent this destruction of their defences. A

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[80] C. L. Temminck Groll, *The Dutch Overseas: Architectural Survey* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2002).
[81] Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 317-318.
[82] Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 87.
[83] NA The Hague, VOC 5198, fo. 320-359. Land Pay Rolls of the Amsterdam Chamber for the year 1750.
[84] Ron van Oers, *Dutch Town Planning Overseas*, 56-57.
[85] NA The Hague, VEL 901 A and VEL 899.
[86] John Splinter Stavorinus visited Fort Cochin in 1776. He gives a detailed description of it. Johan Splinter Stavorinus and Samuel Hull Wilcocke, *Voyages to the East-Indies* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1798) Vol. III, 229-232.
[87] NA The Hague, VEL 901 A Plan of the city and the fortress of Cochin in February 1767. And NA The Hague, VEL 899 Plan of Cochin and the Malabar Coast.

common method practised to protect the land against the water was the facing of the riverside with timber planks. This shoring up of the bank of the river next to the fort ensured that water did not cut into the fortification walls. Under the commandership of Casparus de Jong (1756-1761), the quay was fully repaired. The old, crumbling walls were completely pulled down. New land was reclaimed between the walls and the water and new fortifications were laid.[88] On the western side, another constant battle was fought against the damaging erosive effects of the waves of the sea.

It was a fort built with a mercantile aim – complete with warehouses, a shipwright's office, a governor's mansion, quarters or barracks for soldiers and a church, a hospital, an orphanage, and a prison: basic facilities for the company servants.[89] None of the illustrations of Fort Cochin specifically mentions a school, so it is quite that one of the numerous church buildings from the Portuguese times was used as a school. Discernible from a considerable distance at sea, was a tall flag-post standing within the fort. A painting by Jan Brandes depicts the fort with the beacon tower, warehouses, other VOC edifices, and Chinese fishing-nets.[90] There was also an esplanade, a graveyard, a market-place, and wells for fresh water. All these were geared to facilitating the lives of the servants of the company and their families.

The houses in the fort were either single or double-storey. The main streets near the Bay-Gate were the *Rozenstraat* and *Prinsestraat*. Other street names were: *Heerenstraat, Prinsegracht, Bloemendaal, Lelystraat, Lindestraat, Burgerstraat,* and *Breestraat*. Smaller streets were named after important buildings which stood on them, like the *Wapenkamerstraat* or the *Peterceliestraat* which was probably the place where the spice market was held. Some streets ran through the different districts. The residence of the commander and the second-in-charge were next to each other, on the right side of the Water-Gate, past the warehouses. It must have been one of the nicer areas of the fort. Parallel to the street on which the commander's house stood was the *Rozenstraat*, which had many two-storey buildings. The orphanage was on the *Heerenstraat.*[91] The prison and the hospital were in the south-western corner of the fort. The church and cemetery were in the same quarter.[92]

The hospital normally had one or two medical officers, two or three surgeons and a number of other persons to assist them. In the year 1750, Louis Quintin Martinsart and Hendrik Dirksz. were the chief medical officers. They were assisted by surgeons Johannes Beck and Willem Groenrode. Both were from Cochin. Frans Paulus and Jacobus Luijk from Haarlem were the

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[88] MvO, Casparus De Jong, 41 and 43-44: dated 1761.
[89] The Dutch built many new houses and offices in Fort Cochin, but they also retained some of the older buildings from the Portuguese time, specially the churches as they were big, strong structures. After the initial destruction of Roman Catholic churches and decision to have only one church where services would be held according to the Dutch Reformed church, a few other churches were also restored to their original purpose to serve as places of worship.
[90] Max de Bruijn and Remco Raben (eds.), *The World of Jan Brandes: 1743-1808* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2004), 347-348.
[91] T. Whitehouse, *Some Historical Notes of Cochin on the Malabar Coast* (Cottayam, 1859), 26.
[92] NA London, MPH 817 Maps and Plan Fort Cochin.

other surgeons. Ignatie Volkertsz from Cochin and Jacob Dirksz. worked as medical assistants.[93] Other medical personnel were Hendrik Lodewijk Besenken and Jan Hendrik Schuurman.[94] The ecclesiastical and educational needs of the people were taken care of by four or five VOC servants. In 1750, Fort Cochin had Dirk van der Meer and Jonas Leendertz. as visitors of the sick. They visited the sick and dying in the hospital and in their homes. Gosewijn de Ridder was the school teacher and Cochin-born Johannes Verminne was the organist at the Church.

The fort was also segmented into seven different areas. It didn't boast a centre but had a socio-economic and a political hub. The social and political hub of the fort – the commander's house and office – was next to its economic hub: the port area. The social division of space was based on one's rank and post within the VOC hierarchy, so that the highest officials lived in one part of the fort while the garrisons – considered one among the lower classes – lived in another part.

As to civic matters, regulations passed in Batavia were, in principle, valid for Cochin as well. For the civic upkeep, the fort was divided into four quarters. Each quarter had a constable and a scavenger. They were employed to watch over security and maintain cleanliness. They were allowed to collect a small tax from the shops for their services. For safety reasons, it was considered necessary to illuminate the fort at night. Every hour of the night, patrols were sent out to march the streets of the fort and a military guard was sent into the bazaar each night. [95] To comply with Christian duties, a system of poor relief had been set up. In 1728, the Dutch established a leper asylum.[96] A leprosy hospital called the Lazarus House, owned and controlled by the VOC, and located at Pallippuram could accommodate scores of people.[97] Company servants and other inhabitants of Fort Cochin suffering from leprosy were sent outside the walls to spend their remaining days in isolation. It was maintained by the Diaconate of Cochin. In 1750 twelve persons lived in the Lazarus House.[98]

For a Christian upbringing of the young and homeless children, an orphanage was set up within the fort. In 1750, nine boys and girls from European and Indo-European families lived in there. The orphanage took care of the education of its pupils.[99] It had its own board for the management of funds of the orphans and for its own upkeep. The orphanage was maintained by

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[93] NA The Hague, VOC 5198. Land Pay Rolls of Amsterdam Chamber for the year 1750. Martinsart may be identical with Martin Sart.
[94] TSA DR 498, Criminal Proceedings 1750.
[95] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716 Board's Collection. No pagination.
[96] A. Galletti, A. J. van der Burg and P. Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar* (Madras: Government Press, 1911 reprint Delhi 1984), 9-10.
[97] Before 1728, a Leper House was maintained by the Dutch at Castello.
[98] NA The Hague, VOC 2776, f. 181. Resolutions. Among the inhabitants were five men known as: Hendrik Thymonsz., Nicholaas Volkmaar, Lourens Verhulst, Adriaan Westphalen and Langhad Campong; two young boys called: Abraham Vermeij and Coenraad Marcus; three slave boys called Alesie, Bastiaan and Barido and two slave girls called Dina and Sophia.
[99] NA The Hague, VOC 2758, f. 129. Of the orphan children, there were two boys Jsaak Ackerbaan (10), Jacob Nerne (10) and seven girls Yohanna Atteveld (19), Anna Fredrickszon (19), Alida Sandertszon (18) Helena Atteveld (17), Margarita Nerne (16), Maria der Naijen (13), Maria Atteveld (11). Their ages are given in brackets.

revenues from the fort's tavern, from farms on opium and ferries, and fines imposed by the public prosecutor. It also received the collections taken on Sundays in the Church. The Lazarus House was also partly supported by this fund.[100] Some of the widows of company servants and a few sick and disabled company servants also benefited from this fund.[101]

Although it seemed self-contained, the fort did not function entirely on its own. Its inhabitants were dependent on the surroundings for their daily necessities. A place where they would come into contact with those living outside the fort was the market which was held weekly inside the fort on fixed days. Here small-scale traders and peddlers from the neighbouring localities outside the fort would set up shops to sell all kinds of commodities: oil, milk, clothes, fruits and vegetables, grains, poultry, and the like. Books, furniture, slaves and spices were also sold at the markets. A levy was charged on those who wanted to set up the stalls. On other days, pedlars from outside the walls entered the fort and walked the streets and lanes of the residential areas, hawking clothes, food and other wares and displaying them, on request, on the verandas of the houses of the VOC servants. These small-scale traders brought in local items of use and interest to the people living in Fort Cochin.

The massive defensive walls of Fort Cochin were therefore permeated by human needs and demands. The people living within the walls had almost daily contact with the outside world. The people inside the fort were dependent on those outside, not only for their fresh supply of everyday products but also for political and economic reasons. Similarly, the sick and the wounded company servants and other Europeans from outside the fort visited the hospital and the church within the fort to await treatment, baptize children or for marriage and burial services.

VOC commanders would also often go to the palace of the raja of Cochin in Mattancheri to 'pay their respects', as the latter would not enter the 'Christian fort' for fear of being polluted. When relations between the VOC and the raja of Cochin grew tense, a tent would often be pitched between the fort and the raja's palace where they could and did meet. Other company officials would visit the raja's ministers to settle various issues. Company officials in charge of collecting pepper would frequently venture outside to strike deals with the middlemen who would go to the hinterland to collect the pepper. Traders from Mattancheri, often Jews, would act as intermediaries in these discussions. In short, there was always plenty of communication between and movement to and fro of the people within and outside the walls of Fort Cochin. Far from isolation, there were many contacts between the people of the fort and those outside it. This is, therefore, an example of two localized communities living in close proximity and being interdependent on each other.

[100] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716. No pagination.
[101] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716. No pagination.

Dutch Administration of Fort Cochin

The servants of the company were divided into two main groups: those who served on land and those who served at sea. The servants who served on land were further divided into seven occupational categories – civil servants, military servants, sailors ashore, artisans, the medical personnel, those who served in schools and churches, and lastly those belonging to the diverse (or miscellaneous) services – depending on the nature of their work.[102] In all VOC settlements, servants in the civil service took care of commercial and administrative matters and those in the military services were in charge of security. The military servants of the company were the transient section of the population, moving from place to place wherever their presence was required. Both civil and military servants could be classified into 'qualified' and 'non-qualified' servants of the company. Normally, the posts of public prosecutor, warehouse manager, secretary, and storekeeper were held by qualified servants. The civil servants were also ranked. This hierarchical administrative set-up of the VOC was graded into the ranks of apprentice, junior assistant, junior merchant, merchant, and senior merchant. Since servants were recruited by the different Chambers of the VOC, they were also paid separately by these Chambers. Their salaries were actually paid out in the Netherlands. In Asia they received allowances for their daily maintenance. In 1750, it was also possible for servants of the company to receive their monthly wages in Batavia if they so wished.[103] Naturally, with time, personnel were recruited in Asia as well. These employees were referred to, in the VOC pay rolls, as *indiensten,* literally, 'in service'.[104]

Fort Cochin was headed by a military chief with the rank of commander. The second in rank came from the civil services and held the title of second-in-charge. For the Dutch garrisons in Malabar, the chief military officer – below the commander –held the rank of captain. Under the captain came a captain-lieutenant, four lieutenants and six ensigns. At Cochin there was a maritime officer who was responsible for all matters relating to the port and the company's merchant and naval ships. His squadron consisted of one small yacht, two ships, and three rowboats. On average, Cochin had about 300 European and another 500 non-European employees, mainly military.[105]

The composition of the administrative offices and services in Malabar closely resembled that in Batavia. All regional headquarters of the VOC were supposed to function along the same lines as Batavia did. The commander of Malabar ruled as the chief of a council of seven to nine members. This was the political council. The office of the commander was also assisted by an administrator who was second-in-charge and held the rank of a senior merchant. The captain of the garrison, the public prosecutor, the cashier, the master or manager of the warehouse, the shopkeeper, and the secretary – all of whom held the rank of junior merchants – also formed part

[102] F. Lequin, 'Het Personeel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Azie in de Achttiende Eeuw, meer in het bijzonder in de vestiging Bengalen', Vol. I, (Diss., Leiden University, 1982), 207.
[103] TSA DR 487, Extracts Meeting of Council of India at Batavia, dated Friday, 9th October 1750.
[104] Lequin, 'Het Personeel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie', Vol. II, 339.
[105] NA The Hague, HRB 752, *passim.* Ampliatie op de Memorie van Menage, met opzigt tot de Mallabaar.

of the administrative machinery in Fort Cochin. The main departments in the political council's charge consisted of offices for trade, warehouses, treasury, post-office, and political secretariat. Yet another council, the judicial council, supervised the civil and criminal cases.

In the eighteenth century, Calvinist Protestantism was the public religion in the Netherlands. In principle, the Dutch Reformed church was the "official church" in the overseas settlements and there was a general policy to discourage the espousal of the Roman Catholic faith. Men wishing to enrol in the company as employees had to be of the reformed religion at the time of recruitment. Those entering service from what is now Germany may well have been Lutherans and most certainly there were Roman Catholics from the Dutch Republic and the surrounding areas who registered themselves as Protestants as a matter of expediency.

The company attached a good deal of importance to ecclesiastical matters. The ecclesiastical service of the VOC in Cochin was headed by a *predikant* or minister. Two deacons and one minister were meant to serve Cochin. In most instances, the minister would also have been the head of the educational department. Two of the best-known ministers of Cochin are Philippus Baldaeus and J. Canter Visscher.[106] Baldaeus wrote the *Naauwkeurige Beschrijvinge van Malabar,* which gives interesting information on seventeenth-century Malabar.[107] He was a zealous person who learnt Portuguese and some Tamil in order to re-convert Roman Catholic converts to Protestantism. The Reverend Minister Canter Visscher's *Mallabaarse Brieven* are a contemporary's comments on Malabar society. It was published posthumously by his brother, who also served the VOC as a minister.[108]

Education and religion were closely connected. Most of the children learned to read and write in a curriculum which seemed strongly linked to the Bible. A 1643 regulation issued by Batavia stated: 'the duty of the schoolmasters is primarily to inculcate a fear of the Lord in the young, to teach them the basics of the Christian religion, to teach them to pray, sing, attend church, and to catechize them. The next step is to teach them to be obedient to their parents, the authorities and their masters. The third goal is to instruct them in reading, writing and arithmetic. And the fourth aim is to teach them good morals and manners and finally to exercise (to ensure) that no tongue other than Dutch is used in the schools.'[109] The students of the school were expected to follow the Protestant religion and the Bible was the most important text. In the year 1750 seventeen pupils were enrolled in the school, nine of whom came from the orphanage and eight from

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[106] Canter Visscher served as chaplain of Cochin from 1717 to 1723. Galletti, Van der Burg and Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar*, 32.

[107] Baldaeus was born in Delft in 1632 and arrived in Cochin in 1664. Philippus Baldaeus, *Naauwkeurige beschrijvinge van Malabar en Coromandel, derzelver aangrenzende Rijken, en het machtige Eyland Ceylon*… (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waasberge en Johannes van Someren, 1672).

[108] Galletti, Van der Burg and Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar*, 191-192.

[109] "*Het ampt van de schoolmeesters is voor eerst de jonge jeucht de vreese des Heeren in te scherpen, haer t'onderwysen in de fundamenten van de Christelycke religie, haer te leeren bidden, singen, met haer te kerck te gaen, te catichiseeren; ten anderen haer te leeren haere ouders, overheeden ende meesters te gehoorsaemen; ten derden haer te leeren lesen, schryven ende cyfferen; ten vierden haer te leeren alderley goede seeden ende manieren ende eyndelycke te betrachten, dat in de schoolen geen andere, als de Nederlantse taele gebruyckt werde.*" *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek,* Vol. II, 52: dated 07-12-1643.

individual families.[110] The classification in the records shows that all the students enjoyed the status of European. Thus, non-European status holders did not attend the school inside the Fort.

For the administration of justice, the Dutch had established a uniform system of judicial administration throughout their overseas establishments. A court of justice which was administered by the council of justice was set up. The council of justice which decided the civil and criminal cases was presided over by the second-in-charge. The council decided cases and ordered executions in the name and on behalf of Their High Mightiness which referred to the Estates General. The council of justice consisted of a president and six to eight members. They could be drawn from the civil or military service. Free citizens or '*Vrijburgers*' as they were called in the VOC settlements, could also be members of the judicial council, but this rarely happened.[111] Normally, the council of justice consisted of the second-in-charge presiding, a public prosecutor, the captain of the garrison, a lieutenant, a cashier, the reserve officer of the garrison or troop leader, the master of the warehouse, and the secretary.[112] Other officials, like the storekeeper and the company's chief translator, could also be members of the council if necessary. The Prosecuting Counsel would have filed charges against offenders. He held the rank of merchant. The court of justice held trial and hearing sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays. They began work at eight in the morning, first hearing the criminal cases and then the civil ones.[113]

From a perusal of civil and criminal case papers of the eighteenth century, it seems only a few crimes were reported within the fort walls. Most of the cases were civil, and concerned commercial and property disputes, the dissolution of marriages etc. The most reported criminal crime was desertion and the VOC faced a host of problems suing its own employees for this criminal offence, which became acute at the time of the war with Travancore. Otherwise, Fort Cochin was a relatively peaceful place to live in.

Europeans accused of serious crimes were sent to Batavia, but minor cases were tried in Cochin itself. It is interesting to note that the five new arrivals – from the VOC merchant ship the *Scheijbeek* mentioned before – soon found themselves standing before the Prosecuting Counsel Nicolaas Bowijn. Jacob Dirksz. had been appointed third surgeon, while the others were working as sailors. One evening, all five decided to go out of the fort. They inevitably got drunk, missed their roll call in the fort's garrison and were subsequently reported absent without leave and declared missing from duty. This was a criminal offence for which Dirksz. lost two months' pay and he also had to pay his share of the cost of the suit along with the others. The others were

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[110] NA The Hague, VOC 2758, f. 129. See above for list of the pupils in the orphanage in 1750. The students from private homes were: Frans de Silva (12), Jan Bartelsen (13), Jacobus Krijts (8), Frans Peeterszon (8), Willem (9), Cecan (3), Jsaak (3) and Gabriel (3).

[111] *Vrijburgers* or free citizens were Dutch inhabitants living in VOC settlements but no longer serving the Company. They were allowed certain privileges to trade in order to earn a livelihood. I have used the literal English translation 'free-burghers' to refer to such persons.

[112] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 233-234.

[113] This information comes from a general reading of Civil and Criminal Case Proceedings of Fort Cochin, TSA DR Judicial Records, *passim*.

whipped at the company's shipyard.[114] None, except Hans Matthijs, appears in the VOC records of Fort Cochin after 1750. They probably succumbed to tropical diseases – malaria or smallpox, a common scourge on the coast – or were transferred out of Malabar. In 1755 Hans Matthijs married Cheresina Rodriguez, a Roman Catholic woman of Portuguese decent.[115]

A creolized form of Portuguese was readily spoken fluently by Europeans and Eurasians alike.[116] It was already the accepted language for diplomatic negotiations and had been the *lingua franca* of commerce in the preceding two centuries.[117] Writing in 1743, Commander Van Gollenesse stated that though they tried to teach Dutch, the brightest of the students could only recite what they had learnt by heart and could not speak Dutch at all.[118] Thus, the Dutch never really dislodged the Portuguese linguistic influence. Creolized Portuguese remained widely spoken. Many VOC writers were trained in Malayalam, the language of communication with the raja of Cochin, whose letters would arrive in the fort written on palm leaves called *olas*. These would then be translated into Dutch before being presented to the commander.[119] Creole Portuguese would also have been the language spoken in Mattancheri by the Europeans, when they communicated with the indigenous merchants.

The VOC had a unique regulation for innkeepers within its fortresses. They were the only individuals allowed to sell alcohol in the town and this too was regulated by the company. This had a twofold consequence: one on price and the other on quality. As recorded by the French traveller M. Anquetil du Perron, who visited Cochin late in 1757 and in early 1758, the innkeeper in Fort Cochin enjoyed a monopoly, was extremely greedy, and his services were meagre. Du Perron found it much too expensive to live in the fort and soon decided to find a place in Mattancheri, where he had many more choices.[120] An English traveller at the same inn felt that the wine there was of the best quality in Asia. He stayed inside the fort.[121] Since throughout VOC-Asia, wine and other beverages were controlled and supplied by the company, it is quite possible that they were of good quality as well as expensive.

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114 TSA DR 520. No pagination.
115 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 9. Hans Matthijs was from Hamburg and Cheresina was Cochin-born.
116 Portuguese was also used for all contacts between Europeans and the indigenous inhabitants. J. van Goor, *Jan Kompenie as Schoolmaster: Dutch Education in Ceylon 1690-1795* (Diss., Universiteit Utrecht, 1978), 14.
117 Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 298.
118 Galletti, Van der Burg and Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar*, 80.
119 Many of these *olas* are still to be found among the Dutch records in Tamil Nadu State Archives.
120 T. Whitehouse, *Some Historical Notes of Cochin on the Malabar Coast* (Cottayam, 1859), 25.
121 NA London, Mss Eur F 380/2, fo. 348. Letters of James Forbes to his sister Mary Ann Forbes in London. Forbes was in Cochin on 30 January 1766. After a journey along the coast northwards to Surat he was back in Cochin in 1772 to spend another three or four days there.

The Port of Cochin

The port of Cochin was ensconced in Fort Cochin with a weighing house, warehouses, a shipyard for fitting out ships and a special carpenter's yard where shipwrights repaired ships and boats. The wide mouth of the river, which is actually an estuary, formed a naturally safe harbour.

This port was on the direct shipping line between Batavia and the VOC offices in the western quarters and between the western quarters and the Coromandel Coast. Cochin also formed an important stopping point for vessels from east of the Straits of Malacca heading towards the Persian Gulf and further west. The raja of Cochin derived income from levying custom duties on all non-VOC ships which put in at the port. The Dutch administration collected these on his behalf. The VOC issued passes to these ships. All ships required VOC passes to anchor at the port and pass the Malabar Coast. The income from the port was shared by the VOC and the raja of Cochin. In 1750, this historic port town had been in existence for more than 300 years, and had attracted ships from many different places like Surat, Mocha, Persia, and ships of the French, the Dutch, the English, private ships of Islamic merchants. All docked here for water, firewood and provisions.[122] The port held a strategically important position in the shipping and trading network of the VOC and the larger Indian Ocean. Of all the numerous ports that dotted the coast, the port of Cochin was the chosen destination for many ships operating on the trans-Asiatic sea route.[123]

Ships docked at the Calvetty, which was the harbour of Cochin. The port was managed by a master of the equipage. He was basically in charge of all matters pertaining to the VOC ships, their loading and unloading, repairs, provisioning, and manning. He also allotted places to all other ships anchoring in the port of Cochin. A resolution from Batavia stated that non-VOC ships would be allowed to dock in the VOC ports but could purchase nothing except water and firewood.[124] Yet, from the shipping list of Cochin it is clear that on average, two hundred vessels from numerous ports docked here and they definitely carried much more out of the port than just water and firewood.[125] This shows that the fort and port of Cochin formed a region that functioned autonomously whereby the larger Indian Ocean network rather than Batavia determined the dynamics of the port.

Of the total export value of the VOC from Cochin between 1670 and 1702, pepper accounted for about 60 per cent while rice, mostly from Canara represented approximately 10 per cent and cardamom almost 6 per cent. The rest was made up by various other export products like coir, coconut oil, wild cinnamon, ginger, wax, wax candles, camphor oil, wood, cowries (sea-

[122] Drury, *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher*, 20.
[123] Ships and vessels from the ports in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, ports on the west coast of India north of Cochin, the islands of Mauritius and the Maldives, Ceylon, Coromandel, Bengal, or Malacca and further east often anchored at Cochin.
[124] TSA DR 487, Extracts Meeting of Council of India at Batavia, 6th October 1750.
[125] TSA DR 496, arrival and departures of vessels in 1750.

shells), cowhide to pack cinnamon and, sometimes, Cochin-built sloops (long-boats).[126] Other products which the VOC collected for export from Malabar included cardamom for Europe and rice for Ceylon. All these items of trade were collected and stored in the warehouse of Cochin awaiting the arrival of VOC ships to be exported out.

Important objects of import were opium and cotton.[127] In return for pepper, the Dutch could offer Malabar only opium and therefore it reserved the sole right to import opium into Malabar.[128] The incoming cargo from the VOC ships would be unloaded and sent to the company warehouse. Gunny bags filled with pepper and sewn at the top with coir ropes would be stowed and stacked carefully in the driest part of the ships heading out of Cochin. Other products destined for the ports of Ceylon and Batavia were timber, coir, rice and, whenever possible, young boys and girls as slaves. Slaves from Malabar were in demand in Ceylon as well as in Batavia, and at times they found their way to Cape Town. Yet the number of slaves demanded and those supplied scarcely tallied, the main reason being that many died of small pox. Nonetheless, it must have been a profitable undertaking in Cochin to sell slaves to Europeans for export: from the year 1750 there is an example of a Christian lascar from Mattancheri who was put in the VOC prison for kidnapping and selling a Poelia boy belonging to the raja of Cochin.[129]

Apart from sailors, VOC merchants, warehouse managers, bookkeepers, and coolies, the port would be frequented by Upendra Chetti and Meyer Rahabi, the two 'company merchants', either taking care of their own trade and ships or that of the raja of Cochin. They were also the main pepper suppliers to the VOC. Merchant boats visited here from a variety of places: Porbandar and Surat in Gujarat, the Maldives Islands, Cannanur, and Calicut, to name a few both near and distant. Ships from Nagappattinam, English country traders from Bombay, Muslim merchants from Ponnani, and Baniyas from Porbander were a common sight. Among the other prominent ships would be those belonging to the King of the Maldives, Martanda Varma of Travancore, raja Deva Narayan of Purakkad, and the Ali Raja of Cannanur.[130] All of these non-VOC traders who visited the port of Cochin and the indigenous merchants lived outside the fort walls, in Mattancheri.

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126 s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. lv and lvi.
127 s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 6.
128 s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. lviii.
129 TSA DR 495, Criminal Proceedings 1750. Poelias are a fishing community of Kerala. A lascar is an indigenous person working in the low ranks of the European army or navy in India, an East Indian sailor or 'native police'. Hobson-Jobson, 507-509. The Dutch referred to the lascars as *lascarins* or *lascorijnen*.
130 This information is gathered from the perusal of the passports handed out by the VOC, in any given year of the eighteenth century, to ships that docked at Cochin. Baniyas are a trading community, originally from Gujarat, but widely spread throughout the Sub-Continent and beyond.

1.3 The Peoples In and Around Fort Cochin

Socially, Cochin, was a heterogeneous society that included different migrants and settlers, mostly traders from many parts of India, Asia, and later also Europe. In this section the different peoples who lived in Fort Cochin and just outside it, in Mattancheri, are described. Here we shall learn about the various people, who populated the social world of Fort Cochin. While the archives of the VOC give specific numerical accounts of the numbers within Fort Cochin, a researcher is chiefly dependent on resorting to travel accounts for facts and figures about Mattancheri and the surrounding areas. Since these travel accounts were written mostly by people who had only temporary contact with the people outside Fort Cochin, information about those living in Mattancheri has also been drawn from the memoirs written by the VOC commanders, who had lived in the region for many years.

Of the Europeans, the Portuguese were the first to arrive and since they mixed – by marriage – with the local population, they created a new gene-pool of people referred to in history as "*mestizo*". This community developed close contacts with the other European communities. They carried Portuguese names and spoke the Portuguese language. With the coming of the Portuguese, many new subsections were created in the society. One such new "caste" was that of the toepasses. They were Christianized Indians employed by the Portuguese to man the cannons.[131] They lived in clusters around the Portuguese – and later other European – settlements and came under their jurisdiction. They too were Roman Catholics and spoke Portuguese. While Portuguese men and women born in Europe had the status of "European", those born in Asia of Portuguese parents were called *Castiços* while those born of Portuguese and Indian parents were called Mestiços. In Dutch, the word castizen referred to the offspring of Eurasians. Mestizen and castizen were terms alternatively employed by the Dutch in the eighteenth century to describe and categorise people of mixed birth. We shall learn much more about the mestizos of Cochin in the following chapters.

Since Christians fell under the jurisdiction of the VOC, all Christians living outside the fort, in Mattancheri, Vaipin or elsewhere, would be tried at the fort at the court of justice. The court often used sworn translators, who were employees of the VOC. Hendrik Meuleman and Simon van Tongeren of the VOC were frequently called upon to write wills, take down confessions and statements involving non-Dutch speakers.[132] Toepasses, lascars, and Mukkuvars were widely employed in the service of the company.[133] Most of the gardens and fields of the Dutch were rented out to them. The Dutch also employed them in shipbuilding, smithery, carpentry, and as soldiers and translators.

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[131] Toepas (plural toepasses), also spelled topass, toepass etc., was a name used in the 17th and 18th centuries for dark-skinned or half-caste claimants of Portuguese descent. Hobson-Jobson, 933-934.
[132] TSA DR 495, Criminal Proceedings, Judicial Records 1750. And TSA DR 1230, Wills, marriage settlements, etc., Legal records 1784-1788.
[133] MvO Frederik Cunes, 32: dated 1756. Mukkuvars belong to the pearl-fishing community of Kerala.

Within the Walls

As said earlier, prior to the arrival of the Dutch, the Portuguese had a much larger fort in Cochin. Within the Portuguese town, the Europeans lived alongside the indigenous Christians. There was a considerable non-Christian presence. At the time of the Dutch conquest in 1663, it was estimated that there were 900 old houses in the Portuguese quarter, though only 173 were actually inhabited.[134] After the ousting of the Portuguese from the city, the size of the population was 8,000 including 4,000 toepasses.[135] Consequently, Fort Cochin was likewise not an exclusively European settlement but a mixed society. Its population included Europeans, Eurasians, and indigenous people. So, even in the second half of the eighteenth century, Fort Cochin still bore a strong Portuguese legacy. The history of Fort Cochin under the Portuguese still shaped its society a century later.

The houses on the streets of Fort Cochin in the 1750s were occupied mostly by Indo-European families, that is, family units with a Europe-born father and a Cochin-born mestizo mother, with their children. These households were inside the fortification walls where on an average some 2000 persons lived. An average household also had adopted children and numerous slaves. There were many non-European residents in the fort. Prominent among them were the toepasses who had first settled there during the time of the Portuguese and had been allowed to continue living in their houses after the take-over. But since the Dutch fort was made much smaller and many houses were pulled down, many of the toepasses left to settle outside the fort walls or on Vaipin Island. So gradually with time, the fort became more and more "European", although the majority of the population remained of mestizo origin.

Table 1: Household and Population of Fort Cochin (1700 and 1730)

Year	Number of households	Number of VOC servants	Other occupants	Total population
1700	371	488	1506	1994
1730	208	829	853	1682

Source: Marianne Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India' (MA thesis, Leiden University, 1992), 37, 50 and 72-73.

From the above data, it can be inferred that many households had more than one member serving in the VOC. It would be no great feat of imagination to think that most fathers also enrolled their sons as VOC servants, as this was their only source of constant employment and income. Alternatively, many unmarried VOC servants possibly lived outside the fort. Scrutinizing the data on employees to find out where they were recruited reiterates the fact that recruiting locally had been already a practice at the beginning of the 1750s.

[134] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, pp. lii-liii.
[135] Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India 1500-1663* (Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 77-78.

The data below illustrates that the personnel composition of the VOC in Fort Cochin was definitely not European. They were children of European VOC employees, who were married to mestizo women in Cochin. These Cochin-born, locally recruited servants of the company must have perceived Fort Cochin as their home. Some of them may have had the status of a European, but none of them had ever been to Europe. They were born in Fort Cochin, just as their mothers had been. This relation between the origin of employees of the VOC at Cochin and their perception of the Fort would explain the choices they made in the years to come and the contact they had with people outside the Fort.

Table 2: Employees of the VOC in Cochin (1750 and 1755)

Year	Total	Recruited in Europe	Locally Recruited	Percentage of locally recruited
1750	675	351	324	48
1755	454	257	197	43.3

Source: Compiled from Land Pay Rolls of Amsterdam.

It could be supposed that the local-born men were recruited for the military, or for the lower ranks as sailors or clerks. Indeed, many local recruits were used in the military or as manual labour at the port, in the shipwright's shop, as blacksmiths and as carpenters. However, a sharper look at the qualified servants of the company around 1750 reveals that local-born servants were not confined to the lower ranks.

Table 3: Qualified employees of the VOC in Cochin (1750 and 1755)

Year	Qualified Employees	Recruited in Europe	Locally Recruited	Percentage of locally recruited
1750	42	9	33	78.57
1755	53	12	41	77.35

Source: Compiled from Land Pay Rolls of Amsterdam Chamber.

On an average, more than 70 per cent of the qualified personnel of the VOC in Cochin were also locally recruited. If the highest office – that of the commander – was not *per se* held by local-born employees of the company, there is still a pattern to be discerned in the careers of the commanders of Fort Cochin. Analysing the careers of the commanders of the VOC over the decades of the eighteenth century also sheds light on who headed the Fort and what induced them to take the decisions they did.

We begin with Corijn Stevens who had been commander at Cochin since 1747. Stevens had arrived in Asia in 1729. After two short stints in Colombo and Malabar, he went to Batavia. In 1735 Stevens returned to the Malabar Coast. He then spent the next sixteen years in Malabar, holding different offices and ranks, before reaching the highest office there. He was married to

Maria Louisa Koller of Cochin.[136] In 1751 he died in office. The second-in-charge, Abraham Cornelis de la Haye, was elected to succeed him temporarily. De la Haye was locally recruited. He was born in Colombo to a VOC servant and had lived for some time in Batavia. He had served in Surat before arriving in Malabar. He died in office in Cochin in 1752. He is buried at the St. Francis Church in the fort.[137] At that time, Frederik Cunes had been appointed by Batavia to succeed him.[138] Cunes served in Cochin from 1751 to 1756 and after three decades in Asia, returned to the Netherlands in 1761.[139]

Frederik Cunes was succeeded by Casparus de Jong who served as commander between 1756 and 1761. He had arrived in Malabar in 1737, and after serving for three decades in Malabar and Ceylon, he too returned to the Netherlands. In 1761 Godefridus Weyerman – whom we met in Cannanur – assumed the office of the commander of Malabar. Weyerman, like De la Haye, was a locally recruited servant of the company, although he had been born in Europe. He too had served on the Malabar Coast for more than two decades before assuming this office.[140]

We shall meet other commanders of Malabar, in the course of the book, but for now it can be stated that, following the careers of the commanders of Cochin reveals that many of them had previously served in either Ceylon or Surat or at both places. In fact, out of the ten commanders who served in the second half of eighteenth century in Malabar, only Cornelis Breekpot had had no former contact with the offices of the VOC on the Indian subcontinent. And most probably this had to do with the fact that his predecessor, Weyerman, had been dismissed from office and called to Batavia charged with embezzlement in account keeping of the VOC during his time! And therefore Breekpot was meant to be "Batavia's man" – an outsider in the Surat-Malabar-Ceylon-Coromandel network who would help unravel the embezzlement affair without benefiting from it. All other commanders who served on the Malabar Coast in the second half of the eighteenth century had served in the western quarter, in Ceylon or in Malabar itself. Most of them also died in Asia. Only Frederic Cunes and Casparus de Jong repatriated to the Netherlands.

A review of all this information shows incontrovertibly that the social milieu of Fort Cochin had strong Eurasian hue. The company was on a path of localization and many of its servants were local-born and recruited men who carried Dutch names as their fathers were Dutch. By setting up institutions like the court of justice and the orphanage, similar to such institutions in the Netherlands, attempts had been made to create a 'Dutch society'. Yet, the majority of the inhabitants and employees of the VOC at Fort Cochin had never been to the Netherlands.

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136 TSA DR 575, Civil Proceedings, Judicial Records 1754-1757.
137 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', *Gens Nostra* XLVIII (1992), 4: dated 05-10-1752.
138 Frederik Cunes served as commander of Cochin from 1751 to 1756. He had joined the VOC in 1739 and was appointed lieutenant of the artillery in Java in 1743. In 1745, he moved to Batavia where he served first as Captain of the Corps and later as Major. In 1750 he went to Galle as commander and the subsequent year to Cochin, also as commander. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 191-192.
139 Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 191-193.
140 Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 193-194.

Europe was nothing more than a place to which they were linked to via the company. And, in reality, personally they had little to do with the Netherlands. To those who came from the Netherlands and stayed in Asia for more than two decades, the Netherlands were but a vague memory.

Outside the Walls

Just like Fort Cochin, Malabar was also an admixture of peoples. As the port of Cochin had been in existence since 1314, over the years many trading communities had settled in the raja of Cochin's territory. Anyone walking or riding a horse outside the fort towards Mattancheri would run into people who were very different from those inside the fort walls: the majority here were the indigenous people of Malabar. Nevertheless, it would not take long to find parallels in their daily lives. Indubitably, trade and pepper would dominate the conversations among the traders, which in all probability would also have been held here in Portuguese, perhaps a pidgin or creolized version with a smattering of Dutch. The European population outside Fort Cochin included Italian and German merchants and mercenaries, besides the Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English traders who lodged there temporarily when they visited the port. Broadly classifying the indigenous people of Malabar on the basis of their religion, there would be Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians. But in this section only those communities which came into frequent contact with the Dutch in Fort Cochin will be discussed.

The Christian population was divided into numerous communities. Most of the Christians traced the beginning of the Church in Malabar to the work of the apostle St. Thomas. These St. Thomas Christians, also known as Syrian Christians, after the language of their liturgy, were widely scattered on the Malabar Coast. There were also many Roman Catholic Christians.[141] Many lascars, toepasses and mestizo were also followers of the Latin Church. They lived, in large numbers, in the vicinity of the fort, and provided the main work force.

The VOC reports on domestic affairs periodically comment on religious matters. Referring to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1756, Frederik Cunes, the retiring commander of Cochin, stated that 'the true religion' was taken care of by the Reverend Carel Sezilles. He also complained of the losses that this Church had faced because of the "contagious sickness of the Roman Catholics' teachings and superstitions".[142] His lengthy statements about the tireless work of the preachers show that the Dutch also attempted to convert people to the Protestant Church, but with little success. The Carmelites had a monastery in Verapoly, three miles from Fort Cochin. They, as other Christians, came under the protection of the VOC.[143] The company administered justice over all Christians on the coast, except the St. Thomas Christians. In the treaty of 1663, it

[141] T. Madhava Menon, Deepak Tyagi and B. Francis Kulirani, *People of Kerala* Vol. XXVII (New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press: Anthropological Survey of India, 2002), 987-989.
[142] MvO Frederik Cunes, 25: dated 1756.
[143] MvO Frederik Cunes, 33: dated 1756.

was laid down specially that this was to be the arrangement and if any Christian committed a crime, they were to be punished only by the company.[144] Thus they came under the jurisdiction of the company. Under the 1743 Treaty of Mavelikara between the Dutch and Travancore, Christians residing in the raja of Travancore's territory were also to be considered under the jurisdiction of the VOC.[145]

Malabar Hindus, as a whole constituted an essentially rural society with a predominantly agrarian economic base. Few Malayali castes were known for their commercial activities and none seemed to participate directly in the valuable export trade of Malabar.[146] Many Hindus inhabited the Mattancheri and Ernakulam area, especially those who served in the raja of Cochin's palace and administration. The leading members of society in Malabar were the Malayali Brahmins or Nambudiri who controlled the temples and the land. They were landed aristocrats.[147] The ruling house employed them as advisors and envoys. The ruling elites had to contend with many impositions owing to their sacred status in society. Nambudiris were not even permitted to come near the shadow of an untouchable or venture beyond Malabar for, should they do so, they would be deemed 'polluted'.[148] The ruling landed elites were the Nayars who also served the kings in their armies.[149] The Nayar community was known for their matrilineal system. Owing to their military strength, all political power lay in their hands. Nayars as well as Nambudiris were forbidden to board a ship. These restrictions certainly curtailed the participation of the Malabar Hindu elite in the trade. This created an opportunity for many 'foreigners' to settle in Malabar and with this we arrive at another group of Hindus in Cochin: those who came from outside Malabar.

The Konkani Brahmins (also called Saraswats) and Tamil Brahmins (also called Pattars) had been living on the Malabar Coast for centuries. They were mostly involved in wholesale trade. The former hailed from the Konkan coast north of Malabar and the latter from the hinterlands beyond the Western Ghats. Both were initially attracted to the region by the profitable spice trade. They first conducted trade with the Portuguese and later with the Dutch.[150] They were also powerful in court politics. In Mattancheri, the Saraswats were often seen as courtiers rather than merchants. The third section of the Brahmin settlers in Malabar was composed of the Payyari

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144 CDNI Vol. II, 244.
145 This was later contested by Martanda Varma. De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 109-110.
146 Malayali is a generic term used to describe all people who speak the Malayalam language. Malayalam is one of the Dravidian languages spoken in southern India. It is spoken along the Malabar Coast on the western side of the Ghats.
147 For more on Nambudiri Brahmins see William Logan, *Malabar* (Madras: Government Press 1951), 119-130.
148 The *Baudhayana Dharma Sutra* forbade orthodox Brahmins to engage in sea travel and traffic, and prescribing severe penances and penalties for transgressions. Its author, Baudhayana, did admit that the Brahmins of the north frequently transgressed the scriptures. Lakshmi Subramanian, *Medieval Seafarers*, (New Delhi: Roli Books, 1999), 9.
149 Nayar is also spelled as Nair, Nairos and so on. This name originated from the Sanskrit 'Nayaka' which means a leader, chief, or general. T. Madhava Menon, Deepak Tyagi and B. Francis Kulirani, *People of Kerala* Vol. XXVII, 1113-1123.
150 Canter Vischer, *Malabaarse Brieven*, 389.

Brahmins who came from the Karnataka region and made Malabar their home. They worked mostly in the money-lending business which by and large gave them the chance to control the pepper trade. They were exchangers of gold and silver bullion and enjoyed a respectable position among the costal communities.

Another section of society consisted of the Baniya merchants. In the northern parts of Malabar they were larger in number. They came originally from Gujarat and trading was their hereditary occupation. They belonged to the Vaishya caste, which came third in social hierarchy. They had the reputation of dealing in 'goods of every kind from many lands'.[151] The Gujarati traders had had a settlement in Cochin that went back to the pre-Portuguese days. The areas from Malacca up as far as Aden were covered by the Gujarati merchants who exchanged the commodities according to the needs of the various localities involved from time to time in coastal trade.[152] Chettis from the Coromandel Coast had also become residents of Cochin and were mostly traders in precious metals and jewels. The Chettis and Baniyas had their own regional social customs and enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. Many Chetti and Baniya merchants had long-standing commercial relations with the VOC. Often they received titles of 'company merchants'.

The Jewish community of Cochin is by far the best studied of the numerous migrants of Cochin. The Jews of Malabar, commonly known as Cochin Jews or 'Cochinis', had originally settled in Cranganur, the ancient Muziris, and shifted to Cochin in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century after facing opposition from the Muslims and Portuguese. In 1685 the Jews of Amsterdam sent a commission of four to Cochin to study and report on the Jews there. One of them was Moses Pereira De Paiva who suggested that the Jews were divided into 'Black Jews' called *Malabari* (from Malabar) and 'White Jews' called *Paradeshis* (foreigners). Probably the 'Black Jews' were indigenous people who had converted to Judaism. It is also possible that they had been slaves of the original 'White Jews', who had continued to keep their Jewish observances after the death of their 'White' masters. De Paiva's report was based on oral traditions.[153] Each group maintained its own religious institutions and observed caste relations like their Hindu counterparts. The Jews of Cochin played an important role in the courts of Malabar. They fully participated in the affairs of the Cochin government. Owing to their international contacts, they played a valuable part in the pepper trade.[154] In his memoir Adriaan Moens mentions that 150 Jewish families lived in the Jewish quarters next to the King's Palace.[155] The Jews were in fact well patronized by the rajas of Cochin as they brought in wealth because of their trading activities.

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[151] Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala,* Vol. II (Ernakulam: Cochin Government Press, 1942-37), 56.
[152] K. S. Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), 12.
[153] It states that in 1685, the number of 'Black Jews' amounted to 465 families and that the 'White Jews' numbered 25.
[154] David G. Mandelbaum, 'Social Stratification among the Jews of Cochin in India and Israel' in *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 17, no. 2 (1975), 165-210, especially, 179.
[155] A. Galletti, A. J. van der Burg and P. Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar*, 198.

Some of the prominent Jewish personalities of Cochin whom we shall meet again were Ezekiel Rahabi and Isaac Surgun.

A thriving Islamic culture had developed in the various trading ports of Malabar and the Muslim community in Cochin consisted of *paradeshi* (foreigners) and indigenous Muslims called Mappilas. The Mappila Muslims formed a considerable section of Malabar society.[156] They were a semi-autonomous community and remained socially and culturally distinct.[157] The immigrants hailed from the Red Sea area, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and Turkey. They seasonally resided in the spice ports and traded with immense profits between Malabar and West Asia. Therefore, the most striking feature of the socio-economic history of Cochin is that outsiders largely and consistently dominated commerce, which was central to its very existence. Commercial activities and almost all foreign trade were in the hands of non-Malayali communities.

Because of its trading history, Mattancheri was principally cosmopolitan. While it may have been expected that the European population was a closed community, that of the Eurasians and the Asians was an amalgamation of peoples from numerous religious and cultural backgrounds. While Dutch was spoken inside the fort by Dutchmen – at least by those who were born in the Netherlands – Malayalam bound the people of Mattancheri, where Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived. In all, there existed a mutually dependent co-operative network, congenial to trade. Peoples from different religious and cultural backgrounds, all of who lived in or around the fort, formed a cosmopolitan social milieu.

In Fort Cochin lived a society of people who were born and brought up in Malabar and were European only in name, by virtue of the administrative system of the VOC. For those who were born in Cochin, this was home. For those who came from outside, it can be said that, although they were a minority, they were acculturated to an extent that they too were firmly settled in the Cochin milieu. It will be studied, in the following chapters, whether a way of life had evolved based on mutual co-operation and interdependence between the different communities of Fort Cochin and those of Mattancheri and rest of the surrounding area.

These were the general circumstances in which the Companies and their personnel found themselves around the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century in Malabar. The people who inhabited Cochin came from various milieus. In 1750 Fort Cochin and Mattancheri together appear as one multi-religious and multi-cultural space bound together by the aspirations of trade and profit. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike inhabited them. While the European population lived mostly within the fortified walls of Fort Cochin, others lived around it. Not everyone was allowed to own a house within the walls. The social fabric of the twin establishment – Fort Cochin and Mattancheri – was diverse as merchants from the several

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[156] Roland E. Miller, *Mapilla Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends* (Madras: Orient Longman, 1976), *passim.*

[157] Stephen Frederic Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 23.

different surrounding regions and religious backgrounds had settled in Malabar. Cochin had the enormous advantage of a unique network of merchants, who co-existed in a small town for the purpose of trade. In their urban setting, they were grouped together and people from similar religious backgrounds formed closed groups or maintained mutual ties like the Christian mestizos who lived both inside and outside the fort. In the case of the Dutch in Fort Cochin, they even had a specified walled fortress in which they lived. Even so, the walls were, socially and economically permeable, with the bridge of physical and spiritual necessities connecting them to the outside world.

From the above description of the fort and the people, the basic differences between the fort and the areas around it emerge. While the fort was an urban organised enclave with large houses and streets running in straight lines in grid formation, the areas outside were rural with winding streets, houses with thatched roofs and a few large houses. There were also differences in the design of houses inside and outside the walls, as well as in the composition of the population, their clothing, and in their language. [158]

1.4 Conclusion

The presence of Europeans in Asia was as much social, as commercial and political. Although trade was the main reason for their presence on the Malabar Coast, they were often drawn into the local politics of the region. Without some knowledge of local politics, they could hardly have secured trading-posts and privileges for themselves. The VOC in Malabar was pretty much entrenched in the local politics of Malabar.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the Malabar Coast was host to numerous European trading companies which were deeply immersed in the local politics of the region. For the VOC, Fort Cochin was strategically important as it was meant to protect Ceylon. In the struggle for consolidation of territory and power among the indigenous rulers of Malabar, the Dutch in Fort Cochin played a vital role. They possessed a strong fort and their policy would have had an impact on the balance of power in the region.

Fort Cochin was strategically well-located. It was strong, the oldest and the largest in the coastal region. Defined on the basis of its function, it was a fort, a port, a capital – the headquarters – of the VOC in Malabar. It had a good port and a natural harbour located on the major shipping route for vessels from the Persian Gulf to Ceylon, Coromandel, Bengal, Malacca and beyond. It was a port of call for Dutch vessels freighting between Persia, Surat, Ceylon and Batavia. It served as a rich stop-over or refreshing place abundant in numerous commodities. Any of the other European or indigenous powers present on the coast would have wanted to bring the fort under its own control.

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[158] In 1662, the VOC had passed a regulation that European clothing could only be worn by Christians. F. de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, Vol. II (Batavia: Kolff, 2nd edition 1922,), 33.

The walls of Fort Cochin held within its fold a community which was economically linked to the VOC. It was a society physically bordered by strong high walls. For the people of Fort Cochin, the fort itself and its environs were not hostile or threatening: it was home. The VOC enjoyed amicable relations with the raja of Cochin. He did not pose a serious military threat to the people or the fort. The people of Fort Cochin lived in harmony with all other itinerant and indigenous merchants and traders who frequented the port. There were no problems with the indigenous inhabitants of the surrounding areas: Vaipin, Bolgatty, and Mattancheri. The land and its people and their sovereign offered the inhabitants of Fort Cochin plenty of opportunities for private trade.

Figuratively speaking, the permeability of the walls was sometimes one-sided. Inhabitants of Fort Cochin could always go out and set up homes in Mattancheri or on Vaipin Island. There were no restrictions imposed by the raja of Cochin or the VOC, if Europeans decided to move out to the non-fortified area. They could do so easily. But this was not true for the inhabitants of Mattancheri. They could not just set up homes and start living in Fort Cochin, if they wished. How attractive the fort was as a place for habitation for the local Jews, Chetties or Baniyas is of course a matter of speculation, considering that there are no sources to judge this. But keeping in mind that the 'purity' of a place was a matter of concern among the Hindus, who considered the beef-eating Christians impure, there were in all probability not many – if any – inhabitants of Mattancheri who would have liked to move to Fort Cochin. Even so, there was physical and cultural connectedness between the people on the two sides of the wall. The society of the twin establishment of Fort Cochin and Mattancheri, and the workings of the VOC in the region derived their impetus from the social and economic energy around Cochin and not from Batavia.

The twin habitats of Fort Cochin and Mattancheri were two physically separate entities but one autonomous whole linked or connected with each other by trade and personal contacts which functioned within the dynamics of the region. They were economically integrated. The port of Cochin was an important space where the boundaries and the people met. There were intensive social, political and economic contacts between the two settlements. The fort, because of its nature and strength, was an important axis around which the lives of the people living in and around it evolved.

The battlefield of Colachel in 1741 had been far from the fort and defeat of the VOC did not immediately affect those living within the fort. Nonetheless the company had to cope with the disgrace of conceding defeat to an indigenous sovereign. Travancore could have been a threat, but a peace treaty had been negotiated with Martanda Varma. For the people of Fort Cochin, even after the defeat of the VOC in Colachel, Fort Cochin was still a congenial place to live. There was no mass exodus of the people to Ceylon, Surat, or the Coromandel Coast after the defeat of the VOC. On the contrary, the number of locally recruited people serving the company increased. The VOC personnel and other inhabitants continued to remain within Fort Cochin as

there were abundant means of sustaining themselves in the region. The presence of numerous other Europeans on the coast – as we shall see in the next chapter – only meant that opportunities for private trade were flourishing, as the number of pepper buyers in the market rose steadily.

CHAPTER TWO

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE MALABAR COMMAND (1750-1784)

"…income from land is the source from which the state exists…"
Commander Casparus de Jong[1]

How did the company and the people of Fort Cochin fare during the period between 1750 and 1784? How did the servants of the company at Cochin and the High Government at Batavia deal with the various competitors on the coast? These are the main themes taken up in this chapter, the aim being to specifically identify and further define the nature of the Dutch presence in Malabar. Purely for the purpose of holding on to the safe rope of chronology, the time-span of 1750-1784 has been chosen for this chapter. In 1784, the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war came to an end, and the power positions in Europe and consequently among the European powers in India were redefined.[2]

Present historiography defines the Dutch in South Asia as merchant-warriors, emporialists, entrepreneurs and traders. It has been said that in the second half of the eighteenth century this merchant-warrior was pacified. Cochin has been adduced as an example of an emporium with European and indigenous trading communities dealing in a variety of goods.[3] More thorough research on the Malabar Command, using new archival data, and focusing on the servants of the company reveals another picture. Individual servants, as well as the company as an institution, were changing their style of functioning in Malabar. The above quotation hints at the changes. To unravel these, the Dutch in Europe, in India, and specifically the VOC in Malabar are analysed. Secondly, the VOC and its losses and gains in pepper trade in Malabar are assessed. Thirdly, in order to reconsider and redefine the nature of the company's presence, the non-trading aspects of the Dutch presence on the coast are examined. Since the men on the spot by and large determined the day-to-day functioning of the company , we are also able to discern the conflict

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[1] "*s'Lands inkomsten …[sijn] den bron waar uijt de geld middelen en het bestaan van een staat voortvloeijt* …". MvO Casparus de Jong, 33: dated 1761.

[2] J. A. N. Rietbergen, *A short history of the Netherlands: from prehistory to the present day* (Amersfoort: Bekking, fourth edition 2000), 101-111 and Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic, Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprint 1998), 1095-1097.

[3] For more on merchant-warrior image see Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified, passim*. Els M. Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, *passim* and Femme S. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, *passim* have given the Company a trader and entrepreneur image. Also see J. C. Heesterman, 'Warriors and Merchants', *Itinerario* (1/1991), Vol. XV, 37-49.

of interests and differences in opinion and policy between the servants of the company in Malabar and the High Government.

2.1 Changing Times: Europe and India

In an attempt to understand the changes in the fortunes of the people living in Fort Cochin and the company itself, let us briefly go through some developments in Europe – particularly Britain, France and the Dutch Republic – and India. Because of the very fact that the English, the French, and the Dutch had establishments in India and on the Malabar Coast, and relations between them in Europe led to ramifications on their interactions on the coast, one has to keep developments in Europe in mind while studying Fort Cochin. This will bring into a comparative perspective certain policies and reactions of the VOC officials in Fort Cochin and in Batavia. It will help us to better understand the actions of the men on the spot.

During the 1750-1784 period, wars and alliances, both in Europe and in India, directly or indirectly affected the people of Fort Cochin. At times they were threatened by other European powers on the coast due to their enmity in Europe, and at other times they were threatened by indigenous powers on the coast that could be receiving support from competing European powers. The people in Fort Cochin were aware of these wars and alliances taking place far and near. This can be concluded from the fact that in their offices, the Dutch in Cochin had meters of general and secret letters from and to The Netherlands, Batavia, Malacca, Bengal, Coromandel, Ceylon, Surat, Persia and other offices in VOC-Asia. They were also in correspondence with the Portuguese, the English and the French.[4] For information on events in Europe, the company officials in Cochin were more or less dependent on these official letters, although it was Batavia that they were most connected with. Occasionally they could hope for information via the VOC offices at Ceylon or Bengal, where ships arrived directly from the Netherlands.[5]

Correspondence with the local indigenous rulers in Persian, Arabic, Marathi, the then contemporary southern languages of Kanada, Tamil and Malayalam, kept the Dutch officials in the fort well informed about enmities and alliances among the sovereigns in India. Through this exchange of letters, they were aware of the court politics in the regions immediately in their vicinity and the different factions that could come to or lose power, thereby affecting the company's relationship with the different factions. These changes – both far and near Cochin – affected the general security and well-being of the people of Fort Cochin.

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[4] A. J. M. Heyligers, *Press List of Ancient Dutch Records From 1657 to 1825: Beschrijvende catalogus van de hele Hollandsche massa te Madras* (Madras, s.a) jointly with *Supplementary Catalogue of Dutch Records Madras Record Office* (Madras: Government Press, 1952), *passim*.

[5] Frequently Cochin also received letters on local developments by land via the *ghat* routes from offices on the Coromandel Coast there. In between Calicut and Cochin there is a gap in the Western Ghats which is called the Palghat Gap. This pass connects the east and west coasts of South India.

The inhabitants were thus informed about the developments around them, though sometimes rather late, as in the case of war in Europe when shipping and communication was affected. On the other hand, it was the Malabar Command that informed Batavia about the developments on the coast, on the basis of which the High Government and the Gentlemen XVII prepared their instructions and policies for Malabar, thereby affecting the lives of the people who had to execute the orders.

Power Struggle in Europe

In the second half of the eighteenth century the United Kingdom was on the rise and the Dutch Republic was past its Golden Age.[6] Britain was emerging as the world's leading mercantile power, overriding the Dutch and gradually surpassing the French. The EIC had become a strong competitor and in many parts of Asia, it challenged the Dutch. When compared to the English company, the VOC's trade in South-Asia was generally on a path of decline.

Since the middle of the eighteenth century the Netherlands, were again under a system of central stadhouderate.[7] In 1734 Stadhouder Willem IV (1748-1751), had married Anne of Hanover, the daughter of King George II of England, thereby strengthening Anglo-Dutch relations in Europe, but receiving criticism in the Netherlands. In 1751, their son Willem V (1748-1806) became the stadhouder. Since he was a minor, his mother Anne of Hanover – "a foreigner" – took care of the office, between 1751 and 1766, with the help of an informal steering committee.[8]

The disaffection of the people of the Netherlands towards their government had steadily been on the rise. There was a general discontent among the people due to the rapid economic decline and the stagnant political situation. This led to political unrest among the Dutch people. While on the one hand resources were getting drained off through trade and the colonies, on the other hand intellectuals advocated ideas of physiocracy, that argued that land and developing resources of the land was essential to the nation's growth. With time, certain sections of the Dutch population demanded more rights for themselves and less power in the hands of the stadhouder. Steadily the population became divided into *Patriots* and *Orangists*. The former advocated political reform while the latter supported the House of Orange-Nassau. The Stadhouder Willem V wanted to spend the taxpayers' money on developing an army, which would strengthen his own

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[6] John M. Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 260-271. For a comparison of developments within Europe and in the rest of the world see C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

[7] The Stadhouder was originally a "lieutenant" of the Hapsburg sovereign in a province, responsible for public order and the upholding of the law. Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (New York: Knopf, 1977), p. xvi. Every province had its own Stadhouder, though often one person held power over two or three provinces. In 1747, Willem IV became the first Stadhouder of all seven provinces of the Dutch Republic. Rietbergen, *A short history of the Netherlands*, 73-89 and 101-110.

[8] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1079-1080.

position.[9] The *Patriots* favoured trade to agriculture and therefore wanted to build a new naval fleet, which would also protect trade with the colonies and improve communications with them.

Although the decline in Dutch trade in the mid-eighteenth century was only partial, the effects of the English competition were felt by the Dutch both in Europe and in Asia. Within the VOC, both in the Netherlands and in Batavia, there were talks of re-organising the affairs of the company to counter the decline. One effort to restructure things in 1749 made the then Stadhouder Willem IV the chief director of the VOC, giving him powers over the administration of the company.[10] Furthermore, the States-General itself pushed the company to take measures against the decline.[11] For the VOC, the costs of maintaining the establishments in Asia were proving to be burdensome and their shipping was inefficient. But internal differences, like differences in opinion about reforms, between the Gentlemen XVII and the High Government hindered early attempts at reform within the company.[12]

The *Patriots* were also critical of the administration of the company and felt that little had been done to restructure the company. To them, the decline of the VOC was an internal problem. Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff (1705-1750) who served in Batavia as the Governor-General between 1743 and 1750, proposed reforms. He attempted to improve shipping and cut down on the number of servants employed in Asia. He also tried to reform certain company rules and regulations for trading, but these attempts yielded limited results.[13]

In 1750 Van Imhoff was succeeded by Jacob Mossel (1704-1761).[14] Mossel also undertook the task of furthering reforms, but mostly by undoing Van Imhoff's actions. In the Netherlands, Thomas Hope, a major shareholder in Amsterdam, got involved in the reforming process of the company.[15] In 1751, Hope wrote a proposal to improve trade. Mossel, on his part, pointed out

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[9] Rietbergen, *A short history of the Netherlands*, 111.
[10] Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 163.
[11] The States-General was an assembly of delegates from each of the seven provinces. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands*, p. xvi. Deficits in the VOC's annual budget in Asia had begun in the 1690s which were replenished by the Company in the Netherlands. But this capital began to shrink in the 1760s. J. J. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang: De voorstellen tot redres van de VOC 1740-1795* (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1984), 199.
[12] While the VOC officials in the Netherlands mistrusted the officials in Batavia and called them corrupt and self-serving, the High-Government in Batavia obstructed reforms from the Netherlands on grounds that the Gentlemen XVII were unaware of ground realities in Asia. They were also wary of the Gentlemen XVII's attempts to limit the powers of Batavia.
[13] According to Imhoff there were three main causes: firstly, the VOC, because of the conquests, had expanded in Asia beyond control and therefore it was difficult to manage it. Secondly, it had failed to cut its expenses and critically examine its functioning and thirdly it was not run by professionals but by men – meaning those in Asia – who just wanted to get rich in a short period of time. He also blamed the competition from the English as one of the reasons. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 44-45.
[14] Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 56.
[15] Thomas Hope was a partner in a banking firm called Hope & Co. He held the position of chief sworn participant (*beëdigd hoofdparticipant*), as well as administrator (*bewindhebber)* in the Amsterdam Chamber. He was also Stadhouder Willem V's representative in the VOC (and the WIC). When Willem V took the full responsibilities of his office, he exercised control over the VOC through his representative. Major shareholders were also officially sworn in and took part in the meetings of the Gentlemen XVII. They also held seats and gave advice to the various committees of the Gentlemen XVII. Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 35 and 163.

that the company's account books could not show which regions made a profit and which ones were running at a loss.[16] In 1752 he submitted his report to the Gentlemen XVII suggesting new systems of accounting, but not much came of it.[17] The case of the Malabar Command in these reforms is discussed later in the chapter.

In the eighteenth century, the commercial rivals of the Dutch Republic, Britain and France, owing to their larger economic and human resources, became comparatively stronger. Two political clashes on the continent, first the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and later the Seven Years War (1756-1763), brought the two influential powers – France and Britain – on opposite sides.[18] The Anglo-French conflict was played out at a truly global level for the first time and since their respective companies were competitors in India, this rivalry led to wars in India as well. In this conflict, the Dutch were on the side of the English, while their companies were competitors in Asia.

When the American colonies revolted, the French and the Dutch reformists, influenced by prevailing ideologies, supported America's efforts for a democratic government. This heightened the tension between Britain and the continental powers. Britain retaliated by fighting every European power that supported her rebellious American colonies: France (1778), Spain (1779) and the Dutch Republic (1780). France was among the first to experience Britain's wrath. She was herself struggling financially from wars in the previous decades. This had led to chronic problems within the French company, like shortage of cash which undermined its positions in the colonies, especially in India where it was competing with the English.[19]

In 1780 war broke out between the Dutch and the English on the grounds that the Dutch had been supporting the American colonies, even though the Dutch and the English had been allies since 1748.[20] The superior English navy seriously damaged Dutch maritime trade.[21] The already weak and inefficient Dutch shipping, on which the VOC – its trade, control and administration – was dependent, took a further blow.[22] Not only were there serious economic consequences of

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[16] Steur, *Herstel of* Ondergang, 47-48.

[17] A second wave of reforms was suggested in the 1770s when Cornelis van der Oudermeulen, an Amsterdam merchant and member of Amsterdam Chamber of the VOC, suggested improvements by attempting to eliminate inefficient shipping in Asia, and also looked into the book-keeping of the Company in the Netherlands, as well as in Asia. He wrote two memories between 1770 and 1780. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 37, 71-101.

[18] Later this enmity was continued during the War of American Independence (1775-1783). Although Britain and the Dutch Republic had fought wars in the previous century and there was always competition between them, because of their trade with and in Asia, in the eighteenth century, in Europe they remained mostly allies, mainly for security reasons there, that is, fear of Britain and the Dutch Republic that France would become too powerful in Europe. N. C. F. van Sas, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot: Nederland, Engeland en Europa, 1813-1831* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), 26.

[19] Frank McLynn, *1759: the Year Britain Became Master of the World* (London: Pimlico, Reprint 2005), 190.

[20] The real cause was that England feared that the Netherlands might join the League of Armed Neutrality (Russia), which would infringe its maritime rights. Van Sas, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot*, 29-30.

[21] Rietbergen, *A short history of the Netherlands*, 111.

[22] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1096-1097. For more on the decline of the VOC, see Ingrid Gracia Dillo, *De nadagen van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 1783-1795: *Schepen en zeevarenden* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1992).

this in Europe, the Dutch also suffered heavily in their establishments in Asia. While they languished, Britain became a great power.[23] In Britain, it was taken for granted that the loss of Britain's possessions in North America would be compensated for by hegemony of India.[24]

The Scenario in India

The common discourse about the subcontinent during the 1750s had been one of disintegration and chaos, following the decline of the Mughal authorities in the north. This has been countered by research on the rise of regional powers like the Marathas and Mysore. The regional powers naturally wished to benefit from their alliances with the European powers – be they English, French or Dutch – as much as the foreign Companies exploited the centrifugal tendencies among the regional powers in order to expand their influence and tighten their grip over the resources of India.

In India, apart from Malabar, the Dutch company had establishments in Bengal, Coromandel and at Surat. All of these were competing with the other European Companies in their respective regions.[25] Comparing the European companies shows that the EIC in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, organised as presidencies, were growing at a faster pace, both in terms of number of establishments, volume of trade and military strength, than the French or the Dutch companies. Britain's successes in India had been impressive.[26] By the 1750s, English country traders and the EIC itself had such a prominent place that they were increasingly replacing the Dutch company. On the west coast of India the Bombay Marine ruled the Arabian Sea.[27] For one, the EIC had the backing of the English government and secondly, it offered much wider variety of goods than the Dutch. Therefore, the only cause of worry for the English in India was French power and not the Dutch.

In 1742 Joseph François Dupleix had arrived in Pondicherry as governor. He was ambitious, and had a dislike for the English. His successes in India depended on ships and troops from Ill

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[23] Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe*, 273,

[24] McLynn, *1759 the Year Britain Became Master of the World*, 165.

[25] The VOC establishments on the Coromandel Coast in the mid-eighteenth century consisted of numerous offices including Masulipattinam, Pulicat, Nagappattinam, Sadras and Bimlipatam. Here the company bought textiles and sold spices and copper. In Bengal, the Dutch Company had establishments – among others – in Hugli (Chinsura) and Cassimbazaar; in Orissa, Pipli and Balasore; and places in Bihar including Patna and Chapra. In Bengal and Bihar, the VOC bought saltpetre, textiles, silk and opium. They mostly sold spices and Japanese copper. In western India, besides Surat, the VOC had numerous establishments, among which are Bharuch, Baroda (Vadodara), Cambay and Ahmedabad where it bought textiles and indigo and sold spices, tin and Japanese copper.

[26] C. A. Bayly (ed.), *The Raj: India and the British 1600-1947* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1990), 19.

[27] The EIC's shipping was divided into war ships (navy), called the Bombay Marine and mercantile ships. The Bombay marine was powerful in Asia and challenged all other merchant and navy ships, an example of which is the 1734 English blockades of Surat. Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and Decline of Surat 1700-1750* in *India and The Indian Ocean World: Trade and Politics* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2004) 297. The English take-over of Surat in 1759, called the "Castle Revolution", is further evidence of the strengthened position of the EIC on the west coast of India. For more on the English country trade, see Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 270.

de France (Mauritius), if not France. In 1746, EIC's Fort St. George at Madras was plundered by the French and the English had to take refuge at Fort St. David, south of Pondicherry. This was a repercussion of the War of Austrian Succession in Europe. If Dupleix had shown French power in India and challenged the English, Robert Clive (1725-1774) was determined to annihilate the French from the continent. He had landed in Madras in June 1744 and witnessed the French taking over Fort St. George. Pondicherry and Madras fought out their differences by winning over indigenous sovereigns to their sides, in what seemed like a mutual help-and-profit-making situation among the Europeans and the Indians. Between 1746 and 1760s three Carnatic Wars were fought in which the French and the English were on opposite sides, again an offshoot of their wars in Europe.

In 1756, Robert Clive arrived in Bengal where he continued to win many laurels for himself and the English company.[28] With their victory in the 1757 battle of Plassey, the EIC established a stronghold in Bengal and the resources generated from this enabled it to steadily bring more and more territories under its control, an ability that the other European companies lacked. This victory strongly shaped the early years of British rule and expansion in India.[29] In 1759, Clive forbade the VOC from getting troops to Bengal from Batavia, thereby establishing the EIC's superiority in the region.[30] The English company assumed that the destruction of the French settlements in Bengal – in continuation of wars in the south – with the aim of removing a contender for trade in the region could be achieved.[31] By 1765, the British were in control of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This became the 'British Bridgehead' from where the EIC expanded its influence over the rest of the subcontinent.[32]

In the south, after losses and gains on the sides of both the British and the French, and a spectacular change of fortune in 1760, when the English under Sir Eyre Coote won the decisive battle of Wandiwash – the Plassey of the south – the English occupied Pondicherry and French presence in India was more or less wiped out. By this time, the EIC had gathered a huge army that mainly consisted of Indian manpower, and a relatively strong navy. The presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had grown into commercial and administrative nuclei and were homes to traders and mercenaries alike.[33] The EIC then embarked upon a new war: this time against Haidar Ali (1722-1782) of Mysore, a growing threat to the English due to his alliances

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[28] Percival Spear, *Master of Bengal, Clive and his India* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 37 and J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead, Eastern India 1740-1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 77.

[29] In central and southern India, the declining power of the Mughals was further contended by the Marathas. By 1740s, the Marathas had more or less complete control over central India and had shaken up the Mughal armies even as far as Surat and Bengal. See Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 70-71.

[30] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 82. Hugo s'Jacob, 'Bedara Revisited: A Reappraisal of the Dutch Expedition of 1759 to Bengal' in Jos Gommans and Om Prakash (eds.), *Circumambulations in South Asian History: Essays in Honour of Dirk H. A. Kolff* (Leiden: Brill 2003), 117-131.

[31] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 79.

[32] Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 86.

[33] T. A. Heathcote, *The Military in British India: The Developments of British Land Forces in South Asia, 1600-1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 42.

with the French. The first Anglo-Mysore war was fought between 1766 and 1769, which Mysore lost.

In 1774, Warren Hastings (1732-1818) became the first Governor-General. From his seat in Calcutta he extended his authority over the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. He was a sever administrator and had plans for extending Britain's influence to every part of India. His new power and authority allowed him to mastermind Britain's conquest of India. He was aware that the EIC was on the brink of bankruptcy and that its servants were corrupt. Yet, success for Britain was beyond doubt, as it had naval superiority, strong parliamentary support and faster reforms, which were backed by the nation. This had become clear in the years between the 1740s and 1760s both in Madras and in Bengal, and later with the EIC's early success against Haidar Ali of Mysore. With this confidence Hastings could focus further on Mysore and extend EIC's influence in the south.

All this news reached the people of Fort Cochin and brought the Dutch officials there (and in Batavia) on tenterhooks. Developments in Mysore had a greater impact on Malabar than any other region discussed earlier. By this time, the people of Fort Cochin had already experienced Haidar Ali's power during his Malabar expedition of 1766 and they were aware of the close English presence near Fort Cochin: in the north at Tellicherry and in the south at Anjengo. Haidar Ali had also turned rather bitter against the English as they had refused to take his side earlier when Mysore was fighting the Marathas. But what must have scared the wits out of the people of Fort Cochin must have been the second Anglo-Mysore war between 1780 and 1784. Bitter battles were fought between Haidar Ali and the EIC, territories were lost and won on both sides, but ultimately no clear winner emerged, as French promises of support were not kept.

As far as the Dutch were concerned, their overall plight in India had worsened too. Dutch company officials in the Netherlands and Batavia were aware of the growing British power in India. Firstly, during the Anglo-French wars of 1740-1748 and 1756-1763, the VOC trade in Coromandel had dwindled. Secondly, at the time of the Anglo-Dutch War of 1780-1784, most of the Dutch establishments there rapidly surrendered to the English. Other VOC establishments in Bengal and Surat were also takenover by them.[34] For the people of Fort Cochin news of Dutch establishments elsewhere in India being taken over by the English, must have caused anxious moments. As the EIC had establishments and commercial interests on the Malabar Coast as well, this rapid expansion of the English was threatening to them. Also, because of the war in Europe, VOC communication and shipping between the Netherlands and Batavia came temporarily to a hault as the waters off the Netherlands were completely controlled by the English. This meant that Batavia had few instruction and little information to send to the Malabar Command.

[34] Fort Gustavus at Chinsura was captured by the English in 1781 and restored by Treaty of Versailles (Paris) in 1783.

The people of Cochin heard about developments in India from other European nations, as well as from indigenous rulers with whom they had frequent contacts.[35] Having two warring factions, the French and the English, so close to their fort undoubtedly made them anxious. During the Anglo-French wars, all French territories, including Mahé – in 1761 – on the Malabar Coast were taken by the EIC. With the Anglo-Dutch war, a similar fate had affected the lives of the VOC officials in Bengal and Coromandel. For Dutch and French company servants, a regular practice in times like these was to seek to go to Tranquebar, a Danish settlement on the Coromandel Coast which always remained neutral. The VOC's failure in Bengal and the EIC's success on the Coromandel Coast, together with the rising power of Mysore must have made the inhabitants wonder about the future of Fort Cochin. How much the news would have affected the people of Fort Cochin is difficult to ascertain, yet it must have made them doubt their own security within the fort's walls.

The Malabar Coast

The upkeep of the Malabar Command was indispensable to the Dutch for military as well as economic reasons. The location of Cochin was strategic for the VOC as it defended Ceylon, now not only from the Portuguese at Goa but also from the English at Bombay and Madras. Furthermore, the pepper from Malabar would ensure that the Dutch could control the prices of pepper in Europe and on emerging markets in India and elsewhere in Asia. In the early 1740s, when the Malabar Command could not buy sufficient pepper due to war with Travancore, other offices like Banten and Palembang tried to meet the demand. Yet the fact remained that VOC could not control the 'smuggling' of pepper in Malabar. The Malabar Command constantly ran at a loss yet it had to be maintained for the protection of Ceylon.

Prior to the English and Mysore, Martanda Varma of Travancore had been a cause of worry for the Dutch in Cochin. Since the 1730s, Martanda Varma's increasing control of the pepper trade, his expanding territorial might, the establishment of a new government machinery, and the VOC's inability to control him, not only harmed the company's image on the coast, it also meant that the company had a new competitor in the pepper trade. The High Government had refused to ratify the 1743 peace Treaty of Mavelikara with Travancore. It was of the opinion that the peace was favourable only for Travancore and that it had even been dishonourable for the company. According to the treaty, Desinganadu had been left in the lurch, to tackle mighty Travancore all by itself. Travancore had obtained control over the fort at Quilon and neither Desinganadu nor Tekkumkur were a buffer zone against Travancore anymore. It was feared that the kingdom of Cochin – the oldest ally of the VOC on the coast – would be lost to Travancore as well. Fearing the worst, it was ordered that the small principalities of Nedumangadu and

[35] Heyligers, *Press List*, *passim*. The Dutch archives of the Malabar Command include numerous letters from the Portuguese in Goa, the English in Calicut, Bombay, Madras, Bengal etc. and many *olas* (palm leaf letters) from the indigenous sovereigns.

Karunagapalli must be defended by the Dutch.[36] Between 1743 and until the death of Martanda Varma in 1758, Travancore continued to increase its influence – militarily and politically – over the local chiefs of Purakkad, Tekkumkur and Vadakkumkur.[37] At this time the Cochin and the Kolathiri Raja remained steady friends of the Dutch company while the Ali Raja of Cannanur now and then caused trouble to the company's resident there.[38]

In the opinion of Batavia, the more powerful Travancore would become, the less Martanda Varma would act according to the wishes of the VOC. Since Batavia was, as said, not content with the 1743 peace treaty with Travancore, it was of the opinion that as war had been resumed, now the VOC should now try to get a more favourable treaty. The previous one had been written off as concluded too hastily.[39] Therefore, Batavia reasoned that it would be in the best interest of the VOC if Cochin, Tekkumkur and Desinganadu cooperated with the company against Travancore. Threatening Travancore by forming an alliance against it seemed like a good way of making the company look stronger in the region. But then Commander Corijn Stevens, who had spent sixteen years in Malabar serving the VOC and was well-informed of the local politics, found himself in an uneasy situation. If he led the company into a war against Martanda Varma, it would increase expenses and the security of the fort would be threatened; if he did not, the company would lose pepper and the servants in Malabar earn the displeasure of Batavia. Batavia was likewise not in favour of war either. It just wanted a more favourable treaty![40]

In 1753 the VOC concluded a second Treaty of Mavelikara with Martanda Varma.[41] This was achieved under the aegis of Commander Frederik Cunes, who was new to the coast but had gained enough experience in Java and Ceylon. He alsohad clear instructions from Batavia as to what had to be achieved.[42] Commercially, this treaty was a positive step for the VOC, but the Dutch were now also forced to recognise all conquests of Martanda Varma and they were to remain neutral in future battles among the indigenous rulers. Because of this the raja of Cochin felt that he had been betrayed by the Dutch and left to the mercy of Martanda Varma.[43] For the second time, the VOC had forfeited its position as a dominant power on the Malabar Coast. It was now one among many indigenous and foreign *dramatis personae*, vying for a position to further its economic ambitions.

However, with the matter of Travancore settled, the problems of the VOC on the coast were not yet over. In the meantime, north of Fort Cochin the VOC had fought battles with the

[36] CDNI V, 346-353. GM XI (1743-1750), 293: dated 31-12-1745.
[37] M. de Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 119-147.
[38] GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 308-314: dated 15-10-1758.
[39] GM XI (1743-1750), 12 and 82: dated respectively 15-10-1743 and 31-12-1743.
[40] GM XI (1743-1750), 294: dated 31-12-1745.
[41] CDNI VI, 3-8. Malabar dated 15th August 1753.
[42] Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 192-193.
[43] M. O. Koshy, *The Dutch Power in Kerala, 1729-1758* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1989), 102-108. De Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 134-136.

Zamorin of Calicut, who had been unfriendly for some time.[44] Commander Cunes was very critical of the intentions of the Zamorin and had strengthened Chettuvay with European military personnel. But in 1756 the Zamorin retook it.[45] It was only restored to the Dutch with the 1758 treaty.[46] This treaty was signed by Casparus de Jong, commander between 1757 and 1761. The Zamorin promised to return Pappinivattam and restore Ponnani – places he had captured and brought under his control – to the company. He was also to return deserters and cannons. He also agreed that he would not hinder the company's efforts to collect pepper in the areas that lay south of Chettuvay.[47]

In 1761, Godefridus Weyerman, the chief administrator of Cannanur, became the commander of Malabar. Having served for more than twenty years – his entire career – on the coast, he was well versed with the economics and politics of the region. His term in office was peaceful and eventless, probably owing to the fact that he had built his career on the coast and had good personal contacts with numerous merchants in the region, who often advised the sovereigns. In 1764, Weyerman was replaced by Cornelis Breekpot.[48]

Breekpot's career had been different from that of Weyerman. This was Breekpot's first term on the subcontinent. He wanted to repatriate to the Netherlands and the commandership of Malabar was to be his last assignment – to please Batavia – before he could return home with his collected riches. He arrived in Cochin in 1764 and spent most of his tenure informing Batavia about the ground realities in Cochin.[49]

After the Zamorin had been subdued, further up the coast and more into the hinterland, trouble was brewing due to the rise of Mysore under Haidar Ali. Mysore produced pepper as well as sandalwood; both commodities were much sought after by the VOC. If Haidar Ali was to increase his influence in Malabar – and he had every intention of doing so – the VOC commanders in Cochin wanted to be sure that they would get the desired amounts of pepper from him. At the same time, Batavia strongly recommended not to get involved in local politics. While Commander Breekpot felt that treaties of mutual friendship and co-operation with Haidar Ali should be concluded as soon as possible in order to compete with the French proposals of friendship and collaboration towards him and to counter English country traders, who operated in the region to collect pepper, Batavia wanted to wait and watch the situation .[50]

Fearing that the fort at Chettuvay would be takenover again – this time by Haidar Ali, who had already managed to gain sovereignty over northern Malabar – Batavia ordered that Chettuvay

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[44] MvO Frederic Cunes, 11: dated 1756.
[45] Batavia also informed the Gentlemen XVII about the precarious situation of the Company in connection with the Zamorin. GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 308-314: dated 15-10-1758.
[46] CDNI VI, 155-157. 1758 treaty with Zamorin, dated 24th February 1758, based on the treaty of 1717, which also remained valid. GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 308-314: dated 15-10-1758.
[47] GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 308-314: dated 15-10-1758.
[48] Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 194-195.
[49] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 4; dated 1768.
[50] J. van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore, 1762-1790* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), 22-87, and specially 84.

must be demolished completely and that cannons and ammunition from there be brought down to Cochin. But Breekpot thought otherwise. He was aware of the power of Haidar Ali and believed that it would be financially imprudent to infuriate the Nawab.[51] During the years 1765 and 1766, Haidar Ali's troops entered Malabar and captured Calicut.[52] As a consequence, the first Anglo-Mysore war (1766-1769) broke out as the English at Bombay were agitated by Haidar Ali's expansion into Malabar.

In 1768, Breekpot's term in Malabar came to an end and he was replaced by Christiaan Lodewijk Senff, who arrived in Cochin from Surat. Having served in Surat for seven years, Senff was more aware than Breekpot of developments in India, specially as they concerned the growing power of the EIC. His administration of Malabar will be analysed in the next section. Senff was replaced by Adriaan Moens in 1770. He had decades of experience in Batavia and Colombo and spent the next ten years in Malabar, thereby bringing some stability into the administration of the Dutch in Cochin.[53] The VOC had sent two embassies to Haidar Ali, one in 1766 and the other in 1775. Although by the time of the second embassy, Haidar Ali had fought a battle with the English, the VOC's position with Mysore deteriorated rather than improved.[54]

In hindsight, it can be said that if the VOC at Cochin had supported Haidar Ali in his campaigns against the EIC, as Breekpot wanted to do, they would have won a strong ally in the region, and even gained economically. But at the same time, they would have also earned the enmity of the EIC. Had it not been for Mysore which kept the English occupied during the second Anglo-Mysore war (1780-1784) – congruous to which the Anglo-Dutch war that was being fought in Europe and elsewhere in India – the EIC would definitely have attempted to capture Fort Cochin during its war with Mysore on the grounds that the VOC was an ally of Mysore and that the Dutch and the English were at war anyway. But since the VOC was not a Mysore ally, the EIC preferred to focus on Mysore first. And therefore the Dutch flag fluttered undisturbed within Fort Cochin during the crucial years of 1780 and 1784 when all other Dutch establishments in India were takenover by the English. The year 1784 was thus a watershed for the Dutch in Cochin, as it redefined the power positions between the EIC and the VOC in India. These developments must have influenced the lives of the people of Fort Cochin and made them realise how close they had come to their fort being captured by the EIC.

2.2 A Dance for the Bride

In order to assess the company's presence on the coast from an economic point of view, let us analyse the VOC's trade in pepper, described by a former commander of Cochin as "the bride

[51] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 2-3 and 7: dated 1768.
[52] N. Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power in Malabar 1665 to 1799* (Allahabad: Chug, 1979), 159-163.
[53] Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 195- 198.
[54] Van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore*, 86-87.

around which every one dances".[55] An economic assessment of the Malabar Command from 1750 to 1784 will help us to understand the people of Fort Cochin and their changing fortunes. A discussion on the profitability of this command and Batavia's policy towards it will further help us determine the outlook of the inhabitants of Fort Cochin both towards Batavia and towards their own fort. This analysis will bring into focus the opinion of the Gentlemen XVII, the High Government in Batavia and the servants of the company in Fort Cochin regarding the Malabar Command.

As is already apparent, there were many players on the Malabar Coast, all of whom intended to benefit from the pepper of Malabar. Malabar was rich in this black gold. Pepper was grown in the gardens on the foothills of the Western Ghats, thirty to forty kilometres from the coast.[56] This region is home to the black variety of pepper called *piper nigrum.* In October or November – just before the arrival of the northeastern monsoons – ripe and green pepper berries are plucked in bunches from the plants. They are then removed from the stem and spread on the ground under the tropical sun so that the cornels can lose moisture, shrivel and dry out. This gives the granules their black colour.[57] The best pepper, both in terms of quality and quantity, grew around Cochin and to the south, around Quilon. Pepper also grew north of Cochin all the way up to Chettuvay. Further north, both the quality and the quantity of pepper decreased.[58] From the plantations in the hinterland pepper was then transported to the coast via the numerous rivers and backwaters, which may be called 'pepper highways'.

Since pepper is a seasonal product, the VOC servants on the Malabar Coast were busy with pepper only for a few months of the year. Before the time of harvest, they would make contracts with the local merchants to buy pepper on the company's behalf. Some of these local merchants who regularly entered into contracts with the VOC, not just to procure pepper but also to buy from it the products it wanted to sell on the coast, were referred to as the 'company's merchants'. Boganta Chetti, Upendra Chetti, Ezechiel Rahabi and Meyer Rahabi were some of the company's merchants in the second half of the eighteenth century. The company had to give out advances in cash to these merchants, who lived around the VOC forts and fortresses. Keeping in mind a fixed profit, the purchase prices for pepper were determined by the High Government. The

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[55] Jacob Hustaert wrote to his successor in 1664, "Considering that the pepper trade is the bride around which everyone dances, we recommend Your Honours to bend your best efforts to bring great quantities of Malabar pepper into the Company hands every year…while at the same time preventing the indigenes from transporting it secretly elsewhere by sea or by land". H. K. s'Jacob, 'De VOC en de Malabarkust in de 17eeuw', in M. A. Meilink- Roelofsz (ed.), *De VOC in Azië* (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1976), 85.

[56] Majority of the pepper came from the region which is presently the Wayanad and Idukki region. The former is north of Fort Cochin and the later south of Fort Cochin.

[57] Pepper also has the unique quality of 'losing weight with time'. As pepper gets drier and drier they shrink and lose weight thereby always leading to weight and accounting difficulties. The VOC in the Netherlands habitually re-weighed pepper after its arrival from Asia to ascertain the loss through shrinkage and spilling. Kristof Glamann calculated the shrinkage to be about fifteen percent. Kristof Glamann, *Dutch Asiatic Trade*, 73-90 and Appendix E, Pepper Quantities and Prices, 295.

[58] NA The Hague, HRB 732, fo. 22. Secret memorandum about the Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1757-9.

VOC employees on the coast had little say in it, except to offer the fix price to the company's merchants and hope that competitors would not outbid them. These merchants would get in touch with the middlemen who went to the hinterland to collect the pepper from the farmers.

In Malabar, the VOC had monopsony rights for pepper. Treaties – controlling the pepper trade, albeit on paper, for "time immemorial" – had been entered into by the VOC and the rajas of Cochin and numerous local rulers with a promise that all the pepper would be delivered to the company. By virtue of these treaties, the king and the smaller chiefs were bound to sell all the pepper produced in their territories to the company at prices offered by the company.[59] The ruling houses themselves were not involved in the growing, collecting and selling of pepper. This they left to the farmers and traders whom they taxed. Therefore, the local rulers never thought that they were guilty of not fulfilling their promises. To ensure that the VOC received all the pepper, the company was allowed to police the waterways to prevent traders from selling the pepper to non-VOC traders. The High Government at Batavia, as well as the Gentlemen XVII, ordered the VOC officials on the coast always to enter into pepper contracts with the local merchants, so that all the pepper that was harvested in the region would end up in the VOC warehouses.[60]

After pepper arrived in the warehouses of the company on the coast, company servants transferred it to the big warehouse in Fort Cochin. Subsequently, all the company officials at Cochin had to do was to wait for the ships to arrive – from Batavia or Ceylon – so that the pepper could be transported out of Malabar.[61] Since ships arrived twice a year at Cochin to collect the pepper to be sent to Batavia, the VOC servants would be very busy during these periods; for the rest of the year they had little to do with pepper.

The slack season when pepper had been shipped out of Malabar, was the time when the company servants at Fort Cochin would have limited mercantile work to do. This was the time when their energy was invested in repairing the fortifications, warehouses and other buildings in the fort, choosing members for different committees, etc. Thus, pepper – more or less – influenced the rhythm of life in Fort Cochin. The company in Malabar, as we have seen in the previous section, was also so deeply entrenched in local politics of Malabar that meeting various kings and chiefs, and writing letters to them about political relations, pepper contracts, loans and favours kept the administrators, writers and translators busy in their offices.

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[59] Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 13.

[60] It is difficult to ascertain how much pepper was totally produced in the Malabar region and how much was exported out of Malabar by the numerous Asian and European traders in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is equally complicated (although possible) to calculate how pepper flowed in different directions within Asia, as well and how much of Malabar pepper was sold in the markets of Europe. For an overview of VOC's pepper imports see J. R. Bruijn, F. S. Gaastra, I. Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Vol. I, 192.

[61] Because of the seasonal nature of the product and the shipping pattern, pepper was mostly sold in Europe the following year in the Company's spring sales between April and May.

VOC and Pepper from Malabar

The aim of the VOC in Malabar was to maximise pepper procurement so that it could maintain a monopoly on pepper. [62] In this section, the VOC's pepper collection on the coast between 1750 and 1784 is discussed. The differences of opinion between the men on the spot in Cochin and the High Government in Batavia over pepper from Malabar will be analysed.

Even though the VOC's power was compromised after the 1741 battle of Colachel with Martanda Varma of Travancore, the company still regarded pepper as the main reason for the continuation of the establishment. The VOC wanted to be the only buyer of the pepper that Malabar produced. Malabar was not the only pepper provider of the VOC. In the eighteenth century, most of the pepper came from Banten. Palembang also provided a lot of pepper, thereby making Malabar the third largest pepper providing area of the VOC.[63] But possession of pepper from Malabar was necessary to control the overall pepper monopoly. The aim was to control the selling prices of pepper in Europe.[64]

As we have seen earlier, the Dutch in Malabar tried to control the waterways by means of forts and guard-posts. Since the local sovereigns earned income by levying taxes on pepper, from the middlemen and the traders, the sovereigns had no interest in safeguarding the VOC's monopsony rights on pepper. The company could not force the local rulers to cooperate with it in stopping the 'illegal' trade. Without implementation of the monopsony at Malabar, there could be no monopoly over pepper in Asia.

Since the Dutch presence was limited to the coast, the servants of the company were totally dependent for the collection of pepper on the sovereigns with whom they had signed treaties, and on the local trading communities, like the Jews, Chetties and Baniyas, who acted as middlemen. These local merchants were not bound to follow the treaties entered into by their sovereigns and the VOC. The middlemen only fulfilled the seasonal contracts that they signed individually with the company: to deliver fixed amounts of pepper at pre-fixed prices. They only facilitated the transfer of pepper from the hinterland to the VOC warehouses and had no moral obligation to transfer all the pepper to the VOC. Naturally, these merchants were led by profit incentives and they did not care where the pepper came from or who they sold it to. The indigenous traders continued to do brisk business in all commodities including pepper, with little fear of the VOC.[65] Although the VOC had declared a monopsony over the procurement and a monopoly over the trade of pepper and set up fortresses and warehouses in Malabar to control the waterways, it had but little control over the pepper from Malabar.

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[62] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 34. For pepper trade in the seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century see Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade*, 73-90 and Appendix E, Pepper Quantities and Prices 294-300.

[63] Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 51-52.

[64] NA The Hague, HRB 735, fo. 330. Memorandum of Schreuder to the GG&C, 1763. Jan Schreuder, on the orders of Van der Parra, wrote a report on the trade of the VOC on the Malabar Coast.

[65] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 203-204.

For the company to pay for its establishments on the coast, it had to generate a gross profit of one hundred percent. Smaller merchants dealing in pepper were satisfied with a profit margin of twenty-five percent. The VOC could not offer higher prices for pepper than it did. As demands for pepper were high, the price of pepper in Malabar rose steadily. The EIC was willing to pay these prices.[66] Considering the cost of maintaining the VOC establishments on the coast, the VOC could not compete with the prices offered by the EIC. Neither did it have the financial means to increase the purchasing price of pepper in order to compete with them. It also did not have the financial means to position more armed guards in the hinterland or anywhere else in the territory, to prohibit other traders from buying pepper. The local merchants, attracted by the higher prices offered by the English at Tellicherry and Anjengo, by the French at Mahé and by the visiting Portuguese and Danish merchants, besides a range of itinerant indigenous merchants, preferred to sell their pepper to these buyers rather than to the Dutch company.[67] Thus, pepper often reached non-VOC buyers.

As we know by now, the company was involved in wars with the local chiefs in Malabar, first with the Zamorin, then Travancore. Only the raja of Cochin remained an ally. The Gentlemen XVII did not hold the raja of Cochin in high regard. According to them, he was unwilling to control the 'smuggling' in pepper and did little to help the company.[68] In short, the military and political clout of the VOC on the coast was declining and not being able to keep peace with the local chiefs, meant that the company was in dire straights in Malabar.

After the 1743 Treaty of Mavelikara with Travancore, Batavia, decided in order to salvage the pepper trade, that the former commander, now the governor of Ceylon, Julius Valentijn Stein van Gollenesse, should meet Martanda Varma somewhere to discuss a new treaty regarding pepper. For this purpose, the English were to be taken into confidence, so that they would not oppose this move and support Travancore instead.[69] The growth of the port of Alleppey helped Travancore further its pepper monopoly.[70] The indigenous merchnats from the north with their bombaras preferred to anchor here, rather than at Cochin where the VOC forbade the trading of pepper.[71] At Alleppey they could get pepper. The rise of this port was a threat to the VOC controlled port of Cochin. This further threatened the VOC's interest in Malabar.

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[66] GM XI (1743-1750), 295: dated 31-12-1745. The price fixed between the VOC and the Cochin Raja was fl. 18 or 19 ½ for 100 lbs.

[67] Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 13.

[68] GM XI (1743-1750), 630-631: dated 31-10-1748.

[69] GM XI (1743-1750), 295: dated 31-12-1745.

[70] Travancore had emerged as a strong contender to the post of the local "pepper master" in Malabar: a position actually nobody could hold single-handedly. But as Travancore, in the second half of the eighteenth century, was emerging as a strong and powerful state – both financially and militarily – it had become the master of the pepper trade in the regions under its control. Through the profits from the sale of pepper, Martanda Varma could sustain a huge army and expand his frontiers. Travancore government contract replaced the merchant contracts leading to Travancore's state monopoly over all pepper produced south of Cochin. Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 39.

[71] Owing to the decline of the Safavid Empire, Calicut and Malabar had witnessed a rise in coastal trade in the 1720s. In the 1730s, increasing numbers of bombaras from the north started to visit the ports of

In order to continue collecting more and more pepper, Batavia further suggested to Malabar to unofficially increase the pepper price in order to buy out competitors.[72] In 1746 Travancore offered to sell pepper to the VOC at the same price as it did to the English, but the VOC declined stating that firstly the VOC was in communication with the EIC about trade in pepper on the Malabar Coast and secondly that the Dutch company had a monopoly treaty with some of the rulers.[73] Yet, Batavia was aware of the fact that the English without any monopoly, just by being present in Malabar and offering better prices, got much more pepper than the Dutch company with all its treaties, monopoly and special positions.[74]

Batavia was so desperate for pepper that it even asked the Malabar Command to propose to the English that they should share the pepper produce from Malabar equally. Purchase prices were proposed for regions north of Cochin and those to the south of Cochin.[75] Batavia further realised that since Malabar rulers did not honour the treaties regarding the pepper monopsony rights of the company, the European competitors could easily infringe upon the VOC's privileges on the coast. Governor-General Van Imhoff suggested that next to political means, mercantile methods ought to have been used. This, in his view, was the shortcoming of the VOC in Malabar.[76] Thus, there was a realisation that the treaties and contacts alone did not work and that the VOC needed to increase its purchasing capacity on the coast.

Thus, while company servants at Malabar constantly wrote to Batavia about the threat posed by the expanding English and the high competition in procuring pepper because of the presence of the English, Batavia in turn expected the VOC servants in Malabar to be able to join hands with them in sharing profits from the Malabar pepper. It thereby showed that it was willing to compromise on its aim of maintaining its pepper monopoly. Batavia was also ready to forfeit its monopsony rights over Malabar pepper.

In 1749, the High Government reported to the Gentlemen XVII that there were not enough ships to be sent to Malabar, which was unfortunate, as the company servants at Malabar had

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Malabar, especially Cochin. They were attracted by pepper, sugar and other commodities that the Dutch and other merchants were willing to sell. Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 30. Els Jacobs states that the character of VOC presence on the coast in the second half of the eighteenth century had changed due to the simultaneous developments of the arrival of boats from the north (bombaras) and state monopoly of pepper by Travancore. Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 63. Bombaras are a type of vessel that sailed in the Arabian seas, mostly along the west coast of India. Most bombaras arrived in Cochin from the north, Surat and Konkan coast to collect a variety of products that they could re-sell at other ports. Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade,* 27.

[72] GM XI (1743-1750), 814: dated 31-12-1749.

[73] The High Government at this time had asked the servants at Malabar to buy pepper at fl. 16 2/5 for 100 lbs. of pepper. However Travancore and other merchants who were willing to sell to the Company could be offered up to fl. 18 or 18 4/5 for 100 lbs. of pepper. GM XI (1743-1750), 443: dated 31-12-1746.

[74] GM XI (1743-1750), 630-631: dated 31-10-1748.

[75] For places north of Cochin, fl. 90 per 500 lbs. of pepper could be offered and fl. 81 for places south of Cochin. Batavia's aim was to get two million pounds of pepper from Malabar every year, so that Malabar would not run in deficits anymore. GM XI (1743-1750), 295: dated 31-12-1745.

[76] GM XI (1743-1750), 293: dated 31-12-1745.

reported that trade had improved but cash was lacking.[77] Politically, the company was on good terms with the raja of Cochin and there was peace with Martanda Varma of Travancore as well.[78]

Batavia was of the opinion that two factors added to the problems of the VOC in Malabar. Firstly, the lack of trust in Commander Reinier Siersma, who had come to power in 1743 after the commandership of Van Gollenesse, and secondly, the lack of cash and the dependence of the company on Ezechiel Rahabi.[79] Batavia rated the administration of Siersma's successor, Corijn Stevens, as being a much better administration than of Siersma.[80] Thus, instead of solving the problem of the growing English competition by increasing the patrolling of the waterways, increasing the purchasing power of the servants on the spot, and providing Malabar with more cash, the High Government blamed individual commanders and held them responsible for the poor collection of pepper.

In 1756, Frederic Cunes stated that the only policy that the Dutch in Malabar should follow, if they wished to continue their establishments, would be to force Travancore to deliver the fixed amounts of pepper it had promised in exchange of arms. And secondly, not to get involved in the politics of other chiefs. He reiterated the complaint that, because of the French and English competition, it was proving difficult for the VOC to impose the pepper contracts and the company was forced to pay more for the pepper.[81]

Since both Dutch and English companies bought pepper for millions of pounds from the different regions in Asia, pepper reached a surplus in the European market in the eighteenth century. The Gentlemen XVII then tried to push the High Government at Batavia to sell the pepper in different establishments of the VOC in Asia. In the period 1750-1784 this became a huge success in the markets of Coromandel, Bengal and Canton. Pepper sold at these places by the VOC, replaced gold and silver as the medium of exchange: pepper became the black gold. At Batavia itself, Chinese merchants were willing to buy pepper in huge quantities for the Chinese markets.[82]

For this reason, Batavia constantly complained to Cochin about the lack of pepper coming from Malabar. For one, the amounts purchased in Malabar were not sufficient for the return ships to Europe. Secondly, there was an increasing demand in China, which the company at Batavia was unable to fulfil, even after receiving the pepper supplies from Banten and Palembang. The ports of Malabar were frequently visited by traders from Mocha, Surat and Persia, who anchored at Cochin with their bombaras. They too were eager buyers of pepper. But Batavia advised Malabar not to sell pepper to the other merchants visiting the roadstead of Cochin with

[77] GM XI (1743-1750), 759-760: dated 17-10-1749.
[78] GM XI (1743-1750), 813: dated 31-12-1749.
[79] GM XI (1743-1750), 702: dated 31-12-1748. Siersma held the office from 1743 to 1748.
[80] GM XI (1743-1750), 740: dated 30-04-1749. Stevens was commander between 1748 and 1750.
[81] MvO Frederik Cunes, 2-8: dated 1756.
[82] Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 57, 252.

their bombaras.[83] First and foremost the demands from Batavia for pepper should be met, which was also very important for filling up the return ships to The Netherlands.[84]

So, we see that the High Government at Batavia ignored the fact that by collecting pepper from Malabar and selling it there on the spot to the visiting traders from the north, the company could increase its profitability on the coast, and thereby increase resources to control the pepper in Malabar. Thus, the VOC was not functioning as an emporialist in Malabar. The High Government reasoned that the VOC in Malabar should only collect pepper and ship it to Batavia, from where it could be sent either to Europe or be sold in the Asian markets itself.

Below are some figures on amounts of pepper purchased by the VOC in Malabar between 1740 and 1787. From these, it becomes clear that the VOC in Malabar acquired considerably more pepper between 1745 and 1779 than in the years immediately preceding and following the period.[85]

Table 4: Average yearly amounts of pepper bought by the VOC in Malabar

Years	Average pepper in pounds	Years	Average pepper in pounds
1740-44	838,156	1765-69	1,315,727
1745-49	1,140,048	1770-74	1,272,213
1750-54	1,273,976	1775-79	1,352,311
1755-59	2,144,477	1780-84	891,992*
1760-64	1,461,516	1785-87	764,854**

Source: Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 259-260. Steur has calculated these figures from NA The Hague, Collection Nederburg 107.
* As data for 1781 is not available, it is an average of four years.
** No data are available after 1787.

According to the above table, the 1743 treaty with Travancore – about which Batavia had been very critical – had actually worked. As the figures show, during the time that the VOC joined hands with Martanda Varma, the pepper supplies were fairly good when compared to the time that the company was at war with Travancore. Yet Batavia was not satisfied and continued to complain about not having enough pepper from Malabar for the return ships to the Netherlands.[86]

The High Government realised that peace with Travancore on Martanda Varma's terms was necessary as the supply of pepper very much depended on the company's relations with him. Later, as we know, Commander Frederic Cunes (1751-1756) signed the 1753 treaty with Travancore on behalf of the VOC and was thus assured of fixed amounts of pepper. Through

[83] GM XI (1743-1750), 220: dated 20-10-1745.
[84] GM XI (1743-1750), 300: dated 31-12-1745.
[85] Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, Appendix II Index of amounts of pepper bought by the VOC in different offices in Asia averaged per year (1740-1749=100), 209-211. Also see Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 59 and Appendix Table 39, 252.
[86] During May 1757 and March 1758, 3,000,000 lbs. of pepper was bought in Malabar. This was 1, 057,849 lbs. more than 1756-1757, GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 308-314: dated 30-12-1758.

this treaty, the company was ensured a limited but regular supply of 1.5 million pounds of pepper annually from Travancore in return of arms and ammunition worth about fl. 15,000.[87]

North of Fort Cochin, the competitors for the pepper of Malabar were the family of the Ali raja of Cannanur, the Kolathiri Raja and the Zamorin. Between 1754 and 1758 the VOC tried to secure pepper through contracts with these rulers from their respective regions. In 1754, Godefridus Weyerman, then VOC's chief at Cannanur and a person with over two decades of experience in Malabar, entered into a treaty with the Kolathiri Raja, whereby the raja promised to supply the VOC fixed amounts of pepper.[88]

In February 1755, Weyerman succeeded in getting the Ali Raja to agree to supply up to 150,000 lbs. of pepper from his region.[89] Weyerman, with his local knowledge of politics and economics of Malabar had managed to get favourable treaties for the VOC regarding pepper, just as we saw earlier that his diplomacy with the local sovereigns had been beneficial to the VOC. In 1766 the Ali Raja had helped Haidar Ali by inviting him to attack Malabar and promised co-operation during Haidar Ali's further conquests in the region, thereby incurring the wrath of the English. In 1771 a niece of the raja married a prominent merchant of Calicut: an alliance of power and status, from which the Ali Raja hoped to benefit against the English. But as this proved to be hard to maintain, by the 1780s it became clear that Cannanur, by force, had to become the supplier of pepper to the EIC.[90] Weyerman had achieved successes for the VOC in terms of ensuring that the company received a regular supply of pepper. Yet, in the case of Cannanur, because of the weakening power of the VOC and the increasing power of Haidar Ali and the English, he could not ensure that Cannanur remained a VOC ally and therefore the VOC lost pepper from the Cannanur region.

In February 1758, on the persuasion of Commander De Jong, the Zamorin agreed to a treaty of friendship with the VOC. Concerning pepper supplies, he promised not to hinder the company's efforts to collect pepper in the regions south of Chettuvay.[91] Weyerman, as we know, later became the commander of Malabar. He had other plans for Malabar in order to increase the company's profitability on the coast. We will get to know about this later in the chapter.

After the 1780s, the VOC could gather less and less pepper from Malabar. They could not compete with the English, neither economically nor politically. The EIC had a stronger presence in Malabar in terms of political clout and pepper purchasing power. The EIC was geared to

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[87] CDNI Vol. VI, 3-19. Also see Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade,* 20-45.
[88] When it comes to pepper, this treaty is rather vague. The Kolathiri Raja agrees to supply two, three, four or five hundred candiles of pepper. Thus no fixed amount was agreed to, but probably the reasoning was that he was to supply as much as possible. CDNI Vol. VI, 24-27.
[89] CDNI Vol. VI, 27-29.
[90] Ruchira Banerjee, "A Wedding Feast or Political Arena? Commercial Rivalry between the Ali Rajas and the English Factory in Northern Malabar in the Eighteenth Century" in Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Lakshmi Subramanian (eds.), *Politics and Trade in the Indian Ocean World* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83-112.
[91] CDNI Vol. VI, 155-157.

increase its influence on the coast, for trade as well as for territory.[92] As far as the VOC was concerned, the dance for pepper was over. As stated, there is no way of ascertaining the amounts of pepper produced in Malabar, but it is clear that the VOC could not compete with the many lovers of the pepper bride of Malabar, particularly the EIC. The dream of a pepper monopoly never came true and despite many efforts non-VOC trade in pepper continued. The reasons for the VOC's failure to impose their monopoly in pepper ranged from geographical ones – the backwaters and *ghat* routes – and economic reasons, to factors concerning social milieu and the politics of the region.[93] Pepper was also smuggled to the Coromandel Coast via the *ghat* routes.[94] Batavia was well aware of all this, but it did little to solve the problems of the VOC on the coast. On the contrary, on many points, as we shall see later, Batavia's instructions were detrimental to the company's presence and future existence on the coast. In fact, the situation was further aggravated because of the policies of Batavia. In 1763, Schreuder reported that Batavia was aware at this time that the EIC collected four times more pepper in Malabar than the Dutch.[95] While the Malabar Command could have earned profits by selling pepper to the bombaras, Batavia prohibited this. Through diplomacy, Weyerman solved some problems but these were not permanent solutions. The company servants on the spot found themselves in a difficult situation, where the only sensible thing to do was to maintain themselves on the post as long and as cheaply as possible, and to continue buying as much pepper as possible.

Profitability of Malabar Command

Within the VOC network, at the High Government at Batavia and in the meetings of the Gentlemen XVII in the Netherlands, the Malabar Command almost always from 1661 to 1750 came across as a "loss-making" region of the company. Therefore, the instructions to the servants there were always about economising, cutting down expenses and increasing the quantity of pepper purchased. In this section, the discussions about the profitability of the Malabar Command have been brought forward to show how the accounting system of the VOC placed the Malabar Command in a poor light, thereby influencing Batavia's policy for the coast for the period 1750 – 1784.

For the VOC, income in Malabar was traditionally derived first and foremost from exports. Irrespective of its destination, pepper was by far the most important export product from

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[92] Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), 237-242.
[93] J. V. S. van Gollenesse was commander between 1735 and 1743. Writing in 1743 he described this best in his memoir. See MvO Van Gollenesse, 71-73: dated 1743.
[94] For pepper trade through the *ghat* route and reasons for failed Dutch pepper trade in Malabar see, Markus Vink, 'The Dutch East India Company and the Pepper Trade between Kerala and Tamilnadu, 1663-1795: A Geo-historical Analysis', in K. S. Mathew (ed.) *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: studies in maritime history* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1995).
[95] NA The Hague, HRB 735, fo. 336, Memorandum Schreuder, 1763.

Malabar. Yet, however hard they tried, the VOC could rarely pay for the upkeep of this command from the local profits alone.[96] This conclusion has been drawn from the original bookkeeping of the VOC, although the accounting system of the company was rather complicated, which actually led to confusions.[97] The main problem was the rather simplified and localised system of accounting within the VOC whereby the High Government in Batavia followed a system of book-keeping in which was made up an annual statement of accounts for each settlement separately.

The consequence of this system of bookkeeping was that the income and expenses of Malabar were calculated locally. The account books of Malabar only included income from sales of commodities, from landed property, tolls and leases, etc., that is, all income received, against all payments for purchases of commodity, expenses in maintaining the establishments, maintenance allowance of servants etc. This led to the result: profit or loss for the company in Malabar. The account-books showed often a deficit, as this accounting system did not consider the profits that the company in general made, for example by selling products of Malabar in Europe or elsewhere in Asia. A study of these local balance sheets of Malabar in the seventeenth century shows that Malabar could make profits – and only marginal so – in only four years in the period between 1663 and 1700.[98] The dream of a pepper monopoly did not come true in the following decades either and despite many efforts to stop it, non-VOC trade in pepper continued while the account books of Malabar showed losses. Even in the first half of the eighteenth century, no progress was made. Between 1701 and 1750, there were only two profitable years. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the situation improved considerably.[99]

In the process of reforming the VOC, in 1745, the High Government had listed the deficits of Malabar Command over periods of ten years from 1670 to 1743-44.[100] Batavia calculated that Malabar was constantly in deficit, even if profits from pepper exported were taken into account. It was assumed that there would be no improvements, as the deficit was structural: wars, rising expenses on forts and garrisons. Even in times of peace, the maintenance expenses were beyond the profits that Malabar Command could generate.

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[96] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified,* 169-172. Table 2: Malabar 1661-1794.
[97] Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company,* 127.
[98] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, p. lxxxv.
[99] Thus this is the localised accounting: not taking into account the income that the Company earned by selling pepper from Malabar in Europe and Asia. See Appendix to Chapter Two, Chart 3 Malabar Net profit and loss (1661-1795). Specifically for the increased number fo profitable years in the second half of the eighteenth century see Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 3; Malabar Financial Results 1750-1794 and corresponding Chart 2.
[100] In general, a total of fl. 15,200,000 light money that is, almost fl. 187,500 light money per annum was in deficit. For the period of eighty-two years, fl. 7,000,000 light money – which equalled fl. 5,600,000 Dutch heavy money – was in deficit. The Dutch used a system of "heavy" and "light" guilders. The light guilder was used in Asia. It was valued 25 per cent more than the heavy guilder of Europe. See Els Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 225-227.

In 1748, the Gentlemen XVII wrote to Batavia that if 1,500,000 lbs. of pepper could be procured in Malabar, then the VOC would make fl. 450,000 from its sale in European markets.[101] This would balance the almost continual deficit that the account books of Malabar showed. Thus, the Gentlemen XVII were more optimistic about the profitability of Malabar than Batavia. However, the actual annual procurement was only 750,000 lbs.[102] In this accounting by the Gentlemen XVII, the proceeds from sale of pepper from Malabar when sold in Europe, had been taken care of. This method was not practised earlier in the yearly accounts of the separate settlements.

Batavia recognised that the Dutch did not obtain the pepper while other European competitors did because they paid more for it. The High Government also acknowledged that the VOC also lost a lot of pepper, as it was transferred to the Coromandel Coast via the mountain routes over which the Dutch had no control.[103] Since controlling the *ghat* routes was militarily and financially beyond the reach of the VOC, the company started to buy pepper in Tuticorin with the aim to enforce the monopoly in the Bay of Tuticorin as well.[104] Had Batavia agreed to compete with the English in the price war for pepper, and introduced more forces on land and at sea to control the 'illegal' trade in pepper, Malabar Command could have bought more pepper in Malabar, and thus increased its profitability.

But because Malabar was already perceived as a 'loss-making' command, no efforts were made by the High Government to improve the VOC infrastructure on the coast. On the contrary, as we know, it asked the Malabar Command to join hands with the EIC in maintaining the prices of pepper. This policy of Batavia was a direct result of the localised accounting system of the VOC. Batavia was under the impression that wars had been undertaken in Malabar with the aim of extending the fortifications, eventhough Batavia had made it clear that it aimed at maintaining the balance of power among the numerous kings and chiefs and maximise pepper procurement.[105] This is also stated in a secret report on Malabar prepared at Batavia in the year 1758 by Governor-General Mossel (1752-1761). Mossel clearly states that the 1741 battle with Travancore was fought against the orders or wishes of the High Government.[106]

Batavia's Unfounded Doubts

In this subsection, the efforts and proposals of the VOC servants at Cochin, to improve the profitability of the command are brought into focus. This will prove that Batavia had unfounded

[101] The purchase price cost being fl. 300,000, the pepper would sell for fl. 750,000, that is, for more than double the expenses. As understood from the general letters written back to the Gentlemen XVII. Batavia quoted an earlier letter of the Gentlemen XVII to Batavia. GM XI (1743-1750), 630: dated 31-10-1748.
[102] GM XI (1743-1750), 630: dated 31-10-1748.
[103] GM XI (1743-1750), 293: dated 31-12-1745.
[104] At fl. 25 for 100 lbs., GM XI (1743-1750), 297: dated 31-12-1745.
[105] GM XI (1743-1750), 292-293: dated 31-12-1745.
[106] NA The Hague, HRB 732, fo. 13, Secret Memoir of Mossel.

doubts about Malabar's profitability and that, if supported by the High Government, Malabar Command could have shown many more profitable years.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the company in Malabar had started to do fairly well in the textile trade. *Cottan* textile (*cottase*) purchased from traders south of Cochin could be sold to visiting traders from the north. The VOC resident at Tengapattanam provided sufficient amounts of *white guinea* and *salempuris* to be sold in Cochin. The trade was so good that Batavia wanted to shift the Tengapattanam office to Colachel if Travancore would allow.[107] But matters soon became quite complicated as in the 1740s Travancore was on a rise. The servants of the company in Cochin felt that the Malabar sovereigns were not to be trusted and that Travancore's behaviour was inexplicable and therefore unreliable.[108]

In the 1750s, sugar could be sold profitably by the VOC at Cochin to the merchants from the north, who arrived with their bombaras. In the 1770s, this trade was still very brisk, but was heading for a decline in the 1780s. The drying up of the bombara trade by the 1780s hampered VOC's profit-making in two ways. Firstly, these bombaras anchored at the ports of Malabar thereby providing revenue to the VOC-controlled ports. Secondly, they purchased sugar and other items from the VOC. But later, Batavia refused to send sugar to Malabar and instead sent cloves which the bombaras were not interested in.[109] Batavia also prohibited the Malabar Command from selling pepper to them, preferring instead to receive pepper at Batavia. The bombaras came for the sugar, which was originally coming from the surroundings of Batavia. The High Government did not want to enter into the sugar trade in Malabar, fearing rebellion in Batavia. So, this profitable trade at Malabar also did not get support from Batavia.[110] This again proves that the High Government was not using the port of Cochin as an emporium. With no hope of sugar arriving in Cochin from Batavia, or of being able to buy pepper there, the bombaras stopped anchoring at Cochin. At Alleppey at least, they could get pepper easily. Had Batavia agreed to continue providing more sugar, and use the port of Cochin as an emporium, Malabar Command could have earned more profits.

Opinions regarding the policy of the VOC in Malabar were complex and ambivalent. The Gentlemen XVII were hopeful of Malabar and did not consider the command to be a complete burden. But Batavia doubted Malabar's profitability and was rather pessimistic about the future of the company on the coast. All it instructed Malabar was to limit expenses and, if possible, sell the establishments at a good price. In Malabar there was no cash to buy pepper and therefore Batavia advised them to barter other company products. It also instructed the servants at Cochin not to trade in sugar, not to trade with the bombaras, but just to collect pepper.

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[107] GM XI (1743-1750), 814: dated 31-12-1749.
[108] NA The Hague, VOC 2769, fo. 498-500.
[109] Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 100-101.
[110] Sugar was produced in the surrounding areas of Batavia which mostly employed Chinese workers. Batavia feared a rebellion of the Chinese sugar-mill workers and therefore did not pressurise them too much to increase production.

For the servants of the company this decision not to supply the Malabar Command with sugar was yet another unwise act on the part of Batavia. In the opinion of Commander Casparus de Jong the first blunder of Batavia had been not to have a heavy military and naval presence on the coast from the first moment of settlement, to prevent the 'illicit' pepper trade.[111] Secondly, the High Government refused to make Ceylon a nucleus of the subcontinental trade, but polarised themselves at Batavia.[112] And now, by not providing Malabar with sugar for the bombara trade – which would have improved the company's profitability – in order to protect Batavia from rebellion, they made their priorities clear. The company servants at Cochin were sure that the Malabar Command and probably they themselves, would be able to make a profit from the private coastal traders that came from the north. There was a proposal by the Cochin servants of the company to trade with Mocha. But Batavia denied permission, as it would itself trade with the Red Sea region directly from Batavia.[113]

Seen through the eyes of the VOC servants in Cochin, the VOC lost out in Malabar because the High Government preferred to protect Batavia – their place of residence – to taking practical measures to improve the profitability of the VOC in the Malabar Command. The VOC in Asia had become Batavia-centric. Had they spread their risks – just like the English had done by having many different centres of administration – and just as Rijcklof van Goens had suggested, they would probably have faired better in the eighteenth century and at least in the case of the Indian subcontinent. For the people of Fort Cochin, Batavia was not in sync with Malabar. The VOC's policies were too monopoly-centric and did not work in Malabar. Alternative profit-making opportunities in Malabar were ignored by Batavia.

The people at Fort Cochin must have been disillusioned with Batavia's policy and confused with its changing policies, especially with reference to pepper, English competition and emporia trade. Batavia's blinded belief in cutting costs also must have made its servants in Malabar wary of their masters' future plans for the command. The conflict of interests between Fort Cochin and Batavia led to the company becoming a marginal power in Malabar. The fact that the High Government in Batavia refused to support its servants in Cochin in experimenting with new possibilities of profit-making on the coast and constantly reminded them to just "remain" on the coast with as little expenses as possible and without getting involved in local politics, which would lead to expensive wars, can be considered as one of the reasons for the failure of the VOC in Malabar. In 1752, Governor-General Jacob Mossel (1750-1761) submitted a new accounting system to the Gentlemen XVII. According to his report, Malabar was a profit-generating region.[114] His suggestion in general for the company was to increase profits and reduce expenses.

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[111] Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian trade,* 14.
[112] See discussion on this in Chapter One.
[113] GM XI (1743-1750), 299: dated 31-12-1745. Bandar Abbas (Gombroon) had been closed and there were plans for a new office in Kargh.
[114] Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang,* 213, Appendix III. Malabar made a profit of fl. 18,000.

For Malabar he recommended reducing the size of the office, both in terms of establishments, and personnel.[115]

Having re-established the fact that VOC's monopoly did not work in Malabar and that Batavia was unwilling to engage in coastal trading on the west coast of India, let us now reassess VOC's profits and losses in the Malabar Command between 1750 and 1784. Quoted below are the profit and loss figures in guilders for the Malabar Command. The command had been written off as a loss-making region.[116] Yet, as can be seen from the table, in terms of profits and expenses, the second half of the eighteenth century was comparatively more profitable than that of the seventeenth century.[117] This possibly had to do with the fact that in the previous century the costs of establishment were much higher, and therefore the VOC had hardly ever had a profitable year. But in the eighteenth century, when the establishments more or less required maintenance only, the profits started to show more frequently. By then Malabar had already been written off as an unprofitable undertaking.

Table 5: Gross profit and expenses of Malabar (1750-1784), according to VOC book-keeping system, added up for every five years

Year	Gross Profit	Expenses	Net Profit/Loss
1749-1754	3845	531869	- 528024
1754-1759	50086	437817	- 387731
1759-1764	187849	21882	+ 165967
1764-1769	389184	15850	+ 373334
1769-1774	375720	19796	+ 355924
1774-1779	413455	346725	+ 66730
1779-1784	–	807198	- 807198

Source: Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, Appendix B Annual Financial Results (region wise in guilders), Table 2 Malabar (1661-1794), 169-172.

Making the best use of hindsight, one can say that the localised system of accounting and the monopoly-centric idea of trading damaged Malabar's image within the VOC network. Even using the localised accounting system, after 1750 the VOC actually improved its earnings from the coast. Between 1750 and 1784, the VOC enjoyed sixteen profitable years in Malabar, which was unprecedented in the seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century.[118] To these and the other

[115] Reports were written on every region. These were criticised by Thomas Hope who questioned Mossels's accounting as well as incentives for reforming trade in Asia. He further accused the VOC of not taking sufficient measures when Van Imhoff had suggested them. In his opinion this was so because the Gentlemen XVII had little control over the employees in Asia and this was sufficient reason to critically re-study Mossel's ideas for reforms. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 49- 57.

[116] See Appendix to Chapter Two, Chart 1; Malabar Local Financial Results (1661-1700) and Chart 3; Malabar Net Profit and loss (1661-1795).

[117] See Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 3 and Chart 2 Malabar Local Financial Results 1750-1794.

[118] See Appendix to Chapter Two, Chart 3 Malabar Net profit and loss (1661-1795).

nineteen "non-profitable" years, one must still add the profits that the company made in Europe and Asia by selling pepper procured from Malabar.

Seen overall, the VOC had actually started to do better after it had dropped its merchant-warrior role. Turning the Malabar Command into an emporium and accepting the bombaras from the north, would have led to greater profits, thereby becoming one among the many merchants operating in Malabar. In 1763 Schreuder had recommended this. He argued that the VOC should stay in Malabar as a merchant, without forts and military.[119] Up to 1780 the procurement of pepper increased, but afterwards decline set in. In 1784, due to war with Britain no fleet arrived from the Netherlands and there was no communication between Batavia and Malabar either. Then the people of Fort Cochin must have realised that decline had set in.

Thus in the 1780s, the VOC, a 'merchant-warrior' that conquered ports and forts with their cannon-fitted fleets and servants who were partly merchants, partly warriors, was sailing in the troubled waters off the Malabar Coast which were more or less dominated by EIC's Bombay Marine. By now, the cannons had fallen silent among the noisy politics of the Malabar Coast. The trading tactics of the High Government in Batavia failed in comparison to the ingenuities of the indigenous and European traders in Malabar. The pepper-trading contracts existed only on paper and the military power of the company did not go far beyond the walls of Fort Cochin. Other opportunities at trading were unacceptable to Batavia. What did the servants at Fort Cochin do in such circumstances?

2.3 From Black Pepper to Brown Soil

In this section we shall see how, besides income from trade, income from land and other non-trading activities, such as imposing excises, tolls and taxes, gradually became important for the VOC in Malabar. This will bring out the changing nature of its presence on the coast and further facilitate the redefining of the VOC's presence there. As the title of this section suggests, company servants in Malabar were looking towards land to increase the income of the company and their own. In the following paragraphs, the administration and careers of three consecutive commanders, Frederic Cunes (1751-1756), Casparus de Jong (1756-1760) and Godefridus Weyerman (1760-1764) are analysed to show how the men on the spot bringht about a transformation of the company's functioning on the coast. How, after the 1750s, some servants of the VOC in Malabar took a special interest in extending the company's realm beyond pepper, is also discussed here. The metamorphosis of the Malabar Command from a merchant into a landlord becomes clear.

The company had inherited from the Portuguese certain lands and gardens in Malabar. These were owned by the company and normally were leased out to toepasses, free-burghers or local

[119] NA The Hague, HRB 735, fo. 266. Memorandum Schreuder, 1763.

Malabar merchants. In 1695, the first leases were made. These were for a period of ten years. Commissioner Hendrik Zwaardecroon (1697-1698) mentioned leases only in Cochin, which yielded fl. 3634 and the farm of the sales of arrack there and at Cranganur, which brought in fl. 6342 per year. This added up to fl. 9976 in 1697. This amounted to only five per cent of the gross profit of Malabar. [120] By 1743, apart from the lands around Cochin a few more gardens elsewhere had been added.[121] This practice of leasing out land continued throughout the century. While in 1697 the income from the leases of land and the farming of income not related to the trade of the company, was negligible, in the mid-eighteenth century the amount increased considerably.[122]

By the 1750s, there were more than fifty different types of separate leases ranging between fl. 59,000 and fl. 115 per annum.[123] The income account book of Malabar for the year 1755-56 clearly demonstrates the share of the company's income from non-trade sources.[124] This source of income consisted primarily of the leases of lands, gardens, islands, salt-pans, and the farms of tolls or taxes on the river – including both shipping and fishing –, exises on the sale of arrack, and tobacco. In the said year, the income from leases purely on land amounted to fl. 16,657. Other income under the Cochin office was derived from taxes on fruit bearing trees, tolls on indigenous and foreign shipping, and tolls on small traders.[125] Thus, a shift is clearly discernable from trade to taxation as a source of income.

Commander Frederik Cunes (1751-1756), who was in Mavelikara in 1753 to discuss and agree upon the second treaty with Travancore about the pepper supplies, also wrote about the benefits that the company could reap if more attention was paid to non-trading activities. He thereby wanted to steer the company towards making efforts to increase income from land. He pointed out the company's rights over half the income from the land of the Payencheri Nayars, that the company had received from the Zamorin of Calicut. He protected these company rights against usurpation by the Zamorin.[126] The Nayars collected the taxes for the company in the cultivated lands around Chettuvay, which the company had won from the Zamorin, and in return the VOC provided the Nayars, as well as other inhabitants in the region, with protection against the Zamorin.[127]

Cunes also expressed his concern about the losses in the company's revenue from the non-trading sector which it had to suffer because of the increasing influence of the English. As the

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[120] In 1697 the gross profit amounted to fl. 124,846. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 348-349, p. lxxxv. Zwaardecroon carried the title of commissioner instead of commander.
[121] A list of the Company's landed assets on the coast dated 1743 only mentions the lands around Pappinivattam. P. Groot, *Extracts from General Inventories and Establishment Lists of the years 1743, 1761 and 1780*. Selections from the Records of the Madras Government: Dutch Records no. 9 (Madras: Government Press, 1909), 16-20.
[122] MvO Frederik Cunes, 22: dated 1756.
[123] This figure has been collected from reading the different land leases of the Company in Malabar. See bibliography for details.
[124] MvO Frederik Cunes, 22: dated 1756.
[125] MvO Fredrik Cunes, 22: dated 1756.
[126] MvO Fredrik Cunes, 12-13: dated 1756.
[127] MvO Fredrik Cunes, 12: dated 1756 and MvO Casparus de Jong, 8: dated 1761.

English presence in northern Malabar became stronger, many vessels sailed with English passes and avoided paying the Dutch authorities. He had taken up the matter with the English and stressed that all vessels passing Cochin were required to buy VOC passes.[128] Thus in the post-Mavelikara period, the company on the one hand was aware of its dependence on the Travancore sovereign for the collection of pepper, while on the other hand Cunes pointed to the land in Malabar that the company could bring under its purview and earn income from.

Advocates of Landed Wealth

Commander Casparus de Jong (1757-1761) was an active advocate of bringing about changes in the company's functioning on the coast.[129] His thoughts, quoted at beginning of the chapter, prove that he was aware of the realities of Malabar pepper and therefore stressed the need to move with the times and to garner income from the products of the land.[130] He was aware of the company's landed interests in Malabar. He reported on how the company had come to inherit some of its rights on land, stating that focusing on income from land would be beneficial to both the indigenous people and the company. Assessing Malabar at the end of his term, he divided the sources of the company's income on the coast into different categories, namely trade, which meant selling of commodities, income from land in the form of leases and farms, and the collection of products of the land. He warned against the changing times and stressed the need to reorganise the management of the company on the Malabar Coast.[131]

Land was also brought under VOC control by numerous land-related contracts with the indigenous communities, of which the Payancheri Nayars were the most prominent. These contracts were mainly concerned with taxes on land and often included administration and protection of those living on the land, that is, extension of the company's judicial and fiscal administration. In 1754, the Payencheri Nayars agreed to collect the land taxes around Chettuvay, which was one-tenth of the cultivated product, and that they would hand over to the company annually 523 parras rice and 492 ½ golden fanums. In return, the company was to protect the inhabitants against the Zamorin.[132] Another landed estate of the VOC was Pappinivattam. This

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[128] MvO Fredrik Cunes, 31: dated 1756.

[129] De Jong had many years of experience in Malabar. He first served on the coast in the 1730s, then went to Ceylon and then returned to Malabar for a second stint. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 193. Comparing Banten, where the Company also collected pepper, with Malabar, he writes that unlike the Company's system and success in Banten, it is very difficult in Malabar to collect all the pepper grown in the hinterland only for the Company. Comparing the two pepper territories of the VOC he writes, '…in Banten the king delivers the pepper, but here in Malabar this has never been the case. Here the traders living in the king's territories are the ones who deliver the pepper to the Company. Travancore is the first one where the king delivers the pepper to the Company'. MvO Casparus de Jong, 2: dated 1761.

[130] To quote "… s*ich te schicken na de omstandigheid der tijden voornamentlijk in een staads bestier waar het politique het mercantile moet soutineeren, en waar wij ons voordeel meest uit de lands producten moetende vinden*…"MvO Casparus de Jong, 1: dated 1761.

[131] MvO Casparus de Jong, 1: dated 1761.

[132] MvO Casparus de Jong, 8-9: dated 1761. Parras as a unit of measurement had different values in different part of South Asia. In Malabar 1 parra equals 40 lbs., *VOC-Glossarium*, 87.

was the company's oldest landed estate. According to De Jong, it brought in approximately fl. 2000-4000 per year in the first ten years. In 1760, the income had risen to fl. 27,231.[133] Thus, through extending its presence beyond that of a buyer of pepper and taking interest in land, the VOC in the Malabar Command from the 1750s, started to substantiate its income through non-trading activities. This had been possible because servants of the company on the spot were trying to make their presence permanent by finding other sources of income.

De Jong drew the company's attention to the landed estates that the company had between Chettuvay and Cranganur. He especially referred to the Payencheri Nayars and the 18 half-villages that belonged to the company.[134] Since the revenues from these villages were considerable, the Cochin raja wanted these lands for himself and Travancore supported the Cochin raja's claims.[135] De Jong ensured that the company's rights over these villages were definite and no longer contested by others.[136] He also claimed that the products from the lands of Dharmottu Panikkar belonged to the company. He candidly informed both Batavia and his successor that it was favourable that there was no opposition to the company's growing authority.[137]

The part-transformation of the company from a trader into a landlord on the Malabar Coast thus crystallized. Commander De Jong summarized his policy on the coast in his statement that 'income from land is the source through which the company maintained itself on the coast. The income from trade is fluctuating and attention to revenue from land would yield better results and therefore deserves better attention'. He further stated that, 'the income from the land is the source on which the state exists. The subjects should carry the burden of the state in accordance to the size of their profit. They should pay taxes according to profits'.[138]

To achieve this aim, a special committee under the leadership of the titular captain of the toepasses, Silvester Mendes, was made to survey the company's lands and gardens.[139] When discrepancies were found, another committee was set up under the company servants Hendrik Meuleman and Jan Berlijn to carry out an extensive survey. During De Jong's commandership, the aim was to pay more attention to the revenues and their collection, from land as well as from

[133] MvO Casparus de Jong, 33-34: dated 1761.
[134] MvO Casparus de Jong, 4-12: dated 1761.
[135] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 42: dated 1765. Also see MvO Adriaan Moens, 127-128: dated 1781.
[136] The 18 half-villages, a plot of land from north of Cranganur to south of Pappinivattam earlier belonged to the Zamorin. These lands had been conquered by the Company in 1717 from the Zamorin. The Company gained recognised legal possession of these lands in 1719. In 1740, Van Gollenesse gave the lands to the Cochin raja. 1n 1757, when the raja and the Zamorin were in alliance against Travancore's expansion, on the issue of the nature of the war: whether it ought to be defensive or offensive, disagreements appeared between them. The Zamorin re-took the lands, but the Cochin raja invaded the 18 half-villages as compensation of war cost against Travancore. The Zamorin returned it the next year with the signing of the contract, but in 1758 the Zamorin also gave the land to the Company. Thus the villages came under Company's purview. MvO Casparus de Jong, 4-12: dated 1761.
[137] MvO Casparus de Jong, 33-34: dated 1761. Panikkar is a title of an administrator on the Malabar Coast. *VOC-Glossarium*, 86. It is often written in Dutch documents as 'Pannicaal'.
[138] MvO Casparus de Jong, 33: dated 1761. He also believed that the war with the Zamorin could have brought more profits to the Company, had the Company paid more attention to increasing its landed estate.
[139] MvO Casparus de Jong, 37: dated 1761.

the tolls imposed on the ships anchoring at those ports of Malabar that were under VOC control. De Jong extended the lease terms from ten to twenty years. He tried to find out how much in total, and exactly which lands belonged to the company. Inhabitants and chiefs had been asked to show proofs of ownership and whenever it became clear that certain lands came under the company's jurisdiction, taxes were imposed, mostly to be paid in kind, that is, rice.[140]

Comparing the income books for the year 1755-1756 and 1759-1760, it is confirmed that the income from non-trading activities, which included the land leases, were on the rise. For the year 1755-56 the income from revenues, tolls and land, amounted to fl. 70,516 and the income for the year 1759-60 added up to fl. 82,860, amounting to 31 % and 22 % of the gross profit in those years respectively. The leases of land rose in this period from fl. 16,657 to fl. 47,063. In De Jong's experience income from land was more durable, lasting and stable than that from trade.[141] De Jong's administration focused on increasing the company's non-trading interests on the coast and changing the nature of its functioning there from a procurer of pepper to one which was keen to increase its landed estate and levy taxes on them.

De Jong was succeeded by Godefridus Weyerman (1760-1764). He had been chief of Cannanur for a long time, served in Malabar for over two decades and had made favourable deals for the company for procuring pepper. The life journey of Godefridus Weyerman depicts in many ways the changing face of the VOC in Asia, especially in the Malabar Command. Godefridus Weyerman began his journey from Europe to Asia as a soldier in 1734, when he joined the services of the VOC for the Chamber of Amsterdam. In 1741 he arrived in Malabar. After two decades of serving there, he succeeded De Jong. Thus Weyerman had served his whole career in Malabar, before being appointed to the VOC's highest office there. Weyerman was the second such commander. His predecessor Casparus de Jong had also served in Malabar for many years before being appointed commander in 1756. Both men were well-informed and long serving commanders at Cochin. Having spent many years in Malabar, they not only knew the company servants who were Cochin-born and had spent their entire careers in Cochin, but were also better informed about the local merchant communities, rajas and chiefs, taxation policies and ways of earning income for the company. This will become clearer in the following paragraphs which analyses Weyerman's administrative years as commander of Malabar.

Commander Weyerman was rather positive about trade both in Cannanur and in Cochin. At Cannanur he had spent many years not only as chief, but had also participated in the permitted private trade as a company servant. Yet his main endeavour during his administrative years as commander of Malabar was to increase the landed assets of the company. He writes that the company's lands gave increasing incomes every year during his administration. He farmed out the levying of excise on tobacco in four new areas, all of which were north of Cochin and yielded the

[140] MvO Casparus de Jong, 33: dated 1761.
[141] MvO Casparus de Jong, 35-37: dated 1761. For comparison a between the Cunes years (1752-1756) and De Jong years (1756-1760), see 39; see also Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 3 and Chart 2.

company an annual income of fl. 4663.[142] Weyerman added a note that the income from the farms on tolls at ports and from passes issued to ships had declined and that the lease-holders had been ruined.[143] This was naturally a consequence of the decreasing number of bombaras that visited Cochin and Cannanur.

Weyerman stated that soon after he took up the office of commander, he heard that land and salt-pans had been 'discovered' at Chettuvay from which the company had not been enjoying incomes. He wrote that he found out more about it and he was amazed that these had for so long remained in the dark. He had them surveyed and put them on lease, which brought in rice and cash to the company.[144] According to Weyerman, the income from land had increased in general and of all the land that the company had on the coast, Pappinivattam yielded most profit. There the lease-holders paid both in cash and in rice. Writing enthusiastically about income from the company's leases in Pappinivattam, he stated that he himself had visited the newly acquired areas to see to it that they were well-managed. He also looked into thirty-four gardens which had earlier been surveyed by Meuleman and had been occupied by various people. Sixteen new gardens had been annexed, as the residents could not prove that they were the lawful possessors of the land. These lands were taxed and ten new gardens were leased out.[145] According to Weyerman at Pappinivattam the harvest had been bad and therefore there was no rice to give to the company. The lease-holders could not pay their dues. The guarantors had asked for a year's time and promised that they would pay up at the time of the next harvest.[146]

Since the company had the right to protect Christians on the coast, Weyerman even chose to use the path of Christianity to extend the company's dominion on the coast. He asked his successors to take care of the Roman Catholic Christians in Pappinivattam. He even wished to build there a Roman Catholic Church as it would be beneficial for the company to get more settlers in the land. These settlers would, with time, cultivate the land in order to earn their livelihood, and, since cultivated land can be taxed, they would thereby increase the income of the company on the coast. Also, in order to extend the VOC's influence south of Cochin, which was more or less dominated by Travancore, Weyerman suggested that the interests of the Christians who were subjects of Travancore must be protected.[147]

As if these achievements were not enough, Weyerman brought in more lands, which had been under the control of the rajas of Cranganur and Airur, under the company's possession and put them on twenty-year leases. He asked the rajas of Cranganur and Airur to prove that the land belonged to them but since they had been unable to do so, he suggested to his successor Cornelis

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[142] In total there were four estates, one lease was in the land of the Payencheri Nayars, one in Chettuvay and Pattatil Coilpado (Koilpadu), one in Palliporto and Aycotta (Azhikodu) and one on the island of Bonduertty. MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 19: dated 1765.
[143] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 19-20: dated 1765.
[144] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 22: dated 1765.
[145] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 20-21: dated 1765.
[146] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 22: dated 1765.
[147] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 21: dated 1765.

Breekpot to force them to prove their ownership or to claim it as company's land. Thus, Weyerman was very active as well as was successful in extending the company's landed possessions very quickly. He informed his successor that there is much uncultivated land in the conquered land of Pappinivattam that can be farmed out. These would be beneficial to the company. With further enquiries, he stated, more lands which have not yet been 'discovered' and which have for long remained in the dark can be discovered in the extensive conquered lands of Pappinivattam.[148] Thus, Weyerman too actively increased the company's dominion over the coast, bringing people under its administration and increasing the company's landed wealth on the coast.

The Cochin raja's land on Vaipin Island, which the raja had pledged to the company as a surety, was also partly brought under the ownership of the company by Weyerman, as the raja was unable to pay his dues to the VOC. In fact, Weyerman wanted to buy the entire island for the VOC, as he thought that this was necessary for the defence and peaceful existence of the company in Fort Cochin.[149] This would be true, as the Dutch, prior to capturing Fort Cochin from the Portuguese, had also established themselves on this island. From here cannons could be fired at Fort Cochin. And since the competitors of the VOC – the Portuguese, the French and the English – were present to the north of Cochin they could easily occupy this island in order to extend their power in Malabar.

An obvious query about Weyerman's impressive, yet self-proclaimed success, in extending the company's dominion would be: why had these lands not been brought under taxation earlier? One reason could be that Batavia's focus, while sending instructions to Malabar Command was always so pepper-monopoly oriented, that other options of income, both from land and otherwise, were ignored by the previous administrators of the coast.

In short, by the 1750s the servants of the company in Malabar had started thinking about making the VOC's stay in Malabar more permanent and therefore looked landwards to increase their hold on the coast. In the second half of the eighteenth century land and income from land did generate profits for the company. This was mainly due to the efforts of commanders De Jong and Weyerman. The account books of Malabar Command confirm that the De Jong and Weyerman years of administration from 1756 to 1764 were in general more profitable than those of their predecessors and successor.[150] It is worth noting that of all the memoirs written by commanders at Cochin, Weyerman first wrote prominently about income from land and only then talked about trade and pepper. It proves that, to him mercantile matters were not a priority; the acquisition of land to reap income from it was.

Thus, we see that both De Jong and Weyerman were advocates of landed wealth for the company in Malabar. Both made an effort to increase the company's income from land and to

[148] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 21: dated 1765.
[149] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 41: dated 1765.
[150] See Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 3; Chart 2.

extend its judicial and fiscal administration on the coast far beyond the walls of Fort Cochin.[151] During the period of 1756-61 that De Jong served as commander and Weyerman as chief of Cannanur, their paths must have often crossed. These occasions would have provided ample opportunities for exchange of ideas on transforming the company's functioning on the coast. Commanders De Jong and Weyerman were changing the mode of functioning of the VOC in Malabar according to the immediate environment around them. Their administrative years saw a shift from trade to taxation. Together they increased the company's landed estate on the coast. They brought new areas on the coast under the purview of the taxes imposed by the VOC. They were aware of the EIC's large territorial expansion and were convinced that changing the role of the company to one that stressed the exploitation of land, was the only way to remain on the coast. They were shifting the policy in Malabar from one exclusively based on trade, to one emphasizing the management of land and taxation. It represented the beginning of a new form of colonial exploitation.

Batavia's Men

How did Batavia react to these changes on the Malabar Coast? As we know from the discussion on the profitability, the High Government's perpetual advice to the Malabar Command was to economise and concentrate on pepper. This, as have seen from the foregoing subsection was neither what the two commanders just discussed intended or did. The difference of opinion about the running of the Malabar Command between the men on the spot and the authorities in Batavia is also clear, when we look into the reactions of Batavia to the changes that De Jong and Weyerman had brought about in Malabar.

In the year 1763, Jan Schreuder was sent to Malabar by the Governor-General and the Council at Batavia to assess the command, inspect its overall functioning and submit a report on it. Schreuder had begun his career in Batavia, had been director of Surat and governor of Ceylon. He always returned to Batavia where he eventually died and was buried.[152] As a member of the High Government, he often participated in different committees.[153] From Schreuder's report Batavia got a whiff of 'mismanagement' on the Malabar Coast. In it Schreuder made strong recommendations to cut down expenses on the overall establishment and personnel. He suggested that there should be no new recruits, and only promotions. The report more or less highlights the uselessness of Malabar and the High Government at Batavia pretty much agreed to all his recommendations. It seems that Schreuder was not impressed with the high level of the

[151] Compared to the 1743 list, by 1780, the Company's landed interest had increased considerably. See Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 2 Memorandum of gardens and lands belonging to the Company on the coast of Malabar.
[152] Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 79-80.
[153] NA The Hague, HRB 735, Memorandum Schreuder, 1763.

local recruits that the command had on her records. He was also very critical of the expansion policy that the men on the spot were busy implementing.[154]

In September 1764, Cornelis Breekpot and Francis van Abscouw left Batavia on the ship *Kroonenburg* on a special mission to Malabar. They were armed with a letter from Governor-General Petrus Albertus van der Parra to oust Weyerman and his second Johan Anthony Sweers de Landas and to take over charge of Malabar Command.[155] On their arrival in November, Weyerman and his council gathered for a meeting to welcome the delegates from Batavia. Weyerman had no clue about the secret letter in their possession regarding his dismissal and that of Sweers de Landas. In the same month of November they were dismissed from their posts on charges of fraud and were asked to leave immediately for Batavia to present themselves to the High Government.[156]

Cornelis Breekpot (1764-1786) had spent most of his career on Java, and did not belong to the closed circle of higher officials serving in western India and Ceylon. The fact that a commander had been sent straight from Batavia, and moreover one who had never before served the company either elsewhere in India or Ceylon, says something about Batavia's suspicions about Malabar and the company's servants there. The former four commanders since the 1750s had served either in the western quarters or elsewhere in India or in Ceylon. Never before had someone been sent to Malabar with no prior experience in India, and straight from Batavia.

Breekpot administered Malabar as its commander from 1764 to 1769. Soon after his arrival the High Government sent to him Schreuder's report, with their comments on it. It reached Breekpot over the land route via Tuticorin. The report must have influenced Breekpot's outlook on Malabar. For one, it had been written by someone closer to Batavia than to Malabar.[157] Secondly, Breekpot had been sent after Schreuder's investigation of Malabar had brought to light the land acquisition activities of former commanders. It also hinted at the private profit-making activities of Weyerman and his second Sweers de Landas, and presumably of many other lower-rank officials of the coast as well.

To a large extent Breekpot adopted Schreuder's attitude towards Malabar: one of disapproval towards the high expenses of the command and a general belief that the command was more of a burden to the company than an asset. In his memoir of February 1769 to his successor, he states that he had been ordered secretly not to implement all recommendations of Schreuder at once,

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154 NA The Hague, HRB 735, Memorandum Schreuder, 1763.

155 NA The Hague, HRB 755 (1) fo.1, Papers concerning alleged frauds during the period 1746-63 by Godefridus Weyerman and Johan Anthony Sweers de Landas, dated 1764- 1774. Johan Anthony Sweers de Landas was from 's-Gravenhage and was married to Elisabeth Susanna de Crouse of Cochin. 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', in *Gens Nostra, Maandblad der Nederlandse Genealogische Vereniging*, Jaargang XLVII 1992 (Amsterdam, 1922), 12: dated 14-10-1760. The name Van der Parra is also written as Van de Parra.

156 NA The Hague, HRB 755 (1) Secret Resolution taken in the Council of Malabar at Cochin dated 18th November 1764, Appendix Document 4.

157 Although Schreuder had served at Surat and Ceylon, he had never served at Malabar. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 79-81.

but at an appropriate pace. Breekpot was to a certain extent satisfied with the functioning of the command. Continuing with the regular run of the mill instructions, he explicates endlessly about decreasing expenses, improving the maintenance and administration, improving trade and the overall profits of the company.[158] There is not a word on the company's land acquisitions.

Breekpot followed Schreuder's suggestions to reduce personnel in Malabar. Barsalore was closed, leaving behind a caretaker.[159] Similarly, following the recommendations of the Schreuder report, the personnel and defence equipment at Cannanur were reduced drastically. In fact, Batavia had asked that Cannanur be shut down completely, but the servants in Cochin decided that Cannanur was still important and that a reduction would be sufficient.[160] Considering that Weyerman had acquired much land around Cannanur under the VOC's control, the local servants of the company were naturally not willing to give up their establishment there. Breekpot asked the chief officer at Cannanur to write a report. According to this assessment, the fort was well placed and could be defended by a few men. It was also reported that the situation was favourable for commerce and that, in times of peace, trade as well as the collection of pepper could be good. Goods worth Rs. 65,000 could be traded and 500 to 600 *candile* pepper could be collected. If the company let go of this fortress, the competitors would benefit from it and the VOC would lose control of pepper north of Cochin. Breekpot advised that if the company set up more posts, then Haidar Ali would make favourable offers for trade and for the collection of pepper.[161] This is another instance to show that Breekpot, following Batavia, remained trade-centric and did not look into the company's landed interests.

In April 1766, Breekpot wrote secretly to Batavia that he preferred to take action in favour of Cochin rather than Cannanur because, according to him, Cochin should be made the base for trade. He reasoned that port tolls were paid in Cochin and not in Cannanur.[162] Sticking to the recommendations of Schreuder, he mentioned that Fortress Wilhelmus at Chettuvay should be demolished. He suggested that both Cannanur and Chettuvay could be done without, and replaced by wooden lodges, as collection of pepper from the region was of little importance.[163] He did not mention the income from land that the company received from this region, but stressed the trade and co-operation with Mysore. But, as we know, Weyerman had increased the company's dominion in the north, and losing Chettuvay or Cannanur would mean forfeiting control of those lands. However, Breekpot's policy being pepper-centric, he did not look into the company's landed interests.

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158 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 1: dated 1768.
159 Breekpot suggested that at Barsalore, where the Company had a lodge for collection of rice, a *gomasta* as a caretaker should be appointed for fl. 150 or 200 per annum. The reduction in personnel, according to Breekpot would be much cheaper than the present system, whereby two VOC servants live in the lodge, one on the post of in-charge of lodge and the other as a translator. MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 2: dated 1768.
160 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 3: dated 1768.
161 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 3: dated 1768.
162 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 4: dated 1768.
163 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 6: dated 1768.

On the contrary, Breekpot complained that Weyerman had not executed Batavia's orders to demolish the Chettuvay fort.[164] Weyerman had not done so, because he was aware that Chettuvay was a frontier post against the Zamorin and that it was in the company's interest to keep the post if it wanted to defend the lands around Chettuvay which it had won from the Zamorin, and which were contested by the raja of Cochin. Between Chettuvay and Cranganur lay the company's conquered lands of Pappinivattam and the 18 half-villages, the attached land of Dharmottu Panikkar and the sequestered lands of the Zamorin. Weyerman had tried to increase the company's income from Chettuvay by signing contracts with three families of the Payencheri Nayars, whereby they would give half of their income to the company.[165] So, Breekpot did not think that protecting these was a sufficient reason for maintaining forts in the region, and he still wanted to reduce or totally demolish the company's establishments at Chettuvay.

Thus Breekpot was very critical of Weyerman and condemned his efforts to extend the company's dominion in Malabar. In a subtle way he refuted Weyerman's efforts to increase the company's dominion. Earlier, at the time of De Jong and Weyerman, the leases had run from the first of March to the end of February. This matched with the harvest season so that the company could collect rice from its land. Breekpot changed the leases to terms of seven months starting in February and ending in August so that the leases would end with the VOC's accounting book-year.[166] Since the company received its income in kind, from some of the places, this was not a wise decision.

On the subject of Cranganur, the key to north Malabar, Breekpot wrote that Weyerman had been instructed by Batavia to maintain this post only, if its expenses could be paid for from its income. However, this was not possible and attempts to make a profit from Cranganur were not successful.[167] Around Cranganur the company had three islands.[168] They originally belonged to the Zamorin but Weyerman had taken half the rent from them for a period of two years, as a surety for the Zamorin's debts to the company. As he was unable to pay the debt, the Zamorin with time gave up the islands. Travancore laid claims to them.[169] So, while Weyerman had laid claims to these islands and brought them under the company's rule under the pretext that they were necessary for facilitating control and communication between Chettuvay, Cranganur and Cochin, Breekpot stated that the communication was possible even without the control over these and suggested that they be sold. The company should only retain the right to have access to Cranganur by sea.[170] Through this he again spoiled the efforts of Weyerman.

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[164] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 9: dated 1768.
[165] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 9-10: dated 1768.
[166] Between September and January, probably another six-month accounting was done. MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 12: dated 1768.
[167] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 15: dated 1768.
[168] These islands are named *Paroemportoe* (Paramputtu), *Moetoe* (Muttu) and *Coenoe* (Kunnu).
[169] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 17: dated 1768.
[170] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 17: dated 1768.

Weyerman and Breekpot disagreed also about the the company's claims on Vaipin. According to the former the Cochin raja had ceded it to the VOC, but according to the latter the raja had only pawned it. Consequently, Breekpot reasoned that Vaipin had to be returned to the raja, when he paid his debt.[171] Weyerman had been more eager and confident of being able to extend the company's land ownership on the coast, than Breekpot, who thought that the chances of the lands, particularly the Vaipin Island, coming under VOC control were doubtful. But Weyerman definitely had a better understanding and knowledge of the raja's finances and knew that he would not be able to pay back his debts to the company and, that he therefore, by way of compensation could be forced to hand over the island to the company for an indefinite period.

Breekpot also stated that the lands that the company received from the Paliyat Achan on the Vaipin Island had to be given back to him as he was not willing to sell them to the company.[172] Breekpot was rather pessimistic about the company's future in Malabar in terms of becoming a landlord or operating as a feudal lord. He explained to Batavia that the Vaipin Island was five miles long and that the company had but one-fifth of it, the rest belonged to the Paliyat Achan, the Cochin raja, his other family members and the Hindu temple at Ellegunapule, and various other parties. He wrote to Batavia about all these issues in secret throughout the time that he was in Cochin, thus making sure that his actions or opinions did not reach every member of the Fort Cochin community. By a letter dated 31st October 1766, Batavia replied 'not to spend more efforts in becoming master of Vaipin, but to get back the loan amounts from the Cochin raja and the Paliyat Achan'. Breekpot then admitted that it was very difficult to get the various parties to pay back the loan and that all his efforts had been in vain.[173]

Weyerman had realised this and had therefore consolidated land on the island for the company, in place of the debts that the raja and the Paliyat Achan owed to the company. Vaipin Island was densely populated. It had many Roman Catholics living there. They came under the jurisdiction of the company. Weyerman, as we saw earlier, was sensitive to the Roman Catholics and believed that the company should strive to bring more land and inhabitants under its control, thereby increasing its fiscal and judicial administration. Therefore, he wanted the island for the VOC.

Similarly, south of Cochin, the VOC establishments at Purakkad and Tengapattanam were reduced in size and Quilon, as well as Tengapattanam, which Schreuder had under-assessed, were shown as profit generating establishments by Breekpot. Although Batavia, in line with Schreuder's recommendations, had ordered that Quilon be demolished, yet, just like Weyerman, Breekpot allowed it to continue. Batavia continued to persist that no new constructions were to be undertaken and big fortresses had to be replaced by smaller ones. Following this instruction,

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171 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 19: dated 1768.
172 Written in Dutch records as 'Paljetter', it is a title of one of the 'free sovereigns' or freeholder of Cochin*VOC-Glossarium*, 85. His land lay between Cochin and Cranganur. He was the army chief and chief administrator of Cochin. MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 19-20: dated 1768.
173 MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 20: dated 1768.

Aiwika was made smaller, and other establishments, such as Kayamkulam, were assessed again, but not demolished. Purakkad was also judged more valuable by Breekpot than by Schreuder. Other watchposts like Calicherij Vichhur, Chennamangalam and Manicorda remained in function. Cranganur, an important establishment north of Cochin was found to be strong and in need of some repairs only.[174]

Breekpot felt that times were uncertain, fortunes would change, but that the fate of Malabar had not yet been decided. He stated that it would not be wise to aim at becoming master of all the land from Chettuvay to Vaipin and from Cochin to Quilon. In his opinion, it was better to let matters rest for a while.[175] Thus, we see a completely different notion about Malabar than that of the former commanders, who were convinced that the future of the company in Malabar lay in garnering income from land.

This difference of opinion and attitude can also be seen in the case of Fort Cochin. In 1765 Cochin had been assessed earlier, once by Captain Lieutenant Zijnen and a second time by the Engineers Massenveld and Duntsveld. According to their reports, one by Zijnen and another by both engineers, Fort Cochin was in a precarious condition. From the 1750s onwards many letters to Batavia stressed the need to strengthen the fort in order to prevent its total ruin. Breekpot countered this claim and stated that the reports were not correct and in fact misleading. While previous reports had suggested that a fortification work with five corners, a pentagon, be undertaken on Vaipin Island, Breekpot stated that this was absolutely not in the interests of the company, considering Batavia's constant pleas and demands to economise. Earlier, the engineers had suggested that the fortification works at Cochin were so decayed that it was best to vacate it and move to Vaipin Island. Breekpot, however, argued states that they were wrong and that not only was it impossible to build a fortress on Vaipin, as it was completely made up of sand, but also that new expenditure on fort building was unnecessary as Fort Cochin was habitable and only needed some repair works. On the issue of the two bastions Holland and Stroomburg, which were in a poor state, he suggested that instead of paying annual repairs, a new wall should be made on the inner side, a bit away from the water. This would make the fort smaller but unburden the exchequer of yearly repairs. [176]

Summing up, Breekpot was rather critical of the Malabar Command. In his opinion Cochin was no longer good for the collection of pepper, but only as a port for trading in different articles. Profit and loss depended on trade and he did see no chance of improving it. Cutting down expenses was inevitable and Cochin had to be reduced in terms of both mercantile and military personnel and in terms of infrastructure. To make Fort Cochin smaller he had engineers from

[174] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 21-23: dated 1768.
[175] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 24: dated 1768.
[176] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 25-26: dated 1768.

Ceylon survey the fort and submit a proposal. He claimed that to cut down expenses he laid off many hired labourers and reduced the sea-faring personnel.[177]

Thus, Breekpot through his manner of administration and in his suggestions for future measures, proved that he was Batavia's man on the coast. He was very critical of Weyerman, who had many more years of experience in Malabar behind him and who, through his work, had proved that by maintaining good relations with all sovereigns in Malabar and by increasing the VOC's attention to landed income, it was possible to run the company profitably, even when trade was dwindling.[178] Clearly, Weyerman had made many efforts to add to the company's capital, economic as well as political, on the Malabar Coast. In contrast to Weyerman, Breekpot was cynical and doubted the company's future on the coast. Later, when he himself tried to get money in return for the lands, he realised that Weyerman had been correct in his assumption that the company could become master of these lands. Yet, Breekpot refused to acknowledge Weyerman's efforts to ensure the company's future on the coast by focussing attention on land. He did little to enhance the company's capital. He did, however, admit that Cochin could do better as an emporium where all sorts of goods could be freely bought and sold by traders and that the company could reap benefits from taxing these traders, their commodities and the vessels that anchored at the port of Cochin. Thus, even Batavia's man Cornelis Breekpot, observing the port of Cochin and its importance as an important trading port which attracted many merchants, realised that the VOC could earn profits by freeing trade and earning from taxing the traders, in short by turning Fort Cochin into a facilitating commercial service centre for the benefit of those who formerly were seen as the VOC's competitors.

A Re-assessment

Having seen two opposing viewpoints, one held by De Jong and Weyerman, both closely connected to Malabar and advocating to secure the company's future by increasing income from land, and the other of Schreuder and Breekpot, who reflected ideas current in Batavia, it would be interesting to see how Malabar faired in the next two decades after Breekpot left Malabar in 1769. In the following paragraphs we will get to know the opinion of his successors, Adriaan Moens and Johan Gerard van Angelbeek and in the light of information from them about Malabar, we will re-assess the company's presence and functioning there. This discussion will help us analyse further Breekpot's standpoint and the differences of opinion and policy brought about by the conflict of interest between the servants of the company at Cochin and Batavia.

Breekpot, as we know, was succeeded by Christiaan Lodewijk Senff who arrived in 1770 from Surat. On his way down to Cochin from Surat where he had been serving as director, he looked into the landed interests of the company at Cannanur. After reaching Cochin, he laid claim of

[177] MvO Cornelis Breekpot, 27: dated 1768.
[178] See Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 3; Chart 2.

company's rights on the Canarin's bazaar and temple in Mattancheri, in order to prevent the Cochin raja from increasing the taxes. The reason was that increasing the tolls at Mattancheri would have affected trade and the cost of merchandise, as well as goods necessary for daily use for those living in Fort Cochin.[179] At that time, the company made sure that it played the role of an intermediate or mediator and thereby increased its status, jurisdiction and sovereign rights, even to the areas immediately outside the fort. In 1771, Senff sold Cannanur to the Ali Raja for Rs. 1,00,000. Only a part of this was paid and the rest remained as debt to the company. Ten years later, in April 1781, the Ali Raja owed to the company fl. 69,474-5 and to ex-commander Weyerman fl. 14,852-17 privately.[180] Senff stayed in Malabar only for two years, preferring to move out of Cochin and to settle down in Batavia. In 1771, he left Cochin and was replaced by the High Government by Adriaan Moens.

Adriaan Moens arrived at Cochin from Colombo. He spent the next ten years, from 1771 to 1781, as governor[181] of Malabar. Although he had not served there earlier, he had very well informed himself about the VOC's presence in Malabar and the various dynamics that were in play at that time. This can be judged from the fact that he began his memoir with the 1753 VOC-Travancore treaty of Mavelikara. He pointed out that this was a change in the company's system in Malabar, as now, for the first time a treaty had been made with a sovereign – the Travancore raja Martanda Varma – who promised to supply the VOC with pepper. Earlier, in the case of Cochin, the merchants inhabiting in the Cochin raja's dominion were obliged to do so, but the raja himself was under no obligation.

Moens was fully aware of the threat of Haidar Ali and devoted much attention to improving the company's relations with the numerous political chiefs in the region to be able to defend the fort and the region if needed. Moens' period of administration was marked by many ups and downs in Malabar politics, but one development which worried him and the other VOC officials most was the rumour, in 1774, that the Portuguese were harbouring plans to re-establish themselves in the area and Ceylon and that there were plans to re-conquer Malabar, as it had illegally been taken by the Dutch after ratification of a peace-treaty between the Netherlands and Portugal in 1663. This scared the people of Fort Cochin, as they received news of improvements at the *Estado da India's* capital at Goa concerning its naval and political administration.[182] Moens was aware that, after Mavelikara, the company had neither the economic nor political capital, in fact not even the military strength, to fight in Malabar. He further admitted that in face of the indigenous powers, military-wise the VOC was weak. [183]

Moens accepted that Malabar was not as profitable as expected and listed the sources of income as pepper, trade, revenue from the company's landed possessions and levy on tolls. He

[179] MvO Adriaan Moens, 124: dated 1781.
[180] MvO Adriaan Moens, 148-149: dated 1781.
[181] Moens kept the office as a governor, being an extra-ordinary member of the High Government.
[182] MvO Adriaan Moens, 101-103: dated 1781.
[183] MvO Adriaan Moens, 106: dated 1781.

admitted that pepper was not a successful monopoly.[184] He was also aware of the re-organising efforts within the company, and when word spread around about the imminent threat of the Portuguese, he was in direct communication with the Gentlemen XVII in Amsterdam on the matter. Engaging himself with the profitability of Malabar, Moens wrote that profits from Malabar were increasing. This could be deducted from the sales of cloves and the higher price fetched for sugar. Moens considered the sugar trade to be the 'true test' of the commercial prospects at Fort Cochin.[185] He was also hopeful of a change of system of operating in Malabar, at least in terms of pepper procurement, though he was aware that the VOC could not compete with other exporters. He suggested to Batavia that the company should by out the half of the tolls at Mattancheri due to the raja of Cochin. Moens argued that if the company imposed and collected the tolls, they could keep it low, in comparison to that levied by the raja and thereby promote trade and traders as well as keep the cost of living low. [186] This is again an indication of how he wanted the Dutch company to shift from the role of a trader to that of a revenue collector and fiscal administrator.

In his memoir Moens pays attention to the three small islands opposite Cranganur on the route to Azhikodu. These were important to protect Fort Cochin against an enemy coming from the north. Writing about land, he stated that the Moetoe and Coenoe Island belonged to the company and was leased for Rs. 1,150 per annum. In 1758, the Zamorin agreed to pay Rs. 65,000 as war expenses. More than half was paid till 1762, but Rs. 30,000 was still due and therefore the VOC had laid claims on the island.[187] As said above, Weyerman had brought these under the company's rule. In order to strengthen the company's control on these island, Moens got three stockades constructed on it. He wrote that these islands belonged to the company and should be protected from the Malabar chiefs.[188] Thus he is more positive and clear about VOC's interest and future course in Malabar and income from land than Breekpot. He also looked into the company's long term interests in Malabar. These islands were also strategically vital for the defense of Fort Cochin. While Batavia wrote constantly about cutting down the size of the establishment, the men on the spot continued with the implementation of their own ideas, as to what was necessary for the VOC there.

Since the company found it difficult to collect taxes regularly from the lands that it had brought under its control, Moens found a solution by asking the men of the raja of Cochin to collect the taxes and in return give a fixed amount to the company. Such an arrangement was

[184] MvO Adriaan Moens, 105-106: dated 1781.
[185] MvO Adriaan Moens, 217: dated 1781.
[186] MvO Adriaan Moens, 125: dated 1781.
[187] MvO Adriaan Moens, 116-118: dated 1781.
[188] MvO Adriaan Moens, 118-119: dated 1781.

made for Cusipally and Maprana.[189] The raja of Cochin acknowledged the honourable company as feudal lord and also paid the dues in rice.

In 1769, the 18 half-villages, brought under the management of the company at the time of the administration of De Jong, were returned by Commander Breekpot to the raja of Cochin.[190] This is yet another example of how Breekpot completely miscalculated the company's interest in Malabar and even damaged it, by returning the land that had already been brought under the VOC's control. Moens was well aware of this and therefore wrote a detailed account of the 18 half-villages so that his successors would know that the company's rights on the lands were justified and that the Cochin raja ought to give up his claims to the villages and the income from them.

Moens mentioned the lands in Edapally, also called Repolim, and the company's land in the Zamorin's territory. The Zamorin was the owner, but the company got the revenues. He also mentioned other lands in the Zamorin's territory from which the company got the revenues in return for the company's protection. The Zamorin and his successors had to protect the company's rights.[191] The company continued to give on lease the lands around Pappinivattam, some for periods of twenty years, others annually, whereby the lease-holder collected the taxes and paid to the company a fixed amount. Besides, taxes imposed on these lands through the decades, continued to be paid to the company.[192] Cranganur and the principalities of Cartamana and Airur, which had been under the company's protection since the early eighteenth century, also led to some profits from time to time, however minimal the amounts.[193] Moens advised that the company should continue to retain suzerainty with respect to these areas. In order to administer these lands effectively, Moens suggested that maps must be drawn demarcating the lands which belonged to the company. This would also enable the servants to gradually extend operations in the surrounding areas.[194] Thus, although Moens was also sent by the High Government, once in Malabar, he quickly realised the importance to gaining control over land and securing the company's landed assets there. He agreed to the policies of Cunes, De Jong and Weyerman and did his utmost to further their works. Disagreeing with Schreuder and Breekpot, he saw a safe future for the company, if it protected its landed interest.

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[189] MvO Adriaan Moens, 127-128: dated 1781. Cusipally belonged to Cochin raja and was mortgaged to the Company in 1762 by Weyerman for 300,000 Cochin fanums or Rs. 15,000. The Company was to enjoy revenue and administer the inhabitants. After some time the Company realised that it was difficult to collect taxes and therefore it was agreed that the raja's men would collect the taxes while the Company would get fixed annual income of Rs. 1,297-12-8 from it. The Company had received Maprana in 1717. The Belosta Nambiar was to pay the Company 3000 lbs. of rice in the husk annually. The Nambiar could not supply the rice. In 1758 he was ten years in arrears. That year the land was taken over by the Zamorin. And when Cochin raja and Travancore formed an alliance against him and won the land back, the VOC laid claims, as being the feudal lord of the estate.

[190] MvO Adriaan Moens, 127-128: dated 1781.

[191] MvO Adriaan Moens, 129, 133-134: dated 1781.

[192] MvO Adriaan Moens, 133-134 and 139: dated 1781.

[193] MvO Adriaan Moens, 137-138: dated 1781.

[194] MvO Adriaan Moens, 137-139: dated 1781.

The company's rights, power, position and privileges and thereby the nature of its presence can also be judged from the fact that in 1777 Moens provided a pension to the raja of Cranganur, when his lands had been occupied by Haidar Ali of Mysore. The chiefs of Airur and Cartamana happened to be in similar circumstances, of whom the chief of Cartamana also received a pension.[195] Thus, Moens confirmed the company's rights on lands introduced by Weyerman, but which had been refuted by Breekpot. He demonstrated that the company in Malabar acted as an lord of several principalities and took care of chiefs, who were chased off their lands.

As indicated, a more powerful king than any of those in Malabar, threatened this country. Writing on the possessions of the company, Moens mentions the forts and lands. Referring to Chettuvay, he stated that two stretches of land north and south of Pappinivattam, were taken by Haidar Ali Khan in 1776. For Moens, Cochin, Quilon, and Cranganur were important forts, of which he states that Fort Cochin was in a poor state.[196] Breekpot had done little to repair the latter fort. In fact, while former commanders had written to Batavia about the poor state of Fort Cochin, Breekpot wrote to Batavia that they had been misinformed, and that the fort only needed minor repairs. This once more confirms that Breekpot was playing second fiddle to Batavia and that his actions were not in the best interest of Malabar Command, least the inhabitants of Fort Cochin. Moens paid a lot of attention to the fort, got it repaired and strengthened it with a view to an attack by Haidar Ali. But since Cranganur was strong, Haidar Ali did not go beyond it. The fort of Cranganur and the stronghold of Azhikodu now served as a line of defence for Travancore, which in the past year had expanded considerably to the north. Moens thought that had it not been for these two VOC strongholds, Haidar Ali would have taken the whole of Malabar. He recommended that both Cochin and Cranganur should be repaired annually.[197]

To end his memoir, Moens stated that, 'the lands of the company taken together make-up a considerable part of the possessions'. He much regretted that the lands of the company had not been consolidated in the past and that not sufficient attention had been given to improving the company's landed assets. As a result of this, the company's lands lay scattered in the territories of Travancore and Cochin. He listed all the gardens and landed estates of the company as of 1780, which added up to 9 islands and 69 gardens.[198] Comparing this with the company's assets as of 1743, it is clear that new additions to the company's landed assets had been made. A list of this year only mentions the lands around Pappinivattam. Together with the leases and taxes on these lands, the other sources of income of the Malabar Command not related to company's trade, made up 38 % of the gross profit in the year 1779-1780. [199]

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[195] MvO Adriaan Moens, 140-142: dated 1781.
[196] MvO Adriaan Moens, 204-205: dated 1781.
[197] MvO Adriaan Moens, 204-205: dated 1781.
[198] MvO Adriaan Moens, 207-208, especially 207: dated 1781.
[199] P. Groot, Selections from the Records of the Madras Government: Dutch Records no. 9. Extracts from General Inventories and Establishment Lists of the years 1743, 1761 and 1780 (Madras: Government Press,

Similarly, the memoir of Commander Johan Gerard van Angelbeek (1781-1791), to his successor Van Spall is flooded with references to jurisdictions and land leases. A large part of it deals with the position of indigenous or Eurasian Christians in and around Cochin and the right of the company to administer them and the territories in which they lived. There are detailed references to numerous treaties signed with the rajas of Cochin about jurisdiction and taxation rights over the Christian population of Malabar.[200]

Thus we see that the VOC's Malabar Command underwent a transformation between 1750 and 1784. The men on the spot, Frederic Cunes, De Jong and Weyerman were advocates of landed wealth. Batavia's men Schreuder and Breekpot were sent by the High Government to put a check on the developments in Malabar. As a reassessment shows, later Commanders Senff, Moens and Van Angelbeek again agreed to the policy of the men on the spot, in terms of increasing the company's landed assets on the coast. The company's presence gradually underwent a metamorphosis. The Dutch had come to Cochin as traders but later evolved as part-time landlords. Trade continued, but compared with the value in the end of the seventeenth century, in the second half of the eighteenth century more income was generated by non-trading sources, partly by bringing land under the company's control and partly by imposing taxes. The changing appearances of the VOC in Cochin from 'merchant-warrior' or trader to landlord are evidence of this.

2.4 Conclusion

Since the main purpose of the above exercise was to see how the company and the people of Fort Cochin fared during the year 1750-1784, and to re-define the nature of the VOC in Cochin, it can be concluded that the VOC in Malabar underwent significant change during the period.

Between 1750 and 1784, the EIC emerged as the most powerful European power in India. After the battle of Plassey in the north in 1757 and the battle of Wandiwash in the south in 1760, it became clear that other European powers on the subcontinent could not match the EIC's economic and military might. The Dutch in Malabar realised the rapid expansion of the EIC in the north would soon pose a threat to them.

There was a change in style of operation on the coast, which was marked by the 1753 treaty with Travancore. While earlier treaties and contracts enabled the VOC to procure pepper, offered by merchants serving as middle men, now fixed amounts of pepper promised by the raja of Travancore were to reach the company's warehouses. There were other possibilities for income

1909), 16-20. For the 1781 list see Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 2: Memorandum of gardens and lands belonging to the Company on the coast of Malabar. Non-trade income fl. 83,136, gross profit 1779-80 fl. 217,639, MvO Adriaan Moens, 227-228: dated 1781. For gross profit see Appendix to Chapter Two, Table 3.

[200] MvO Van Angelbeek, 3-8: dated 1793.

generation in Malabar, but Batavia disallowed these as it remained pepper monopoly centred. To deal with the growing competition, servants of the company at Fort Cochin suggested changes in the policies of the VOC on the coast. Yet, there were differences of opinion and policy and conflicts of interests between the servants of the company in the Malabar Command and the High Government at Batavia. In some instances, even the Gentlemen XVII had an opinion or expectation different from that of the Malabar Command and Batavia. The conflict became clear, when Batavia did not follow the suggestions of the commanders at Cochin about exploiting the emporium nature of the port and harnessing income from taxation at the port. There was a possibility for the VOC to indulging in emporium trade itself rather than just focussing on procurement of pepper, but the High Government declined it, preferring to follow a policy that was beneficial to Batavia.

In sheer numbers there was a remarkable growth in the non-trade income of the Malabar Command in the first half of the eighteenth century, and a stabilisation in the period 1750-1784. Being in 1697 only fl. 9,976, or five percent of the gross profit in that year, it rose to fl. 70,516 in 1755-56, or 31 percent of the gross profit. In 1779-80 it added up to fl. 83,136, or 38 percent of the gross profit. The men on the spot, like Frederic Cunes, Casparus de Jong and Godefridus Weyerman changed the functioning of the company by shifting the focus of operation from pepper to land. The efforts of De Jong and Weyerman led the company to extend its fiscal administration far beyond the walls of Fort Cochin. By bringing more and more land under the company's control and taking over fiscal administration, they were making their presence in Malabar concrete and reaching beyond their coastal presence, and strengthening their sense of belonging to the land. By bringing land under the purview of the company, its presence in Malabar became more permanent. With these efforts, income from land became more important than in the seventeenth century. The company thus underwent a metamorphosis from a pacified merchant-warrior and emporialist landlord, imposing and collecting excises, customs and taxes, and claiming other rights on land.

The differences in opinion between the commanders of Malabar and Batavia reflect an opposition between a system of exploitation based on trade, versus a new colonial model based on the taxation of land and land occupation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOCIAL WORLD OF FORT COCHIN

Whoever who does not want to die, let him carve his name here;
In order to remain living even after his death;
If not in the roots, let it be in the trunk,
For it is out of the roots that the tree has got its life.
Marriage Book, Fort Cochin.[1]

These telling and true to life lines, taken from the front page of a marriage book maintained in Fort Cochin, acquaint us with a view of the legal and moral relationship of marriage, which mostly leads to establishment of affinal ties and creation of progeny. While family ties often become a system of support, marriage and the birth of offspring lead to extension of family networks, as well as the continuation of family names. The institution of marriage and the role it played in the lives of the VOC servants is dealt with here. This chapter basically looks into the social and economic relationships of the company servants in Fort Cochin. Individuals, institutions and daily life there are the main themes in this chapter.

As we have already seen in the previous chapters, Fort Cochin and the region around formed one geographic and economic entity. Yet, the people who inhabited the region, were divided into two distinct political domains: the ones living within the walls, namely the company servants, and their dependents, and those living outside the fort walls in Mattancheri, Vaipin Island, Bolgatty Island and other surrounding areas, that is, the so called indigenous people or local people of Malabar. Politically, the realm of the raja of Cochin was separated from that of the VOC. In principle, Dutch jurisdiction was limited to Fort Cochin, but traditionally it extended to the Roman Catholics on the coast.[2]

As established in the previous chapter, the politics and the economics of the VOC in Malabar were not limited to Fort Cochin. The men on spot – in Fort Cochin – were well aware of how to

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[1] '*Die niet sterven wil laat hier zijn naam inschrijve; Opdat hij na zijn dood nog in het leeven blijve; Is 't niet in de wortel, 't mag zijn in de stam; Want 't leeven van de boom is dat, dat uijt de wortel kwam*'. TSA DR 1509, Marriage register, 1799-1801.

[2] According to the 1663 Treaty between the VOC and the Cochin Raja, the Dutch inherited from the Portuguese the duty to protect all Roman Catholics who lived along the coast, and therefore the Company was the sole owner of the right to try them in courts of law. The Syrian or St. Thomas Christian were not under the VOC jurisdiction. They were always, even at the time of the Portuguese, subjects of the regional chiefs. In the case of Cochin, they were subjects of the Cochin Raja. CDNI, II, 244-45. MvO Adriaan Moens, 180: dated 1781.

deal with and adjust to the constantly changing political and economic environment of Malabar. They did so by shifting their focus on earning profit for the company, from the mercantile domain, to harnessing income from land. In this chapter, first, we will go into the question to as to what defined Fort Cochin and what were its main social and cultural characteristics. How far did they reach beyond the fort's walls? Secondly, did the larger Malabar littoral milieu have an effect upon fort society?

In order to do this, first the question as to what were the main social components of this fortified enclave must be answered. Keeping our primary aim in mind, the following three main sections deal with the population composition of Fort Cochin, the daily social and economic life there, and the public institutions that were established by the company for the benefit and service of the company servants. We shall also examine the VOC as an administrative organisation, which governed Fort Cochin to maintain order among the fort's inhabitants. To test the second part of the query – the one about the effect of the larger Malabar milieu upon the Fort Cochin society – it would be desirable to undertake an equally detailed study of the worlds outside Fort Cochin. However, paucity of sources and the larger goal of the research project compels one to remain focussed on Fort Cochin and unearth the outside influences as much as possible by studying what is happening within the walls. Thus, the testing of my second question is done in conjunction with the first and does not form a separate study.

The people living in Fort Cochin and those living outside may have interacted with each other at many different levels: personal, commercial and legal. Through incidents in daily lives, culled from a quagmire of data gathered from the civil and criminal cases, wills, estate papers, papers created by public institutions like the church, hospital records, orphan board etc., one gets a glimpse of episodes in the day-to-day life and working of numerous individuals and institutions present in Fort Cochin. This shows that although the people were divided into two distinct physical and legal spaces, with distinct administrative set ups, they were connected to and interacted with each other in several ways. Differences, interactions and social distances among the various groups of people, in and around Fort Cochin, as well as some instances of social and commercial networks and interdependence will be the thread that will guide us through the 'social world of Fort Cochin'.[3]

To unravel the unique characteristics of this social world, chronology has been temporarily abandoned and replaced instead by individuals, institutions and incidents which enable us to envision Fort Cochin as it was during the decades between the 1750s and the 1790s. To achieve this, a number of individuals and public institutions of Fort Cochin are brought forward. An enquiry into these institutions and the individuals using them leads to conclusions about finer aspects of the then contemporary social scenario. Administrative practices of the VOC in the

[3] The phrase has been borrowed from Jean Gelman Taylor's '*The Social World of Batavia*'. Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social world of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

management of its public institutions and the various levels of interactions and distances among the groups of people connected to Fort Cochin are analysed. Through the different levels, types, and contexts of networks and interaction between the people living inside and outside Fort Cochin, the defining features of the place will become clear.

3.1 Mestizos and Merchants

Since this section deals with "Mestizos and Merchants", let me first make clear what I mean by the two terms. Owing to the Portuguese heritage, the Malabar Coast, as a consequence of centuries of miscegenation, had many people of mixed European and Asiatic parentage (Eurasians) referred to by the Portuguese as *Mestiços*. In 1580, the Italian Jesuit, Padre Alexandre Valinano, writing on the population of Portuguese India, distinguished the categories of *reinol* (Europe-born Portuguese), *castiços* (Portuguese born in India of pure European parentage), *Mestiços*, (born of a European father and a Eurasian mother), and the indigenous pure-bred Indians. In the seventeenth century, the term *castiço* came to be applied to Portuguese born in India without any infusion of Asian blood, and the term *mestiço* to anyone who had a European ancestor, however remote.[4] Thus the classification was based both on place of birth and on ethnic profile.

The Dutch in Fort Cochin used a similar system, whereby a *mestizo*, in Dutch, meant a person of mixed European and non-European (Asian) parentage.[5] *Castizo*, when prefixed with the word 'white', denoted Asia-born persons of pure European parentage. The category of 'white castizo' is a mysterious one and probably used only in Malabar.[6] When the VOC established its presence on the Malabar Coast, many persons of mixed European and Asian descent were already present on the coast. The vestiges of this Luso-Indian world, as we shall see, were traceable in Malabar even in the eighteenth century. Owing to their Christian heritage and the privileges the mestiços enjoyed during the time of the Portuguese, they were allowed to live inside Fort Cochin. Because of their Portuguese connection, mestizo society was predominantly Roman Catholic. They tended to live in clusters around the Dutch settlements. By virtue of their religion, they came under Dutch jurisdiction. While some mestizos lived inside the fort and others outside, Malabar merchants consisting of Jews, Chetties, Konkani merchants and others, were a common sight at

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[4] C. R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire 1415-1825* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 62-63.

[5] Plural *Mestizos* or *Mestizen*; feminine *Mestiza*. Marianne Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India' (MA thesis: Leiden University, 1992), 32.

[6] Derived from the Portuguese *castiços*, plural *castizos* or c*astizen*; feminine c*astiza*. The term 'w*hite castizos*' appears only in the year 1790. See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 1, Table 1. As far as I have been able to ascertain, from readings about Batavia, Galle and Colombo, the categorization 'w*hite castizo*' did not exist in these places. The word castizo is used often but that meant a person of mixed European and Asian parentage (European father and Mestizo mother). Lodewijk Wagenaar, *Galle: VOC-vestiging in Ceylon* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994), 48 and Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, p. xix.

Calvetty, the port of Cochin adjoining the fort walls. The port of Cochin was the main space where economic transactions took place among the numerous foreign and indigenous merchants.

In this section, it is argued that mestizo women and Malabar merchants were the agents through whom the servants of the company in Fort Cochin formed social and economic networks, which aided their adaptation to the Malabar social and economic milieu. The various roles of mestizos and merchants in Fort Cochin will be analysed. In the first subsection details are given about the households and family units in Fort Cochin. In the second subsection titled 'Servants of the Company', new data are brought out, firstly, on the strength of company employees in the second half of the eighteenth century and, secondly, on the composition and recruitment of these employees. Quantitative data about households, family units, and servants of the company bring out the different groups of people who were residents of the fort and the composition of the company personnel there. In the third subsection, 'Daughters, Wives and Widows' attention is paid to the female section of the population.

It would be appropriate to add a short note here on the record-keeping practices of the Malabar Command. Reading the archival materials, which were written inside Fort Cochin by the VOC servants in the second half of the eighteenth century for the purpose of administration of the fort, one finds categorizations of people into groups such as Europeans, white castizos, mestizos, free indigenous persons and slaves. This categorization appears in the records of the house rolls.[7] Other category names or identity markers used in civil and criminal case papers, wills and other papers were St. Thomas Christians, Jews, Muslims, Baniyas, Canarins[8], and Chetties. Once in a while, groupings like free-burghers[9], lascars (*Lascorins*)[10] and toepasses[11] were also mentioned. The categorization label 'indigenous', when used in reference to inhabitants of Fort Cochin, denoted toepasses, as Hindus, Jews or Muslims did not live inside the fort.

This official system of categorizing of people in the records and impressions about the non-VOC people by VOC officials give clues to the way the VOC officials perceived themselves within Fort Cochin, as well as how they perceived others who were not directly connected to the company. Information collected on the basis of this categorization and classification, as we shall see further on, was useful for the company in other administrative instances as well. These

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[7] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 70-72.

[8] The term was used indiscriminately for all people, Hindus as well as converted Christians, who came from the Canara Coast. The Portuguese used the word '*Canarim*'. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, 84-85. The so called Canara merchants were actually Konkan Brahmins, like Babuli Pandit who had settled in Cochin for the purpose of trade.

[9] *Vrijburgers* or free-citizens, also sometimes referred to as *Dutch burghers*, specially in the context of Ceylon, were either children of VOC servants born in Asia, and living within a VOC establishment, or a former Company servant, who continued living in the VOC jurisdiction or just outside it, but using the VOC establishment. The Free-burghers had a protected status in contrast to the Mestizos and the indigenous people. As stated earlier, I use the word 'free-burghers' to refer to such persons.

[10] According to Hobson-Jobson, *lascar*, is originally from Persian *lashkar*, 'an army', 'a camp'. Hobson-Jobson, 507-509. It basically means someone of indigenous origin who served in the army of the European companies. The Dutch used the words *laskorijns* or *laskaren*.

[11] For discussion on toepasses, see Chapter One, specially section 1.3 The Peoples in and around Fort Cochin.

identity markers were created and used by company officials in their day-to-day working. This is an indication that there were ideas of differences based on racial, ethnic, and religious lines among the VOC servants. Such categorizations were based on perceived concepts of difference and social stratifications among the people who lived and frequented the fort. Strengthened by official identity markings, these ideas of differences, supported by official practice, played upon the popular consciousness of the people. Naturally, among the VOC servants there was also a hierarchical stratification based on ranks and title and their corresponding salaries. Servants of the company were not one homogeneous group, but fragmented on the basis of hierarchical differences.

An interesting aspect of social interaction is always how people perceive each other. Governor Adriaan Moens, who spent over a decade in Malabar, described the coast's inhabitants as consisting of 'natives of the country and of foreigners. The native inhabitants are called Malabaris and are again divided into heathens and Christians'. The Christians, according to Moens, were further divided into the old and the new Christians. The old Christians were the St. Thomas or Syrian Christians, while the new Christians were the Roman Catholics. The foreigners, according to Moens, 'consisted of the Protestant Christians, Jews, Moors and Heathens'.[12] Thus, the Dutch considered the Roman Catholics of the coast as indigenous while non-Malabar Hindus and Muslims were considered foreigners. This categorization of people into 'indigenous' and 'foreign' by Moens was again based on ideas of perceived differences. The Jews, had been in Malabar for centuries, were also considered by the Dutch to be belonging to the 'foreign' element. This description by Moens can be taken as an example of the general social ranking as perceived by the Dutch.

Similarly, writing about the toepas community, Governor Moens stated, that they followed Christianity of the Roman Catholic version. They lived around Cochin and along the coast. Their ancestors had been attached to the Portuguese. Some of the toepasses had been slaves of Portuguese persons, and had later been emancipated. Others were born from the unions between Portuguese men and indigenous women. According to Moens, they rather belonged to the native than to the foreign element. He described them as 'having noble names, adopted from their foreign masters, speaking low Portuguese, and wearing European style clothes complete with a hat, but that they went bare-footed. They follow many different professions: carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths etc. Many are cultivators of the land, while others are enlisted in the company's service as soldiers'. Making fun of them, he wrote that, 'one sees them quite in their element when the Portuguese arrive in Cochin from Goa'. Moens did not trust their abilities in the field, fighting in times of war, but states that they were usable in the garrison on sentry duty.[13] These perceptions of differences often influenced, as we shall see, administrative practices and policies of the VOC in Fort Cochin.

[12] MvO Adriaan Moens, 171, 181, 190: dated 1781.
[13] MvO Adriaan Moens, 188-189: dated 1781.

Households and Family Units

In this subsection the general composition of the population of Fort Cochin in the second half of the eighteenth century will be discussed. On average, there were about 200 households in Fort Cochin with about 2000 people living inside the fort walls. Between 1760 and 1790 the population of Fort Cochin had grown.[14] The major additions consisted of households of one to ten persons. These medium-sized households made up most of the houses in Fort Cochin. Most households had earning members who were, at least partially, economically dependent on the Dutch company.

A striking feature of Fort Cochin society is the number of slaves. As a multiracial group, slaves formed more than half of the population.[15] The second in numerical strength were the servants of the company, who were either Europeans or, as in the case of 1790, white castizo. The third in number were the indigenous people and the fourth were the mestizos.[16] Overall, Europeans were a minority and European women a rarity. Consequently, Fort Cochin was not exclusively a European settlement, but a mixed society. The population of Fort Cochin included Europeans, Eurasians, and indigenous people.

A household was not the same as a family unit. A household would include servants, slaves and indigenous people and minor wards, that is, those living in the house, but most probably sired by the male head of the household and born to female slaves.[17] Orphan children and illegal offspring were considered kin and lived in the household as family members. While families consisted of only related members, households could consist of family units and extended family members, like brothers-in-law, sisters, other free women, unrelated minor children, male and female slaves, slave boys and girls, and servants. Family units normally consisted of father, mother, grandparents, children and stepchildren from either previous or present marriages of either partner. The absence of European women in itself is an important indication of family life in Fort Cochin. Mestizo women as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters were the norm, and therefore automatically made the family unit – the natural and fundamental group unit of society – into a multi-ethnic one. The head of the family and chief bread earner was the father, although the mother also contributed to the family's income by bringing in her inheritance. Some families had two wage-earning members – father and his son – both employed by the VOC. The

[14] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 1, Table 1 and Table 7.
[15] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 8 and Table 9.
[16] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 1 and Chart 1.
[17] Indigenous (*Inboorlingen/ inborelingen)* were local or indigenous children. Minor wards (*Opvoedelingen)* were children who had been taken into the household for their education and upbringing. In all probability these were children from concubines or female slaves fathered by the male head of the family, or illegitimate orphan children of Company servants. When legitimised by public announcement, they became part of the families, otherwise they continued as slaves.

Daimichen family, whom we shall meet later, is an example of this phenomenon. I refer to them as a 'VOC-families'.

A practice of the VOC administration was to distinguish three categories of households or estates. All estates were valued and fell into one of the three groupings: those that were valued less than 400 *rijksdaalders* (*ryxds*), those less than 2000 ryxds, and those worth more than 2000 ryxds. These can be termed as lower-, middle-, and high-class income or wealth groups. A rough estimate can be made that persons with estates valued less than 400 ryxds were mostly sailors and soldiers living in ship cabins or in the barracks of Fort Cochin. Those in the middle range were mostly of the rank of merchants and those with estates valued at more than 2000 ryxds were the highest office holders like commanders and governors, although some senior merchants like Johan Adam Cellarius, a public prosecutor, amassed wealth much beyond what his company salary would have made possible. He was born in Ulm (Germany) and joined the VOC as corporal. With promotions he became the public prosecutor of Cochin and set up a large household in Fort Cochin.[18] His estate, at the time of his death was valued much beyond the 2000 ryxds mark. The value of the estates of persons writing their wills, or of deceased persons, was an indicator of wealth and status. As we shall see in another section, material culture was linked to wealth and status.

The social hierarchies maintained by the VOC are reflected in yet another set of VOC records. The registers of households were prepared placing – rank- and title-wise – the highest VOC servant at the top, and counting down the ladder with the widows of former servants or indigenous people last.[19] Status and respectability apparently were derived from rank and title. In the register of the households, the inhabitants were categorised into five groups. These were Europeans, castizos, mestizos, indigenous people and slaves. Slaves belonged to two groups: the mestizos, and the indigenous. Yet, they were differentiated on the basis of their legal standing, that is, their bonded status, which distinguished them from free persons, was taken into consideration, and therefore mestizo and indigenous slaves were categorised together.[20]

Among the inhabitants of Fort Cochin there were many indigenous people. Most of these were toepasses, who, being Roman Catholics had been allowed to set up hearth within the walls. They were mostly hired labourers and household servants and therefore little information is available about them from the company records. Together, this potpourri of Europeans, mestizos, indigenous people and slaves formed the racial make-up of Fort Cochin.

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[18] TSA DR 1557, Papers concerning the estate of J. A. Cellarius. Legal Records, 1803. Unless otherwise stated, all information on Cellarius is from this bundle.

[19] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 36.

[20] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 1. Similar household records were also maintained in VOC fortified establishments, of which only a few have been studied (Cape Town, Galle, Colombo and Batavia). The categorizations were naturally different depending upon the components of the larger local society. For a discussion on the population of Colombo see G. Knaap, 'Europeans, Mestizos and slaves: the population of Colombo at the end of the seventeenth century', *Itinerario*, Vol. V, (2/1981), 84-101. Knaap states that the reasons for maintaining such records by the VOC are unknown. He ascribes this practice to administrative "instinct" of the VOC.

As stated earlier, slaves formed more than fifty percent of the fort population.[21] Most slaves and servants were part of the domestic environment, although the company itself also owned and traded in slaves. As they had no rights and no legal entity and were seen as commodities owned, bought and sold by free men and women, it is difficult to find information regarding their personal lives. They did not leave behind testimonies, wills or property papers. Therefore, it is not possible to examine their lives separately from that of their masters and mistresses.

The relationship between the master and the slave was one of interdependence, yet often marred by violence or attempts of the latter to break away and become free standing. Nonetheless, affection and deep-running family loyalties between the two also occurred. If not involved in the domestic scene slaves were assistants to their masters in their private businesses or worked the fields and lands. Most of the slaves carried Christian names or were named after the days of the week, months of the year or after planets.[22] They had no surnames, as their family relations were not recognised legally by the VOC administration.

Peter Isaaks, a mestizo who was employed by the company at the rank of junior merchant, and who held the post of trade officer and was married to an indigenous woman, owned 22 slaves.[23] Another person, most probably a trader in slaves, held in his estate 7 men, 2 boys, 10 women and 1 girl, in total 20 slaves. He had two houses, one inside and the other outside the fort.[24] He probably used the house outside for procuring slaves from the hinterland and the one inside for selling them to the inhabitants of the fort.

The dynamics of the master-slave relationship was always one of rights and obligations, and of ownership and subservience between the powerful and the powerless. Slaves were also an asset used to show off status and wealth, an investment, which could be sold on the market to raise cash when needed, and they were commodities of exchange and items of trade.[25] Their owners also gave slaves as gifts to their children so that the children could enjoy the loyalty, affection and service of the slaves who had been connected to the family for a generation or more. Slaves, as commodities, were also gifted or donated to other people. An example from 1758 is offered by the case of Hendrik Dirksz., a book-keeper, who gave the slave boy Marten as a gift to junior surgeon Bernardus Regter.[26]

The company itself was a trader in slaves. There were always demands for slaves in Ceylon and Batavia, which were met from time to time by exporting slaves from Malabar. Whenever the demand could not be fulfilled, the reason given by the officials in Malabar was the death of slaves or the difficulty in procuring them due to small-pox. Many of the Malabar slaves also found their

[21] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 1 and Table 8.
[22] This I gather from reading of wills whereby owners, at the time of their death and while writing their will, often freed their loyal and long serving slaves.
[23] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 52.
[24]TSA DR 690, Wills, Legal Records, 1761-1764.
[25] NA The Hague, VOC 2776. Resolutions.
[26] TSA DR 615, Wills etc., Legal Records, 1757-1760. Donation dated 10th January 1758.

way to Cape Town, Ceylon, Batavia and other parts of VOC-Asia as they travelled with their masters.

Households of the low-income group included hired skilled and unskilled day labourers, sailors, soldiers, sergeants, household servants etc. Not all of these were VOC employees. Many were hired temporarily at the shipbuilding yard or were takrn on to do seasonal works, like dredging moats around the fort, repairing fortification and houses etc. This class was very mobile, living and working both in and outside the fort. The itinerant nature of their occupation made them move from place to place in the VOC web of forts, warehouses and guard posts on the Malabar Coast.

The middle-income group households comprised such employees of the VOC such as translators, surgeons, writers (clerks), engineers, assistants to shipwrights, the town inn-keeper, etc. In the 1750s, the captain of the carpenters and masons Anthony van der Does, surgeon Louis Quentin Martinsart, writer-cum-translator Simon van Tongeren and Jan Pullardt, the glassmaker would have belonged to this group.[27] They all lived in Fort Cochin. An example of a middle-level military servant of the company would be Lieutenant military Philippus van der Cruissen and his wife Maria Gosenson. They had a house on the *Heerenstraat*. Their household included 10 slaves one of whom was a young boy called *Pas-op*! (literally, 'take care').Van der Cruissen's parents-in law were also relatively rich.[28]

Another representative example of a middle-income group household is that of Andreas Heinrich Schacht, the first sworn clerk of the political council and the secretary to the judicial council. In 1793, he gave his daughter Carolina two slaves. One was a girl called Roza and the other a boy called August.[29] Schacht was married to Cochin-born Maria Francina Lucasz. He was fairly well-to-do and enjoyed a certain power and a respectable position within Fort Cochin. His household consisted of numerous slaves, the ownership of whom could be a matter of show of wealth and status. His wife Maria's, parents were Dionysius Lucasz. and Johanna Elisabeth Exspeel. Lucasz. was living in Fort Cochin as a free-burgher. He had earlier served the VOC as captain of the White Citizens. The Schacht family was good friends of the family of Jan Willem Hendrik van Rossum, public prosecutor with the rank of merchant

The commander or governor's household – which would be an elite or high-income group household – was a much larger household with numerous slaves and servants and located in the best part of the fort. In the 1790s, Governor Van Angelbeek had 71 slaves.[30] This was exceptional and it can be speculated that not all of them were employed in his household within Fort Cochin. Many must have been lent out to others to work in the gardens and plantations.

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[27] TSA DR 615, Wills etc., Legal Records, 1757-1760. Will of Van der Does dated 16th September 1759.
[28] TSA DR 690, Wills etc., Legal Records, 1761-1764.
[29] TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794. Will dated 9th June 1792.
[30] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 52.

Public prosecutor Johan Adam Cellarius was another such member of the elite of Fort Cochin. The Cellarius family lived in a big house in the *Rozenstraat*. The street still exists in Cochin and was in the nicer part of the fort near the Esplanade and adjoining St. Francis Church, the Dutch Reformed Church of Fort Cochin. The house was bought in 1786 for Rs. 3700 from Jacobus Eversdijck, also a VOC servant. The Cellarius household consisted of J.A. Cellarius, his wife, their 3 children – 2 sons and a daughter – and 10 slaves: 4 boys and 6 girls. His estate papers show that he was very well-to-do merchant settled in Cochin with family, house and slaves, a huge library and a variety of things in his house and kitchen. He wore white and black satin and silk trousers and his house had red bedlinen.

Fort Cochin society was hierarchical and consisted of several economic strata, which were marked or determined by political and legal rights set by the VOC. For example, Europeans enjoyed far more privileges than the indigenous people. Power, status and respectability matched the location and size of one's houses, clothes, number of slaves, etc. Patronising the religion favoured by the company, by donating money to the church, adhering to its rituals at the time of baptism, marriage or death, or attending the Sunday morning service, also marked one's place in the social hierarchy. Being a European company servant meant enjoying a certain degree of superiority over those who were local-born.

Naturally the stratification was not permanent and in watertight compartments, but a variable and fluid one. By virtue of his wealth, a surgeon could well join the elite ranks, while a senior merchant by virtue of his drinking and brawling lifestyle with little savings and not much material wealth in his house could slide down the status ladder.

Servants of the Company

In this subsection the servants of the VOC are discussed in more detail. New data on the composition of the personnel in Fort Cochin will lead us to new conclusions about the composition of the company's personnel in the second half of the eighteenth century. Fort Cochin was chiefly meant for the servants of the company and their families. Both civil and military servants of all ranks were supposed to live inside the fort. We have earlier met some of these men like Commander Godefridus Weyerman who was Gulik-born, and Commander Jan Lambertus van Spall who was Utrecht-born. In addition, we shall now meet other company servants like Lübeck-born Johan Andries Daimichen, Ulm-born Johan Adam Cellarius, Oxheim-born Carel Baron von Ochsee and Heidelberg-born Frans Josef von Wrede.[31]

[31] It is only a co-incidence here that these VOC servants of Fort Cochin were born in what is now Germany. In fact, there were so many German immigrants to the Netherlands – and most of them went to Asia – that The Netherlands was called the graveyard of Germany. Jan Lucassen, 'The Netherlands, the Dutch and Long-Distance Migration in the Late Sixteenth to Early Nineteenth Centuries' in Nicholas Canny, *Europeans on the Move: Studies on Euroepan Migration, 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

The VOC followed certain criteria for recruiting its personnel. Each chamber recruited and paid its own servants. Salaries were paid out in the Netherlands. At the place of posting, the servants received living expenses. For locally recruited personnel,[32] a category of servants we will examine in detail, and for those who decided to stay on in Asia as free-burgher, there was a salary office in Batavia. Promotions, if not granted by the Gentlemen XVII or by the High Government at Batavia, were usually local decisions, which had to be approved by those authorities. From time to time, the Gentlemen XVII and the High Government passed resolutions on matters of recruitment and promotions, which served as guidelines for hiring men to serve the company. The VOC much preferred to hire Dutch citizens rather than foreigners. Roman Catholics and people who had gone bankrupt were avoided. Men who had been to the punishment houses or reforming homes were likewise not to be recruited either. Young boys of age 13 and above, who claimed not to have the above-mentioned vices were eligible for recruitment. In 1777, the Gentlemen XVII decided that persons of 20 or more years of age could be considered for the rank of junior merchant.[33] Whatever their social and economic background might have been in Europe, once in Asia they were labelled as European servants of the company, which gave them a certain privileged position and became part of their identity.

All servants of the company belonged either to the mercantile or the military service. Mercantile servants were either distinguished as qualified and non-qualified personnel. All qualified personnel had rank and post (designation).[34] There were also servants who took care of the medical and ecclesiastical needs of the company servants in Asia. All company employees enjoyed a certain amount of flexibility; they could shift from the military to the mercantile services, though a move the other way rarely happened. Three Cochin commanders, Abraham Cornelis de la Haye, Godefridus Weyerman and Christian Lodewijk Senff, had joined the VOC as soldiers and later changed to the mercantile service.

Employees were identified by rank and post held. In all official papers the names of VOC servants were followed or preceded by their post and rank. In case of personal documents like a will, if the person was of European origin or carried the status of being a European, his or her name was, as a rule, followed by the place of birth, or residence of his parents and other relatives, that is, the place he hailed from in Europe. If he was a white castizo, his place of birth in Malabar was mentioned. Names of women were followed by the name, post and rank of their present or former husbands. Hierarchies were connected to ranking in the company. Both rank and post were important in determining status.

1994), 153-191. Other works also write about Germans in service of the VOC. Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997).

[32] See Chapter One for details on '*indienst*'.

[33] F. Lequin, 'Het personeel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Azië in de achttiende eeuw, meer in het bijzonder in de vestiging Bengalen', 2 volumes (Diss., Leiden University, 1982), 42.

[34] Stapel and Van Boetzelaer van Asperen en Dubbeldam (eds.), *Beschrijvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie door Pieter van Dam*, ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1927), Eerste Boek, Deel 1, 554-555.

Before entering into a discussion about the composition of the VOC employees in the Malabar Command and specifically in Fort Cochin, it would be worthwhile to note that the company had started to recruit men in Asia to serve its offices there. Although this aspect of the VOC in Asia is hardly researched, local recruitment had been in practice for some time. This is gathered from a rather striking fact that in 1718, a proclamation was passed in Batavia that the salaries of servants of the Company who had been born and appointed in Asia, could be paid out there.[35] This proves that local recruitment had started around then and arrangements had to be made for the payment of their salaries. It would be correct to assume that these recruitments referred to persons who were born in Asia to European parents. In 1742, another proclamation stated that local appointments could only be made if the people were willing to fulfil their duties 'in person'.[36] This edict was a prohibition on appointments whereby, the holder of the post would hire another person to do the work, and not be present himself to do it. Although this is a negative proof that there were local recruitments, it does throw light on the practice. A couple of decades later, another edict on the issue was passed. It approved that mestizen and castizen could be appointed as sailors in lower ranks on ships and vessels.[37] We have already seen in the first chapter that locally recruited persons were not limited to the lower ranks and that the majority of the qualified personnel in Cochin were also locally recruited.[38]

In the years 1750 and 1755, as we saw in the first chapter, the VOC in Fort Cochin had on its pay-roll many men who were locally recruited.[39] In 1750, the entire Malabar Command had 1153 personnel. Of these, 803 were Europeans while 350 mestizos and toepasses. Fort Cochin in that year had 675 employees, 219 of whom were mestizos or toepasses.[40] Of the 675 employees, 324 were locally recruited. Through the decades, between the 1750s and the 1780s, there was an increase in the number of company servants.[41] The question arises where the increase came from: were these men Europeans or were they locally recruited?

Percentage-wise, the participation of locally recruited servants in the VOC in Cochin increased in the last decades of the eighteenth century.[42] The increase in the locally recruited personnel was mostly in the mercantile department. It seems that manyCochin-born men – almost certainly sons of VOC employees – were keen to seek employment with the VOC at the fort. On an average, in the second half of the eighteenth century, 30 per cent of the employees in Fort Cochin were locally recruited. In the year 1785, however, no less than 40 per cent of the employees were so recruited. It seems that serving and living in Fort Cochin, or in other VOC

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[35] *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek,* Vol. IV, 118: dated 29-04-1718.
[36] *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek,* Vol. IV, 546: dated 28-04-1742.
[37] *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek,* Vol. VIII, 308: dated 29-09-1767.
[38] See Chapter One, Table 3, Qualified employees of the VOC in Cochin.
[39] See Chapter One, Table 2, for locally recruited personnel in the year 1750 and 1755. See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 3 and Table 3 for details on locally recruited personnel in Fort Cochin 1760-1785.
[40] NA The Hague, VOC 5198, *Landmonsterollen van Kamer Amsterdam*, fos. 320-359.
[41] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 2, Table 2.
[42] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 3, Table 3.

establishments on the Malabar Coast, must have been an attractive proposition. This conclusion is derived from the fact that many male descendants of the Dutch, from other parts of Asia, possibly from the adjoining areas of Surat, Ceylon and Coromandel found employment with the VOC in Fort Cochin. Their numbers were also on the rise.[43]

A small digression, nonetheless an important fact to remind ourselves, would be the mention of a 1672 proclamation in Batavia, whereby the VOC forbade the employment of "coloured" people as clerks.[44] Yet, in Fort Cochin, local recruitment of personnel was not limited to the lower ranks. As high as 70 per cent of the qualified VOC personnel in Fort Cochin was recruited in Asia; they were either from Cochin, Malabar, or from the surrounding areas.[45]

An increase in locally recruited servants did not mean a decrease in European employees. Most of the new Europeans who came to Cochin were in the military services. While, on the one hand, locally recruited soldiers, mostly toepasses and lascars, sometimes categorised together as "orientals", were sent from Cochin to Batavia,[46] European soldiers were sent from Batavia to Cochin to be in charge of the high-ranking military posts. In January 1748, there were 683 military personnel in Malabar. Only 149 of these men were locally recruited mestizos, while 48 soldiers had been sent from Batavia to Malabar.[47] Thus comparing qualified mercantile servants with those in the military service in Fort Cochin, it can be concluded that while the mercantile offices could be trusted to locally recruited men, the military posts were largely held by the Europeans. Only a small minority of military servants were locally recruited people. In this way the loyalty of European military men, towards the company in times of war, could not be doubted. It can also be deduced here that the locally recruited men were not eager to join the military, as this service offered little opportunity for private trade. Also serving in the military would mean frequent transfers, and if required to VOC settlements outside Malabar.

In the year 1751, after the death of Commander Corijn Stevens, Colombo-born and locally recruited Abraham Cornelis de la Haye, was provisionally elected to the office of the chief administrator of Fort Cochin. Before arriving in Cochin in 1749, he had, among other places, served at Surat for nine years as public prosecutor. The family of De la Haye was well settled in Asia.[48] Their presence was mostly in the Colombo-Malabar-Surat network. Contacts within this network meant swift promotions to reach high offices in the region.

In the 1740s, Nicolas Bowijn, a Cochin-born locally recruited person similarly became the public prosecutor in Fort Cochin.[49] Bowijn later reached the position of second-in-charge under

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[43] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 4, Table 4.
[44] F. W de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 2 vols. (Batavia: Kolff, 1919), vol. 1, 535.
[45] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 3, Table 5.
[46] GM XI (1743-1750), 815: dated 31-12-1749.
[47] GM XI (1743-1750), 701: dated 31-12-1748.
[48] His father was a VOC servant on Ceylon. De la Haye's first daughter was married twice to VOC servants, once in Surat and for the second time in Batavia. W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op hare buiten-comptoiren in Azië* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Libaert, 1944), 192.
[49] NA The Hague, VOC 5199, *Landmonsterollen van Kamer Amsterdam*, fo. 146.

the commandership of Frederik Cunes during the years 1751-1756. Thus, although regulations prohibited it and the general belief has been that local recruits only held lower posts in the company, in Fort Cochin the majority of the qualified officials were local-born and recruited persons.[50] Some even made it to the highest office there.

These locally recruited mercantile servants of the company carried Dutch names and a few of them, who were born in Europe, had the status of a European. This phenomenon of a 'locally recruited European' arose, when a person came to Malabar as a company servant and after having completed his first tenure or contract as a VOC employee, decided to continue staying in Malabar and therefore began a second term with the company and was considered locally recruited. But such cases were rare. Most Europeans, who stayed on in Asia, did so as free-burghers. However, Commander Abraham Cornelis de La Haye was born and recruited in Colombo and Commander Weyerman although born in Gulik (Jülich, Germany), was not recruited in Europe, but began his career with the VOC in Asia. Second-in-charge Nicholas Bowijn was also locally recruited.

Another such Europe-born person, who managed to achieve a moderately high rank and position in Fort Cochin and also one who took up a second term with the VOC, was junior merchant Johan Andries Daimichen. Born in Lübeck, in north Germany, he first took up service with the company in 1751.[51] Soon afterwards, he must have arrived in Fort Cochin. He married a Cochin-born woman named Pasquella Lucasz. Johan Andries was a European and Pasquella, in all probability, a mestizo. They raised a large family in Fort Cochin with three sons and three daughters.[52] In the year 1785, his name appears again as a company servant, but this time as a locally recruited one, re-recruited in 1783.[53] In this way, he served the VOC in Malabar for more than three decades. He was resourceful enough to arrange an employment with the VOC for one of his sons Godefridus Daimichen.[54] This must be seen as a sign of his settling down in Cochin and his not wishing to return to Europe.

Thus it can be concluded that for many servants of the company, Fort Cochin was an attractive location to live and work. The VOC in Fort Cochin had adapted to local circumstances and often recruited personnel locally, even for the higher qualified ranks, although only in the mercantile section and not in the military. Some locally recruited personnel even reached the high office of commander of Malabar. The locally recruited employees, the vast majority of whom were Cochin- or Malabar-born, had no or a very weak ties with Europe. It can be said that for those who were from Cochin, Fort Cochin was their home and the place where their families hailed from. If not their fathers, then many members of their mother's families lived in and around Fort Cochin. This we shall see in the following section.

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[50] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 3, Chart 4. Also see Table 3, 4 and 5.
[51] NA The Hague, VOC 5208, *Landmonsterollen van Kamer Amsterdam*, fo. 328
[52] See Appendix Daimichen Family Tree.
[53] NA The Hague, VOC 5233, *Landmonsterollen van Kamer Amsterdam*, fo. 164.
[54] NA The Hague, VOC 5218, *Landmonsterollen van Kamer Amsterdam*, fo. 433.

Daughters, Wives, and Widows

In this subsection, attention is given to the female section of the Fort Cochin population and the role they played in the lives of the VOC servants. The most striking feature of the fort's society was that European women were a rarity.[55] In 1733, there were 115 Europeans living in the Malabar region. Of these, only 3 were women.[56] In 1750, about 200 Europeans lived in and around Fort Cochin. Only one among them was a Europe-born woman. Even the wife of Commander Corijn Stevens, Maria Louisa Koller was Cochin-born.[57] In the year 1790, there were only three European women in Fort Cochin. The European population was predominantly male and mestizo women dominated the female section of society.[58] Thanks to the Portuguese heritage there were many Christian women of mixed European and Indian parentage with whom the VOC company officials could marry. Since these women were Christians, albeit Roman Catholics, marriage was possible and it was soon realised that indigenous women or women of mixed descent were better suited as wives in the tropics, as they were much healthier and could survive longer. Thus, the majority of the wives of the first generation of VOC servants were Portuguese mestiço women. Later, their daughters, as mestizos with Dutch family names, became wives of other company servants while their sons became locally recruited VOC servants. According to the records of their baptism ceremony a lot of the mestizos of the later generations were officially followers of the Dutch Reformed Church. In this way local Christian families became the cornerstone of Fort Cochin society.

The difference between the Portuguese mestiços of the earlier centuries and the Dutch mestizos of eighteenth century Cochin, was that while the former spoke Portuguese, carried Portuguese names and were Roman Catholics, the Dutch mestizos spoke broken Dutch and creolised Portuguese,[59] carried Dutch family names and could be followers of Roman Catholicism or the Dutch Reformed Church.

For the mestizo women, marrying European men was a means of attaining status and position. In many families, descent could be traced through local-born mestizo women. They played an important role in the establishment of family ties and networks of the servants of the company in Malabar, especially for the middle-income households. In 1698, Commissioner Hendrik Zwaardecroon remarked that his men were marrying local women who were of the Catholic belief and that instead of the men bringing over their women to the Reformed Church,

[55] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 1.
[56] Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 301.
[57] Maria Louisa later married another VOC servant. 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', in *Gens Nostra, Maandblad der Nederlandse Genealogische Vereniging*, Jaargang XLVII 1992 (Amsterdam, 1922), 7: dated 18-02-1753.
[58] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 1.
[59] From Red Sea to Canton, English, Dutch, Danes and French used creolised Portuguese for communication between the Europeans and the Asians. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 298-299.

more often they themselves were turning to the Papal religion. He even suggested the banning of such marriages.[60]

The mestizos population had distinct cultural features. They were an amalgamation of Indian, Portuguese and Dutch cultural, social and linguistic influences, which they had incorporated into their daily lives. The people of mixed Portuguese and Indian descent had a strong Portuguese-Catholic culture, which was typical of the Luso-Indian world rimming the Indian Ocean. They were present in large numbers on the Malabar Coast especially around Fort Cochin and in Goa. The Dutch mestizos were concentrated in and around Fort Cochin or other VOC settlements on the Malabar Coast. Both numerically and culturally, mestizo society with its unique Luso-Indian characteristic formed a significant section of the littoral Malabar society.

A vivid depiction of mestizo society can be found in a description of Nagappattinam by the Dutch traveler Wouter Schouten. He states that most of the Dutch people there were married to mestizo women who dressed according to their own tradition. According to him, the women spoke good Portuguese and, with difficulty, a little bit of Dutch. He states that they were Christians, but does not specify whether they followed Roman Catholic or Dutch Reformed Church.[61] The situation in Fort Cochin would have been similar.

For the European company servants who came from the Netherlands and neighbouring areas, living in Fort Cochin without European women and being surrounded by mestizo women became a part of the fabric of their lives. These mestizo women had a role in the private or domestic space very different from their place in the public space. They carried with them their own mestizo culture, to which the European men adjusted in the home scene. During their working time, their husbands carried themselves according to the norms and standards expected of them in public as dictated by the VOC regulations.

High-ranking company servants like Commander Godefridus Weyerman, Commander Jan Lambertus Van Spall, secretary to the political council, with the rank of junior merchant, Johan Andries Daimichen, public prosecutor Johan Adam Cellarius and military officer Von Ochsee and Von Wrede were all married to Cochin-born women whose fathers had served the VOC. In fact Cellarius, Von Ochsee and Von Wrede were respectively married to three sisters Maria, Elisabeth and Anna of the Daimichen family.[62] This sort of familial ties among company servants, via their wives, led them to form a certain network that was important in their day-to-day lives.

Women, in general, were mostly dependent on men: fathers, husbands, brothers, or, in case of female slaves, their masters. It is generally believed that while European men in Asia lived in

[60] H. K. s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala 1663-1701: De memories en instructies betreffende het commandement Malabar van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1976), 357. Memorie door Commandeur Hendrik Zwaardecroon voor Magnus Wichelman, Jaffna: dated 31-5-1698.
[61] Wouter Schouten, *Wouter Schoutens Oost-Indische voyagie* (t'Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs en Johannes van Someren, 1676), 179a-180a.
[62] See Appendix Daimichen Family-tree.

concubinage or other consorting liaisons with the indigenous and later mestizo women or often with female slaves, a European woman who bedded an indigenous man was generally ridiculed. In the year 1790, there was one European woman in Fort Cochin who was married to a castizen man, P. Cornelisz.[63] This woman called Elizabeth van Sompel was a rare exception: a woman from a higher social category – a European – marrying one from a lower one, a castizo. The only reason for this exception would be the status and respectability connected with her husband's profession. He was a minister (*Predikant*) in the service of the VOC at Fort Cochin. As a widow in Cochin, Elisabeth van Sompel would have belonged to the lower ranks, but as wife of a minister, she probably enjoyed a higher status.

A particular section of female society that appears very frequently in the archival papers of Fort Cochin is that consisting of widows or other single women. Some rich widows formed a circle of their own, giving gifts, donations and loans to other widows. They formed an important subsection of society, both socially and economically. Their names along with the names of their former husbands who were VOC employees are mentioned from time to time. Considering that most of the widows were mestizo or indigenous women and most probably Roman Catholics, they formed a close-knit network among themselves. Many of them were independent rentiers, economically self-sufficient owning houses and property inside the fort. They were the daughters and sisters of VOC servants, were married to VOC servants and after the deaths of their husbands continued living inside the fort as widows.

Widows, who had inherited some wealth from parents and husbands, often functioned as creditors to maintain and build up their capital. Anna Helena Daimichen twice married VOC servants; first Johannes van Blankenburg and later Von Wrede. In 1790 she gave Rs. 2000 as loan to Meyer Rahabi at six per cent interest.[64] In October 1794, Anna passed on this loan to Rahabi to her niece Diderika Memeling Blankenburg, daughter of her sister-in-law Maria van Blankenburg.[65] Thus Diderika could get the interest from Rahabi on a regular basis and later she would also receive the principal amount.

Similarly, in 1793 Elisabeth van den Berg, widow of Lieutenant artillery Andries van Eyk, gave Rs. 1000 to Johanna Kraay, the wife of Sergeant Albert Pullardt. Albert had left for Batavia and Johanna stayed on in Cochin as a housewife.[66] The relationship between Elisabeth and Johanna

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[63] Pieter Cornelisz. had come to Malabar from Ceylon. VOC 5231, fo. 550.

[64] TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794.

[65] Diderika Memeling's father was Johan Hendrik Saalig who was posted as Reserve Officer at Colombo. Anna Helena Daimichen was christened in Cochin on November 24, 1765. She was daughter of Johan Andries Daimichen and Pasquella Lucasz. On November 7, 1794, she married Frans Josef Von Wrede, who was a German from Heidelberg.

[66] Housewives, another VOC categorization meant women who were married, but were temporarily alone. This situation could arise either because their husbands had to leave Fort Cochin to serve the VOC in other parts of Malabar, India or Asia and had not taken their family along with the intention of returning back to Fort Cochin or because they were former employees of the VOC and had moved to other parts of Malabar in search of a livelihood and had left their families behind temporarily in the Fort for safety reasons. Free women were unmarried single women living in Fort Cochin. Their fathers, or other male members of their families, must have been Company servants. See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 6.

is not clear. However, Elizabeth cared enough for Johanna to ensure that after her death Johanna would be taken care of by her sister Alletta van den Berg, who likewise was a resident of Fort Cochin and married to a VOC servant.[67] All these women were Fort Cochin-born mestizos. Their fathers, brothers and husbands were connected to the VOC and some of them had relatives in other neighbouring VOC establishments like Surat and Colombo. Having inherited a VOC-culture where men could leave their families at one station to go and serve in another, these women formed a group of interdependent persons that often provided social and economic support to each other.

Widows like Elisabeth van der Werff and Helena Suzanna Philipsz., were rich women with large estates and extended families and friends in Fort Cochin. Many of them, just like their male counterparts, married twice or thrice. For newly arrived European men wanting to climb up the VOC bureaucratic ladder, these women of wealth and, therefore, status and extended family ties and networks within the VOC, were attractive marriage partners.

Another representative example is Maria Luis, wife of toepas Barnardo de Couto. Maria lived in Mattancheri and spoke Portuguese. In 1794, she used the VOC judicial system to ensure that her wealth would be properly distributed among her kith and kin. Along with her will she prepared a list in Portuguese stating how much money was to be given to whom after her death. She gave gifts of money to her niece Felicia Dias, daughter of her sister Dominga Luis and toepas Thome Dias. Next to her niece, she gave gifts of money and goods to many different people most of whom were single free women, housewives or widows. The executors of her will were Roman Catholic priest Nicolaas van Leeuwen and the Vicar of the Church at Mattancheri free-burgher Jacob Doutre.[68]

Similar is the case of Dominga de Silva, a rich Catholic widow with Portuguese parentage. She was the widow of VOC servant Simon van Tongeren, a junior merchant and translator. Her estate was worth more than 2000 ryxds. When Dominga wrote her will, she appointed reserve officer of the military, Jurgen Dalinger and reserve officer of the citizens, Joachim Marques de Queiros as executors of her will.[69] These men must have been friends of Van Tongeren.

As the political and economic authority of the Netherlands seemed most remote and Asia-born women dominated the female population of the European settlements, a society developed with interests of its own.[70] The women formed singular family systems and a social network based upon family relationships, which further evolved through changing circumstances. The European company servants joined these. Within four decades of the company's presence on the coast, the company servants were settling down. Recognizing this feature, Commissioner

[67] TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794. Aletta van den Berg was married to Hans Caper Thiel. Their daughter Aletta Augustina Thiel was married to Jan Lambertus van Spall.
[68] TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794. Will dated 3rd May 1794.
[69] TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794.
[70] Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia.*, p. xix.

Zwaardecroon, as early as 1698, had remarked that Dutch servants married indigenous women and wished to continue living at Cochin.[71] These were the early signs of intentions of staying on. VOC men were becoming rooted in the Cochin milieu. Then also some former company servants stayed on in Cochin as free-burgher. In the second half of the eighteenth century Fort Cochin had many locally recruited employees. In fact, the majority of qualified mercantile employees were then locally recruited. Their sphere of influence, their movement and familial ties, did not extend beyond the Ceylon-Malabar-Surat network. These men were not connected to the Netherlands or even to Batavia.

Two VOC Malabar commanders were married to Cochin-born women. Commander Weyerman married twice while in Malabar and Commander Jan Lambertus van Spall even thrice. The chances that these women were European are very meager. Van Spall's third wife whom he married on December 10, 1786 was Cochin-born Maria Petronella Cornelisz.[72] She was, in fact, the daughter of Elisabeth van Sompel, the only European woman who had married minister Pieter Cornelisz., a non-European.

Marrying local women was not restricted to Dutch men. John Russell who was from London, was attracted to the Cochin area for private coastal trade. For a short while, he was the inn-keeper in Fort Cochin.[73] He was married to a Cochin-born woman Helena Susanna Bos and they had an estate south of the fort. Helena's parents were Captain Daniel Bos, a military officer, and Johanna Expeel.[74] John Russell entered the social world of Fort Cochin, through his marriage to a daughter of a VOC servant. He could then take up a contract to run the inn and earn a livelihood. Thus Cochin-born women opened up social and economic networks for European men.

European company servants set up households in the fort with the assistance of their mestizo wives and children; and thereby became more attached to the town and surrounding areas. The mestizo wives and children helped them develop a sense of belonging and a network of relatives they could bank on. By providing these social networks, the mestizo women became active agents in the on-going process of adaptation of the company servants in Cochin. They also played a role in the process of adjustment to local circumstances in the domestic space.

Company servants like Van Spall, Weyerman, Cellarius, Von Ochsee and Von Wrede married Cochin-born local mestizo women belonging to VOC-families. Through them, the men established extended family relations and social networks in Cochin. These new relations that the mestizo wives brought with them were helpful when the men needed to find means of livelihood outside of the VOC. Family members and friends played the roles of executors of will, guarantors for loans and leases and partners in trade.

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[71] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 316.
[72] See Appendix Van Spall Family-tree and Weyerman Family-tree.
[73] TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
[74] TSA DR 666, Wills etc., Legal records, 1760-1768. Daniel Bos's circle of friends included Gilles van der Sloot and Nicolaas Muller. Bos, Van der Sloot and Muller were servants of the VOC

Thus even after a century, the Portuguese legacy of mestizo women continued to affect social life in Fort Cochin. Although a minority, VOC servants were slowly becoming part of the larger Malabar milieu. Mestizos were agents of adaptation from both ways: inside to outside and from outside to inside Fort Cochin.[75] While remaining a minority in the Malabar milieu, the VOC servants were beginning to form a distinct part of the larger society, with mestizo women being the main vehicle for a two-way system of influence and adaptation.

The VOC's system of categorization produced identities by marking differences among the people. Data collected by the company on family units living inside the fort, serve two purposes. Firstly, it gives an impression about the families that lived there. This is taken up in detail in the next section. Secondly, it tells a great deal about how the VOC officials perceived themselves as well as the different people who were living inside the fort, how they perceived themselves in the larger Malabar milieu and whom they included and excluded in their social and economic relations, as in the case of mestizo and toepasses. The manner in which records were maintained also tells a great deal about the hierarchies functioning within the VOC and Fort Cochin society.

As is clear from the categorization, the inhabitants of Fort Cochin were identified and grouped in the records into different clusters, which was also an indication of their place on the hierarchical ladder. The Europeans, depending on their rank and place of birth formed the elites. Even among them, a difference was made between those who were born in Europe and those born of European parents in Fort Cochin. The latter, categorized as "white castizo" were considered lower in status than the former. The third place in this hierarchy went to the mestizos. Fourth in the rank were the indigenous people. Lowest of all these was a group of people that was legally separate: the slaves, who could be either mestizo or indigenous. The categorization of different people in the company records on this basis tells us how the VOC servants regarded their own status vis-à-vis those of others. This system of identification and categorization was followed in all official VOC documents, be it in the census records, estate papers, civil and criminal case papers or wills. The people using the system must have been aware of these identity markers. It also tells us how they perceived the different communities they came into contact with and how identities were forged and maintained.

Similarly, the concept of mestizo displays the arbitrary divisions the Dutch placed between different sections of the population in order to maintain their power and identity. It was part of

[75] While the VOC's unique system or tradition of categorising and identifying people in its day to day working and record keeping gives an insight into how they perceived differences among people, how non-VOC people perceived the Company and the Company servants, is difficult to find out as there are no sources available on this matter. Yet, letters written by the Cochin Raja and his administrators to the VOC complaining constantly about individuals who committed the sin of killing sacred cows and then escaping to the jurisdiction of the VOC to avoid being punished, and about the misbehaviour of soldiers can be found frequently in the VOC records. While the Company was an ally of the Cochin Raja, Christians who lived in the territory of the Cochin raja, but were under the VOC jurisdiction were considered troublesome by the Raja. Also soldiers who went out of the fort, got drunk and committed crimes, but did not fall under the Raja's jurisdiction, were considered as troublemakers.

the administrative practice of the Portuguese, which was continued by the Dutch. It was a socially constructed concept developed by those who wished to retain power and preserve the prevailing organization of society. It was a categorization based on the idea of difference, whereby a mestizo was considered "better" than a toepas, or an indigenous person. In doing so, social organization and control were established. A reliable workforce, assumed to be loyal to the masters, was also created.

The flexible use of the term mestizo by the Dutch, along with the varying treatment towards these people, throws light on the ongoing process of adaptation, both of the indigenous population as well as of the Dutch. It is obvious that the mestizos held a unique position, suspended between the elite Dutch and the indigenous toepas community. Despite their superior status over the rest of the indigenous people, their economic prospects were limited. Job opportunities were not guaranteed for all mestizo men. In order to make a living, and hopeful of joining the VOC social and economic set-up, many mestizos were willing to become artisans or servants in Dutch homes.

Mestizo women courted Dutch men in the hope of marrying them. Since European women were scarce, they did fairly well. Their attributes, local connections, their resilience and their social capital helped them to play their roles as agents of adaptation. Their language, which was partly creolised Portuguese, partly Malayalam, sprinkled with a few acquired Dutch words, became their tool for attempting to assimilate into the Fort Cochin social scene. The mestizos played a significant role in the ongoing process of adaptation that the people of Fort Cochin, specially the European company servants, were experiencing. While mestizo women provided with social networks to the company servants, mestizo men, as we shall see, provided economic networks that led to an opening up of avenues for private trade for the company servants.

3.2 Living in Fort Cochin

In this section the social, economic, and material lives of the people of Fort Cochin are examined. In the first subsection titled 'In Search of Livelihood' the economic networks of the company servants are analysed. Continuing with the theme of adaptation, it is proposed here that Malabar merchants, just like the mestizo women, were agents in formation of networks that assisted company servants in earning a livelihood. This is followed by a description of the life-cycle rituals, which bring out the various social and economic relations of a few people. Christian life rituals like baptism, marriage, and burial, which are both personal as well as public in nature, are described. Based on information available with respect to book collections, food, clothes, furniture etc., in a third subsection, the society's material and intellectual life is analysed.

In Search of Livelihood

In the previous section it became clear that serving the company in the fort was an attractive proposition for many sons of VOC servants. Yet, for many others, as we shall see in this section, there were other avenues of earning a livelihood. These are analysed in the following paragraphs.

Since private trading by company officials was prohibited, with the exception of commodities that they were permitted to trade in, few instances of private trade can be found in the VOC archives. Yet, it is a known fact that VOC servants, just as their EIC counterparts, amassed great wealth by engaging in private legal or illegal trade in Asia.[76] That some of the VOC servants were working hand in glove with English officials or indigenous merchants, when it came to carrying out private trade, is also quite well known specially for the Indian subcontinent.

Holden Furber has pointed out that in the 1780s Cochin had become merely a base for the "country" trade of south-western India. The private profits of the Dutch chief and his council were greater in Fort Cochin than at Surat, because the Dutch company possessed complete control of the town and fort. The decline in the company's own trade made little or no difference to its servants at Cochin, who were making their fortunes by charging fees and commissions on the import and export cargoes of every ship that visited the port. As the harbour was one of the best on the Malabar Coast and the town one of the most prosperous owing to the wealth of its Indian and Jewish merchants, these items were not inconsiderable.[77] Incomes from private trading by company officials, in these items, were high in Cochin.[78]

As established earlier, the presence of the VOC on the Malabar Coast was littoral and the company servants were dependent on indigenous merchants like the Jews, the Muslim merchants, the Baniyas, and the Chetties for the collection of pepper from the hinterland. The texts of the various contracts that the VOC officials concluded with the numerous indigenous merchants, confirm the interdependence theory. While the indigenous merchants provided pepper and other commodities to the VOC, the VOC officials farmed out the rights to collect taxes, be it in the form of customs or levies on land to the indigenous merchants.

In 1741, for instance, a trading vessel belonging to Islamic traders was captured by VOC cruisers off Quilon. Ezechiel Rahabi, a leading Jewish merchant settled in Cochin, was approached by the Islamic traders so that he could use his influence in the Dutch office to

[76] Two well known examples of private trading by Dutch Company officials in India are those of J.M Ross and J. A. Sichterman. Director of Bengal J. M. Ross, escaped to Europe, with the help of his good friends Robert Clive and Warren Hastings. Holden Furber, *John Company at Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), 83. Jan Albert Sichterman, who served in Bengal from 1719 to 1744, where through his marriage relations, he gained favourable attention from the highest VOC office in Bengal and later himself served as the director of Bengal (1733-44) – is a model example of Dutch men making money in Asia. After serving for a year at Batavia in the High Government, he returned to the Netherlands in 1745. Christiaan J. A. Jörg, 'Jan Albert Sichterman, A Groninger Nabob and Art-Collector', *Itinerario* Vol. IX (2/1985), 178-195.

[77] Furber, *John Company at Work*, 103.

[78] MvO Adriaan Moens, 253: dated 1781. Moens lists the constantly rising income the commander and the second-in-charge could make in Cochin by participating in permitted private trade.

receive concessions.[79] This is an example of co-operation between Malabar merchants and the VOC.

The Jewish merchants were an important section of the Cochin mercantile community. The Rahabis, characterised by Ashin Das Gupta as "medieval merchants", who would have been happy if the Dutch company left the coast,[80] closely cooperated with the Dutch merchants who engaged in private trade. Maybe the indigenous merchants would have benefited, had the company wrapped up its operations on the coast, and the port freed for all trade, including pepper; but they were certainly profiting from the presence of the VOC there. In fact, Ezechiel Rahabi and his four sons (or nephews) Meyer, Baruch, Elias and Abraham were all traders who had close economic ties with the inhabitants of Fort Cochin. Ezechiel Rahabi had such good relations with such a wide range of people in Fort Cochin that his account-books almost read like a who's who of Fort Cochin. When he died, his creditors announced the amounts of money that he – or rather at that moment the inheritors of his debt, his four inheritors mentioned above – owed to them. In the long list were the names of Hendrik Dirksz., Carel Baron von Ochsee, Arnoldus Lunel, J. G. la Personne, Jan Lambertus van Spall, Charles Groenrode, Pieter Harms Muller and an array of other VOC servants. Ezechiel had also borrowed money form the orphan board and from the Diaconate of Fort Cochin. Rich ladies and widows, who had lent money to him on credit, so that they could receive a regular income in the form of interest, were Sara Harmsen, Louisa Groenrode, Johanna Elisabeth Heydeman, and Petronella Verduyn.[81] These examples show that the Jewish community had a considerable influence on the socio-economic life of Cochin and that prominent members of the community could influence the political powers of the coast. Thus co-operation between the Jewish community and the VOC officials was not just limited to trade dealings, but included other aspects of the VOC presence there.

An exciting example of a Fort Cochin company servant participating in personal profit-making is the case of Dirk Wolff, the VOC Resident at Cranganur, who in April or May 1778, went to Feirra de Alwa to meet two Jewish merchants Abraham Cohen and Joseph Rahabi. Wolff was born in 1756 in Cochin and at an early age began his career in the service of the VOC. His father had also been a VOC servant. Dirk Wolff had 98 matchlocks – a kind of handgun with a locking device – in his possession, which he wanted to sell to the Jewish merchants there. Joseph Rahabi suspected that the handguns belonged to the company and that, if caught in trading in them, he would be punished. However, Dirk Wolff convinced him that the guns belonged to him and that they were not part of the VOC's weaponry. To further persuade Joseph Rahabi into buying the guns, he told him that he had sold 25 guns to Salomon Kessar, another Jewish merchant who had a garden on Bolgatty island, and 3 pieces to Abraham Cohen for 7 ½ Rupees each. Dirk, however, was caught in his clandestine trade and Governor Adriaan Moens

[79] Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 2.
[80] Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 104-108.
[81] TSA DR 1567, Papers of the estate of Ezechiel Rabbi, Estate papers 1804.

investigated the case. In August of the same year, both Jewish merchants and Dirk Wolff stood in the court of Fort Cochin narrating the sequence of events and arguing as to who was to be blame.[82] This is a perfect example of VOC servants and indigenous merchants establishing and exploiting a network of traders in Malabar for their mutual benefit. As a company servant, Dirk Wolff would have come in contact with the Jewish merchants during company-related transactions, as the Rahabis were the appointed company's merchants on the coast. He used this for trading and profiting privately. The VOC officials and indigenous merchants formed a network, which was mutually beneficial.

Cellarius, the public prosecutor, was also involved in private trade. Earlier in his career, he was posted at Cranganur and had probably built up his trading network with the indigenous merchants while he was posted there. A comparable story is that of Weyerman who was posted in Cannanur. He too had amassed so much wealth, that he could lend money privately to the Ali raja of Cannanur.[83] Away from headquarters, in Cannanur and Cranganur, VOC servants would be less preoccupied with company matters. Yet being trading ports and towns, these places were ideal for establishing contacts with indigenous and foreign merchants. Cellarius had trading contacts with merchants in his birthplace Ulm, and in Bombay and London. He owned an estate and investments in Ulm. He was a very influential rich merchant, who dealt in such varied articles as clothes, textiles, prints and atlases, as well as pepper and other products of Malabar. As noted earlier, the family of Cellarius was related with that of Von Wrede and Von Ochsee, also Germans involved in private trade. They were brothers-in-law as their wives were sisters: Maria, Anna and Elisabeth Daimichen. Their third sister Elisabeth was married to Carel Baron von Ochsee. The Daimichen-Cellarius-Von Wrede-Von Ochsee family network is an example of how company servants were closely connected to each other through their Cochin-born wives. Since Cellarius, Von Ochsee and Von Wrede were from Germany, a common homeland and language functioned as homogenising factors and formation of a German sub-group.

In short, the above examples show that both mercantile and military servants of the VOC made ample use of the existing networks to create and develope their own contacts with local merchants for private trade as well as for their own social and personal reason.

Not just in the economic and social, but in the political sphere too, local merchants often aided and assisted the VOC. The Jewish merchant Ezechiel Rahabi played a significant role during the negotiations between the VOC and Travancore in the 1740s.[84] An example of Jewish-Dutch cooperation can be quoted from the letters of one Elizabeth Fay, an English lady who was captured and imprisoned by Haidar Ali at Calicut. Another well-to-do Cochin Jewish merchant Isaac Surgun, lent his good offices to rescue her and send her to Bengal. She writes in detail how

[82] TSA DR 1567, Papers of the estate of Ezechiel Rabbi, Estate papers 1804.
[83] MvO Adriaan Moens, 149: dated 1781.
[84] M. de Lannoy, *The Kulasekhara Perumals of Travancore*, 109.

plentiful the house of this Jewish merchant of Cochin was.[85] By helping an English lady the Jewish community showed its willingness to mediate in dealing with the 'original' inhabitants of the land.

In 1757, Ezechiel Rahabi acted as the executor, along with company servant Johan Bulkens, captain and chief of military, for the will of Jacob Wolf, captain lieutenant, and his wife Dirkje Magdalena Jansz.[86] Thus, personal relations between VOC officials and Malabar merchants were also formed. As stated earlier, the Dutch considered Jews to be 'foreigners' and other merchants as 'indigenous'. This categorization facilitated this Jewish-Dutch relationship. This narrowing of social distance between those living inside the fort and those outside it was possible because, for the Dutch, the Jews of Cochin were 'fellow-foreigners'.

Commander Godefridus Weyerman, whom we have met in the previous two chapters, as the man who added to the company's landed possessions, had been dismissed by Batavia in 1764 and was called to Batavia to face charges of fraud. He was declared 'employable again' after three years. In 1776, twelve years after his dismissal and three years before his death, he received the title of ex-commander and the rank of ex-governor.[87] In 1734, his salary would have been approximately fl. 12 per month. At the time of his dismissal, in 1764, although his salary was fl. 150 per month, he had total assets worth fl. 757,483. This amount was more than double the assets of his second-in-charge Johan Anthony Sweers de Landas, who had also been incriminated on charges of fraud and deception in the company's book-keeping.[88] Obviously, Weyerman had other sources of income than his salary. During his two decades in Malabar, serving in Cannanur and Cochin, he had created a most profitable network of connections in and around Malabar. As is known, many ambitious young Dutch men headed for Asia with the aim of getting rich by private trade. No doubt Weyerman amassed his wealth, according to such a scenario, through private dealings or trade. On the one hand, he was adding to the company's landed estate, thus making the settlement a permanent one; while on the other hand he was amassing wealth for an easy life after his contract with the company ended.

Since VOC mercantile officials for company-related trade matters established contacts with local Malabar merchants, these contacts had been used to form networks and indulge in private trade and profit-making. Yet, the case of the friendship between Johan Bulkens, Jacob Wolf and Ezechiel Rahabi shows, there were social and personal relations between local merchants and military employees of the VOC as well.

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[85] Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 2. See also W. K. Firminger, (ed.), *The Original Letters from India of Mrs. Eliza Fay*.
[86] TSA DR 615, Wills etc., Legal Records 1757-1760. Will of Jacob Wolf dated 4th August 1757.
[87] Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 193-4.
[88] NA The Hague, HRB 755 (I) Papers concerning alleged frauds during the period 1746-63 by Godefridus Weijerman and Johan Anthony Sweers de Landas, dated 1764-67. Appendix document 21, Inventory of assets of Johan Anthony Sweers de Landas, dated Cochin 6th February 1765, NA. Conversion is based on Barendse, R. J. *The Arabian Seas, 1640-1700* (Leiden: CNWS, 1998) Appendix 1, 444.

Apart from private trade, some VOC military officials sought alternative sources of income by deserting. Fort Cochin had a serious problem of deserters: the "rolling stones" among the Europeans in Asia. In troubled times like those in the 1740s, when VOC was at war with Travancore, this problem became acute, with men being quick to seek a livelihood elsewhere. The case of Eustache Benoit de Lannoy of Malabar is most famous.[89] At the height of the conflict Commander Van Gollenesse felt that three to four hundred VOC men had entered the service of Travancore.[90] The Cochin list of deserters to the enemy for May 1742 includes 30 names, three of whom were from Germany, while one was Flemish. Van Gollenesse regarded the situation to be so serious that he felt obliged to try to wheedle them back into the fold of the company, by offering full pardon to any who would return from the English factory at Anjengo. No questions would be asked and no punishments meted out. Yet, only three did so.[91] When the problem became chronic, especially in the light of the company's conflicts with Travancore, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Dutch and Travancore, stating that deserters would be returned to the company. In 1743, the VOC's Malabar Command signed a similar pact with the French at Mahé. The list of deserters from the Malabar Command for the year 1750-1751 shows that most soldiers eloped in groups of two or three.[92] And even in times of peace, they knew that they were a rare commodity and were willing to take risks, so that they could make a better living elsewhere. It was known that running away from the company and joining other indigenous or European armies was the beginning of becoming a 'settler' in Asia. For the deserters, running away from the VOC meant giving up the right to live in Fort Cochin. It also meant breaking all ties with the VOC, including the possibility of returning to the Netherlands on a VOC ship. Nevertheless, for some, opportunities outside the VOC set-up seemed more attractive than staying in Fort Cochin.

Registers of deserters were maintained in Fort Cochin and lists of deserters were constantly sent to Batavia.[93] Those considered missing from duty were charged criminally for deserting the company. Many VOC deserters were welcomed by the Jesuits. The VOC would have liked to take strong action against the religious establishment of the latter, but was aware of its own weak and dependent position on the coast. The VOC, therefore, followed a policy, whereby the Jesuit fathers were treated decently.[94] If deserters were ever caught, arrested and brought back to the fort, they were given the death penalty,[95] which could only be executed in Batavia. Nonetheless, many European men who arrived in Malabar as VOC soldiers, preferred to serve in the army of the raja of Travancore or the EIC. Batavia, on the basis of information received from Fort

[89] M. de Lannoy, 'A 'Dutchman' in the service of the raja of Travancore. Eustache Benoit de Lannoy (1715-1777)', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. 13 (1986), 1-16.
[90] Winius, and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 104.
[91] Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 304-305.
[92] NA The Hague, VOC 2776, fo. 174.
[93] GM XI (1743-1750), 703: dated 31-12-1748.
[94] GM XI (1743-1750), 564: dated 31-12-1747.
[95] GM XI (1743-1750), 815: dated 31-12-1749.

Cochin, in the year 1747- 48, wrote to the Gentlemen XVII that 87 Europeans and Asians, mostly attracted by Travancore, had deserted. Because of this, Travancore had a European army the likes of which it had never had before.[96] In all probability, salaries and social status were higher in the Travancore army, and the move out of the fort and VOC employment was made with the more lucrative opportunities in mind that were available outside the fort walls.

It is known that opportunities for creating and amassing wealth through private trade were much more plentiful in the EIC. VOC soldiers entering the service of the EIC did so hoping to make more money there. Batavia believed that many deserters joined the English via Travancore. Others also joined the French and other European companies.[97]

Since the problem of desertion was acute, many European newcomers in Fort Cochin were replacements for those who had deserted the VOC.[98] Since European men were in short supply, a general pardon for all deserters from the Malabar Command was granted from time to time.[99] Wherever the deserters went to, the Jesuits, the EIC or Travancore, one thing is clear: there were numerous other opportunities for them to make a living outside the fort walls, independent of the VOC.

Thus, while mercantile service in Fort Cochin was considered lucrative, the men in the military wing of the company were often tempted to break out of the fort walls. To us, this is evidence of the many possibilities for Europeans, of living outside the fort walls, and of mixing with the larger Malabar milieu, independent of the VOC.

Apart from European men serving the Dutch company, another important sub-group of Europeans in and around Fort Cochin were those who were former employees of the VOC. In 1743, there were 40 "pensioned Europeans", or free-burghers, registered in the VOC records.[100] The company servants and the free-burghers received a few more privileges, as compared to the toepasses who lived within the fort walls.[101] Free-burghers were European men who had served the VOC in Cochin and who, after the termination of their contract with the Dutch company, decided to continue living either in or around the fort. Free-burghers could also be white castizos, men who were legitimate sons of VOC employees. As free-burghers they enjoyed a certain privileged position as compared to the mestizo population. They were allowed to live inside the fort, as well as use all VOC facilities. They made a living by engaging in private trade or by harnessing income from land. Names of many such Dutch men, as free-burghers, appear repeatedly in the papers concerning land and custom leases of the company. They could take up the leases of the company's numerous gardens and lands, for collecting taxes at the port in Cochin and at Quilon, or taxing the indigenous and foreign ships, leases for cleaning up the fort

[96] GM XI (1743-1750), 701: dated 31-12-1748.
[97] GM XI (1743-1750), 701: dated 31-12-1748.
[98] GM XI (1743-1750), 701: dated 31-12-1748.
[99] GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 455: dated 31-12-1759.
[100] MvO Van Gollenesse, 31: dated 1743.
[101] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 316.

streets and removing garbage, besides a variety of other leases that the company put on auction every year.

From the 1750s, an example of such a citizen of Fort Cochin is Andries Bartelsz. who took the contract for keeping Fort Cochin clean. This work was contracted annually in an auction, to the person who would make the lowest bid. On the 26th August 1751, Andries Bartelsz. signed the lease and his guarantors were two other free-burghers Leander Quelho and Manuel Gomes.[102] Free-burgher Warnar Florijn, who was originally from Amsterdam, made a living by running the fort's inn for several consecutive years. The inn-keeper would have to win the farm from the company by making the highest bid to pay for the alcohol sold in his inn. In the inn, only alcohol brought from Europe (and later Cape Town) by the VOC could be sold. The inn-keeper would have to pay the excise on the alcohol. The same inn provided income in the year 1750 to Jacob Sligter and for a few years to Imme van der Zee. Van der Zee's name appears several times in other company contracts and leases. Later, as these men moved to land leases and started earning a living from the land, men like Joseph Pereira and Carel Groenrood started to run the inn. All these men were registered as free-burghers. Many of them were married to Cochin-born women. Warnar Florijn for example was married to Cornelia Magdelena de Jong.[103] Warnar Florijn and Imme van der Zee are also examples of people who moved their focus of seeking a source of livelihood from within the fort walls to the country beyond, taking up land leases. Since many European men were married to mestizo women, however, continued living in and around the fort as pensioned Europeans or free-burghers.

Another such example of a VOC servant who later decided to lead his life in Cochin as a free-burgher, probably as a private trader, is of Arij Mentsz., who had arrived in 1750 as a soldier. He married Cochin-born Jacoba Margaritha Ewald, daughter of VOC Sergeant Jan Daniel Ewald and Anna Maria. When in 1758, he wanted his will written; he decided to have David Rahabi as the executor. David, the son of Ezechiel Rahabi was probably not only a trusted business associate, but also a close friend. This shows that relations between a former company servant who was a Dutchman and a Jewish merchant could be strong and personal, going beyond the purpose of trade.

There were many such merchants who had commercial contacts often with the company servants, free-burghers and local Malabar merchants, who lived in and around the fort. Thus we see how Malabar merchants became agents in the ongoing process of adaptation of the inhabitants of Fort Cochin to the larger Malabar economic milieu. There were social, economic and private relations and networks between company servants who mostly lived inside the fort, and the merchants living outside. These merchants must have, at least partly, opened their economic networks to servants of the company, free-burghers and other European merchants who remained tied to Cochin, so that they could sustain themselves in the larger Malabar milieu.

[102] TSA DR 512, Conditions on which farms etc. were let. Conditions of lease, 1751.
[103] TSA DR 615, Wills etc., Legal Records 1757-1760. She was widow of Johan Bulkens.

Similar relations between inhabitants of Fort Cochin and those outside will emerge in the following subsections.

The Circle of Life

The compelling and declarative lines quoted at the beginning of the chapter are written on the cover page of a marriage register of Fort Cochin. They echo the beliefs, about life, marriage, children and family, of the people living then.[104] The lines express how life, family and children were seen in Fort Cochin. They show the importance of surviving childhood and reaching adulthood, and to be able to marry and have children so that the family name would continue. Yet, many did not reach this stage of life at all, as they died very young. Public as well as private social events such as the baptism of children and marriages, recorded in the diary of the town's church, tell us a great deal about everyday life in Cochin. In this section, the personal relations established by the company servants are analysed.

A Matrimonial College composed of some civilians and free-burghers took care of matters related to marriage and separation.[105] They were not paid for their work, but the appointment was considered respectable. All marriages and marital contracts were registered with this college. The banns or wedding announcements had to be put up in Church on three successive Sundays before the wedding ceremony could take place.[106] This gave ample opportunity to those who would object to the proposed marriage, to voice their opposition.[107] The College also helped in solving petty matrimonial differences.

Marriage took place at an early age, especially for girls.[108] One's religious status as a Christians as opposed to the non-Christians was important, and played a role in the interaction between men and women. Daughters of VOC employees got married to sons of VOC employees, who in turn were themselves VOC employees, thus forming VOC-family networks.

From the household records, one gets an impression of the patterns or types of marriage current in Cochin in the eighteenth century. Six different types of marriages, namely between two Europeans, between a European man and a mestizo woman, between a European man and an indigenous woman, between two mestizo people, between a mestizo man and an indigenous woman and between two indigenous people were recorded. [109] While Christians, both Roman Catholic and Dutch Reformed, intermarried frequently, only one Jewish woman was married to a

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[104] TSA DR 1509, Marriage register, 1799-1801.
[105] The Commissioners for Matrimonial Affairs (*Commissarissen van Huwelijkse Zaken*) administered marital affairs. Company servants wanting to get married, required to take permission from them.
[106] R. W. Lee, *An Introduction to Roman-Dutch Law* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953) Fifth edition, first published 1915, 61.
[107] Roman-Dutch law did not allow marriage between blood-related individuals. Nor was it permitted to re-marry into a former-spouse's family. Lee, *An Introduction to Roman-Dutch Law*, 53-54.
[108] According to law the permissible age of marriage was the age of puberty, which was taken to be fourteen for males and twelve for females. Lee, *An Introduction to Roman-Dutch Law*, 52.
[109] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 41.

VOC servant of Christian belief. Marriages led to the creation of family ties, networks and formation of groups.

In 1750, there was only one European couple. And as we know, even the wife of Commander Corijn Stevens was Cochin-born. From time to time, one or two such couples might have lived in Fort Cochin, but the majority of the couples were inter-racial. In 1790, there were two European couples, both of which belonged to the elite group.[110] One was that of Governor Johan Gerard van Angelbeek and his wife Jacomina Lever while the other was F. K. Heupner, commander of artillery and his wife Wilhelmina Elisabeth Franken. These were high-ranking and high-income elite members of VOC society.

The majority of married couples belonged to the category of European men and mestizo women. In 1760, there were 67 such couples. This number by 1790 had risen to 93.[111] The increase probably had to do with the fact that in the 1770s the VOC in Cochin had recruited many new people in the civil ranks.[112] The VOC had a regulation forbidding passage on VOC ships to mestizo women beyond the Cape of Good Hope.[113] Thus, many men who had mestizo wives did not repatriate and continued to stay on in Cochin.

Mestizo or indigenous women did not convert to the Dutch Reformed Church in search of economic security. On the contrary, Dutch men who were supposed to belong to the Dutch Reformed Church, married and adapted to the fort's mestizo society. As we have seen, Commissioner Zwaardecroon wanted to ban marriages between company servants and Roman Catholic women.[114] There are no examples of a European woman marrying an indigenous man. However, as we have seen earlier, there was one exceptional couple, that of Elizabeth van Sompel, a European and Pieter Cornelisz., the non-European minister.

Writing about the Roman Catholics, Commander Adriaan Moens makes special mention of the toepasses: "…they are also Roman Catholics and proselytes of the Portuguese. They are so much attached to this religion that nothing will induce them to give it up. Their superstitions outdo even those of the Portuguese and Spaniards."[115] Thus, although the Dutch commander had a rather low opinion of the Catholics, he was clearly not enthusiastic about converting them to the Dutch Reformed Church.

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[110] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 41. Governor Van Angelbeek's and Jacomina Lever's daughter Christina Elizabeth van Angelbeek (1756-1792) was wife of the Governor of Ceylon Willem Jacob van der Graaff. P. Colin-Thome, "Governor Van Angelbeek and the Capitulation of the Dutch Settlements in Ceylon to the British (1796)" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Sri Lanka) vol. 24 (1978-1979), 20-48.

[111] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 41.

[112] NA The Hague, VOC 5218 to VOC 5226. *Landmonsterrollen van Kamer Amsterdam.*

[113] The prohibition was on free, not-free, mixed or other natural (which meant indigenous) women of the lands. They could also not set sail for Europe on English, Danish, French, or Portuguese ships. J. A. van der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek 1602-1811*, Vols. 17 (Batavia/'s-Gravenhage: Landsdrukkerij/Nijhoff, 1885-1900), Vol. I, 296-97; Vol. II, 132-134.

[114] s'Jacob, *De Nederlanders in Kerala*, 357.

[115] MvO Adriaan Moens, 189: dated 1781.

In the preserved marriage books of Fort Cochin, 372 marriages are recorded.[116] Of these, 73 percent of the men were from Europe. Almost 70 per cent of the women were Cochin-born whereas the remaining came from Malabar or other parts of Asia. 50 per cent of the women and 33 percent of the men who got married at the Dutch Reformed Church were Roman Catholics.[117] This would mean that there were quite a few European men of Roman Catholic belief. Considering that the VOC in the Netherlands was not fond of recruiting Catholics, either these men had misinformed the company at the time of being recruited or they converted to Roman Catholicism. Sometimes Lutherans and Anglicans are also mentioned. Two facts about Fort Cochin emerge from this. Firstly, that European company servants married local-born women, many of whom were Roman Catholics. Secondly, that the presence of Roman Catholics was a constant feature at the St. Francis Church.

While many European men moved out of the fort after marrying mestizo women, as we shall see later, many mestizo or indigenous women moved into the fort after marrying company servants. This strengthened the relationships between those inside and those outside the fort, at least among the Christians. Thus, the process of adaptation was stimulated from both sides whereby the role of women was particularly important. Being Christian opened avenues for setting up one's household inside the fort. There was no conflict or antagonism between followers of the Dutch Reformed Church, who were in minority, and the Roman Catholics. Apparently they co-existed in harmony.

Among the VOC servants, marriage led to formation of networks. Johan Adam Cellarius, the public prosecutor, who was an active participant in the political, social and cultural environment of Fort Cochin, married a Cochin-born Dutch inhabitant, Maria Catharina Daimichen.[118] Her father, Johan Andreas Daimichen, was secretary to the political council with the rank of junior merchant. This marriage not only tied Cellarius to Cochin, but also assured him good postings on the Malabar Coast. Through this marriage, Cellarius became related to Johannes van Blankenburg and Willem van Haeften, prominent inhabitants of Cochin, both of whom became his brothers-in-law.[119] When, in 1778, Cellarius and Maria Catharina had their first son Johan Jacob baptised in Fort Cochin, the child's grandparents Johan Andreas and Elisabeth Daimichen witnessed it. The following year their second son Johan Adam was baptised.[120] Since Cellarius and Maria Catharina were in Cranganur at this time, and Fort Cochin was the centre of Dutch Malabar

[116] These marriage records date from 1749 to 1763 and from 1782 to 1802. Records for the years in between are missing. The number 372 refers to marriages recorded up to 1795. This data has been collected from the Church Records. Among the VOC records, the archives of the *'Commissarissen van Huwelijkse Zaken'* of Fort Cochin which kept a *'rolle boek van huwelijk zaaken'* should also record marriages, at least of VOC servants, but only one such bundle has survived. Other VOC records like the Daily Register also sometimes recorded marriages but they were not consistent with it.

[117] Of the 372 marriages, 272 bridegrooms were from Europe and 260 brides were Cochin-born. Of these 173 were Roman Catholics. Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 57.

[118] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 83: dated 28-06-1761.

[119] Johannes van Blankenburg was married to Maria Catharina's sister Anna Helena Daimichen. See Appendix Daimichen Family tree.

[120] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 139, 140: dated respectively 25-10-1778 and 23-08-1779.

social and cultural life, the Cellarius couple got their second son baptised in the fort Church. Cellarius's brother-in-law Willem van Haeften and his wife Elisabeth Daimichen attended the ceremony. In 1780, when a daughter Maria Helena, was born, Cellarius's sister-in-law Anna Helena Daimichen and her husband Johannes van Blankenburg attended the child's baptism ceremony.[121]

Baptism-, marriage-, death- and funeral-related documents provide information on social circles and relations. There are no records of death, except the numerous gravestones spread all along the Malabar Coast. Deaths, especially of women at the time of childbirth, which took place at home with the help of midwives and female slave servants, were common. The mortality rate especially among women and children was high. This is clear from the fact that a man easily had two, three or more wives in his lifetime. Widows would also often remarry. The numerous family graves in Cannanur and Cochin holding mother and her children together, are indications of their short lives, sometimes, in the case of children, of just a few months. Some last wishes left behind by people at the time of their writing a will, mostly of Roman Catholic women, who desired special ceremonies to be held at the time of their deaths or on their death anniversaries, are indication of their religious beliefs and sentiments regarding rituals.

There was no Roman Catholic Church within Fort Cochin. Although marriage between a Roman Catholic woman and a man of the Dutch Reformed faith, as we have seen earlier, could take place in the St. Francis Church inside the fort, for other rituals the Roman Catholics of the fort went to Vaipin Island.[122] Since Verapoly, just north of the fort, also had many Roman Catholics and was the seat of the Bishop of Cochin, Roman Catholics of Fort Cochin would be visiting there too. However, the baptism book of St. Francis Church is evidence of the fact that Catholic children were baptised inside the fort in the Dutch Reformed Church.[123] Some Catholic parents allowed their children to be 'brought up' by their godparents according to the doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church.

The life of Catherine de Rosairo shows many aspects of an individual's life in and around Fort Cochin. Catherine had a house inside the fort, which she had received as a gift from one Daniel Simonsz. She had sold this house for 300 ryxds. and had deposited the amount against interest to be able to live off it. Catherine, as she herself confessed, had lived all her life 'under the roofs of other men'. She had later married Joseph Ferreira, to whom she had borne a son Robert. When her husband died, Catherine became a part of Cochin's 'rich widows' circle. Catherine spoke Portuguese, and used the VOC clerks to write her will in Dutch.[124] She had strong religious beliefs.

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[121] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 341: date 20-08-1780.
[122] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 58.
[123] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 77: dated 08-04-1753. Jan Willem, son of Roman Catholics Jan Brackman and Anna de Silva was baptised. The witnesses were Lutheran Jan Christiaan Snijder and Dutch Reformed Christina Krijger,
[124] TSA DR 645, Civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1759-1761.

Her long will gives instructions how she wanted to be buried. She was a Roman Catholic and a resident of Mattancheri and belonged to the parish of Our Lady in Verapoly. She wanted to be buried according to the Dominican rites and her body was to be accompanied by the Vicar and four other priests. Members of the fraternity could join the procession. Music was to be played during the procession and the burial. The body was to be buried in the Church for which she had paid hundred and fifty fanums. A special service was to be held on the day of the burial. On the third, seventh and thirtieth day after the burial, services were to be held as well as when a year got completed.[125]

Catherine's life both inside and outside the fort showed one constant feature, her self-proclaimed Christian religiosity. By virtue of being Christian, she could live inside the fort as well as outside. She used the VOC judicial system to write her will and to ensure that she would get her desired burial in her Roman Catholic Church in Verapoly.

The people of the fort maintained the closest daily contacts with those just outside, for example in Mattancheri, and with those on the Vaipin Island and in Verapoly. In 1779, the Vicar Apostolic (*pater vicar*) of the Roman Catholic Church at Vaipin was Gerrit van Dam.[126] The Catholic Church at Pallipuram, on the north end of Vaipin Island was an important place of pilgrimege for Catholic Christians. Vaipin, Pallipuram and Verapoly were inhabited by numerous Christians – mestizos, toepasses and indigenous – who visited the fort often and for many different reasons: to attend the judicial court, to attend baptism and marriage services of their friends and family, etc., or to have commercial dealings at the port of Cochin. The Roman Catholics both inside and outside the fort, as we have seen from the case of Catherine de Rosairo, remained loyal to their faith, thereby giving Fort Cochin a strong Roman Catholic character.

Daily Life

A day in the working life of one of a lower, but indispensable class of VOC employees – writers – working for the company in Fort Cochin, would entail writing many sheets of paper. A writer like Simon van Tongeren sitting in the 1780s in the commander's office would have to maintain a daily register of events occurring in the fort.

In the daily registers, clerks made routine notes about incoming and outgoing letters, arrivals and departures of ships and visits by important dignitaries like prime ministers and chiefs, halts of VOC officers travelling between offices, etc. He would also have to register the speed and the direction of wind blowing, Christian festival days, ceremonies of baptism and marriage at the Dutch Reformed Church and sentences passed by the judicial council. It is interesting to note that to make an entry which required an indication of time, one clerk mentioned the bells of the

[125] TSA DR 645, Civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1759-1761.
[126] TSA DR 1095, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal records, 1778-1780.

church within the fort which he could hear in his office. Entries in diaries of special days, like the first and last days of the year, began and ended, in the name of God.

European company officials must have gone to work in contemporary European style clothing – copied from the new arrivals – while in their private spaces at home, clothing and eating culture would be determined by their indigenous or mestizo wives. Writer and sworn translator Simon Van Tongeren, who was married to Dominga de Silva, a Catholic woman with Portuguese parentage would be one such example.

Not every employee of the VOC lived inside the fort walls. Frans Josef Von Wrede – brother-in-law of Cellarius – originally from Heidelberg, Germany, preferred to live outside the fort. He was married to one of the Daimichen sisters. Wrede was well versed in Dutch, German, French and English. A letter written to him in English simply gives his address as "Frans Joseph von Wrede, a garden near Cochin". This shows that he must have been a well-known personality in Cochin, with a reasonably large estate outside the fort. After many years of service in the VOC and some private trade, he could live comfortably in his garden. In the records, Wrede comes across as a person who had good relations with Van Spall. He often acted as an intermediary between Van Spall and the EIC officials or other Englishmen living in the region. When an English prisoner escaped from the goal of Calicut, Von Wrede informed Van Spall about it.[127]

On 28 July 1757, one humid Sunday morning, quartermaster or billet-master Jan Wake, instead of going to the Church for the morning service, went to the house of Jacobus Meijn, the VOC cash-keeper and first clerk. Jan Wake used to live in Mattancheri. Meijn lived inside the fort. The purpose of Jan's visit was to make a will. He had been feeling somewhat 'sick, in body and mind' and decided that it was time to have a will written. Jan was a Dutchman who had left Europe in 1723. In Amsterdam, he had left behind his three brothers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and a sister called Francina. Although he did not marry in Fort Cochin, at least not in the Dutch Reformed Church, as there are no records of him in the marriage book of the Church, he did have a moderately sized household running in Mattancheri. He probably preferred to stay outside the fort for personal reasons. As there were no restrictions on VOC officials setting up homes within a certain radius of the fort, Jan Wake had set up his hearth in Mattancheri. His household there consisted of 13 persons: himself, slave-maid Jasienta and her four children: Jacob, Maria, Francina and Abraham; names that are the same as Jan Wake's siblings in the Netherlands. Three other slaves called Margarite, Lucretia and Anthonia and four slave boys called Augustus, Matthijs, Domingo and Lucas were also part of his household.

Giving a voice to his Christian beliefs he stated that, considering the fragile and weak life on this planet, which is comparable to a transient shadow, and his mortal sickness, which would take him to the lap of the earth (grave), he wished to have a decent burial.[128] This is an example of a

[127] TSA DR 1457, Letters from and to Calicut, etc. Letters to and from foreign factories, 1794-1795.
[128] TSA DR 615, Wills etc., Legal Records 1757-1760. He came to Asia on the VOC ship the *Opperdoes* and was employed by Amsterdam Chamber.

company servant not living in the fort, but after moving out still having a job there and using the fort's institutions.

Jan de Lange, captain of the shipwrights and supervisor of the shipyard, lived in Calvetty, just near to the port of Cochin. He was married to Sara Johanna Groeneveld, daughter of VOC servant Peter Francois Groeneveld. Jan had been hired by the Middelburg Chamber as a junior carpenter in 1777. Jan and Sara had two sons, Johannes Pieter and Leendert Christoffel.[129] Jan had family in Middelburg; Sara was born in Cochin on 16th May 1765. Her parents and three siblings, one brother and two sisters, were all in Cochin.[130] This is an example of what can be called a typical "VOC-family". Sara's father Peter Francois worked as an assistant for the VOC in Cochin.[131] Since Jan's work kept him mostly near the port and shipyard, he lived there and not inside the fort walls. His wife's family members however, lived inside the fort.

Goods and artefacts, which were catalogued in inventories drawn up at the time a person passed away, give us another glimpse into daily life in the fort. Items used by the people of Fort Cochin in their day-to-day lives – some from the Netherlands, others locally produced – tell us about the material culture created and sustained by the inhabitants of the fort. A regular event occurring in Fort Cochin would have been an auction held outside the homes of people. Apart from the auction of items of trade at the warehouses or of land leases probably outside the commander's office, other auctions, would take place when a resident of the fort – a head of the family and household – passed away without leaving behind an adult family member to take care of his estate. In such a case the orphan board would have an inventory drawn up of all the household effects and then have them auctioned. Neighbours, friends, relatives and strangers would buy by bidding. These auctions were meant for the company servants who lived in Fort Cochin, for those servants of the company who were on VOC ships in the harbour and for the free-burghers. The goods on sale were valued when the inventories were drawn up. Then they were auctioned. The items were sold to the highest bidder. The proceeds of this would go to the estate of the family managed by the orphan board until the heir came of age. Not only household goods like utensils, furniture etc., but also personal items like books, clothes and jewellery and sometimes even houses were sold. If the deceased persons had debts, these were paid off from the proceeds of such a sale.

Since this practice of cataloguing household goods was meant for all individuals living in the fort, studying the papers of these estates and auctions gives us an insight into the material culture of the richest, the poorest and the vast majority of the middle income group of people in the fort. A sailor's belongings could be limited to six to ten items consisting of a coffer with uniforms, a

[129] TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794.
[130] TSA DR 1556, Wills, Legal records, 1803. Peter Francois Groeneveld and Anna Cornelisz. were married in Cochin in 1762.
[131] NA The Hague, VOC 5218 *Landmonsterollen van Kamer Amsterdam*: dated 1770.

couple of other items of clothing, shoes and a bible or prayer book.[132] On the other hand, that of a rich company servant like Cellarius could run into tens of pages with sub-headings like wooden furniture, kitchen utensils, garden tools, jewellery, clothes and books, etc.

Houses were single or double storied. The houses were lit with candles and lamps. They had wooden furniture made of Malabar teak. Both, Asian as well as European style furniture, were used in the houses. Some had spittoons, common both to Europe and Asia and others typical Dutch items like a foot-warmer, a small wooden box with an iron base which could hold burning coal. It was used to keep the feet warm in the winters. Bigger households were divided into the front house and the backhouse. The connecting courtyard had a well. While the front house had living rooms, the backhouse had the kitchen and storerooms. The mistress of the house, her slaves and their children would spend time in the courtyard and backhouse. This was the space where news and gossip would spread through word of mouth. The houses had front verandas. These were spaces of informal meetings and small dealings amongst men. Some houses had benches on the stoop for evening chats and drinks.[133]

Since fruit, vegetables and other provisions were brought inside the fort from the surrounding areas, the inhabitants were dependent on the merchants who brought in the provisions. Mostly Jewish merchants brought in commodities of daily use into the fort. There was naturally a strong influence of local agriculture and fisheries on culinary culture. Rice and coconut, curry leaves and tamarind, produced in large quantities and part of the diet of the local mestizo population, was incorporated into the households within the fort. Pickles and chutneys would also in all probability be part of the menu. Fresh supplies of fish could be obtained from the sea and river. The wells inside the fort had poor quality brackish waters and therefore drinking water too had to be brought from outside. The VOC servants were dependent on the local merchants for supplies of these items and were unable to control the prices of these products.

On the other hand, one inhabitant had in his house, *vaderlandse gekommijnde kaas*, a type of cheese with cumin, typical of the Netherlands.[134] Thus a few eatables were supplied regularly from the Netherlands, via Batavia. Different types of wines and alcoholic beverages were often from Europe. The VOC supplied wine and beer to its servants in the colonies. Elite households kept stocks of European beverages and references in private letters about procuring 'good wines' from other VOC establishments appear from time to time.

In 1762, Johan Adam Cellarius, arrived at Cochin to serve as a corporal. After arriving in Cochin, he soon changed to the mercantile department and later served at Cranganur as chief with the rank of junior merchant. In Cochin, with time, he had created a large library for himself, which informs us that European servants of the company on the coast may have been aware of

[132] TSA DR 1077, Book of public sales, Sales 1777-1792.
[133] This is based on survey of still existing Dutch houses in Fort Cochin, undertaken in January 2007, and reading of various estate papers of the Dutch inhabitants.
[134] TSA DR 690, Wills, Legal Records, 1761-1764.

intellectual developments in Europe. Among the hundreds of books in his library one could find Shakespeare and Don Quixote, Cellarius had works by French philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau. He also had the complete works by physiocrat Abbé Raynal.[135] Cellarius comes across as an interesting personality not only because of his humble beginnings within the VOC and his huge estate, but also from what he had created in Cochin. In his library he had numerous dictionaries, novels, scientific books apart from a collection of maps and atlases. His house had Newton's *Principia*, Milton, *the Works of Pope*, books on navigation and Hume's *History of England.* Apart from that, he read Shakespeare, especially Hamlet. He had a copy of *Romeo and Juliet* in Dutch. In French he read Montesquieu, Voltaire, Molière, Rousseau and the Voyages of Tavernier. He had many books in Latin, German and Dutch on medicine, herbs, law and theology.[136] The large collection of books in the house of Cellarius hints at the influence of contemporary European intellectual thought, on persons serving in Asia. Governor Adriaan Moens was impressed with the personal library his friend Cellarius had built. Moens and Cellarius communicated often with each other. Words of appreciation about Cellarius by Moens can be found in his memoir.[137] In addition, Cellarius owned a palanquin and a 2-horse-drawn chariot. Not many people in Cochin had such luxuries. In fact not many were permitted to have such a show of paraphernalia. Inside Fort Cochin a palanquin was a status symbol, though it would have been a necessity for someone frequently travelling out of the fort or between smaller VOC establishments in Malabar.[138]

European men used European clothing. Jacob Canter Visscher who served in Cochin as a minister in the early decades of the eighteenth century, described the women as wearing clothes very different from those of European women, although in wearing jewellery both were comparable. He described the inhabitants of the fort as living in 'shocking luxury' in comparison to their counterparts in Europe. Both men and women chewed betel leaves with nuts and other local condiments.[139] Governor-General Jacob Mossel had detailed guidelines formulated to control and regulate the VOC establishments, from shoes, clothes and jewellery, number of slaves, horses and chariots, to the furniture that employees and their families could use to show their status. Marriage and baptism ceremonies as well as burial ritual and Sunday morning church-going was also regulated.[140]

To break the monotony of life inside the fort, the inhabitants often took trips to nearby places. These were mainly entertainment excursions by the rich elite.[141] They would be accompanied by

[135] TSA DR 1557, Papers concerning the estate of J. A. Cellarius, Legal Records, 1803.
[136] TSA DR 1557, Papers concerning the estate of J. A. Cellarius. Legal Records, 1803.
[137] MvO Adriaan Moens, 179-180: dated 1781.
[138] TSA DR 1557, Papers concerning the estate of J. A. Cellarius. Legal Records, 1803.
[139] Major Herber Drury, *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher now first translated from the original Dutch* (Madras: Adelphi Press, 1862), 91-94.
[140] J. A. van der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*, Vol. VI, (1750-1754), 30 December 1754, 773-795.
[141] MvO Van Gollenesse, 87: dated 1743.

their servants and slaves who carried all their goods, food, tents etc. for the camping outside the fort walls.

Knowledge, food and dress were markers or codes to maintain the social distinctions between the inhabitants. They stratified the people living inside and simultaneously excluded the ones living outside the fort walls who did not belong to the VOC world, that is, the indigenous communities, be they Hindus or Muslims or non-indigenous settlers like the Jews and the Armenians. Though the line of divide between the inside and outside people was rather obscure since Christians, be they mestizos or toepasses, lived both inside and outside the fort, which made for some similarities and continuities, yet the vast majority of the people outside the fort were non-Christians. The difference and social distance between them and the inhabitants of the fort would therefore be greater than the similarity between them.

For newcomers, there would be differences not only in the physical environment of Malabar, but also as to cultural. Nevertheless, those arriving from Colombo, Surat, Bengal, establishments of the VOC on the Coromandel Coast, or Batavia might well have found certain parallels with respect to the manners in which business and personal lives were conducted. Even so, customs and traditions carried from outside by new arrivals soon got assimilated into the established norms and practices of Fort Cochin.

While Portuguese was a common language and Dutch the official written language, it is interesting to note that in 1780, when Fra Paolino da San Bartolomeo, who was born a German, wanted to visit the raja of Travancore, he carried with him a letter of introduction from Governor Adriaan Moens. Fra Paolino noticed that the king of Travancore "had studied English for several months and spoke it very well". He also remarked that the king of Cochin "spoke Dutch exceedingly well and was desirous of learning English also".[142] Thus, towards the end of the eighteenth century the Dutch language was not just limited to the fortified enclave, but had percolated into and touched the lives of a small minority of people around it. While Portuguese, the *lingua franca* of European establishments was spoken by many, the reach of Dutch was rather limited. The sovereigns of Travancore and Cochin had realized that Dutch influence was giving way to English.

3.3 Public Institutions

Ideas, institutions, attitudes and mentalities often got transferred from the Netherlands via Batavia to Cochin. Their agents naturally were the VOC servants. In the following sections the public institutions of Fort Cochin will be analysed. We have seen, in an earlier chapter, that Fort Cochin had many institutions that gave it a complete societal infrastructure. The main questions

[142] *The Dutch in Malabar being a Translation of Selections nos. 1 and 2 with Introduction and Notes.* Selections from the Records of the Madras Government. Dutch Records no. 13, edited by A. Galletti, A.J. van der Burg, and P. Groot (Madras: Government Press, 1911), 38. Fra Paolino's real name was Johann Philipp Wesdin (information courtesy Dr. Mark de Lannoy).

then that arise are: how did the different institutions like the orphan board, the leper house, the hospital, educational institutions, church and the judicial system function in Cochin? For whom were they set up and who benefited from them? While the dynamics of the relationship between the inhabitants of the fort and those outside it remain the core issue, basic questions as to who used these institutions, and what policies were followed in these places will have to be answered. Since these public institutions were spaces of interaction among the different people, by focussing on them, we will get to know about the interactions and distances between different sub-groups. This will allow us yet another glimpse of the social world of Fort Cochin.

Just like the fort itself, the institutions in it were basically meant for the company servants and their families. They had been established by the company for its employees. The court of justice has left behind the richest, and the most difficult to work with, archival material. Its papers give an impression of everyday life. Other institutions like the church, the school and the orphanage have been clubbed together as their roles in society and their workings were closely linked. The last section is about the leper house and the hospital. Although information on these institution is hard to come by, yet an attempt will be made to bring into focus all of them. There was also a prison, but almost no usable records of it have survived.

The Court of Justice

European courts of law were not new to Malabar. The Portuguese had established a legal system and the Malabar Christian population was using this.[143] The VOC had set up a system of administration based on what was then practised in the Netherlands, namely Roman-Dutch law.[144] Apart from the law of the Netherlands, Fort Cochin like the rest of VOC-Asia followed what is known as Batavia's Statutes Book.[145] These were a collection of statutes passed since 1602. The law books of Simon van Leeuwen, Ulricus Huber[146], and Petrus Pekius[147] were used widely. The Codex Batavus, a general treatise on religious, public and civil law of Holland, Zeeland etc. was available for general reference.[148]

These rules and laws were meant for the VOC people. The papers relating to the court of justice enable one to imagine and visualise faces and voices of people who would have once

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143 Teotonio R. de Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History* (New Delhi: Concept, 1979), 97.

144 The phrase 'Roman-Dutch Law' was invented by Simon van Leeuwen, who employed it as the subtitle of his work entitled *Paratitula Juris Novissimi*, published at Leiden in 1652 and re-published in 1665. This was carried by the VOC to the colonies. The *Batavia's Statuten* applicable to all other VOC establishments also worked as guiding principles for administration of Justice.

145 J. A. van der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek 1602-1811*, Vols. 17 (Batavia/'s-Gravenhage: Landsdrukkerij/Nijhoff, 1885-1900).

146 TSA DR 21, 21A, Ulrik Huber, '*Heedendaegse rechtsgeleertheyt, soo elders, als in Frieslandt gebruikelyk.*, Vols. 2 (Leeuwarden: Hero Nauta, 1686).

147 TSA DR 40, Petrus Peckius and Simon van Leeuwen, '*Verhandelinge van Hand-opleggen ende besetten: dat is Arrest op persoon en de Goederen*'(Amsterdam: Henr. Boom & wed. van Dirk Boom, 1693).

148 TSA DR 141, Eduard van Zurck, *The Codex Batavus of Hollands, Zeeuws en Generaliteits Recht* (Delft: A. Beman, 1726).

crammed its rooms. The personal profiles of a range of people from different walks in life, different religions, and different places tell us who once stood in court voicing their grievances, making statements, defending themselves or laying conflicting claims that had to be resolved by judicial action. One comes across such persons on almost every page of all the civil and criminal case papers. From the accounts of minute-by-minute activities that took place in court, one can get an idea about the day-to-day activities that took place in Fort Cochin. Apart from this, the civil and criminal cases tell us about which groups used and benefited from the VOC system and which refrained from using it. This also gives clues to the social interaction and distance between inhabitants of the fort and those outside. Ongoing court cases in Fort Cochin would have been topics of discussion among officials of the VOC, both in the office and at home.

The council of justice consisted of six members and a president who was also the administrative and military head of Malabar, that is, the commander or governor. The president did not attend the proceedings of the court, but the orders and punishments were read out in his name. All sentences had to be confirmed by the president. The prison, which was within the fort dated from the Portuguese time.[149] During the Dutch period, the civil and criminal offenders were housed in separate cells.

Every year one member left the council; his place was filled by a new member.[150] A committee of two attended the trials in the court. An annual list was prepared month-wise as to which two members of the council would form the committee. The committee met every week on Tuesdays and Fridays. The day began at 8 am with a prayer. First the criminal cases were tried and then the civil. For a sentence to be passed all members had to be present. The sentences were read out and confirmed in a full session of the council of justice.

Governor Julius Valentijn Stein van Gollenesse (1734 and 1742) attempted to refurbish the library of the court of justice which, according to him, prior to his arrival, was "pretty irregularly administered". He appears to have been a close aide and admirer of Van Imhoff, then governor of Ceylon. Van Gollenesse had named his son Gustaaf Willem after him. Van Gollenesse had Van Imhoff send him the Ceylon *Blaffert* (a collection of Batavia's ordinances). From the time of Van Gollenesse all extracts of resolutions of the political council and letters, with instructions and advice, from Batavia and the Gentlemen XVII were also sent to the court of justice. Since many members of political council were also in the judicial council, all sentences not subject to revision or appeal had to be confirmed by the commander acting alone. The commander had the power to stay execution of the court's decision and refer the case to the High Government.[151]

Men like Matheus Hendrik Beijts, Jan Willem Hendrik van Rossum and Johan Adam Cellarius held the office of public prosecutor in Fort Cochin. In this capacity they brought charges against individuals who were suspected of having committed a crime under the VOC jurisdiction. It was

[149] Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin,* 89-90.
[150] TSA DR 575, Civil Proceedings, Judicial Records 1754-1757.
[151] MvO Van Gollenesse, 80: dated 1743. A *blaffert* is a list or register.

normal for petitioners and defenders to be allowed fourteen days time either to answer the questions or receive statements in writing. Rarely was a case settled in one sitting.

Since Commander Johan Gerard van Angelbeek's (1781-1793) administration, the Malabar Christians claimed immunity of all taxes imposed by the raja of Cochin and pretended to be only subjects of the Dutch. They paid a certain sum annually to the raja of Cochin.[152] However, with the increasing influence of the VOC in terms of controlling land, and bringing more and more people under its ambit, the atrocities of the raja of Cochin towards the Christians also increased. The raja displaced about 2000 families and asked them to leave their land and homes. It was to be re-settled by Hindus who refused to live in homes abandoned by Christians. Many Christians came to flock near the fort. Consequently the Dutch commanders found it difficult to protect all Christians. Yet, the fact remained that more and more people were seeking the protection of the Dutch. Of the white and black Jews of Cochin, the white Jews had always been under the immediate protection of the Dutch. Canara merchants, present in large numbers on the coast, had their residential and business area under the jurisdiction of the raja of Cochin, but their temple was under Dutch protection. Armenians were also under Dutch protection.[153] Piles of correspondence between the raja of Cochin and VOC officials are available with complaints of the former to the latter about wrongdoers causing trouble in his lands and escaping to the VOC jurisdiction.

In the earlier sections, the social and economic network as established by company servants and Malabar merchants has been mentioned. An example from the year 1754 brings out the plurality of Fort Cochin society and the people involved in such financial transactions, and, when they went wrong, legal transactions. This is also an example of the range of people who could be summoned by the Dutch court. The story comes to us from the civil case of a rich widow, Rachel Augustina van der Sloot, widow of VOC bookkeeper Jacob Sligter. She approached the court as a claimant against eight members of Cochin society as defendants. As shown earlier, rich women often provided money on credit to traders and earned interest from it. In the case of Rachel, she filed a case against her debtors: visitor of the sick Abraham Buis, junior steering-mate Wijnand Scherne, chief assistant of the mason Anthony van der Does, chief assistant of the shipwrights Daniel Hendriksz., free-burgher Marcellus Six, Dionysus Allewyn (a mestizo), Babuli Pandit (a Canara merchant) and kanakapillai Ayappa.[154] The case shows that money was lent not just to specific sub-groups of the fort's inhabitants, but to several merchants and people who lived in the surrounding areas. It also shows that, when a case was filed, and if the court sent summons, non-Christians like the Canara merchant Babuli Pandit and Kanakapillai Ayappa had to appear before the Dutch court.

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[152] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.
[153] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.
[154] TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.

In yet another instance, Warnar Florijn, the captain of the citizenry, chief of the ships woodworks or carpenters and also the town innkeeper,[155] had a case running against the translator Simon van Tongeren, Lieutenant of the lascars Mathias de Viveiros and Jogia Chetti, a resident of Pagodinho.[156] Later Warnar Florijn, as we know, would continue to stay in Cochin as a free-burgher.

These cases suggest lively contacts among people of very different origin. The VOC courts attracted both Christian and non-Christian litigants. While in principle the legal system was set up for the family of the VOC employees, actually other inhabitants of Fort Cochin and its surroundings also used the system for their benefit.

Another interesting civil case, from the 1770s, was that of Jewish merchant David Rahabi versus Canara merchant Calaga Prabhu. Calaga Prabhu owed money to David Rahabi.[157] This partnership between a Jewish and a Hindu merchant has been drawn attention to by Ashin Das Gupta.[158] It seems the partnership in the 1780s ran into trouble and the two were involved in litigations against each other. The case of David Rahabi versus Calaga Prabhu ran from 1772 to 1776. It was a big case involving a large proportion of the who's who of Cochin's commercial and social world. Ezechiel Rahabi was also involved along with Daniel Cohen, Baba Saraf, Aloe Saraf, Calaga Prabhu, Venkatesh Pai, Venkatesh Prabhu, Baba Nayak, Jogia Chetti, etc.[159]

Babuli Pandit, a merchant from the Canara coast who lived in Mattancheri, visited Fort Cochin very often. In 1755, he was involved in a court case against the VOC. The company was represented by Matheus Hendrik Beijts, the public prosecutor. There had been disagreements over trade contracts between the company and Babuli Pandit.[160] Another example of non-inhabitants of fort Cochin using the company's institutions dates from 1755. One Domingo De Lemos on behalf of Incencia Gonsalves, stood in the VOC court against Manuel Urtis. All of them lived outside Fort Cochin. While De Lemos and Gonsalves were living outside Fort Cochin, Urtis was a resident of Chakengatty. Yet, all three were using the Dutch Judicial setup inside the fort to solve their disputes.[161]

The VOC court rooms were thus filled by Chetti, Canara, Jewsish, Dutch, mestizo and toepas as law seekers and VOC officials as law providers, all active in the mercantile world of Fort Cochin. These are instances where indigenous people, for their self-interest, were using Dutch legal systems to address their grievances and protect their rights. They were thereby accommodating and adapting their legal behaviour to the Dutch systems.

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155 TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
156 TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
157 TSA DR 940, Civil Proceedings, Judicial records, 1772-1776.
158 Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, 108.
159 TSA DR 940, Civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1772-1776.
160 TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
161 TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.

Non-VOC European people used the Dutch legal institution as well. The English Captain Alexander Barclay might have been in Cochin for private business. His wife Mary Barclay was a resident of Calcutta. While in Cochin, Barclay was staying in the house of company servant assistant Hendrik Meulleman. Barclay, in his will gave some of his belongings to Hendrik Meulleman. Since Barclay's will was in English, Jacob Elias, a Jewish merchant, translated the will from English to Dutch. This not only demonstrates the fluency of non-Dutch men in Dutch language, but also shows how non-VOC Europeans made use of Dutch legal facilities.[162]

The 1792 case of Anna Maria van Oosten versus Anna Benjamin is also interesting. It brings out Dutch, Jewish and English networks. Anna Maria was the plaintiff. She was wife (and later widow) of VOC servant Jakob Voogt. She was represented in court by Barend Bles. The defendant Anna Benjamin was married to Mr. George Powney of the English East India company and was represented in court by Cornelis Dirk Swabe, a Dutchman. Anna Benjamin was a daughter of the Jewish merchant Isaak Benjamin. Anna Maria van Oosten, alias Mrs. Voogt filed a case against Anna Benjamin claiming that the latter had taken away her slave boy. George Powney threatened to sue Anna Maria for defamation.[163] Anna Benjamin and George Powney were not inhabitants of Fort Cochin. They were neither Dutch nor VOC servants. Yet, they were using the VOC judicial system.

In the year 1754, plaintiffs Jan Dams and Naga Prabhu, were represented by Jan Feith, a junior merchant and Keeper of the Warehouse, in a case against John Russell, captain of the citizenry and town inn-keeper.[164] Naga Prabhu was a Canara merchant. He was also the company's merchant. John Russell, at the same time, was also involved in another case. In this one he had, as a claimant, filed a suit against Mathias de Viveiros, the lieutenant of the lascars. Matthias owed about 500 ryxds to John Russell. The bill of credit was in Portuguese. The case had been going on for almost two years.[165] We know that Matthias was married to a Cochin-born mestizo and lived outside Fort Cochin. As we have seen earlier, Warnar Florijn also had a case running against Viveiros.

The company also had cases running against Naga Prabhu. This merchant who was most certainly a supplier of pepper and other commodities to the VOC was being represented in the Dutch court by his nephew Kusera Prabhu.[166] Other names that come up very frequently in the judicial and other papers, to name a few, are of company's merchants Venkatesh Chetti, Upendra Chetti, Ramayana Chetti, Islamic merchant Abdul Rasul,[167] Jewish merchants David Cohen[168],

[162] TSA DR 666, Wills etc., Legal records, 1760-1768. Will of Alexander Barclay dated 24th December 1764.
[163] TSA DR 1368, Civil proceedings, Judicial proceedings, 1790, 1791.
[164] TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
[165] TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
[166] TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
[167] TSA DR 489, Passports, 1747-1754.
[168] TSA DR 782, Wills etc., Legal records, 1765-1770.

Ezechiel Rahabi, Elias Rahabi, Isaac Surgun, Meyer Rahabi, Ibrahim Tobias and Abraham Gavy.[169]

Thus, the Dutch court of justice was used by more than just the servants of the company and the inhabitants of the fort. Those living outside the fort and not involved in a company-related dispute, but in one of a personal or commercial nature, also used the company's legal infrastructure. From among the non-inhabitants of Fort Cochin, two most prominent groups who used the VOC court were the Jewish and the Hindu merchants. The cases they brought were mostly commercial as well as legal in nature. It is interesting to see that different communities used the courts for different matters. Christians and Jews used it for personal as well as commercial matters. The Hindu and Islamic merchants only went to court for commercial disputes. To a certain extent, there was a "reception" of Dutch law in Cochin. There was perhaps always a certain level of juridification of conflict, but with the availability of the VOC court, non-Dutch, even non-Christian people from outside the fort used the system to their benefit.

Church, School and the Orphanage

The VOC had other institutions in the fort like the church, school and the orphanage. The functioning of these institutions was quite different from that of the court of justice, especially in terms of users of these institutions. Naturally, they were established for the use of the servants of the company and their families. They were closely linked to each other and the Dutch Reformed Church bound them together. These were typical Dutch institutions in terms of establishing principles, but the practicalities or functional realities in Fort Cochin were different.

Within VOC-Asia, schools and seminaries were built and maintained in Batavia and Colombo at the company's expense.[170] Governor-General Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff (1743-1750) even oversaw the opening of a special printing press for the seminary at Batavia.[171] As we have seen from the case of ministers in Malabar, they tried their utmost to learn the local languages like Tamil, Malayalam and in fact Portuguese so that they could attract Roman Catholics and others to the Dutch Reformed Church. Thus a polyglot church and school branch of the VOC service tried its best to lure followers to the Dutch Reformed Church.

During its almost 200 years of existence the company sent thousands of Calvinist ministers, lay bible-readers and school teachers to the East. Servants of the company hired for religious and educational services were grouped together. On board ship, during the journey to Asia, the lower

[169] TSA DR 489, Passports, 1747-1754.
[170] Seminaries were built in Colombo and Batavia so that more ministers could be brought under VOC employment. The Gentlemen XVII also paid for the building of schools and churches. The Company also financed the publishing and spread of bibles other edifying (*stichtelijk*) literature in Dutch, as well as some Asian languages. The VOC translated and published religious books in Malay, Portuguese, Tamil, Singhalese, and the Sing-kiang dialect which was spoken on Formosa. Harm Stevens, *De VOC in bedrijf, 1602-1799* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1998), 77, 84.
[171] Stevens, *De VOC in bedrijf*, 81.

ecclesiastical servants who had limited theological knowledge, mostly served as chaplains. Once on land, they were appointed as visitor of the sick, catechist, or Sunday-school teacher. After many years in service they could hope to hold middle level offices as minister. These were not the most reputed positions to hold in the company. With paltry salaries and motley possessions they went about the fort and its surrounding areas comforting those who were physically ailing, hoping that some of them would convert to the Dutch Reformed Church. Church and school were important spaces for the practising and preaching of the Dutch Reformed Church. It was compulsory for VOC sailors, soldiers and artillery personnel to attend the Sunday morning service.

The role of the Church was most visible in daily life when ceremonies like baptism, marriage and burial were carried out in accordance with the "true religion". Its main function was to spread the Gospel. In times of conflict between the Church and the commercial branch of the company, however, it was always the mercantile interest of the company that overruled the religious one. In short, the merchants ruled the roost, not the ministers of the Church.[172]

It is a well-known fact that conversion to the Dutch Reformed Church was only relatively successful in Asia. In Malabar it was a complete failure. Roman Catholicism, as we have seen, was the pre-dominant religion and the Dutch Reformed Church was present in Fort Cochin only as the "official" church which all company servants were expected to follow. Thus, there were few followers of the Dutch Reformed Church. Roman Catholicism, from the time of the Portuguese, remained a widely practiced religion. As shown, however, many believers of the Roman Catholic Church living around the Fort Cochin used the VOC legal system and the St. Francis Church.

The foremost duty of a minister was to take care of the pastoral work and to preach to the servants of the company. Maintaining general decency, discipline and morality in society formed an important part of their objective. Apart from managing their own congregation, the ministers had a duty of sending missionaries to the local population with the aim of converting them. But the Portuguese Roman Catholic priests were much more diligent in their task of converting the indigenous population to the Catholic Church and the VOC's ministers could achieve little amongst the huge numbers the Portuguese had managed to bring under their fold.[173]

Because Portuguese was so widely spoken in Malabar, Batavia had no minister that could be sent to Malabar.[174] For active conversion the preachers mostly aimed at the Roman Catholics living inside Fort Cochin. Peter Cornelisz. whom we have met before, as the only non-European with a European wife, managed to convert 13 individuals from different religious backgrounds into the Dutch Reformed Church. These newly baptised followers consisted of 2 Mennonites, a

[172] Stevens, *De VOC in bedrijf*, 77.
[173] Conversion to the Dutch Reformed Church was only relatively successful on Formosa, Ambon and Ceylon. Stevens, *De VOC in bedrijf*, 79.
[174] GM XI (1743-1750), 815: dated 31-12-1749.

Syrian Christian, a Catholic, 3 Jews, 4 Muslims and 2 Hindus.[175] Cornelisz. was from Ceylon and probably had the advantage of speaking Portuguese.

In the 1740s and 1750s, Preacher Johannes Scherieus was in charge of spreading the Dutch Reformed Church on the Malabar Coast.[176] In the 1751, minister Carel Sezilles was sent from Batavia to Malabar in place of Hermanus Grise, who, though appointed minister, preferred to stay in Batavia.[177] Carel Sezilles had been sent to Malabar as permanent teacher and he began his work there on 2nd February 1752.[178] But, in 1760, minister Sezilles went to Ceylon, in return of which the VOC's government at Ceylon promised to send to Cochin a minister who would preach in Dutch, but was willing to learn Portuguese.[179]

The Reverend Johannes Scherieus died in Fort Cochin in 1753. Bookkeeper David Hendrik Westphal presented his estate in the court of Prosecutor Matheus Hendrik Beijts in sequestration. Johannes was in debt, amongst others to people in Batavia. The creditors had laid claim to his estate. His estimated debt was around 2,000 ryxds, a substantial amount for a mid-level VOC employee. After his death, services in the Dutch Reformed Church had been suspended. A comforter of the sick did some work. Sacraments, now and then, were administered by a minister who made visits from Ceylon.[180]

So this was the state of affairs of the Dutch reformed Church in Fort Cochin. The frustration of VOC officials in this matter can be measured from a statement of Governor Van Gollenesse. According to him, "the true religion", in spite of numerous regulations concerning schools and the education of children, had made little progress. Attempts at preventing the spread of the "popish superstitions" led to little results and almost all children of the European employees who had married Catholic wives, were brought up as Roman Catholics. According to his assessment, not much improvement could be expected unless church and schools were provided with edifying and efficient teachers who understood the Portuguese language.[181] This again shows that daily life in Fort Cochin outside the VOC offices was mostly conducted in Portuguese language.

The hopeless situation in Malabar regarding the spread of the Dutch Reformed Church can be gauged by Commander Van Gollenesse's statement: "…for what can the zeal of a Reformed Preacher, whom nobody can understand, do to combat the bustle of the thousand Roman Priests on this coast, who are perfectly equipped with the necessary knowledge of the languages?"[182]

Sunday morning prayer meetings at the Church were spaces of dissemination of news, announcements, and information, about marriages, deaths and baptisms and a place where news, mostly policy matters from above – Ceylon, Batavia and the Netherlands – would travel from the

[175] MvO Adriaan Moens, 101: dated 1781. Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 59.
[176] TSA DR 560, Extracts from civil proceedings, Judicial records, 1753-1759.
[177] GM XII, VOC 2769, fo. 512r: dated
[178] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 77: dated 02-04-1752.
[179] GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 590: dated 31-12-1760.
[180] GM XI (1743-1750), 566: dated 31-12-1747.
[181] MvO Van Gollenesse, 80: dated 1743.
[182] MvO Van Gollenesse, 80: dated 1743.

official to the socio-personal sphere. News regarding official matters, declarations etc. were also posted on the church walls. The archives pertaining to Fort Cochin do not give any evidence of newspaper circulation. Apart from its spiritual role, the Church was also active in education, removing poverty and taking care of the needy, the orphans and the widows.

A Diaconate took care of many aspects of poor relief inside the fort. It played an important social role by providing monetary support to widows, orphans, and the unemployed. The Diaconate received money from various sources. Charity money collected in Church by circulating the money bag during or after service, those in offertory boxes and gifts or donations to the church, offerings made at the time of writing wills, stamp money while writing wills and other legal documents, money received by the council of justice as fines, revenues from the tavern which was in the fort, farms of opium, ferries, and fines from the office of the public prosecutor formed the fund of the Diaconate. This fund was used to finance and support numerous charity institutions.

Education was based on religion. Select schoolbooks were used throughout the VOC's establishments in Asia, of which the Bible was the most important. The idea was to have a homogenising effect on all VOC establishments so that children of VOC personnel could at least be seen as potential followers of the Dutch Reformed Church. The medium of education was supposed to be Dutch. Prayers were the first things that all children were supposed to know by heart. Learning began with the Dutch alphabet for children between four and six. Those between six to eight years of age learnt spelling. Reading was introduced to those in the age group of eight and twelve years and writing to those between nine and fourteen. Even then their understanding and speaking of Dutch was very limited. Attempts at teaching Dutch to the children at school failed as the brightest of them after many years of labour could only recite something that they had learnt by heart, without understanding it.[183] The archives pertaining to Fort Cochin do not contain information on specific books that were used there, and if there were books in Portuguese. There were special children's Bible and a Roman Catholic prayer book published in Antwerp and dated 1657 could be found.[184] Also, not many papers with respect to the administration of school are to be found; so it is not possible to gather information on issues like the amount of the school's budget, how much in fees was charged by the school etc. It can be safely assumed that most of the pupils were legitimate children of VOC servants.

Fort Cochin, in 1760, had about 75 children.[185] Yet, in that year only 46 children, mostly mestizo with Dutch names, attended the school.[186] There were no indigenous children, although the household records, as we have seen earlier, show that there were many indigenous couples living in the fort. Although it is not possible to determine from the school records whether all the

[183] MvO Adriaan Moens, 80: dated 1781.
[184] TSA DR 1, Roman Catholic missal, Missal, 1657.
[185] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Table 1.
[186] Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving', 59.

pupils in the schools were legitimate children of VOC personnel, yet since the number of children enrolled is so limited, and the number of children recorded in the census records much greater, it can be speculated that the purpose of the school in Fort Cochin was to educate the children of the VOC servants so that they could later be recruited by the company. Here the company followed a policy of segregating between the mestizo people and those who were indigenous. Information gathered under various categories as European, mestizen and indigenous, in the census records, were used to determine who could be admitted in the school and who not. This was probably a management strategy, whereby undesired Roman Catholics could be excluded from the VOC school.

For the indigenous people living inside Fort Cochin there was perhaps another school not financially supported by the VOC. This I gather from the fact that there was a schoolteacher for the indigenous, Evert Witbergen. He, in all probability, taught the indigenous children, that is, children of toepasses and other converts to Roman Catholicism, who lived inside the fort.

Based on Christian principles of charity and welfare, and replicating institutions that had been established in the Netherlands, Batavia, and other VOC colonies, Fort Cochin also had an orphanage. The main role of the orphanage was to take care of the orphans and their estates.[187] The orphanage was maintained by funds of the Diaconate. It took care of the education of its pupils.[188] Seeing the name list of children under its care, here too, its role was limited to orphans and estates of company servants and did not include all inhabitants of Fort Cochin.

Governor Moens (1771-1781), during the years of his administration drew up a list of who was allowed and who was not into the orphanage. Naturally, it was first and foremost meant for children of the servants of the company. Moens specifically wished to keep the orphanage only for 'white' children of European parents and who followed the Dutch reformed Church. Children of Catholic parents had in the past been raised in the orphanage, but it was expected that they would convert. Illegitimate children, who apparently were many, could not get a place there as otherwise it would be too full.[189] The children of the orphanage went to the school inside the fort.[190] Here a policy of exclusion, outlined by Moens, was actively followed by the VOC.

The orphanage was administered by an orphan board, which also took care of the estates of orphans. It functioned according to the 1648 regulation, when it was founded. The regulation changed many times according to the orders of the Batavian Government. The orphan board consisted of a president, six trustees and a secretary. Mostly one person held the office of the cashier and secretary of the board. These were not jobs, but duties and honorary offices held by senior respectable members of society. In return of their services they received a small

[187] Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*, 26.
[188] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.
[189] The illegitimate orphans then found place for themselves as *opvoedelingen* in households of family members and friends.
[190] MvO Adriaan Moens, 241: dated 1781.

remuneration. The president and members were partly company servants and partly free-burghers.[191] They were meant to prevent the wasting of the estates of the orphans and minors and oversee the functioning of the orphanage. They were also responsible for the pupils in the orphanage. They superseded and excluded even the testamentary executors, that is, if guardians to children and executors of wills had been appointed by parents. The board invested the money as they wished and paid four percent interest to the pupils' estate.[192] Normally the president of the orphan board was chosen by the members and was a person of property. Members could be nominated by the president, but had to be ratified by the company's local government. President and treasurer were in charge of the cash. The board sent an account to the VOC's administration twice a year to be scrutinized by the company's accountants. A copy was sent to Batavia.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Fort Cochin was economically very closely tied to and supervised by Batavia. There was always a shortage of cash in the VOC office for its day-to-day functioning. In such a situation, the orphan board came to the rescue of the people as well as the company. From its capital, accumulated by virtue of it being the caretaker of the estates of the orphans until they reached adulthood, it lent money to the people on interest and functioned as a bank. By this the estates of the children could be increased and other people in need could be helped out as well. The accounts books of the orphan board of Cochin prove that this institution was the largest creditor for the inhabitants of Fort Cochin as well as some prominent Malabar merchants.

Because the estates of the orphans had to be managed, this institution assumed other financial functions as well. Apart from taking in legitimate orphans of the company servants into the orphanage and taking care of their general well being and education, the orphan board took care or managed the estates of the orphans until they became legal adults – 25 years old – and were considered capable of handling their own property. Mostly in the case of girls, they received their inheritance at the time that they got married and boys when they joined the service of the company. From its capital, the board gave loans to individuals who took it by hypothecating their houses. As the houses were in Fort Cochin, at a time when the place was prosperous and most people had houses which could be sold, if necessary, to recover the principal amounts, the orphan board had given out many loans. In other cases, these house owners themselves acted as guarantors for others who needed loans.[193]

The orphan board also functioned as a financial institution. Since it took care of the property of orphans and minors, it had a fund or capital at its disposal. Estates of individuals who died without an heir were also confided to the board. From this capital, the board gave loans to individuals and to the company itself at the rate of six percent per annum. Thus, the board

[191] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.
[192] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.
[193] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department, fos. 103-104: dated 27-11-1835 to 10-11-1835.

received from the debtors' an interest of six percent per annum and paid to the creditors' that is, back to the estates of the orphans, an interest of four and a half percent per annum. Thus, while three fourths of the interests earned, went back to the capital, one fourth could be divided among the president, cashier cum secretary and other members. The president received double the share as remuneration compared to other members.

Leper House and Hospital

These two public institutions should have been a source of extremely interesting research on social interaction and distance apart from general health, diseases and medicines in Fort Cochin. Unfortunately, the sources are extremely limited and therefore one has to do with just a few details available from their financial accounts and names of individual patients and inmates of these institutions.

One disease that was widespread in Malabar was smallpox. The scourge of smallpox was difficult to escape. It left its victims, if not dead, then with horrifying speckles and sometimes even blind. Since the cause of deaths, were not recorded, it is hard to estimate how many people died of small-pox. Yet, in the incoming letters of Cochin whenever Batavia or Ceylon demanded slaves from Malabar and these could not be met, often the cause attributed was death due to smallpox. New-born and young children often lost their lives due to this disease. Another common disease, although not fatal, was elephantiasis. It was so widespread in Malabar that the disease in former days was called Cochin-leg. It left the patient with swollen legs which resembled that of an elephant.

Leprosy was of course also so widespread that a separate leper house was established. The Diaconate funded other charity institutions which were part of the VOC set-up. As stated, the leper house, named Lazarus House, situated outside Fort Cochin in Pallipuram, was funded by the Diaconate's fund.[194] Analysing the records of the leper house, here all members – VOC servants, free-burghers and even slaves – lived together. In 1750 there were twelve persons living in the Lazarus House.[195] This shows an interesting aspect of this society. Leprosy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was perceived as a punishment from God, or a form of penance. Therefore all Christians: European, mestizo or indigenous could live together, under one roof. Here there was no policy of exclusion, at least in terms of who could get admittance, as long as they were Christians. Yet, there was spatial segregation and records clearly marked a person's status, that is, whether he was European, mestizo or indigenous.

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194 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.

195 NA The Hague, VOC 2776, fo. 181. Resolutions. These were five men named: Hendrik Thymonsz., Nicholaas Volkmaar, Lourens Verhulst, Adriaan Westphalen, and Langhad Campong; two young boys called: Abraham Vermeij and Coenraad Marcus; three slave boys called Alesie, Bastiaan, and Barido and two slave girls called Dina and Sophia.

Within Fort Cochin there was also a hospital. Some of its patients received financial support from the Diaconate. The total expenses – leper house, orphan house and widow pensions – came to about Rs. 5,500 per annum. These institutions were under the care of the Diaconate. They made a monthly report to the commander.[196] A policy of inclusion and exclusion was followed in terms of who were to receive charity and who were to be barred from it. All Christians were eligible to receive charity money and could hope to use institutions funded by the Diaconate if needed. However, in reality only people related to the VOC benefited from it; others were excluded.

Mostly servants of the company were admitted in the hospital. The hospital records classified the patients on the basis of the post they held in the company. Servants from the garrison, artillery and sea-farers or sailors were often admitted in the hospital. Some of these could be mestizos. In 1785, the hospital beds were occupied by company servants who were born in Cochin, those whose places of origin were in Europe – Amsterdam, Antwerp and Zwolle – and one from Pondicherry on the Coromandel Coast. There was also one person categorised as "*moors zeevaarende*", a sailor of Islamic faith.[197] The hospital records also categorised the patients as European, mestizo etc. And unlike the Lazarus House, not all Christians were allowed in the company's hospital. In the orphanage, Leper House and in the Hospital, residents and patients received food, drinks, pieces of clothing and blankets according to their rank, or the rank of their fathers in the VOC. Daily expenses made on them were recorded.

During most part of the second half of the eighteenth century, Louis Quintin Martinsart, who for some years also had a place in the judicial council, worked as the chief or senior surgeon at the company's hospital.[198] Another member of the hospital administration was Ignasio Kiswalt, a junior surgeon.[199] A comforter or visitor of the sick Abraham Buijs must have visited the sick in the hospital and in their homes.[200]

In the 1790s, Jan Hendrik Schuurman was one of the surgeons in the hospital at Fort Cochin. Jan had begun his career in the VOC as a drummer. Thus one can conclude that no specialist education was required to qualify as a surgeon. He was married to Johanna Catharina Jurgen of Cochin. Their son Martinus Hendrik Schuurman was also a surgeon. Jan Hendrik lived in his house in Fort Cochin which he did not want to be sold after his death. He gave the house to his son Martinus who was to pay Rupees fifteen hundred for it from which the outstanding debts and other gifts of money could be paid. Martinus also received all gold and silver objects from his parents as well as the house furniture. Jan's other son and his son-in-law were also servants of the VOC in Fort Cochin, another example of a VOC-family.[201]

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196 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation 1796.
197 TSA DR 1240, Hospital Record 1785-1786.
198 TSA DR 615, Wills etc., Legal Records 1757-1760.
199 TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794.
200 TSA DR 575, Civil Proceedings, Judicial Records 1754-1757.
201 TSA DR 1412, Wills, marriage settlements etc., Legal Records, 1792-1794.

3.4 Conclusion

To come to an understanding of the nature of Cochin society, it is clear that there must be other factors and forces and many more individuals involved, than what has been brought forward here. Yet, what has been presented above is a portrait of Fort Cochin and the influences of the larger Malabar milieu on fort society.

Categorising the diverse components of this social formation into different groups was an administrative practice followed by the VOC. Imposed from above, this categorization practice was based on ideas of social difference perceived and maintained by the high echelons of the VOC administrators. This is discernable in the way Governor Moens described the different people of Malabar and those living in Fort Cochin. If the VOC is examined as an administrator, there were certain administrative practices and policies of inclusion and exclusion which were based on ideas of difference. In this way, social distances were maintained.

Within Fort Cochin, there was always hierarchy among the company servants. This was constantly re-negotiated and context-specific. So, while Europeans had the highest status, locally recruited people could reach high offices. Locally recruited people, for instance in the cases of Abraham Cornelis de la Haye and Nicholas Bowijn, could even reach the office of commander and second-in-charge, respectively. Others like secretary to the political council with the rank of junior merchant Johan Andries Daimichen and his son Godefridus, and writer and translator Simon van Tongeren were locally recruited qualified servants of the company. While the majority of qualified VOC personnel in the mercantile section were locally recruited – a sign that the company itself was adapting to local circumstances – the higher echelons of the military sections were trusted to Europeans. Thus, in the economic domain, certain sections of the population were excluded from specific formal labour (company's military services); others like the mestizos, lascars and toepasses were used as informal labour (hired daily workers and lower ranked soldiers).

Considering the fort with its diverse population composition, the households within the walls, the composition of the personnel of the VOC and the women in Fort Cochin, the influence of the larger Malabar milieu on the fort society becomes clear. The "social world of Fort Cochin" included the surroundings of the fort. While Christians lived both inside and outside the fort, the Hindus, the Jews and the followers of Islam lived outside. Non-Christians did not aspire to live within the fort walls. Nevertheless, certain members of the non-Christian mercantile communities visited the fort frequently. Social distance between the Christian and non-Christian population was concrete, yet in certain cases as in economic partnerships, the distances were narrowed or bridged.

The toepas community gave Fort Cochin a Roman Catholic character. Although they were Christians, they were looked down upon by the Europeans as indigenous and were not allowed in schools and in the orphanage of the VOC.

The fort had a strong composition of Roman Catholics which gave it and life there its unique characteristic. They were an important constituent of the populace and work force. In general, company servants had to be members of the Dutch Reformed Church and other protestant believers were welcomed and taken into service, the Catholics were strictly not allowed. Yet, in Fort Cochin the servants of the company were compelled to be tolerant of the Roman Catholics around them. Some of the company servants there actually were Roman Catholics. The influence of the Dutch Reformed Church was extremely limited. The Roman Catholic Christians who lived inside the fort did so voluntarily. They could move in and out quite freely. Since in many ways the company was dependent on them, it had no choice but to tolerate their religious beliefs. Social distance between Roman Catholic mestizos, especially women, and Dutch Reformed European servants of the company was nominal.

The Christian population, especially the mestizos and the toepasses, because of their presence both inside and outside the fort walls, and the Malabar merchants, with their active participation in the economic interactions with the inhabitants of fort Cochin, played an important role in narrowing the distance between those living inside the fort and those outside it. There were commercial and personal relations established by individuals living on both sides of the wall. The mestizos had a crucial role in the changing characteristic of the company's personnel, and in the ongoing process of adaptation on part of the European company servants. Contacts with other merchants, Christian, Muslims, Hindus or Jews, led to the creation of networks which were economic in nature. While contacts with the merchants provided economic means of sustenance, mestizo women created family and social network and ties.

Interactions between the company servants and the non-company servants or between the inhabitants of the fort and those who lived outside were constantly re-negotiated and context-specific. What has emerged from the study of public institutions of Fort Cochin is that people from outside the fort walls were using some VOC institutions inside. While mercantile sections of the outside population used certain institutions, in others their participation was prohibited. Certain sections of non-Christian communities, mostly members involved in mercantile activities, used the VOC courts. Hindus and Muslims did not use the VOC courts for personal matters, but only for commercial disputes. Jews and Christians used the VOC courts for commercial as well as personal disputes.

On the other hand, some inhabitants of the fort were denied access to institutions in the fort itself. The company maintained administrative policies which excluded certain members of Fort Cochin society from some of its institutions. As we have seen, in the case of the admittance of pupils to the school and the orphanage, or the distribution of funds of the Diaconate, a policy of

exclusion of non-VOC people was followed. Inconsistent inclusion and exclusion of the two non-homogeneous hierarchised groups of people divided by the fort walls was the main administrative policy of the VOC.

Yet human needs and temporary contingencies made people cross the boundaries, albeit in selective ways. Thus there were personal (European men married to mestizo women), commercial (networks between company servants and Malabar merchants) and legal (non-VOC people using VOC courts) interactions among the inside and outside population. The larger Malabar milieu did have an effect on the fort society. Social and commercial networks were established among the people. While some social distances were narrowing, such as European company servants marrying Roman Catholic women, in many other ways, like admittance to hospital and at the school, distances were maintained. While the company followed policies of inclusion and exclusion, human agency (or need) flouted these. This led to connectedness and interdependence.

Thus, in Fort Cochin, the political and economic authority of the Netherlands and Batavia were limited to matters that were strictly VOC. Individually and personally, the VOC servants functioned in the Malabar milieu with the help of their mestizo wives and Malabar merchants. Mestizo women dominated the female population of this settlement. A society came into being with interests of its own, divorced in some respects from the larger VOC world in Asia.

Adaptation to a new situation, as a human process, has two aspects. One is loosing touch with one's former environment; another is feeling more at home in the new one. The longer a VOC servant stayed away from his former home in Europe, got married, set up a household and developed an extended network of family and friends in and around Fort Cochin, the more he felt at home in the 'new' place, loosened and eventually lost contact with the older one. For those who came from outside, namely the European company servants, the fort was slowly becoming home. For a majority, it was not a strange land far from home. It was home.

CHAPTER FOUR

DAYS OF RECKONING (1784-1795)

We wish you dear sirs, with a loving heart,
that you will retire with honour and glory, after a lengthy administration
so that you will at long last in your old age,
may enjoy in tranquillity and peace, under your vine and fig tree,
the fruits of many years of wandering around in the service of the company
Weyerman and Sweers de Landas.[1]

These expressions of wishes reflect upon the easy life that servants of the company were hopeful of leading after their years of hard work in service of the VOC in Asia. How some servants of the company at Fort Cochin ended their careers with the VOC and where they wished to enjoy the fruits of their hard work is the main subject matter of this chapter. In the quote, it is not specified where the servants of the VOC wished to enjoy their wine stock and figs. The circumstances that forced them to decide upon a place will be described here. The time span chosen is the period between 1784 and 1795. The point of departure holds its importance as the year of the truce between England and the Netherlands after the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war. 1795 gains its significance from the fact that for the servants of the VOC at Cochin, the days of reckoning arrived in that year.

Changes in Europe became the guiding force for alliances and hostilities in those parts of India that were dominated by the presence of Europeans. These, in the case of Fort Cochin had a long-term impact upon the VOC servants there. In the first section of this chapter we leave Fort Cochin and Malabar to review the larger changes that were taking place in Europe and India. These places, far and near from Malabar, had immediate consequences for the inhabitants of the fort. In the second section we shall return to Fort Cochin, to analyse the changes that came about within the VOC especially concerning the Malabar command. The reforms concerning the Malabar command and the actions of the servants of the company there relating to it will be analysed. Here, the issue of earning a livelihood beyond the realm of the VOC, as discussed in the previous chapter, will be picked up once again. The section will address the question where

[1] *Wij, met een toegeneegen hert wenschen dat uw weledelen; tot derselver eer en glorie, na een langwijlig besteer favorabelder en horabelder mogen ontslagen worden. Ten eynde nog eens in hunne oude dagen, gerust en in vreede onder hunnen wijnstok en vijgeboom, de vrugten te kunnen genieten van een langjarig dienst en omswerving.* NA The Hague, HRB 755 (I), Document 8, Weyerman and Sweers de Landas to Breekpot and Abscow: dated 27-12-1764.

some servants of the VOC who had served in Fort Cochin wanted to enjoy the later years of their lives. Then, keeping the European and Indian political situation in mind, in the third section there is a step by step chronology of events around Fort Cochin that lead up to 1795.

4.1 Winds of Change

'In 1789 France fell into revolution, and the world has never since been the same. … It replaced the "old regime" with "modern society…'.[2] The purpose of this section is not to argue whether Fort Cochin changed from "old regime" to "modern society" but to see what effect developments in Europe, and specifically in France and the Netherlands had upon the lives of VOC servants at Fort Cochin. For this purpose, we briefly leave the fort and Malabar to update ourselves with developments in Europe and India between 1784 and 1795. The subsequent paragraphs bring out the impact of these changes in India, specifically the actions and policies of the English and the Dutch Companies operating in India at that time.

Developments linked to the French Revolution dominated parts of Europe during 1789 and 1800. The Netherlands was also undergoing political changes in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century. England gaining from her political stability, took advantage of the political unrest in France and the Netherlands to forge an empire for herself in India. The process had begun much earlier due to circumstances in India, but with new developments in Europe, England's position and policy towards India changed. The English were always wary of French ambitions and both in Europe and Asia, England played a central role, mostly by opposing France.

After Dupleix, as we have seen, thanks to the first EIC Governor-General Warren Hastings (1774-1785), French presence in India was restricted. By the 1783 Treaty of Versailles, its presence was limited to "commercial" activities. Without any sort of political, economic or military dominance, there was little hope of a French share in India or Indian Ocean trade.[3] Warren Hastings's term came to an end in 1785 and although he was impeached for financial disorganization, and later vindicated, he had either defeated or made puppets of most great powers in northern and eastern India: indigenous and European. Just before the turn of the century, similar ambitions for southern India drastically changed the lives of the people of Fort Cochin. Hastings was succeeded shortly by John Macpherson, who held the office between 1785

[2] R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World* (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 7th Ed., 1992), 361.

[3] In 1785 when some French businessmen combined to form the so-called "new" French East India Company of Calonne, they were aware of their dependence on the English company and private traders for their survival in India. Yet the French government believed otherwise. The French Revolution of 1789 further worsened its chances in India as the colonies were completely neglected. Yet it harboured ambitious plans for India. Holden Furber, *John Company at Work* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), 32-77.

and 1786. Between 1786 and 1793 Charles Mann Cornwallis, Marquess Cornwallis was the Governor-General of India.[4]

England and the EIC

At the East India House in Leadenhall Street in London, the proprietors and directors of the EIC and the returning nabobs debated hard on the forward policies of the EIC, always securing their own private profits first. On one hand, the English company was deep in debt, yet on the other hand the India "interests" were anxious to re-establish the company's credit which had suffered due to the numerous wars in India forcing it to be indebted to the State.[5] British business houses and country traders in Surat, Bombay and Bengal wanted further expansion of British influence in Gujarat and along the southwest coast of India. Gujarat was a rich producer of cotton while Kanara, Malabar and Travancore produced cinnamon and pepper.[6]

As early as 1761, Robert Orme (1728-1801), an English East India Company official who authored many books on the places he visited during the course of his service in Asia and specifically India,[7] wrote in a letter to Robert Clive[8], from Batavia about his impressions of the Dutch East India Company. Considering the rivalries in Europe, Orme was of the opinion that the British had nothing to worry about the Dutch in India. He stated "… we can never have anything to fear from them, while they have much to fear from us". He further remarked that the Dutch had great possessions in India but were incapable of defending them.[9] He then wrote a detailed review of Batavia. It is a rather glum report and at one point he writes, "Dutchmen are little better than mere Indians".[10] He felt that the English, at any point they wished, could take Batavia.[11] On Cochin, he was of the opinion that it had always depended on Batavia for military help, and even with that they had been unable to defeat the natives: a reference to the 1741 battle of Colachel which the VOC had lost to Travancore. He further described the poor condition of the fortifications in Cochin and how some of the bastions were falling apart.[12] In his description, Nagappattinam and Bengal were equally poorly defended.[13] He believed that had the Dutch paid attention to their forts and garrisons as much the English had to theirs, the Dutch would have

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[4] David P. Henige, *Colonial Governors from the Fifteenth Century to the Present* (London: University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1970), 125.
[5] Furber, *John Company at Work*, 260-269.
[6] C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), 105-106.
[7] Robert Orme was son of an EIC official and was born in Anjengo. After education in England he returned to India in service of the EIC. He was in Cochin in 1741 and 1742. BL London, OIOC Orme Mss, OV 162, fo. 415.
[8] Robert Clive was governor of Bengal from 1758 to 1760 and again from 1764 to 1767. Henige, *Colonial Governors*, 125.
[9] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fos. 142-143.
[10] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 145.
[11] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 146.
[12] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 149.
[13] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fos. 149-150.

been on an equal footing with the English. He also stated that the English were in an advantageous position due to the revenues they earned from Bengal, which the Dutch in India were lacking.[14] Orme commented upon the relations of the two Companies with the indigenous states. While the Dutch had been at war on the Malabar Coast, they had maintained peace in Coromandel. The English on the other hand were at peace on the Malabar Coast but were involved in very heavy wars on the Coromandel Coast.[15] On the functioning of the European companies, he stated that the VOC took bullion from Batavia to Holland, in this way avoiding to drain the mother country of precious metal as most of the European East India Companies were obliged to do.[16] With the help of figures on military deployments of the EIC and the VOC, he further illustrated how easy it would be for the English to run over Batavia.[17]

British spirits were high in India. The French had been subdued and the Dutch were no threat to her ambitions. The 1784 India Act reorganised the East India Company's relations with the state and created the board of control at London to supervise its functioning.[18] The act also gave more powers to the Governor-General at Fort William in Calcutta, and diminished those of the governors at Bombay and Madras presidencies. When in 1786 Lord Cornwallis became the Governor-General, the act, enabled him to increase his control over the Bombay and Madras presidencies.[19] English administration was better organised and the board of control at London increased state control of the company's activities. In India, the act and the efforts of Henry Dundas, the president of the board of trade, had been resented by Warren Hastings who had his own ideas about British expansion in India, foremost of which was substituting India for the loss of the American colonies.

The key period of British expansion in southern India started in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. By then, control over the revenue and judiciary in Bengal and Bombay presidencies was quite widespread. While in Bengal they "shared" sovereignty with the Mughals, from Bombay Castle, the headquarters of the English East India Company for its Bombay presidency, the EIC ruled as a surrogate of the British crown: minting coins and administering

[14] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 152.
[15] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 152.
[16] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 153.
[17] BL London, OIOC Orme Mss I, fo. 158.
[18] The 1784 India Act, popularly called Pitt's India Act was a plan of William Pitt the younger (1759-1806). This was his first administrative reform as Prime Minister between 1783 and 1801. He held the Office again from 1804 until his death in 1806. Pitt placed his ally Henry Dundas as the president of the board of control. In 1785 Henry Dundas – who was also serving as one of the Principal Secretary of State for His Majesty George III – and the Secret Committee which was part of the board of control, agreed to a settlement for the better management of the company's finances. Dundas tried hard to establish stable relations between England, France and Holland concerning the east. C. H. Philips, *The East India Company 1784-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, Reprint 1968), 47.
[19] Lord Cornwallis was succeeded by Sir John Shore (1793-1798) and later Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) became the Governor-General. Cornwallis returned for a second term in 1805.

justice – to all inhabitants – in the name of the British crown.[20] The Madras presidency also had substantial control, though the rise of Mysore had caused apprehensions.

In 1784 after the second Anglo-Mysore war, the Treaty of Mangalore was signed between Tipu Sultan and the English company. Tipu had ascended the throne of Mysore in 1782 after the death of his father Haidar Ali. For the VOC, while on the one hand, Mysore was the only counterbalance against the rising supremacy of the British, on the other hand, both friendship and enmity with Tipu would lead to troubles for the Dutch.[21] In 1787, Mysorean troops appeared near Cranganur, but withdrew.[22] In 1789, a coalition was formed between the EIC, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas. Tipu, naturally warned by this, decided to consolidate power and undertook a Malabar campaign. He first focussed on the northern side, and later also on southern Malabar. The plan was to cross the Travancore defence line and bring parts of Malabar under his control. He reached right up to Verapoly. The Dutch at Fort Cochin were only saved by the monsoon of 1789, which was so ferocious that the Mysorean army could not cross the river to take Fort Cochin, and had to retreat northwards.[23] The English at Tellicherry under Major Alexander Dow could do little against Tipu, but fortunately for them, thanks to threats from the Governor-General Lord Cornwallis, many Malabar chiefs sided with the English: the Zamorin, the raja of Palghat, the raja of Cochin. Travancore, though not a formal ally by treaty, had maintained good relations with the EIC, to balance its enmity with the Dutch. The Bibi of Cannanur, whose daughter was married to a son of Tipu Sultan, remained hostile to the British.[24]

Tipu Sultan and the EIC went to war again late in 1789. This third Anglo-Mysore war (1789-1792) broke out on the grounds that Tipu had attacked Travancore, which was a British protectorate. Mysore was defeated. France could not come to its rescue. The state of Mysore was reduced drastically. The Marathas, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the EIC gained territory. Parts of the newly acquired territory came under the Madras presidency.[25] Northern Malabar came under British rule.

Since the 1790s, news had been reaching French establishments in India of political unrest in France. There were discussions in the French colonies to prepare for defence against England. In the summer of 1793, Pondicherry received definite information from Isle de France (Mauritius) that the English were preparing an attack. Hasty preparations were made for defence as the fort walls lay in ruins.[26] Pondicherry requested Isle de France for re-enforcements but in return received anxious questions requesting information on how capable the British were in capturing

[20] C. A. Bayly, "The British Military-Fiscal State and the Indigenous Resistance, India 1750-1820" in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), 322-354.
[21] Van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore*, 143.
[22] Van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore*, 144.
[23] Van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore*, 144-149 and 152.
[24] Innes and Evans (ed.), *Madras District Gazetteers*, 74-75.
[25] Claude Markovits (eds.), *A History of Modern India 1480-1950* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 260.
[26] S. P. Sen, *The French in India 1763-1816* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1971), 445-449.

the island.[27] In 1793, England overran all French territories in India, namely Chandernagor in Bengal, Yanam, Pondicherry and Karaikal on the Coromandel Coast and Mahé on the Malabar Coast. Chandernagor was taken on 11th June; Mahé was attacked on 13th and surrendered on the 16th.[28] Pondicherry surrendered on 23rd July. The capitulation of Pondicherry was most dramatic. Scenes of counter-revolution whereby many of the officers and citizens threw up the tri-colour cockade and wore signs of mourning for the king followed it.[29] A similar show of loyalty to the old regime, as we shall see, took place among the Dutch in Fort Cochin.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the English East India Company's personnel had come to believe that they were rulers of India. This gave legitimacy to a flexible military and fiscal organization, which displayed a remarkable capacity for territorial expansion. The political language of the company servants and of the British government began to take on an even more absolutist tone.[30] The English East India Company was expanding rapidly throughout India. Henry Dundas, the president of the board of trade, was optimistic of the company's growth and returns from India, although worried about debts and clandestine trade.[31]

Malabar's black gold was still in high demand in Europe and the EIC wanted to dance its turn for the pepper bride of Malabar. Fort Cochin, a fortified settlement with a sizeable civilian population, a huge garrison, artillery and seamen, was a sore to EIC's designs of expansion in southwestern India. Next to Fort Gustavus at Chinsura, Fort Cochin was the only other formidable Dutch settlement in India. Chinsura and the VOC-possessions on the Coromandel Coast had been taken during the Anglo-Dutch war of 1780-1784 and it was common knowledge that the VOC was no threat to the EIC in Bengal. The VOC establishments in Bengal and Coromandel had been first abandoned between 1780 and 1784. Fort Gustavus, captured by the EIC in 1781, was restored by treaty of Versailles in 1783. Later, in 1795, as a consequence of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, they were again either captured or abandoned.

So, Fort Cochin in Malabar was the only Dutch settlement in India over which the English had never been able to exercise control. Since the supremacy of the British had already been established in Bengal, Bombay and Madras, the English were now in a position to turn their attention towards Malabar. In 1792, a commission was established to assess conditions in Malabar. It is obvious from the instructions drawn up by General Robert Abercromby[32] that the

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[27] Sen, *The French in India*, 447-448.
[28] Sen, *The French in India*, 472-481.
[29] Sen, *The French in India*, 449-451.
[30] C. A. Bayly, "The British Military-Fiscal State and the Indigenous Resistance, India 1750-1820" in Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War Britain*, 322-354, especially, 333 and 339.
[31] Amales Tripathi, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency 1793-1833* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1-6.
[32] Robert Abercromby (b.1740-d.1825) was the supreme commander of the British in Bombay and in this capacity had led troops from Bombay against Tipu Sultan. He was governor of Bombay from 1790 to 1795. Jonathan Duncan succeeded him in 1795 and held till 1811. Henige, *Colonial Governors*, 97.

aim of the commission was to establish a fully functional administrative system in Malabar, which was to be in a position to collect the taxes levied by the British on a regular basis.[33]

The commission comprised of Alexander Dow and William Gamul Farmer from Bombay presidency and William Page and Charles Boddam from the Bengal presidency. They were charged with recording the political situation of the day and its historical background. They were to be based at Tellicherry. During the wars with Mysore, Tellicherry had played an important role as a base for protection and communication.[34] Earlier, Britain's main interest in Malabar had been pepper. After the 1780s, political ambitions had also played a role in their involvement in the region, of highest importance being the subjugation of Mysore.

In March 1793, as a direct action of the commission and under the guidance of Governor-General Cornwallis, the British created the province of Malabar under the Bombay presidency, thereby creating an improved administrative infrastructure in the region.[35] At the head of the government was a supravisor – William Gamul Farmer – also holding the post as chief magistrate of the province of Malabar. He was stationed at Calicut: the bridgehead for territorial control in Malabar. Under him were two superintendents: one heading the northern division with headquarters at Tellicherry and the other heading the southern division with headquarters at Cherpelcherry. Courts of justice, following the Code of Bengal were set up at Calicut, Tellicherry and Cherpelcherry.[36] These steps of early legislation and organisation became the foundation for future control of Malabar by the English.

EIC officials in Malabar felt that Cochin was unimportant to the company, but those in Calcutta were of the opinion that Cochin and dependencies would be of great importance, as it was a strong fort. It would become an excellent depot for war stores, provisions, etc. for the security of the EIC's southern territories and those of the raja of Travancore. [37] Also, the port was very good, protected by the bar and very deep, which was good for ships. The country was abundant in excellent timber and ships of one thousand tons burden were conveniently built there. The trade of pepper would be in favour of the English company. It would totally put a stop to the inhuman traffic of slaves, which was then most shamefully carried on to a considerable extent by the Dutch.[38] The English company had no fortifications near the sea, except at Cannanore, which was situated at no great distance from the northern boundary of Travancore. Calicut only had offices, not fortifications. Fort Cochin would also be handy if Mysore ever needed to be invaded.[39]

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[33] Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition of British Rule in Malabar 1790-1805* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 98.
[34] Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 73.
[35] Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 101-102.
[36] Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 99-102.
[37] BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fo. 586.
[38] BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fos. 586-595.
[39] BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fo. 595.

Thus, although within the EIC opinions were diverse about the desirability and importance of acquiring Fort Cochin, the Governor-General at Calcutta was determined to bring it under control. Economic (pepper and timber), political (control of Mysore) as well as moral (elimination of the slave trade) reasons were cited to legitimise the EIC's expansion in southwestern India.

The Netherlands and the VOC

In this section, the political and economic situation in the Netherlands and the VOC in general will be summarised. The 1780-1784 Fourth Anglo-Dutch War proved the superiority of the English navy. It seriously damaged the Dutch maritime trade.[40] One third of the Dutch fleet was sunk by the English between 1782 and 1784. Communications and shipping with Batavia suffered the most. The war led to serious economic consequences for the Dutch in Europe, and they also suffered heavily in their colonies.[41]

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Netherlands during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was also undergoing many changes socially and politically. The main cause of social discontent was the poor economic condition that had arisen from the Anglo-Dutch war. With rising economic problems, questions were asked about who was responsible for the war.[42] Two factions – Patriots and Orangists – emerged.[43] The land was in chaos and a civil war like situation emerged between the Patriots and the stadhouder's men. The Patriots demanded a new constitution and in 1786 they took over the administration at Utrecht, where Willem V was living. In 1787, Prussian troops invaded parts of Netherlands in support of the Orangists.[44] The Patriots were sacked; many of them fled and took refuge in southern Netherlands and France. The ideas of the Patriots were similar to the revolutionary ideas of the French. In 1788, Willem V entered into a Triple Alliance with England and Prussia against France.

The VOC was also facing a decline. After 1780 the situation became disastrous with expenses far greater than income.[45] Willem V, as chief director of VOC was unpopular with the Patriots. Although the Patriots were tolerant towards the company, a thorough re-organization was demanded. Slavery was to be banned. Free-trade was to be encouraged. It was decided in 1786

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[40] P. J. A. N. Rietbergen, *A Short History of the Netherlands* (Amersfoort: Bekking, fourth edition 2000), 111.
[41] Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1096-1097.
[42] Nicolaas van Sas, "The Netherlands, 1750-1813" in Hannah Barker and Simon Burrows (eds.), *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 48-68.
[43] Rietbergen, *A Short History of the Netherlands*, 111.
[44] Willem V was married to Wilhelmina of Prussia. She was sister of Frederick Willem II of Prussia who sent his troops to restore his brother-in-law.
[45] The chambers invested money in an attempt to kick start the company, but the damages were beyond recovery. The VOC was in a financial crisis. Femme Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* (Leiden: Walburg Pers, 2003), 148, 164-170.

that a Fifth Department would be added to the Amsterdam Chamber.[46] Six new directors were appointed by the States-General in addition to the existing twenty directors. This committee was to come up with a plan to re-organise the company, redress the problems and take charge of communication with Batavia. At least in the third aim, of establishing contact with Batavia, it was partially successful. The Amsterdam Chamber agreed to the demands of the Patriots but the Zeeland Chamber was strongly opposed to it. The president of Zeeland Chamber Lourens Pieter van de Spiegel, threatened that the Chamber would join the EIC and hoped to receive assistance from Britain in opposing the Patriots. Since no assistance arrived from Britain, it was more or less settled that the Fifth Department would play a dominant role in the VOC.

Thus while the Patriots were reformist and 'modernist', the Orangists were considered conservative anglophiles. There was also a general belief that the VOC, especially at Batavia was governed by a lot of self-seeking conservative Orangists.[47] When in 1787 the stadhouder regained his position with the help of Prussia, the reforming zeal within the company was stalled. Yet efforts were made to regain control and re-establish communications with Batavia. In 1790, a 'State Committee for the Affairs of the East India Company' was set up. A special commission consisting of S. C. Nederburg and S. H. Frijkenius was appointed to go to Batavia and take control of the situation there and in the rest of Asia. In 1792, they left the Netherlands for Batavia.[48]

In 1792, the 'exiled' Patriots who were in France established the Batavian Revolutionary Committee at Paris. In 1795, French troops overran the Netherlands; Willem V escaped to England, from where he wrote the letter of Kew.[49] According to this document, Dutch settlements in Asia were to surrender temporarily to the English.[50] The Batavian Revolution of 1795 resulted in a few Patriot leaders gaining seats in colonial management boards. Economizing and adaptation measures were taken at least in the Netherlands to manage the VOC and the areas under its control. In reality there was little contact with Asia.[51]

When needed, the Gentlemen XVII, as we have seen earlier, sent their own commissioned officials to different offices in Asia in order to inspect and appraise the establishments, their functioning, officials, expenses, condition of fortifications etc.[52] One such commission to report on the Malabar command, was the military commission consisting of J. O. Vaillant, C. A. Ver

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[46] J. J. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang. De voorstellen tot redres van de VOC, 1740-1795* (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1984). 112. And G. J. Schutte, *De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën: een onderzoek naar hun denkbeelden en optreden, 1770-1800* (Groningen: Wolters, 1974), 21.

[47] G. J. Schutte, 'Winds of Change: Dutch Colonial Policy during the first decade of the nineteenth century', Papers of the Dutch-Indonesian Historical Conference 1976 (Leiden 1978), 154-162.

[48] Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 168-170.

[49] BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fo. 595.

[50] T. H. Milo, 'De Maritieme verdediging van Oost-Indië van 1795-1802', in *Marineblad: Orgaan van de Marine Vereeniging*, 56e Jaargang Juni 1941, 209-255, especially, 211.

[51] Schutte, *De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën*, 220-221.

[52] NA The Hague, HRB 752, Addition to the memorandum on reduction of expenditure in Malabar, 1756-64. In 1756, a commission was established to economise the expenses of Malabar and suggest reductions in mercantile and military personnel on the coast.

Huell and J. F. L. Graevestein. The commission submitted a report on Malabar dated February 1790.[53] The task of this commission was to report on the state of defence of Cochin.[54] It concluded that the defence of Cochin required maximum attention. At that time, the rajas of Cochin and Travancore were perceived as greatest threats to the fort. It was desirable, according to the commission, to keep friendly relations with both, in order to face Tipu Sultan of Mysore.[55]

In August 1793, the British placed their forces near Cranganur. When Commander Van Angelbeek asked for British support in case of a French attack, Colonel Hartley replied he would do his utmost to fulfill the Dutch commander's request, but it would be possible only if the VOC was willing to pay for the expenses. Van Angelbeek then replied that since the English troops were to remain on their own territory, and not enter Dutch territories, the costs should be shared by both VOC and EIC.[56] Although the matter was laid to rest there, this correspondence between Van Angelbeek and the English gives us an early glimpse of the general fear of the French. Van Angelbeek reported the matter to Batavia.

In 1793 while writing his memoir, Commander Van Angelbeek stated that considering the present circumstances – that is, the war with France[57] – it would not be advisable to reduce the garrison at Cochin, although economising was necessary. He had earlier promised Batavia to reduce the total number of garrison from nine hundred to six hundred heads but now thought it wise to postpone the reduction until an appropriate time.[58] In December 1793, Van Angelbeek left Cochin to go to Colombo as governor and director. Jan Lambertus van Spall took his place.[59]

As we have seen, both England and the Netherlands were assessing their presence and future prospects on the Malabar Coast. While Orme was very positive about British capabilities against the Dutch, Valliant was aware of the growing English presence in southwestern India. Yet, he focused on Cochin and Travancore and advised the Dutch not to get involved with Mysore. For the British, the subjugation of Mysore was most important. Both the EIC and the VOC were conscious of the French. While Alexander Dow's commission made plans to extract more revenues out of Malabar and weighed Malabar's potential in the future, Valliant's commission evaluated how capable Cochin would be in defending itself, in case of an attack. Thus, while the British were being progressive, the Dutch were defensive. Yet, due to developments in Europe,

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[53] NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijk Secretarie, no. 1914, Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin. Report compiled by Captain J. O. Vaillant, Captain C. A. VerHuell and Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. L. Graevestein to the stadhouder: dated 1790.
[54] NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijke Secretarie, no. 1914, Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin: dated 1790.
[55] NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijke Secretarie, no. 1914. Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin, fos. 1-2: dated 1790.
[56] MvO Van Angelbeek, 17: dated 1793.
[57] In 1792, the Batavian Republic had been established in Paris and there was a general fear that Dutch Patriots, often also referred to as 'Liberators', backed by the French Revolutionary forces, would take-over Netherlands.
[58] MvO Van Angelbeek, 12: dated 1793.
[59] W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op hare buiten-comptoiren in Azië* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Libaert, 1944), 85 and 198.

their common perceived enemy in India was France, against whom they were willing to join forces.

Before assessing Malabar in details in the following section, it would be necessary to shortly survey the VOC establishments in the rest of India. Fort Gustavus at Chinsura was captured by the Dutch in 1781 and restored by the Treaty of Versailles in 1783. VOC establishments in Bengal and Coromandel were first abandoned between 1780 and 1784. On March 25, 1788 Isaac Titsing, the director of Bengal, wrote to Governor-General Willem Alting at Batavia warning him of the extent of English power in India. He prophesied that European expansion in Asia would continue and that in the case of India, it would be in favour of Britain: thanks to their divide and rule policy. [60] Later, in 1795, as a consequence of the Napoleonic wars the Dutch settlements in Bengal and Coromandel were again either captured by the EIC or abandoned by the VOC.

The State of Affairs of the Malabar Command

Matters changed for the VOC in Malabar politically as well in the decades under discussion. Commander Christian Lodewijk Senff (1768-1780) had considered Travancore to be the company's competitor and enemy on the coast. He was also sure that Mysore would want to control the whole of Malabar including Fort Cochin as well as exert power over Travancore. Since the VOC had achieved peace with Travancore, the overtaking of Travancore by Mysore would lead to problems for it.[61] Senff was aware that the rajas of Cochin and Travancore were nervous about the growing power of Mysore. His suggestion was to keep distance from Mysore, which anyway looked down upon the Dutch company ever since 1743. The idea also was not to upset Travancore and Cochin by allying with their potential enemy.[62] After Travancore, Mysore had been on the rise. Commander Van Angelbeek (1781-1793) therefore, suggested that the VOC should get in touch with Mysore and try to make a favourable settlement with it. In 1790, the military commission sent by the stadhouder however, had advised to stay clear of Mysore.[63]

As we have seen in Chapter Two, in the 1760s under the administration of commander Weyerman, the company had, in return of the debts that he owned to the VOC, attempted to buy the Vaipin Island from the raja of Cochin. The company had a garden and other pieces of land there.[64] Later, commander Senff showed enthusiasm towards expanding the company's domain beyond the fort walls. His predecessor, Cornelis Breekpot had paid attention to the fortification works and had a new bridge built at Calvetty, the harbour of Cochin. To improve condition at

[60] Furber, *John Company at Work*, 303.
[61] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 69-72.
[62] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 78-97.
[63] NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijke Secretarie, no. 1914. Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin, fos. 1-2: dated 1790.
[64] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fo. 6.

Fort Cochin, commander Breekpot had requested other changes but Batavia, on grounds of increasing expenses, had rejected his ideas. Senff's description of Fort Cochin itself was not very impressive. The effects of the water currents were destructive and a stream had found its way within the fort walls, past the commander's office, between point Sloterdijk on the west end to point Stroomburg on the east end. This stream, according to Senff, had to be deepened so that small boats could enter the fort. Against the orders of Batavia, he went ahead, with the proposed changes and maintenance works stating that this was necessary for the inhabitants of the fort and that it was the duty of the company to care for its servants.[65] He further suggested that a new building should be built for the officers and that the office of the VOC was so small, dark and stuffy that the writers were languishing in the heat. He proposed new and better buildings to be built. He was also in favour of repairing the quay, as the company would benefit from it.[66] So, servants on the spot at Fort Cochin had two aims, one of controlling more land outside the fort and bringing it under the ambit of the VOC and secondly, maintaining the fort in as good a condition as possible.

As we have seen earlier, the Gentlemen XVII had cherished deep-seated suspicions against the officials at Batavia whom they all considered corrupt and greedy. In 1742, therefore, they had sent Gustaaf Willem Baron Van Imhoff, to Ceylon and Malabar to report on these two areas.[67] On the issue of permitted private trade, Van Imhoff's contribution was that he put in writing what had in theory been in practice for a long time. After him, the High Government at Batavia elected Jacob Mossel. He had served for two decades on the Coromandel Coast.[68] During the reign of Mossel (1750-1761), Commander Casparus de Jong wrote a special secret report about Malabar, based on which, in February 1758, Governor-General Mossel wrote his own secret memoir. The Malabar command, at that time, was under criticism for not producing 'profits'.[69]

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[65] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 52-53.

[66] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 55-58.

[67] The views of Imhoff on Malabar have been discussed earlier. Van Imhoff as Governor-General at Batavia between 1743 and 1750, was to restore the VOC to its past glory. He went about to achieve this by attempting to regulate private trade, which anyway had been going on right from the very inception of the VOC. His administrative achievements at Batavia included efforts at making Batavia more 'liveable'. Among others it included the building of Buitenzorg, a palace outside Batavia for the Governor-General and inviting European farmers to settle in Batavia. After seven years of 'experiments' in 1750 he died at Batavia. Instead of being hailed as the reformer, he was made infamous as the one who also 'adapted' to the Batavian ways. Kees Zandvliet (ed.), *The Dutch Encounter with Asia*, 83-84.

[68] Mossel has been reputed to undo all that was done by Van Imhoff regarding regulation of private trade. It definitely did not change matters for Malabar. In an attempt to control profit-making by trading privately, which was detrimental and competitive towards the company, Mossel increased the salaries of the officials. He also regulated the private lives of the company officials by laying down guidelines about show of wealth and status. He disliked pomp and show and expected fellow company servants to follow him. Kees Zandvliet (ed.), *The Dutch Encounter with Asia*, 84-85.

[69] See discussion on Malabar's profitability in Chapter Three. In 1758 Mossel added to the free-navigation and permitted trade rules for Malabar. Tin and pepper were to remain under company's rule while trading in other goods were allowed between west coast of India and Malacca. GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 214: dated 25-04-1758.

Mossel suggested that Cochin should be made into a 'free-trading city' as the commerce there was good and a lot of income could be collected by taxation on shipping. Mossel himself had no local knowledge of Malabar but was aware that the VOC by selling spices, copper, tin, iron, and sugar, and from the incomes of leases outside the fort, annually made fl. 150,000 while from pepper (in Malabar) only fl. 87,000 was made.[70] He suggested that only pepper should be excluded from free-trading, as it was a VOC monopoly, but that all other items should be unregulated, especially for the bombaras who frequented the port.[71] Mossel hoped that these issues would be discussed seriously by the Gentlemen XVII in the Netherlands and measures taken to implement them.[72]

A decade later, yet another commander of Malabar, Christiaan Lodewijk Senff, who had served at Surat, as director between 1763 and 1768, was still writing how the VOC would benefit from the bombaras that came to the port of Cochin especially for spices, copper, tin, iron and other products that the VOC sold there. The bombaras created a great demand for sugar for which they were willing to pay in cash or exchange them for products of daily use like cotton, asafoetida, textiles, almonds, raisins, rose water, etc. which were not sold at Surat.[73] Senff states that the company would only benefit by following the English or bombara model of free-trade in the Malabar, Surat and Persian Gulf region.[74] He argued that the cash that the traders would pay for sugar could be used to buy pepper.[75] Senff was quite critical of Breekpot's measures in Malabar. During his short two year stay at Fort Cochin, he had managed to get a much more realistic insight into Malabar politics and economics. This naturally was an outcome of his experience as director of Surat. He also organised the various leases from which the company was receiving an income and introduced new types of contracts and taxes.[76]

As can be seen from Malabar's profit and loss chart, the company between 1760s and 1780s made profits and then dwindled into losses again.[77] Neither the plan of Mossel to make Cochin a

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[70] NA The Hague, HRB 731, Secret memorandum about Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1757-1759, Vol. I, fos. 24-25.
[71] NA The Hague, HRB 731, Secret memorandum about Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1757-1759, Vol. I, fo. 26.
[72] NA The Hague, HRB 731, Secret memorandum about Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1757-1759, Vol. I, fo. 28.
[73] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 104-105.
[74] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 106-108. He was well aware that there would be a discussion whether the opening up the port of Cochin and providing goods to English and bombara merchants would be harmful for the VOC at Surat. But this problem could be solved by ensuring that the products at Cochin were not sold at a price lower than in Surat. Commander Senff had if fact served at Surat, and therefore was very well qualified to give his opinion on the VOC trade on the west coast of India. It is also not to be forgotten that there were talks in Batavia in the 1760s to close down the Company's establishments in Surat. GM XIII (1756-1761) in print, 588: dated 31-12-1760.
[75] NA The Hague, HRB 745, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. V, fos. 110-112.
[76] TSA DR 879, Conditions on which Government farms were leased. Conditions of leases, 1770.
[77] See Appendix to Chapter Two: Table 3; Malabar Local Financial Results 1750-1794 and corresponding Chart 2.

free-trading city, nor the suggestions of Senff to allow free-trade and encourage bombaras to anchor at the port of Cochin were implemented by Batavia or the Gentlemen XVII.

The localization of the company's servants and recruitment of local persons into the service of the company in Fort Cochin has been discussed in the previous chapter. At Batavia too, there had been a move towards localization of servants and although this phenomenon has not been studied in detail for Batavia, in 1761, a Colombo-born person, Petrus Albertus van der Parra became the Governor-General of the Dutch Indies. Van der Parra's succession to the post of the Governor-General was a paradigm shift within the VOC. He was a third generation member of a Dutch family living in Asia. He had numerous relatives throughout the Dutch Indies in different ranks and places. He had been recruited locally by the VOC, at the age of fourteen at Colombo as a 'soldier at pen', basically a clerk of low rank. He then went to Batavia and worked his way up to the highest office there.[78]

All regulations of Mossel, meant to control show and fancy, were flouted by this, 'son of VOC-Asia' who during his fourteen years of administration made official, trends in lifestyle and administration, which were in principle present for many decades.[79] His administration of VOC-Asia was the turning point in the history of the Dutch overseas empire. After Van der Parra, regulations continued to be made regarding private trade. Governor-General Reinier de Klerk (1777-1780) in 1778 made a whole new set of regulations referring back to edicts passed in the previous decades.[80] Similarly Governor-General Willem Arnold Alting (1780-1796) repeated these regulations.

These regulations regarding private trade suggests two aspects of the VOC in Asia. Firstly, that there was a lot of private trade going on by the company officials, even in commodities that were supposedly monopolies of the VOC, e.g., pepper in Malabar. Secondly, the very fact that the same regulations were passed repeatedly proves that private trading continued. Naturally, the higher VOC officials in an establishment were supposed to control private trading which was detrimental to the company's monopolies, but when they themselves were involved in it, little could be done. The examples that we have about this from Bengal and Surat prove this adequately. From Fort Cochin itself we have the example of Johan Adam Cellarius, the very prosperous public prosecutor who had amassed a lot of wealth, clearly not just from his VOC salary. As it appears from the list of items found in his house, he was among other things dealing

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[78] F. W. Stapel, *Governeur-Generaal van Nederlandsch Indië* (Den Haag: Van Stockum, 1941), 63.

[79] Van der Parra, during the term of his administration made no attempts to curtail his ambitions to be seen as a person of great grandeur, show and circumstance. He celebrated his coming to office with splendour and his birthday was commemorated as a national holiday throughout the VOC settlements. He showered favours to his numerous kiths and kin by promoting them to high offices. His friends were posted to well paid offices and in return he received favours form them. Although news of all this reached the Netherlands through different sources, there was little the Gentlemen XVII could do. In this way he stayed in office for fourteen years, until his death in 1775. Kees Zandvliet (ed.), *The Dutch Encounter with Asia*, 84-85.

[80] *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek 1602-1811*, Vol. X, 300-314.

in European books, maps and atlases.[81] Trading in commodities like provisions, food, books, furniture, and clothing for Europeans, and dealing in other commodities of day-to-day use like oil for lamps, candles, cloth, alcohol and other beverages etc., could be profitable.

It is clear that there was more to a man like Cellarius than his job as a VOC corporal in Cochin who slowly made his way up to the office of public prosecutor. Unlike many VOC "low rankers" who moved from office to office in numerous parts of Asia, Cellarius got married and settled in Cochin as soon as he arrived in Asia. He moved around a bit on the Malabar Coast, but always returned to Fort Cochin. By virtue of his marriage to a Cochin-born woman, his ties with Cochin became stronger. He had an extended family there and a good network of people around him. Commander Weyerman was another such example. He had amassed his wealth, by private trading, way before there was any discussion on making Cochin a free-trading port.

4.2 Enjoying the Fig Tree and the Vine

We have seen in the previous chapter how VOC company servants were finding means of profit-making by trading privately with the Malabar merchants. This section first gives an overview of changes or reforms that were brought about by the VOC in permitted private trade of VOC officials. The larger aim of taking up this issue again is to be able to compare opportunities of earning a livelihood for Dutch company servants in Cochin, in the light of political and economic developments outlined in the previous section. As the title of this section and phrase at the beginning of the chapter suggests, many servants of the VOC were hopeful of enjoying the benefits of the years of service to the VOC. Where the inhabitants of Fort Cochin wished to enjoy the fruits of their labour and how the reforms initiated by the VOC affected them will be discussed here.

Reforms Concerning Malabar

In Malabar, apart from the new economic scenario, whereby the Malabar command had started to show profits in its local account books, almost continuously between 1757 and 1775, there had been massive efforts at making the command smaller in terms of size and personnel.

Since the 1760s, the VOC considered to sell its fort at Cannanur to Haidar Ali.[82] Governor-General Mossel in his report of 1758 had appreciated the importance of Cannanur.[83] Governor-General Van der Parra sent instructions to Malabar that Cannanur should be shut down

[81] TSA DR 1557, Papers concerning the estate of J. A. Cellarius. Legal Records, 1803.
[82] NA The Hague, HRB 754, Papers concerning the sale of Cannanore to the Ali Raja of Cannanore by the VOC, 1766-1778, fos. 1-5.
[83] NA The Hague, HRB 732, Secret memorandum about Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1757-1759, Vol. II, fos. 2-3.

completely.[84] Eventually, however, in 1771 the VOC sold the fort to the Ali Raja of Cannanur.[85] Correspondence of the 1770s, between Fort Cochin and the smaller establishments, show that while Cranganur and Quilon were doing well, Fort Wilhelmus at Chettuvay had fallen to ruins.[86] Schreuder in his report on Malabar had suggested that a new *ronduit* be built at Chettuvay on which eight six-pounder cannons could be mounted. When the High Government discussed the report of Jan Schreuder, Van der Parra, in 1763, was of the opinion that the fort at Chettuvay should be completely demolished.[87] Fort Wilhelmus at Chettuvay was eventually sold to Tipu Sultan of Mysore. On 31st July, 1789 VOC's Cranganur and Aycotta were sold by governor Van Angelbeek to Travancore for 300,000 Surat Silver Rupias.[88] Thus, the Malabar command was much smaller at the end of the eighteenth century compared to what it had been in 1750.

The reductions were done on orders from above, that is, Batavia's instructions. Although at the beginning there had been resistance from men on the spot, later the orders had to be carried out. The VOC officials who were posted at Cranganur and other establishments did not attempt to go to Batavia or the Netherlands but were absorbed into Fort Cochin. The sale of the VOC fortresses at Cannanur, Cranganur and Chettuvay must have made people wonder about the future of Fort Cochin.[89] In 1750, the company had a network of fortresses, warehouses, guard posts and outpost on the entire coast of Malabar totaling twenty-two large and small places. In 1795 Malabar command consisted only of Fort Cochin, a lodge or warehouse for the collection of pepper at Purakkad and another at Kayamkulam, and a small establishment at Quilon.[90] The VOC's presence had been largely reduced.

Fort Cochin continued to remain the main administrative, economic and cultural centre of the much reduced establishments in Malabar. Commander Senff had done a lot to repair and strengthen it. In 1778, fearing attack from Mysore, the fort had been strengthened and the ditches around the bastions were dug out.[91] The only available detailed map from this period dates from 1782 shows no structural changes had been made in the fort .[92] As the company began to economise in the 1780s, owing to a lack of funds the basic maintenance works of the fort had been neglected. The walls facing the sea were constantly falling down due to the impact of the waves and the esplanade was not the safest area for a leisurely evening walk. Point Stroomburg and the quay of Sloterdijk needed continuous attention.[93] Point Overijsel also started

[84] NA The Hague HRB, 735, Memorandum Schreuder , fo. 43.
[85] William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, 418.
[86] NA The Hague, HRB 744, Memorandum of C. L. Senff, 1770. With appendices and repertories, Vol. IV.
[87] NA The Hague, HRB 735, Memorandum Schreuder, fo. 56.
[88] C. A. Innes, F. B. Evans (ed.), *Madras District Gazetteers*, Malabar and Anjengo (Madras: Government Press, 1908), 73-74. TSA CCD 2033, fo. 298. Land lease records.
[89] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 298, Land-lease report.
[90] NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijke Secretarie 1914, fo. 1. Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin: dated 1790.
[91] Alexander Rea, Monumental Remains of the Dutch East India Company in the presidency of Madras (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1998), 28-29.
[92] NA The Hague, nos. 905 and 906, Foreign Map Collection Leupe (VEL), Maps of Cochin from 1782.
[93] MvO Casparus de Jong, 26: dated 1761.

to collapse and needed annual repairs.[94] There were constant water-logging and drainage problems within the fort, which were reported to Batavia regularly.[95] The 1790 military commission also reported that the fortification needed urgent improvements.[96]

The VOC's establishments on the Malabar Coast were the only European establishments until then in India that were neither captured by the English nor abandoned by the Dutch themselves fearing an English attack. Naturally the VOC officials at Fort Cochin would have sensed the English threats during the 1780-84 war and during the 1789 Malabar campaign of Tipu. Luckily for them, the EIC and Mysore had kept each other busy.

Way back in 1760, Batavia had instructed Fort Cochin that in case of an attack from a European enemy, by which they meant France, as the English were considered allies, Cannanur, Quilon, Chettuvay and Cranganur were to be abandoned and all forces were to concentrate at Fort Cochin. So, then Fort Cochin was considered an important asset for the VOC. In June 1789, on rumour that the Dutch were going to cede Fort Cochin to the English, Tipu Sultan of Mysore wrote to French governor Thomas Conway at Pondicherry that the French should try to purchase the place from the Dutch.[97] In the 1790s, there was a talk of selling the Fort Cochin to the English, though the VOC's price was too high for the EIC. Negotiations were going on about the sale. News of attempts to sell Fort Cochin to the English would have reached the servants and must have contributed to their doubts of staying on in Cochin or going somewhere else. It must have been an important topic of conversation at social gatherings.

Anyway, it was clear that strategically Fort Cochin was much in demand towards the end of the eighteenth century especially with the volatile political situation in southwestern India. Anyone in command of the fort could use it as a military base for further expansion in the region. Although there were other forts on the Malabar Coast, it was Fort Cochin, which was best located and most wanted by the indigenous and European powers.

The Commander Leads

On the island of Bolgatty, across Fort Cochin, a mansion had been built by the VOC in the 1740s, which was to be the new residence of the commander or governor of the VOC in Malabar. While the commander's office remained inside the fort, he had a bigger mansion at Bolgatty

[94] MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 4-5: dated 1765.
[95] All Memories van Overgave from Frederik Cunes dated 1756 to that of Johan Gerard van Angelbeek dated 1793 refer to the deteriorating condition of the fort walls. Commander Godefridus Weyerman gave the most detailed description of repairs works in his memoir dated 1765. MvO Godefridus Weyerman, 4-5: dated 1765.
[96] NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijke Secretarie, no. 1914, 1. Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin: dated 1790.
[97] Sen, *The French in India*, 522.

Island where the air was supposedly fresher and the water tasted better.[98] This was the very first sign of moving out beyond the fort's walls with the commander being the leading example.[99] It was also an example of the wealth created by the VOC commanders at Cochin. This section outlines certain new developments in Malabar and specially Fort Cochin around the period under consideration. The economic means of sustenance for company servants independent of the VOC have been discussed earlier. In this section the free-burghers will be discussed.

As discussed in Chapter Two, in Fort Cochin there had been attempts by the men on the spot to transform the company from a trading entity to one which could generate income by controlling and administering land (gardens and plantations) and by taxing land and ports. In the Netherlands and in Batavia there had been discussions about reforming the company to improve its profitability. It was a well-known fact that many servants of the company had made fortunes for themselves by exploiting all opportunities at trading privately while serving the VOC in Asia.[100] In the previous chapter, many different examples of this phenomenon from Fort Cochin itself have been mentioned. Company servants as well as free-burghers participated in small-scale peddling trade to earn a livelihood.[101]

As established, the VOC servants through their mestizo wives and the local Malabar merchants had established social and economic networks which helped them to sustain themselves in Cochin. In the light of the rapid economising and reduction of establishments that the VOC had undertaken in the Malabar command and the changes brought about by the men on the spot regarding the extension of the company's landed estates, more and more company servants and free-burghers were securing their livelihood in this manner.

In India, the VOC servants considered Bengal the most lucrative establishment where wealth could be amassed by trading privately. The company's Surat office was nothing but a company establishment in the name; it merely served the private interests of the company servants.[102] In

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[98] NA The Hague, HRB 735, fo. 241. Memorandum of Jan Schreuder to the GG&C, 1763. Fort Cochin had a shortage of fresh water and firewood. While water was supplied to the town from Fera d'Alva, firewood was supplied from Cranganur.

[99] There are no statistical records of the number of people, which lived outside the Fort, but there are references in the archives of people having houses and living outside. Since they often visited the fort for legal or commercial matters, their names appear in the archival papers from time to time.

[100] Small-scale private trade was carried on both in the Asia-Europe as well as in the intra-Asian trade. In Malabar, from the shipping records it is clear that coastal trading continued and participation of VOC officials in it cannot be doubted. In 1746 Batavia allowed free-navigation and permitted trade in Malabar with some restrictions. But the instructions were not understood clearly. Officials at Malabar were aware that the coastal shipping had to be left unhindered as it brought in revenues for the company as well as the Raja of Cochin. GM XI (1743-1750), 444: dated 31-12-1746. For similar regulation for Bengal see GM XI (1743-1750), 166: 31-12-1744.

[101] In India, Bengal was considered to be the most lucrative office by the VOC servants. VOC's Surat office, as pointed out by Ashin Das Gupta, was nothing but an establishment in the name of the Dutch company but one, which served the private interests of the company servants. A. Das Gupta, 'De VOC en Suratte in de 17e en 18e eeuw', in M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz (ed.), *De VOC in Azië* (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1976), 82-83. Cochin had a similar reputation. Furber, *John Company at Work*, 103.

[102] A. Das Gupta, 'De VOC en Suratte in de 17e en 18e eeuw', in M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofsz (ed.), *De VOC in Azië* (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1976), 82-83.

the 1780s, Cochin was the busiest port held by a European power in India.[103] It also had a reputation as a port where company servants amassed wealth through private trade.[104]

The contracts related to the collection of taxes from land belonging to the company, were taken by free-burghers like Joost Verhulst and Fillip Cardozo. In other cases, free-burghers like Jan Jurriensz. acted as guarantors for lease contracts.[105] These land leases were possible because, as we have seen in Chapter Two, commanders Frederik Cunes, Casparus de Jong and Weyerman had brought extensive lands under the control of the VOC. These examples of people living and working outside Fort Cochin show to what extent servants of the company were moving beyond the pale of the fort and the company. Naturally, this was linked to the VOC's economising and reforming zeal on the coast, which left the Malabar command highly reduced.

One free-burgher, Gillis Bons, had acquired the farm to collect taxes at the port of Cochin from indigenous vessels[106] and from foreign ships with two masts, that is, of the English, French, Portuguese and Islamic traders.[107] Later, he took up the contract of the river of Cranganur.[108] He probably lived outside the fort as he also had the contract to provide surij and arrack outside the fort area.[109] Other free-burghers involved in this trade were Abraham van Rossum who provided beverage to Chettuvay,[110] George de Aroejo who had the contract for surij and arrack supply at Crangannur,[111] and Fort Cochin.[112] For Vaipin Island the contracts were taken by Diego Perrira,[113] free-burgher Pieter Huwetter,[114] and Joseph de Souza.[115] Earlier most of the contracts were taken up by indigenous Jewish or Chetti merchants of Cochin. This shows that free-burghers were well-settled in the Malabar littoral milieu, and were here and there replacing local Malabar merchants.

Other free-burghers like Jacob Slighter, Imme van der Zee, Warnar Florijn, Joseph Pereira, Carel Groenrode, and many more, were earning a livelihood by taking up contracts of the town-

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103 Furber, *John Company at Work*, 7.
104 Furber, *John Company at Work*, 103.
105 TSA DR 1180, Twenty years' leases of company's gardens and fields, Leases, 1781-1800.
106 TSA DR 793, Conditions of lease for Government farms. Conditions of lease, 1766.
107 TSA DR 815, Annual conditions of leases, Leases, 1767.
108 TSA DR 921, Conditions on which government farms were let. Conditions of lease, 1772.
109 TSA DR 512, Conditions on which farms etc were let, Conditions of lease, 1751; TSA DR 536, Conditions of lease for Government farms. Conditions of lease, 1752.
110 TSA DR 512, Conditions on which farms etc were let, Conditions of lease, 1751; TSA DR 702, Conditions of lease for Government farms, Conditions of lease, 1762. TSA DR 737, Conditions of Government farms, Leases, 1764; TSA DR 793, Conditions of lease for Government farms. Conditions of lease, 1766. TSA DR 815, Annual conditions of leases, Leases, 1767.
111 TSA DR 512, Conditions on which farms etc were let, Conditions of lease, 1751.
112 TSA DR 579, Conditions on which Government lands were leased, Conditions of lease, 1755; TSA DR 650, Conditions of lease of the company's farms. Conditions of lease, 1760.
113 TSA DR 512, Conditions on which farms etc were let, Conditions of lease, 1751; TSA DR 536, Conditions of lease for Government farms. Conditions of lease, 1752; TSA DR 579, Conditions on which Government lands were leased, Conditions of lease, 1755.
114 TSA DR 702, Conditions of lease for Government farms, Conditions of lease, 1762.
115 TSA DR 815, Annual conditions of leases, Leases, 1767 ; TSA DR 905, Conditions of Government leases, Leases, 1771; TSA DR 921, Conditions on which government farms were let. Conditions of lease, 1772.

inn.[116] These are examples of inhabitants of Fort Cochin, some of whom were former company servants, who were earning a livelihood not formally but informally from the VOC. Similarly free-burgher Frederik Scheffer, Hendrik Wesp, and Joseph Expeel acquired the licence to supply beer to indigenous vessels that anchored at Cochin for refreshments.[117] Often, Hendrik Wesp also acted as a guarantor for other such farms.[118] By these means many inhabitants of Fort Cochin including mestizo and toepasses like Robert Douserse and Duarte de Lemos could support themselves economically.[119]

Although there is no way of finding out if the numbers of persons, European or mestizo who were living in and around Fort Cochin as free-citizens, was increasing or decreasing, as there are no detailed census records available of the fort, yet the archival documents do show increasing references to them and their participation in the local trade. As compared to the numbers in 1750, the total population in Cochin had been on the rise. VOC statistics state that in 1790, the total population within Fort Cochin was around 2317. Of this, the total European population was 155, with 152 European men and 3 European women. The rest consisted of castizos, mestizos, indigenous people and slaves. The largest non-European group in 1790 was that of white castizos with a total of 469 persons. These were local born persons with at least one European parent. This rather new term was not used in the previous records. In 1790 there were supposedly 1299 slaves within the Fort walls.[120] As we have seen, there were many current or former VOC-personnel who had establishments just outside the fortress and on Vaipin and Bolgatty Islands. Many had started to live outside the fort and were earning a livelihood there, though they continued to be attached to the fort for practical purposes.

4.3 The Takeover of Fort Cochin

In the following paragraphs the events that led up to the English takeover of the VOC's Fort Cochin will be narrated. Within the EIC, as we have seen, while the Malabar supravisor was not very positive about the advantages of occupying Fort Cochin, the EIC officials at Calcutta, were convinced about its strength and the role it would play in the EIC's expansion in Malabar. The board of control officials in London held similar views.

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[116] TSA DR 491, Conditions of Sundry Government leases granted, Conditions of lease, 1750; TSA DR 536, Conditions of lease for Government farms. Conditions of lease, 1752; TSA DR 634, Conditions on which government farms were let. Conditions of lease, 1759; TSA DR 739, Mercantile, Letters from Cranganur, 1764; TSA DR 815, Annual conditions of leases, Leases, 1767; and TSA DR 879, Conditions on which Government farms were leased, Conditions of lease 1770.

[117] TSA DR 702, Conditions of lease for Government farms, Conditions of lease, 1762; TSA DR 737, Conditions of Government farms, Leases, 1764; TSA DR 879, Conditions on which Government farms were leased, Conditions of lease 1770; TSA DR 905, Conditions of Government leases, Leases, 1771; TSA DR 921, Conditions on which government farms were let. Conditions of lease, 1772.

[118] TSA DR 962, Conditions of lease for Government farms. Conditions of lease, 1773, 1774.

[119] TSA DR 512, Conditions on which farms etc were let, Conditions of lease, 1751; TSA DR 815, Annual conditions of leases, Leases, 1767.

[120] The total population in 1760 was 2040. Marianne Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India', Appendix 2, 70-73.

In January 1794, negotiations were going on between the Dutch and the raja of Travancore about the sale of Fort Cochin to Travancore. On 17th January 1794, Commander Van Spall also offered to sell Cochin to the EIC. The court of directors at London were to decide on the issue. On 27th July 1795 the Madras government opened negotiations with Batavia on this matter.[121] They were unaware that the Stadhouder Willem V's letter of Kew, written in February 1795, would allow the temporary surrender of Cochin to the English anyway. [122]

Willem V, having escaped to Britain after the Batavian Revolution of January 1795, which was backed by French revolutionary forces, had been persuaded by the English to sign the so-called Circular Note of Kew. This letter was written in February 1795. It ordered Dutch colonial governors not to resist the British and place their forts, harbours, and ships at Britain's disposal.[123] The letter directed VOC officials in Africa and Asia to consider the English as their allies against the French. The stadhouder had held the post of the chief administrator of the VOC since 1748,[124] and, as we shall see, the British used his letter of Kew as a pretext to extend their presence in Malabar.

In June 1795, from Bombay Castle, a special request of the president and governor George Dick[125] was sent to the Governor-General at Calcutta Sir John Shore,[126] for "…instructions relative to measures which they [the Governor-General and council] may think necessary to be pursued … for securing the Dutch settlements on this side of India". What was meant was Fort Cochin and its dependencies. Copies of this letter were sent in cipher to Madras presidency.[127] This special and secret letter was a consequence of the fact that Bombay had received intelligence from Henry Dundas of the conquest of Holland by the French.[128] In this letter dated 19th February 1795, with a flying seal and also in cipher, Dundas referred to the letter of Kew and ordered, at his Majesty's command, the commanding officer of the forces at Bombay to extend his full co-operation to Sir Robert Abercromby, commander of His Majesty's ships and vessels in the Indian Ocean, in executing the orders regarding the Dutch settlements.[129]

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121 BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fo. 595.
122 BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fo. 595.
123 Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 1127.
124 Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 164. Willem V was the *Opperbewindhebber* of the VOC.
125 George Dick was provisionally holding the office of governor at Bombay after Robert Abercromby (1790-1795), while waiting for the arrival of Jonathan Duncan (1795-1811) from Calcutta. Abercromby left for Calcutta to take his appointment as chief commander of His Majesty's ships in the Indian Ocean.
126 MSA SPDD 49 (I), fo. 157. A letter dated 13-03-1795 from W. Ramsay, Secretary, East India House, London to Bombay informing the appointment of Duncan. Sir John Shore was Governor-General from 1793 to 1798. He had succeeded Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793). Henige, *Colonial Governors*, 125.
127 MSA SPDD 49 (I), fo. 165. In cipher: A secret or disguised manner of writing, whether by characters arbitrarily invented (app. the earlier method), or by an arbitrary use of letters or characters in other than their ordinary sense, by making single words stand for sentences or phrases, or by other conventional methods intelligible only to those possessing the key; a cryptograph. (OED Second edition 1989).
128 Henry Dundas (Ist Viscount Melville) was president of the board of control for India from 1784 to 1802.
129 MSA SPDD 49 (I), fos. 158-159. Letter of Henry Dundas to Bombay: dated 19-02-1795. Flying seal: In the postal system, a way of identifying posts meant to move fast.

Thus, within five months, in India, in June 1795, the Bombay presidency was the first to receive instructions concerning the political developments in Europe, chiefly the position of the stadhouder and his letter of Kew. The matter was discussed there and immediately, it sent information to and asked for instructions from the Governor-General at Calcutta. The reference of "securing Dutch settlement" did not mean the purchase of Fort Cochin but its conquest.

Henry Dundas also sent instructions to Abercromby at Calcutta, explaining the French threat to Dutch settlements and consequently to the English and requesting immediate command and control of Dutch settlements in Asia by the English until general peace was obtained. Holland would receive back its possessions once it gained independence from the French occupation. The stadhouder's letter of Kew accompanied this letter.[130] Dundas also advised Abercromby "…to publish this proclamation, inviting and requiring the governors of Dutch settlements, plantations, colonies and factories in the Indian Seas to deliver up the same to his Majesty …".[131]

On 6th July 1795, Abercromby wrote to Colonel Robert Bowles, EIC's commanding officer in the province of Malabar stationed at Calicut, repeating the commands he had received from Dundas, regarding taking over Dutch possessions in Asia. He further ordered troops to be collected in the vicinity of Cochin and asked Bowles, to send an experienced officer to the commander of Fort Cochin to enquire whether the Dutch had received instructions to 'hand over their forts in trust' to the English. A sufficient force was to be prepared so that Fort Cochin could be captured in case the Dutch refused a peaceful handover. In such a case, Abercromby allowed the use of force. As a last bit of instruction, Abercromby states that if there were to be any Swiss or German corps in the service of the VOC, they might be offered a chance to serve Great Britain on equal terms.[132] Thus, within five months of the collapse of the Dutch Republic, the EIC in India was militarily preparing for a takeover in Malabar.

In that same month of July, the Calcutta government wrote to Commander Van Spall at Fort Cochin informing him about Willem V's letter of Kew and its implications.[133] Further, Sir John Shore wrote to the raja of Travancore assuring him of his friendship and informing him of the British plans in the region.[134] On 28th July, Bowles forwarded to Colonel James Balfour, commanding officer of the Forces at Calicut, copies of the letter of Kew and orders for its execution. He also assigned Major George Petrie of the 77th Foot Regiment the task of taking over Fort Cochin.[135] Major Petrie left Calicut with the Grenadier battalion of sepoys towards

[130] MSA SPDD 49 (I), fos. 159-162. Letter of Henry Dundas to Robert Abercromby: dated 19-02-1795.
[131] MSA SPDD 49 (I), fo. 162. Letter of Henry Dundas to Robert Abercromby: dated 19-02-1795.
[132] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 332-334. Letter of Robert Abercromby to Colonel Robert Bowles: dated 06-07-1795.
[133] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 262-263. Letter of Edward Hay, Secretary to the Government at Fort William to James Stevens, supravisor and chief magistrate of the province of Malabar: dated 16-07-1795. The letter was sent to Stevens in Dutch and English to be forwarded to commander Van Spall. Similar letters were sent to the VOC director at Chinsura and the Dutch governor at Ceylon.
[134] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 264. Letter of Sir John Shore to Raja of Travancore: dated 17-07-1795.
[135] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 331. Letter of Colonel Robert Bowles to Colonel James Balfour: dated 28-07-1795. Lord Hobart, governor of Madras was well informed about the developments.

Fort Cochin. The takeover was to be a combined effort of King George III's and the EIC's forces.

On 2nd August 1795, Petrie's troops reached Vaipin Island opposite Fort Cochin.[136] In fact, the British troops camped at the same place where in 1661-1662, Rijcklof van Goens had set up Fort *Nieuw Orangie* at the start of the first siege to capture Cochin from the Portuguese.[137] Now, the English forces were building up, at the same place to capture Fort Cochin from the Dutch.

Arriving from the north by sea, Petrie set up his troops and ammunitions on the edge of Vaipin Island: Vaipin Point. The walls of Fort Cochin were visible just across the mouth of the river. This location was ideal as it brought the fortress walls within reach of his cannon and blocked the port of Cochin. Two lines of trenches were built: one to attack Fort Cochin from the north and the other facing the sea – primarily aiming at the harbour – to protect the English camp from Dutch war ships if reinforcements should arrive from Ceylon. The second trench would also prevent a Dutch escape from Fort Cochin in ships without being under a direct line of fire. It also ensured that they could not receive any ammunition etc. by the sea route. The surveyors prepared maps and plans of Fort Cochin and the surrounding region.[138] They were aware of every street and store that lay in the fort.[139] Major Petrie's own camp was set up six miles north of Vaipin Point.

Across the river at Fort Cochin, the VOC employees and other inhabitants, oblivious of the turmoil in the Netherlands, must have heard from their friends in Mattancheri and Vaipin about the build up of English troops. They had little clue about the Netherlands being overrun by France and the escape of the stadhouder to England. Yet, the arrival of the English, just outside their Fort would not have taken them by surprise completely. They were well aware that they were living on borrowed time since the 1780s. They knew that it was only a matter of time before they would lose Fort Cochin, just like the other VOC settlements in Chinsura, Pulicat, Nagappattinam and Sadras had been lost to the English during the 1780-1784 period.

Contact for Conquest

On the day of his arrival, 2nd August 1795, Major Petrie went to the Vaipin Point and from there sent Ensign Johnson of the Engineers, who spoke French and the local languages to communicate with the Dutch commander across the river.[140] When no reaction was received from the Dutch, Major Petrie wrote a letter to Van Spall on the same day, stating: "I have the honour to inform you that I am this instant arrived here, and have it in charge from Colonel

[136] BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fo. 595. Sepoys or Sipahis: A native of India employed as a soldier under European, esp. British, discipline (OED Second edition 1989).
[137] M. Antoinette P. Roelofsz, *De Vestiging der Nederlanders ter Kuste Malabar*, 272, 276 and 319.
[138] TSA Maps and Plans of Cochin.
[139] NA London, MPH 1/817 Plan of Fort Cochin.
[140] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 348-349. Letter of Major Petrie to Colonel Robert Bowles: dated 02-08-1795.

Bowles commanding the troops in the province of Malabar to impart to you the contents of dispatches lately received from the Right Honourable Henry Dundas … which are of essential consequence to the interests of your government as well as of the Dutch Republic and colonies at large. I have therefore further the honour of informing you, that I now wait to have the pleasure of communicating to you, His Majesty's most gracious and friendly instructions, and fully to explain the nature and purport of my mission."[141] Thus, Major Petrie had arrived at Vaipin, secretly, with an army and artillery, and was preparing for war, yet he established contact courteously for the purpose of taking over Fort Cochin.

That same evening, Van Spall wrote back to Petrie in French, requesting him to send the correspondence of Henry Dundas.[142] Probably sensing danger, he did not invite Petrie into the fort. Van Spall had arrived at the most difficult moment of his career. He was faced with the predicament of following Willem V or awaiting instructions from his immediate superiors at Batavia. He had come to the office just two years earlier after a long service in Malabar from 1765 onwards. He must have spent the night of 2nd August, anxiously wondering about Petrie's next move and hoping for some correspondence from Ceylon or Batavia with instructions for him. Other inhabitants of Fort Cochin would have also spent the night as much as possible within the suffocating fort walls wondering what the future had in store for them.

Petrie, having seen the cold response of Van Spall, wrote to Bowles at Calicut that the letter of Van Spall was "a refusal couched in evasive terms".[143] He reported from his camp on Vaipin Island, to Colonel Bowles that his pacific attempts to establish contact with the Dutch commander had proved futile. The following day Petrie wrote to Van Spall, one more time informing him about the stadhouder's letter requiring him to deliver the fort of Cochin in trust to His Britannic Majesty. He assured Van Spall of English goodwill.[144] Van Spall replied that he had neither received any dispatch from his masters in Batavia nor the letter of the stadhouder, though he was expecting news from Ceylon any moment.[145] This meant that Van Spall more or less stuck to the old situation whereby his loyalty lay with the stadhouder and the old Republic. He refused to accept the new situation and change of government in the Netherlands even when the English sent to him information about the stadhouder's escape to England after the French invasion.

Colonel Bowles now informed Colonel James Balfour, commanding officer of the forces at Calicut that having seen the response of the Dutch commander and his refusal to admit the English detachment into the fort, he had made full preparations for a siege. Thus the EIC at Calicut prepared an attack. Major Petrie appointed Lieutenant Gray of His Majesty's 77th Foot

[141] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 349-350. Letter of Major Petrie to Van Spall: dated 02-08-1795.
[142] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 350. Letter of Van Spall to Petrie: dated 02-08-1795.
[143] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 351. Letter of Major George Petrie to Col. Bowles: dated 02-08-1795.
[144] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 353. Letter of Petrie to Van Spall: dated 03-08-1795. Lieutenant Gray took the letter, in English and in French, to Fort Cochin. He was instructed by Petrie to wait in the fort for an answer.
[145] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 354. Letter of Van Spall to Petrie; dated 03-08-1795.

Regiment, to be brigade major, and Sergeant Hooper of the same corps to be sergeant major.[146] Additional troops and provisions were transported from Cannanur.[147] It was only a matter of time before the attack would commence.

Van Spall on the other hand was trying his best to keep the English at bay as long as possible, by engaging them in diplomatic correspondence. On 10th August he wrote to Petrie again, stating that he had received Petrie's letter along with that of the stadhouder. He further informed Petrie that he had received news from Madras that the Batavian Republic had concluded a peace with the French. He therefore declared his status to be neutral. This meant that he could not allow Petrie's troops into the fort.[148] Thus, Van Spall was trying to buy time until he received instructions from Batavia about the official stand of the VOC regarding the political circumstance in the Netherlands.

Eight days later, Van Spall wrote an angrier letter to Petrie, first persisting on his previous decision of not accommodating foreign troops in his fort owing to his allegiance towards the Republic and stadhouder and then stating that he and his council – "…were not accustomed to receive orders and commands of our sovereigns through any other channel than that of the Dutch East India Company and immediately addressed to us." He then stressed the lack of an *aide-mémoire* from the side of the English as was customary, and tersely pointed out that instead the English had sent "…a detachment of troops to the very limits of our territory…."[149]

Van Spall was quite right in expressing his anger. The stadhouder's letter of Kew had been written in February 1795 and the English at Bombay had knowledge of it in June. They did not inform Van Spall about it immediately, even though they had offices in Calicut and Anjengo on the Malabar Coast. Instead they had prepared for a military takeover and established contact with Van Spall only in August when Major Petrie had set up his camp and dug trenches on the Vaipin Island.

Seeing the imminent danger, Van Spall tried to buy time by first, in an effort to keep the English away, agreeing to everything he was told, yet not allowing them to enter the fort, and later stating the news of peace in the Netherlands, as a legitimate reason for denying the English access to the fort. In any case, he had made his stand clear that he would not be letting the English forces inside the fort without hearing from his own superiors. He also let them know that their action of sending military and artillery to Cochin was not in accordance to their claim of being an ally.

In the meanwhile the English preparations for the siege of Fort Cochin were drawing to an end. Two flank companies of the 2nd battalion of European infantry and four battering guns arrived by sea as reinforcement to Major Petrie. This fleet carried provisions and artillery for the

[146] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 350. Letter of Robert Bowles to James Balfour: dated 06-08-1795.
[147] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 354-355. Letter of John Stevens to Bombay Castle: dated 07-08-1795.
[148] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 356-357. Letter of Van Spall to Petrie: dated 10-08-1795.
[149] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 368-369. Letter of Van Spall to Petrie dated 18-08-1795.

siege.[150] It was time now to inform the local rulers about the English plan to take-over the fort. James Stevens, the supravisor and chief magistrate of the province of Malabar stationed at Calicut, was advised by the Governor-General to acquaint the raja of Travancore about the causes of recent developments in the region and British plans to deal with the French threat. The Travancore raja was further warned against retaining Frenchmen in his army.[151] Stevens also contacted Rama Raja, the king of Cochin, who promised him all possible assistance, as the English company had always protected the raja.[152]

At the English camp, the strategy was to block the fort from the south to prevent any contact of the Dutch with the mainland.[153] Colonel Bowles informed Bombay Castle that on 1st September the 77th Foot Regiment, with eight hundred and fifty troops, and the Grenadier battalion with two six pounders (cannons) had marched from Parur, about eighteen miles to Tripunithura. During the night they had crossed over to the island of Cochin, and encamped between two and three miles southeast of the fort. Since Major Petrie had requested more ammunition and shots, on the request of Colonel Bowles, Bombay Castle sent another two Grenadier Companies of the 2nd battalion of European Infantry with guns and stores which was expected to reach Azhikkodu by 7th or 8th October and take another four or five days to reach Cochin.[154] Thus while Petrie's camp was to the north of Fort Cochin at Vaipin Island, another camp south-east of Fort Cochin was set up by the EIC. East and west of the fort was the mouth of the river and the Arabian Sea. Fort Cochin thus stood enclosed by British troops.

Ships carrying ordnance, powder and stores from Tellicherry and Cannanur arrived at Cochin.[155] Governor-General Sir John Shore at Calcutta complained that troops were reaching Malabar too slowly and ordered that locals should be recruited and that the two native battalions from the Malabar province should not be withdrawn under any condition until the fort was in the English possession. He informed Bombay that recruits from Europe were expected to reach India soon and that lascars, in whatever number required, must be raised at Bombay itself. He also gave instructions that in times of war, some hundreds of supernumerary recruits should be in training at Bombay, for the purpose of filling the vacancies occasioned by casualties in the native battalions in the Malabar province. He further gave instructions that even though Surat might need similar support, all possible assistance must be first directed towards Malabar, while Surat

[150] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 358-359. Letter of Robert Bowles to Bombay: dated 21-08-1795.
[151] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 368. Letter of James Stevens to Bombay Castle dated 21-08-1795.
[152] MSA SPDD 49 (III), fo. 420. Letter of Stevens at Trivandrum to Bombay Castle: dated 19-09-1795.
[153] MSA SPDD 49 (III), fos. 391-393. Letter of Lieutenant Bowles to Bombay Castle: dated 31-08-1795.
[154] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 359-360. Letter of Robert Bowles to Bombay: dated 04-09-1795. P. G Rogers, 'The Surrender of Cochin (1795)', 28. This is typescript dated 1963 available at the *Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, The Hague.
[155] MSA SPDD 49 (III), fo. 393. Letter of Robert Bowles to Bombay Castle: dated 02-09-1795.

might be sidelined for the moment in order to conquer Malabar.[156] As a consequence, Bombay Castle resolved to raise a body of five hundred lascars.[157]

Thus all EIC efforts, at least on the west coast of India, concentrated on taking over Fort Cochin. Military and naval backing was sent to Malabar to assist the takeover under Major Petrie's command. The British preparation for taking over Cochin was almost complete. To the north of the Fort, a captain was posted with two Grenadier Companies of the 2nd battalion of European infantry, to fire at the north walls of Fort Cochin.[158] The EIC's office at Anjengo, south of Cochin, sent information that there were no armed Dutch vessels in the Gulf.[159] He was referring to the Gulf of Cambay (Khambhat). Thus, no help would arrive from the north for the Dutch at Cochin. While the Bombay presidency sent full military support to Major Petrie for the takeover, he was also advised to continue pacific and diplomatic means of achieving the goal. So, on 5th September, Major Petrie wrote one last letter from his camp to Van Spall, stating clearly that Van Spall was now forcing him to execute his orders militarily and that he would be responsible for the calamities that would befall the Dutch due to the British attack.[160]

Declaring Loyalties

Now, really feeling the pressure of the British forces, Van Spall decided to call a meeting of all his councillors to deliberate over the situation. The meeting which was held on 5th September would have been attended by Van Spall, major-in-chief Pieter Josef De Can, Johan Adam Cellarius, Arnoldus Lunel, Johan Andrew Scheidz., and Cornelis van Spall. Major De Can was chief military officer and the last four were councillors, one among whom was the brother of the commander. Van Spall informed them of his ongoing communications with Major Petrie and of the gravity of the situation.[161]

Van Spall and his fellow company servants at Fort Cochin were aware of their limited contact and communication with other VOC offices in Asia, specially Ceylon and Batavia. They were aware that there was a complete freeze of communication among the VOC settlements due to the war and that throughout VOC-Asia there was a general financial incapacity which did not allow them to take measures either against France or England, independent of developments in Europe. So, for them the day of reckoning had arrived. It was time to prioritise matters, settle accounts, and take decisions.

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156 MSA SPDD 49 (III), fo. 395. Letter of Sir John Shore to Bombay: dated 11-09-1795. The Surat offices of the EIC were also under the administration of the Bombay presidency.
157 MSA SPDD 49 (III), 404. Resolution: dated 13-10-1795.
158 Rogers, 'The Surrender of Cochin', 13.
159 MSA SPDD 49 (III), fo. 389. Letter of John Hutchinson and John T. Dyne to Bombay Castle: dated 01-09-1795.
160 MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 361. Letter of Major Petrie to Van Spall: dated 05-09-1795.
161 MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 361. Letter of Major Petrie to Van Spall: dated 05-09-1795.

Van Spall's councillors may have advised him to take a neutral stand, but that would clearly have been a strategy of evading what was inevitable. A decision had to be made about how best to deal with the presence of the British army outside the fort walls. Having carefully weighed their options and loosing all hope of any assistance from Ceylon, they prepared their answer to Petrie.

A day later, Van Spall wrote to Petrie: "… we declare that we are faithfully devoted to the ancient, and legitimate Constitution of our Seven United Provinces, with the prince stadhouder at its head, … and we also acknowledge the British as our allies … It will be agreeable to us if you post, your detachment to the northward of Vaipin, and at Calvetty or at Manakkodam to the south of our fort." Van Spall then added that he was unwilling to pay for the troops and expected the British to pay for their own sustenance, while waiting for further developments and orders from Colombo or Batavia. He also proposed a meeting of senior Dutch and EIC officials.[162]

Commander Van Spall, Major Petrie and James Stevens, the supravisor and chief magistrate of the province of Malabar stationed at Calicut, who was in Cochin at that time, met on the same evening of 6th September, 1795.[163] Stevens and Petrie explained to Van Spall the causes and consequences with respect to Fort Cochin, of events in Europe. Van Spall, may have been bewildered by the recent developments, but was not a gullible person and was certainly not prepared to acquiesce to the demands of the British easily. While engaging the English in correspondence, he was also making preparations for the defence of Cochin. He ordered the strengthening of the walls and laying of provisions. He was making all efforts to protect the fort.[164]

According to the report of the stadhouder's commission of 1790, Cochin at this time was estimated to have about five hundred European infantrymen under four captains in its garrison belonging to the company and about nine hundred indigenous companies under seven captains. There were also European and indigenous artillery groups at Cochin totalling hundred and seventy heads[165] and another eighty seafaring men.[166] The British force outside Cochin consisted of the 77th Regiment, two Companies of the Bombay European Regiment, the Grenadier battalion of sepoys, the 5th battalion of sepoys and an accompaniment of artillery. They also had some naval support. Thus in terms of numerical strength, the Dutch were capable of taking on the British forces.

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162 MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 362-363. Letter of Van Spall to Major Petrie: dated 06-09-1795.
163 MSA SPDD 49 (III), fos. 414-415. Letter of Stevens to Bombay Castle: dated 12-09-1795.
164 MSA SPDD 49 (III), fo. 392. Letter of Lieutenant Bowles to Bombay Castle: dated 31-08-1795.
165 This group of armed men were under Captain Lieutenant Ferdinand Caspar Heupner, captain of artillery served at Cochin. In 1790 it was decided that if Cochin were to cut down expenses, he would go to Ceylon. On advice of Commander Van Angelbeek, all armies had remained in Cochin. MvO Van Angelbeek, 12: dated 1793.
166 NA The Hague, Stadhouderlijke Secretarie, no. 1914. Memorandum of a military commission on state of defence of Cochin: dated 1790. Appendices to report.

On 9th September, Major Petrie wrote to Colonel Bowles at Calicut, "Van Spall's conduct has been all along evasive and full of duplicity, but he has clearly evinced his determination not to admit any British troops into his fort, and I shall proceed to take the most vigorous and decided steps for its reduction as soon as the arrival of the guns and stores will enable me to do so".[167] On the same day, Van Spall, foreseeing imminent danger of war, wrote to Petrie again repeating his declaration of loyalty to the stadhouder. He further stated that he and his council acknowledged and regarded the English as their faithful allies. He agreed to follow orders of the stadhouder, including his directions to consider the British troops as a friend and ally. He made it clear that this instruction was to prevent the colonies from being attacked by France and that he would do so. He then argued that "…the order was given under a supposition that we shall be attacked by the French, and as the enemy does not appear to make such an attack, we do not find ourselves under the necessity of admitting any troops into our garrison…."[168]

Thus Van Spall and his council again professed their allegiance to the stadhouder and refused the British demand once more. Van Spall also informed Major Petrie that he could not act without the advice of Colombo and Batavia. He trustingly requested Petrie to take their letter to Colombo and procure an answer for them. Then in a rather naive and emotional way he asked Petrie to understand his position. He spoke of "… oaths and duties that oblige them to defend what is trusted to them…". He was referring to duties of military men like himself who were bound to defend the fort. He stated gallantly that any army threatening them with force would be considered an enemy.[169] He thus transferred the onus of war on Petrie.

End September, Bombay received intelligence of a French military and naval build-up in the Indian Ocean. It was decided to warn the Portuguese at Goa against the French and if possible send spare British ships to Goa.[170] On 1st October 1795, Bombay sent a letter to Goa[171] Meanwhile Major Petrie continued his pacific efforts of persuading Van Spall to surrender.

The English had made good preparations for a military take-over of the place. The fort was surrounded by British cannons placed on trenches dug on both the sea and the riverside, on Vaipin's southern section. While the riverside trench could attack the fort from just across the river at very close proximity, the seaside trench would provide protection from Dutch ships. Since the British already had an understanding with the Cochin rajas about the takeover, they were able to construct a second line of attack at Mattancheri from where they could attack the southeastern walls of the Fort. In this way, they also managed to cut off the fort from having contact with the hinterland. The sea outlet was blocked as well. The people could neither escape

[167] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 359. Letter of Major Petrie to Col. Bowles dated: 09-09-1795.
[168] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 365-367. Letter of Van Spall to Major Petrie: dated 09-09-1795.
[169] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fos. 365-367. Letter of Van Spall to Major Petrie: dated 09-09-1795.
[170] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 371. Letter of Admiral Elphinstone to Bombay: dated 31-03-1795, read at Bombay Castle on 29-09-1795. Admiral Sir George Keith Elphinstone was the chief command on the Indian Seas, appointed by his Britannic Majesty. The then governor of Goa was Francisco da Vega Cabral.
[171] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 387.

on ships by sea nor by land. The English, therefore, were well prepared for a military take-over of the fort.

A Surrender?

At half past nine, on the night of the 17th October 1795, the Dutch opened a very brisk and very general fire from about 122 pieces of cannons. The English posts at Vaipin and Mattancheri received little damage. The English officers were within a hundred yards of the Fort. On the 18th the Dutch slackened the firing and on the 19th the English battery opened against the north face. This was not the strongest part of the fort. In fact, due to the damage done by the waves, it had been under constant reparations. Cannon shots from Vaipin would have damaged the bay port and gate, the government stables, parts of the commander's house and office in the fort and the residences on Rose Street. On the morning of the 20th, the English started firing from the Mattancheri line, against the southeastern side of the fort. The fortifications on this side were stronger and damage would have been limited, but this was also the part of the fort, which had the residential quarters and the magazine. At noon, the same day, the Dutch surrendered.[172]

According to the report of Major Petrie, "…the enemy commenced a very heavy fire, and continued it with little intermission till the time of surrender…".[173] It is clear that, while the Dutch opened the first fire, both sides made a show of their military prowess. According to Petrie, 1458 military men under the command of major-in-chief Pieter Joseph De Can surrendered to the English. Of these 275 men were Dutch. The remaining were indigenous Sepoys and Malay. For the English, the takeover was not easy. The strength of the fort and the range of artillery it possessed impressed Major Petrie. He wrote that if the Dutch had a larger garrison at their disposal, the task of defeating them would have been formidable.[174] The fort was well provided with guns and ammunition. According to English records, there were 167 iron guns, 43 brass guns, 16 brass mortars and 7 howitzers. They could fire from 200 guns simultaneously.[175] Yet, the English were better placed: to the north and south of the fort. They could get reinforcements if required. The local rulers – the rajas of Travancore and Cochin – could be coerced into affording assistance as well, if the need arose. The Dutch inside the fort were isolated.

The difference between Commander Van Spall and Major Petrie lay in the fact that the latter, backed by the stronger English presence in India and a larger network, would have received unlimited support from Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, while Van Spall was functioning entirely on his own. He was in possession of a strong fort, which was well manned and equipped, yet

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172 BL London, OIOC IOR, H/605, Home Miscellaneous, 1784-1798, fos. 585-586.
173 Rogers, 'The Surrender of Cochin', 29. Major Petrie to Henry Dundas, president of the board of control at London: dated 30-10-1795.
174 Rogers, 'The Surrender of Cochin', 28.
175 Rogers, 'The Surrender of Cochin', 27-28.

there was, no external support in sight. There was no hope that help would arrive from Colombo or Batavia, because even if there was an attempt by the Dutch there to come to the assistance of Fort Cochin, the English ruled the seas and there was no way ships could reach the port of Cochin without coming under direct fire from the English at Vaipin. There had been no contact with Batavia and anyway they had already considered selling the fort to the British. Commander Van Spall and his men could fight only as long as his own men and stores lasted, while Major Petrie could continue asking for more men, ammunition, ships etc. from Bombay until his aim of bringing the fort under his possession was accomplished. Thus, in many ways, it was an unequal battle and surrendering was a prudent choice, not a military defeat.

In the days that followed the capitulation, Major Petrie concentrated all efforts to take possession of Dutch forts at Quilon and the factories at Purakkad and Kayamkulam**.** Van Spall in his memoir wrote that on 20th October, in the evening after the surrender and right after he had left his commandment to go to his residence outside the fort, Petrie had declared to him that it was up to Van Spall to decide to continue living in the commandment as long as he was in charge of it. A guard of Honour, consisting of an officer and 12 sepoys, were placed outside his house in the fort.[176] Thus, already on the evening of 20th October, Van Spall was put under house arrest. Also on the 20th, more troops from Bombay sailed for Malabar.[177] The actual treaty of capitulation was signed on 21st October 1795.[178] Fort Cochin was finally lost to the English. The Dutch flag was lowered for the last time and the Union Jack was raised on the flag post of the fort.[179]

In retrospect one may think that the reason why Van Spall surrendered after three days of hostilities, even when he had ammunition and men, may lie in the fact that when the English started to fire from the southern side, the residential houses within the fort would have been damaged. On the same side was the magazine, which stored the ammunitions. He was aware that he was responsible not only for the fort, but also for the people who lived in it. The port, which was a part of the fort, gave the people a means to earn a livelihood. If the port, the fort, and the houses within it would be destroyed, the people would suffer immensely. Other Dutch settlements in India had already been lost to the British in the past. So, Van Spall's decision to surrender was probably based on the personal interest of the people of Fort Cochin. The fear of loss of lives and houses and eventually the destruction of the entire fort must have made him surrender quickly.

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[176] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 1: dated 1798.
[177] MSA SPDD 49 (III), fo. 406. Letter of John Griffith to Calcutta: dated 17-10-1795.
[178] CDNI, 682-687.
[179] Since Cochin was taken over by the English on the orders of King George III and part of the army that took over Cochin was the king's army, the British flag was unfurled at Cochin and not the EIC's flag. England at that time used the Union Jack while the company which had traditionally been using the horizontal red and white stripes, varying in number between nine and thirteen, in 1795 used the stripes with the union jack in the canton.

Not surprisingly, while London had despatched Willem V's letter of Kew to India in February 1795, and Bombay had already begun to prepare to takeover Fort Cochin and its dependencies in Malabar, as early as June 1795, the VOC officials at Batavia got the letter of Kew only in August 1795.[180] Even then, as we know from the narrative above, they were unable to send out messages on time, at least to the establishments immediately under English threat, namely Malabar and Ceylon.[181] Commander Van Spall, until the time that he surrendered the fort, had no news from the High Government of any developments, either in Europe or in Asia. The 1795 takeover of Cochin fell perfectly in the EIC's plan for India. This was not a surprise military success but a planned step, backed by the EIC in London and executed by officials in Bombay. The actual completion of their expansion in Malabar was legitimised timely, by Willem V's letter of Kew.

There must have been a realisation among the VOC servants at Fort Cochin that, for the company, this establishment was no longer a very important settlement. The sale of the VOC fort at Cranganur to Travancore by Van Angelbeek was proof of that. The orders of Batavia to Van Spall to start negotiations regarding the sale of Fort Cochin to the English, likewise confirm this. Inversely, for the servants of the VOC at Fort Cochin, the VOC was not very important either as other means of sustenance were available.

If approached from the sea on a clear day, Cochin in November 1795 would have one striking difference as compared to that of 1780 as depicted by the Dutch artist Jan Brandes: the flag on the flag-post at the centre of the fort which also served as a beacon for vessels heading for the Cochin roadstead.[182] For hundred and thirty-two years it had carried the Dutch red, white and blue. Now it flew a British Union Jack. It is not hard to imagine how the Dutch inhabitants would have felt when they saw a British flag flying inside the fort that had been their home for so many years. Van Spall and his councillors must have had mixed feelings of sorrow, loss and disquiet watching their Dutch flag being lowered and the English flag being hoisted. This "new" Cochin has been depicted in watercolour by William Alexander (b.1767- d.1816), a renowned British artist who made a painting of Cochin around 1800 with a British flag flying on the Fort

[180] The ship De Medemblik which had left Texel on 23rd December 1794 and had planned to leave from the Cape for Batavia on 11th June 1795 was faced by an English fleet at the Cape. The Letter of Kew was brought to the notice of the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope by the English in June 1795. It was only on 11th August 1795 that Batavia came to know about the news of Willem V's escape to England and the letter of Kew. T. H. Milo, 'De Maritieme verdediging van Oost-Indië van 1795-1802' in *Marineblad Orgaan van de Marine Vereeniging*, 56e Jaargang Juni 1941, 209-255, specially, 211 and 212.

[181] The High Government held a meeting during the night of 10th August. It was declared that a proclamation would be sent out to the VOC offices in Asia informing them about the developments in the Netherlands. The High Government had decided not to follow the instructions of the letter of Kew, but to treat all European powers, who ever it may be, as enemy, if they attacked VOC establishments. T. H. Milo, 'De Maritieme verdediging van Oost-Indië van 1795-1802' in *Marineblad Orgaan van de Marine Vereeniging*, 56e Jaargang Juni 1941, 209-255, especially 212.

[182] Max de Bruijn and Remco Raben (eds.), *The World of Jan Brandes, 1743-1808* (Amsterdam: Waanders, 2004), 348.

flagstaff.[183] An era had passed. For one, EIC officials started living and working inside the fort. Fort Cochin was now referred to as British Cochin.[184]

4.4 Conclusion

1795 marked a significant year in the history of the Dutch people in Europe where the Batavian Republic was established. In Asia, the VOC lost control over most of its possessions, a process started with the fall of Fort Cochin in 1795 and Ceylon in 1796. The inhabitants of Fort Cochin were forced to decide their future, individually and collectively. Events in Europe had a decisive impact on them.

Individuals – and the community as a whole – had to decide what they could do in the fast changing situation. For many it meant the end of their careers with the company. They had to weigh their options of surviving without being in the service of the Dutch company. Trading privately, just as the other Malabar merchants did, was an option they were well aware of and a practice some of them were well versed in.

The life histories of company servants like Cellarius, Von Wrede, Van Spall, will show how VOC servants, their dependants and many others whose lives were connected with the VOC, adapted to the changing economic and political circumstances. To the servants of the company in Fort Cochin, it must have become apparent even earlier than 1795, that the future of the company in Malabar was uncertain and that time and tide would change in favour of the English, who had a much larger base on the subcontinent. Attempts in the past, as discussed in Chapter Two, at restructuring the company's functioning had been thwarted by the High Government. During the administrative years of governors Moens and Van Angelbeek, who had spend considerable time — both over a decade each — attempts were limited to improving the functioning of Fort Cochin. They did little to restructure the company's presence and role on the coast. Yet, as we have seen, the free-burghers of Cochin benefited from the extension of the company's landed estates and former VOC-servants in the decades of the 1770s and 1780s were taking up the company's farms and and earning a livelihood from it.

Willem V's letter of Kew played an important role in the lives of the inhabitants of Fort Cochin. It also gave the British a legitimate ground to go ahead on their rapid expansion track in southwestern India. The Dutch in Malabar had been the only undefeated European entity and Willem V's actions gave them an open field to subjugate this 'ally' in India. The conquest of Fort Cochin completed English access to the pepper of Malabar. An entity, which was a potential threat to their expansionist plans, had been done away with. This was the commercial end of the VOC in Malabar. Both politically and commercially the British emerged victorious. Fort Cochin

[183] BL London, OIOC Painting WD - 4105, Cochin with the Union Jack by Alexander William.
[184] Once the EIC set up administrative offices in the fort, it referred to the place as British Cochin. TSA CCD, passim.

was an important gain and an added advantage for British growth on the Malabar Coast. Politically, strategically, militarily and commercially the British were now in a more advantageous position on the coast than ever before.

During October 1795, the inhabitants of Fort Cochin had been witnesses to an event that would change the course of their lives. Their days of reckoning had arrived. People were forced to adjust to the changed circumstances. Although, according to the clauses of the capitulation, the Dutch inhabitants were protected and were to continue being governed by their own laws, in reality, as we shall see in the following chapter, changes were brought about rather rapidly. Now the population of the fort was confronted with the dilemma either to stay on or to leave.

By 1795, Fort Cochin had been occupied by the Dutch for a good hundred-and-thirty-two year. After its establishment in 1505 by the Portuguese and its capture, in 1663, by the Dutch, it now reached its third and last phase: that of decay and final destruction under the English.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIFE AFTER THE VOC (1796-1830)

That everyone must know what they have to do,
and that everyone shall be responsible to his superior,
for his conduct.
Commander Jan Lambertus van Spall[1]

Business as usual was resumed in the fort within days. Just five days after the takeover, on 26th October 1795, Johanna Katharina, daughter of company servant Jan Dirksz. and Johanna de Bruin, was baptized. Others followed soon. Arnoldus Lunel and his wife Cornelia Bartels attended a baptism in December.[2] Marriages resumed too. Amidst the *rites de passage* there were many servants of the company in the fort, who were wondering what the future held for them. When they asked the Dutch commander Van Spall, if collective decisions would be taken on a future course of action, the words of advice quoted above, was all he had to say.

The following pages reconstruct how the lives of the servants of the company and their families unfolded between the takeover of Fort Cochin and 1830. The choice of the year 1830 becomes clear in the narrative. Since chronology has been followed very closely, many issues, themes, personalities and institutions, dealt with throughout the book, are re-visited here. On the centre-stage remain the inhabitants of Fort Cochin, specifically the servants of the company and the free-burghers. The first section, entitled Primary Changes after the Takeover shows the measures the EIC took after October 1795 and how the inhabitants of Fort Cochin reacted to them in the first instance. The second section, Winds of Chance, looks at the options open to the VOC servants and their families after the takeover. This is followed by a third section containing an account of the measures taken by the British for the administration of Malabar, and their consequences on the fort's inhabitants. The fourth section focuses on the lives of Dutch individuals and institutions in British Cochin and the final outcome of the takeover for the Dutch company servants. Their mestizo wives, their children and the vestiges of a few Dutch institutions in British Cochin have also been looked into. The question as to what happened to the people after the takeover has finally been answered here.

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[1] *Dat een ijder moet weeten wat hem te doen staat; en dat een ijder van zyn gedrag, aan zyn superior, verandwoording zal moeten doen.* NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 3.
[2] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 362: dated 26-10-1795 and 29-10-1795.

5.1 Primary Changes after the Takeover

Let us briefly re-visit the fort and the people at the time right before and after the takeover. Things as they were at the time of the takeover and the changes that had been brought about by the British are the main issues discussed here. The life histories of some of the people that we have got to know so well, and who worked their lives through the conflicting situations, have been followed up here. It has to be noted that the VOC servants in Fort Cochin were unaware that on 24th December 1795 a decree had been passed in the Netherlands which annulled the management of the VOC.[3] The VOC was rescued and not declared bankrupt, as it was taken over by the government of the Batavian Republic.[4] A committee for the East Indies took over the management of the VOC and replaced it, both in Europe and in Asia. From the 1st of March 1796, the management of Dutch possessions in Asia was to be taken care of by this committee.[5] In this way the VOC came to an end.

The New Administration

A week after the surrender, British commissioners took over the Dutch ammunition house, along with the gunpowder stores and the warehouses. When Van Spall confronted Petrie about it, he was told that the EIC would take into their possession everything that stood in the books of the Dutch company and that Van Spall should oversee the whole process.[6] Van Spall writes in his memoir that was sent to Batavia that, however much he protested, 'the EIC officials just made themselves masters of everything'.[7]

A list of public buildings, drawn up by the British, lists the following: the secretary's office, the commissioner's house, the company's warehouse, the store house for provisions and arrack, guard house, charity house, church and clerk's house, coach house and stables, prison, master attendant's warehouse with compound shed and mast house, marine barracks, and leper's asylum at Palliporto (Pallipuram). These were now all under British administration.[8] Soon after the takeover, the British set themselves to the task of going through the Dutch documents, in order to learn about the rights and privileges of the VOC on the coast. Papers related to treaties over

[3] Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*, 170.
[4] Femme Gaastra, "War, Competition and Collaboration: Relations between the English and Dutch East India Companies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in H.V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln and Nigel Rigby (eds.), *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Leicester: Boydell Press, 2004 reprint), 49-68.
[5] *Comité tot de zaken van de Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen*, that is, committee for the East Indies Trade and Establishments. Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 184.
[6] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fos. 1-2: dated 1798.
[7] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 1: dated 1798.
[8] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1276, List of Public Buildings under commissioner of Cochin: dated 09-12-1797.

conquered lands, gardens owned by the company, taxation rights on the Malabar ports etc., were studied and British rights on these were claimed. Discussions began in Madras and Bombay EIC administrative circles about the Company's right to interfere in the administration of Cochin and Malabar, as they had been taken possession of in the name and on behalf of his Majesty.[9]

Numerous discussions were undertaken in EIC circles as to what had to be done with the fort and how the Dutch had to be handled. To begin with, the new masters of the fort made it clear that all Dutch institutions had to write regular reports to the British authorities. Thus, for some time, parallel Dutch and British administrative machineries were at work. Quite understandably the inhabitants of the fort were concerned about their private real estate. On their request proofs of ownership were issued by Van Spall and trade bookkeeper Johan Andries Scheids.[10] People interested in such legal documents were, for instance, chief of artillery Pieter Elstendorp, supervisor of the woods-stack Jacob Meyer, the chief of equipments Johan Hendrik Brand and the master of the shipyard Jan de Lange.[11] Copies of these proofs of ownership were sent to Major Petri. Among those requesting for similar documents from the British were Meyer Rahabi, Boganta Chetti and William Brown, the Dane who had commercial interests and estates in Cochin.[12] Here one notices two aspects of change and continuity at play. First of all, Dutch company servants and others connected to the fort, wanted to make sure that their personal properties would not be damaged or destroyed by the EIC officials. They therefore procured from their own Dutch officials proofs of ownership of properties inside the fort. Secondly, well-to-do merchants, who had substantial property outside the fort walls, asked the British authorities that they recognize their private properties, gardens and warehouses. It is also quite interesting to see how quickly British authority was accepted in Cochin. Since no one knew what would happen, everyone wanted to be sure that their property would remain safe.

One may wonder as to what was the number of people within the fort at the time. A list of heads of households there is available to us from the year 1792.[13] This gives us the nearest possible number of inhabitants of the fort, about three years before the takeover. Taking the average number of employees in the second half of the 18th century, it can be estimated that there were between 600 and 700 VOC personnel in Fort Cochin on the day of the takeover.[14] We already know that among the qualified servants of the company, the majority was Cochin-born and locally recruited by the VOC.[15] According to the EIC records, the population of Fort Cochin

[9] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation, 1796.
[10] MSA SPDD 49 (I), fos. 98-100.
[11] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 1.
[12] MSA SPDD 49 (I), fos. 98-100.
[13] See Appendix to Chapter Four, List of people living in Fort Cochin in 1792. Courtesy Jack Verduijn-Lunel, who brought the document to my notice.
[14] See Appendix to Chapter Three, Chart 2, Table 2: VOC Employees in Fort Cochin (1750-1788).
[15] Appendix to Chapter Three Chart 3; Locally Recruited Qualified Employees of the VOC in Fort Cochin (1760-1785).

in 1795 was 2,300 souls, slaves included.[16] These people were forced to decide on their future course of action, whether to continue living in the fort or leaving. Almost half of the 2300 souls were slaves[17], whose lives were linked to their masters' fortunes. The majority of the population was castizo and mestizo, and almost all the wives of VOC servants were born in Cochin, either of Dutch parents or from mixed marriages, or were from other places in Malabar and Asia. The British estimated that the Portuguese and Malabar Christians, living at Vaipin and the outskirts of the fort, equalled 12,000 souls.[18] These were earlier under Dutch protection.[19] According to an EIC report, more than 3000 Portuguese Christians (toepasses) living around Cochin had claimed Dutch protection and would now be under the British.[20]

The VOC servants were declared prisoners of war. Some of them, specially the military and seafaring personnel, were taken to Bombay. Commander Van Spall himself was under house arrest. Those in the mercantile and other miscellaneous services, like ecclesiastical and medical, continued to stay in Cochin. They needed special permission from the British authorities, if they wished to go out of the fort. Later these restrictions were removed. Provisions were made under the capitulation treaty for transferring or shifting those willing to go to Batavia.[21] These servants of the Dutch company were allowed the same pay or allowance, as that drawn by corresponding ranks in the service of the EIC. Suitable living conditions were provided for the officers. In other case they were given rent allowance instead.

There were no specific restrictions on movement inside and out of the fort for the non-VOC population. Apart from the British soldiers, there were no immediate changes that would reflect upon the everyday life of British Cochin. Markets, church, school, orphanage, hospital and the court of justice, all continued functioning as they had under the Dutch. The fact was that the terms of the capitulation had guaranteed that the Dutch were to be governed according to their own customs and laws. Yet, the EIC officials were rather eager to establish their own systems and show their authority over the Dutch inhabitants.

The days following the capitulation were spent in correspondence between the EIC and the VOC officials over numerous matters, some crucial, others trivial. Dutch military men, detained by the British for drunkenness and misbehavior, were dismissed. Others like sergeants Bonefacius van der Mass, Hendrik van Os and Willem Buytendijk of The Hague, Cochin-born cadet Nicholas de Vogt, and private Karel Michael Hillerstein of Sweden, taken in for other

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16 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/71, Calcutta Political Consultations, 1796.
17 See appendix to Chapter Three; Table 1, Chart 1.
18 Although exact figures as to how many persons came under Dutch jurisdiction prior to October 1795, is not known. Yet, in Chapter Two the increasing judicial extent of the VOC, along with control of territories has been discussed.
19 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Calcutta Political Consultations, 1796.
20 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation, 1796.
21 CDNI, Article 6, 683. According to the capitulation, the VOC servants received a portion of their income, but the amount was so little that hardly anyone bothered to collect it on a monthly basis. This I gather from the fact that often Dutch-men sent their servants once in three or four months to collect the amount. TSA CCDs *passim*.

offences, were released when Van Spall intervened on their behalf. This tug-of-war between the British and Dutch officials for claiming legal authority was to continue for a long time to come.

The Dutch naturally wanted to hold on to their own administrative systems. Both the British and the Dutch were in a predicament about how best to maintain their positions and settle down to the new hierarchy and power relations that had come into being. Most importantly, issues of day-to-day civil administration of the fort had to be taken care of jointly by the Dutch and the British authorities. The VOC's own administrative infrastructures and powers started to crumble.

To ease matters of day-to-day administration of British Cochin and conflicts between the Dutch and the British, Major Petrie, after having received clearance from his superiors on the issue, approached Van Spall to ask him to continue his service as commander of civil matters and be accountable to Bombay. Van Spall was not to be concerned about military matters, yet he could maintain the civil administration of Cochin on the previous footing. But, showing his loyalty to the VOC and his nation, he declined the offer and instead asked for permission to go with his family to Tranquebar, a Danish settlement on the Coromandel Coast, where he wished to wait, until peace was restored.[22] Petrie allowed Van Spall to leave for Tranquebar. He thus took a private decision about himself and his family.

Early in 1796, it was decided by the British administrators that for all the former servants of VOC, who were now prisoner of war at Cochin, it was obligatory to take the oath of allegiance to the new British administrators. There was confusion among the VOC servants about this. They had no contact with the VOC-authorities in Ceylon, which was itself at that time under the British threat. On 15th of February 1796 Colombo was taken by the EIC. Without a higher guiding influence, it seemed that everyone was on his own; free to decide how one would deal with the new situation. The administration of the British inside Fort Cochin was a fact to reckon with. The British occupied the VOC offices in the fort. The only place people could meet to discuss matters was in private homes. There was a conflict of interests. Their personal interests to join the new authority would have jeopardized their position as VOC employees. Officially, they were expected to be loyal to their own company. But with the takeover, there was no VOC left. Their fixed source of income from the VOC ended. They were no longer masters of the fort and could not control the port. Persons who indulged in private trade suffered. In these circumstances an EIC offer – to be treated equally in all matters, if they took the oath of allegiance to the British crown – was a tempting one.

Van Spall's story of the takeover and the events following it, which he penned down in his memoir, demonstrates the least bit of poignancy. Firstly, he does not give a complete account of the takeover. Although he had come to office in 1793, he surprisingly began his memoir from the day after the takeover. As far as the actual takeover is concerned, there are no traceable records from the Dutch archives. Van Spall thought it irrelevant to write this in his memoir. If it was

[22] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo.1. Denmark was a neutral power at this time.

written separately, it has not survived the ravages of time. Secondly, to secure his position in the eyes of the Dutch officials in Batavia and the Netherlands, Van Spall recounts an episode before the surrender where Major Petrie, with the help of Meyer Rahabi, it seems, offered him 50,000 rupees, if he allowed British troops inside the fort without a battle. According to Van Spall, Major Petrie later argued that, to the EIC, the sending of more troops and ammunition from Bombay would have cost the same amount.[23] This offer – incentive or bribe – was never mentioned in any EIC correspondence or records. It would not be too presuming to conclude that Van Spall was only trying to impress Batavia with this story.

Van Spall's account of daily affairs in the fort, after the takeover, gives one an idea that he was not much concerned by the growing British administration of Fort Cochin and further political developments in Europe or India. Whenever required, he would use his position for his own advantage, or for that of his acquaintances, but he did not take a clear stand as a leader of the Dutch people under British occupation. On the contrary, as we shall see in other instances, he tried, not to get involved in conflicts between the Dutch and the British and, as far as possible, maintained cordial relations with the British authorities.

There were three layers in the British administration. Major Petrie was in charge of its defence. He was joined by a new commissioner, John Hutchinson, who was in charge of civil administration. Above them were the EIC commissioner at Calicut and the higher officials at Bombay. Later a more extended administrative network was set up.[24] Major Petrie left Cochin on the 22nd January 1796 to go to Ceylon. Other EIC military officials, who were part of the takeover campaign, were to remain in Cochin for its defense. Hutchinson was replaced by Commissioner John Hope Oliphant, at about the same time. Country trade was promised to be free, as was the practice in other parts of India where the British had offices.[25]

First Reactions of the Inhabitants

In January 1796, Van Spall wrote to Batavia apprising the High Government of the situation at Cochin. On orders of the Bombay government, a court of appeal was to be constituted by the British, which would try cases pertaining to the Dutch servants who wished to continue staying in Cochin as prisoners of war. Van Spall reminded the British authorities that according to the provisions of the capitulation the British could not pass any new laws concerning the government of the place. The EIC offered that all Dutch nationals interested in serving in the new court could do so. Van Spall was assured that all previous councils, political and judicial, of the VOC would continue functioning, as had been decided in the terms of capitulation.[26]

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[23] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo.1.
[24] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 333. Letter of Robert Abercromby to Colonel Robert Bowles: dated 06-07-1795.
[25] MSA SPDD 49 (II), fo. 333. Letter of Robert Abercromby to Colonel Robert Bowles: dated 06-07-1795.
[26] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo.3.

Since the EIC officials insisted that those Dutchmen, who wished to serve as members of the court of appeal, needed to take the oath according to the preliminary articles of capitulation. A proclamation to this effect was pasted on the gate at the harbour. The question whether to continue serving the "Dutch company" was much discussed among the Dutch. Naturally, they did not know that the charter of the VOC had been revoked. The lines quoted at the beginning of the chapter about 'everyone knowing what they have to do and that everyone shall be responsible to his superiors for his conduct' was Van Spall's advice to his men on the issue of joining the EIC and taking the oath of allegiance to the British.[27] Van Spall personally informed the British authorities that during the war he would remain a neutral person and remain loyal to the capitulation and that he would try to convince the other servants of the company to do the same. He told the British authorities that he would declare his decision on the issue publicly so that every Dutchman would be aware of it.

The British made only minor changes in the judiciary. The council of justice retained its legal powers to pass judgement over civil and criminal cases that were being tried at the time of the takeover. This institution would try Dutch persons. A few people, on request of the British, took the oath of allegiance and they were allowed to continue their role in the council. In 1798 it consisted of Charles Groenrode, John Traats, Henry Fredrik Stettnitz, Cornelis Dirk Swabe, Henry Jacob Verduin, M. J. van Leeuwen, and A. G. van der Sloot. All of them were Dutch and took turns in two's to attend the court. Criminal sentences had to be confirmed by the British authorities in Bombay. Monthly reports were sent in English to the commissioner's office. In mid-November 1798, the members of the council of justice received a letter from Commissioner John Hope Oliphant that they were not doing their duties and therefore their allowances would be stopped from 30th November. Considering that a few cases were still pending, the EIC's decision to terminate the functioning of the court seems more like an attempt to further close down Dutch institutions in Cochin and replace them with British ones.

A parallel court of appeal had been constituted by the EIC. This judicial body would consist of three persons with similar powers as the VOC's court of justice. No death sentences were to be passed on subjects of the Dutch government. In order not to anger the Dutch officials too much, it had been suggested that Cellarius, or some appropriate person with knowledge of the Dutch language, be appointed to take care of matters. The British put forward the condition that he should take the oath of allegiance.[28] Cellarius declined the offer.

According to a treaty that George Powney, the British resident at the Cochin raja's court, had, in 1790, concluded with the raja of Cochin, the Dutch had jurisdiction over all Christians and in

[27] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo.3.
[28] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation, 1796.

some points over the Jews.[29] The British argued that according to Powney's treaty with the raja of Cochin, the EIC had the right to assume all privileges that the Dutch had enjoyed. Therefore, these Christians now came under British jurisdiction. These people had used the Dutch judicial system. Now they would use that of the British. Thus, we see that, after 1795, the British assumed all Dutch judicial and fiscal rights in the region. They had become, not just masters of the fort, but of all territories, rights and privileges that once belonged to the VOC.

Dutch prisoners, that is, civil employees of the VOC, receiving allowances from the Cochin treasury, were paid till 31st October 1797 and those drawing an allowance from the military pay office, of whom many were at Bombay, were paid up to 30th December.[30] The cessation of payment led to some frustration and annoyance within the Dutch community. Van Spall complained to Oliphant about the unequal payments and requested that payments should be done on an equal footing.[31] From 31st October 1797 all allowances to Dutch prisoners of war were cancelled, except to the invalids, who continued receiving their allowances as they did under the Dutch government.[32] This led to a commotion among all former VOC employees both in Bombay and in Cochin. Frantic letters of complaints, illustrating the pitiable condition of the Dutch after the takeover were written. Lieutenant Waldeck and Captain Lieutenant Dalinger, who were in Bombay, were also very distressed, because of the stopping of allowances, and wrote personal letters.[33] Later both of them applied to the Bombay government to be allowed to return to Cochin, as they were sick in Bombay. The Bombay military council resolved, on November 17, 1797, that all payments to the Dutch, civil and military, should be continued till further orders.[34]

These were the main events and circumstances that the inhabitants at Fort Cochin were forced to face immediately after the takeover. The Cochin that we have known under the VOC administration was fast changing under the British authorities. Although daily life continued uninterrupted, new people and new institutions started to play an increasingly important role.

When visiting Fort Cochin in February 1772, James Forbes, who travelled extensively in India, wrote: "…the Dutch but seldom think of returning to Europe and therefore are certainly in the right to improve and cultivate their estates in India as much as possible."[35] In an earlier chapter we have already seen that the Dutch authorities of the VOC in Malabar were moving towards landed estates in an attempt to make their presence permanent. In the following sections we will be able to judge whether this staying on held after the takeover.

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[29] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/9/716, Board's Collection, Bengal Political Consultation, 1796. The Syrian and St. Thomas Christians had never claimed Dutch protection and therefore were not to be brought under British jurisdiction.
[30] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1285: dated 19-12-1797.
[31] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 3 (New pagination begins with the New Year of 1798), Letter of Van Spall to Oliphant.
[32] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1229: dated 15-11-1797.
[33] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1230: dated 15-11-1797.
[34] Rogers, 'The Surrender of Cochin', 27-30.
[35] BL London, OIOC Mss Eur F380/2, fo. 349, Letters of James Forbes.

5.2 Winds of Chance

The inhabitants of Fort Cochin, especially the Dutch company servants and their families, had to face the new political situation with prudence. In principle they could wait and watch the situation in Fort Cochin, leave it and go to another Dutch settlement, or move to a neutral place nearby, so that their interests as Dutchmen in a conflicting situation would be safeguarded. In the following subsections the options that the servants of the Dutch company had, have been evaluated. Along with this, what arrangements the EIC made for them and what happened to their family members is also looked into. What did the people of Fort Cochin make of the different opportunities that came their way? On what basis did they make these choices?

Leaving Fort Cochin

As stated earlier, the people of Fort Cochin had three main options: returning to the Netherlands, going to Batavia, Colombo or any Dutch office on the Coromandel Coast, or staying on in Fort Cochin. This subsection deals with the first step of returning to the Netherlands. Normally one would go to Batavia, if one wanted to repatriate.

In 1797, there was talk in Bombay among the EIC officials about sending the Dutch prisoners of war from Bombay and Cochin to Batavia. James Stuart, the commander-in-chief of the committee of government in Malabar, who was based at Tellicherry, wrote to Oliphant, asking him to draw up a statement of expenses. In Bombay a certain Mr. Tate was asked to prepare a proposal to transfer Dutch prisoners of war, who had been brought from Cochin to Bombay, to Batavia. Tate proposed that a ship be arranged at Bombay, which under a neutral flag would carry the Dutch prisoners of war from Bombay to Cochin, collect more passengers at Cochin and then head via Ceylon to Batavia. The total expense for the transportation would have been Rs. 11,225.[36] This proposal was accepted and a Danish ship called Helsingør, was to be used. Commissioner Oliphant at Cochin was asked to keep the prisoners there ready for embarking for Batavia. The Dutch inhabitants at Cochin were to inform Tate about their destination: Ceylon or Batavia.[37]

According to Tate's plan, a total of 192 persons from Bombay were supposed to undertake the voyage to Colombo or Batavia.[38] Of these only 78 were servants of the Dutch company:

[36] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1194, Estimate of Expenses: dated 01-11-1797.
[37] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1193, Letter of Stuart to Oliphant: dated 10-10-1797.
[38] This group of VOC personnel, or prisoners of war, consisted of 15 European officers, 7 officers' wives, 4 Malay officers, 17 children of European and Malay officers, 38 slaves of European and Malay officers, 59 non-commissioned officers and privates, 17 wives, 24 children and 11 slaves of the non-commissioned officers and privates. TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1194: dated 01-11-1797. The British used the term commissioned and non-commissioned officers, while referring to the VOC's qualified and non-qualified personnel.

European, Malay and mestizos. A majority of the remaining persons were wives, children and slaves of the VOC officials. From this group of 192 persons, one European officer, even while he was still in Bombay, had already decided that he would stay back in Cochin. Ten non-commissioned officers and privates also wished to remain in Cochin; two privates wanted to go to Colombo and one to Galle. So, from this group of 192 persons, eleven persons did not wish to leave Cochin.

As we can see from the details of those wanting to leave Cochin, a majority of them were European and Malay officers. In all probability they had come to Cochin recently and had no family there. Also these were military officials and therefore were used to moving around VOC-Asia.

In Cochin, Oliphant put out a notice asking people to apply for transportation to Batavia. A table was drawn up whereby 40 Dutch inhabitants were listed. The list included mercantile and military personnel. Of these, 34 people wished to remain in Cochin and agreed to relinquish their allowance. The names included commander Van Spall, members of the political council Johannes Bos and Cornelis Van Spall, secretary Arnoldus Lunel, assistant A. H. Schacht, clerk Jean Gerard la Personne, Doctor Soutman, Jeremiah Zeizig of the mercantile department, the Reverend Peter Cornelisz., Jan Groenbaart and John Beerents of the ecclesiastical department, Majors Gephardt and De Can, Captain Bonnel, Captain Lieutenant Bisschop and fifteen others from the infantry, four from artillery and one from marine.[39] A second list consisted of 36 invalids under the Dutch government. Most were from the Armed Forces and had served the company for about twenty or more years. The EIC Surgeon D. Robertson wrote to Oliphant that they were too sick to be removed from their present location. There was also no hope that they would recover from their various illnesses so as to be able to labour and earn subsistence.[40] Thus, only seventy-six (forty servants of the VOC and thirty-six invalids) actually came to Oliphant's office, of whom only six wanted to go to Batavia. One would naturally want to know why only such a small number of VOC employees were willing to leave Cochin and go to Batavia.

The answer lies firstly in the fact that most of the VOC officials, including the Europe-born persons, were so rooted in Cochin with extensive personal and commercial networks that leaving Cochin, even when the EIC was paying for the transportation costs, did not seem to be an option that they were willing to consider at that moment. For the majority of the persons who were in service of the company in 1795, Fort Cochin had become home. Secondly, the locally recruited servants of the company had never been to Batavia. Others, like the free-burghers, had already chosen long ago not to go to Batavia or repatriate to the Netherlands but to stay on in Cochin. It is possible that they decided to stay on, because, as free-burghers in a VOC controlled fort and port, they enjoyed certain privileges. Now that that those privileges were gone, they might think of leaving Fort Cochin. However, few of them did.

[39] TSA CCD 2033, fos. 1197-98, List of prisoners: 02-11-1797.
[40] TSA CCD 2033, fos. 1199-1200, List of invalids: dated 04-11-1797.

From the careers of the VOC commanders we know that those who came to Cochin after serving in Batavia for some years, had stayed in Cochin for many years.[41] By 1795, Van Spall had spent three decades there. People would have heard about the city and life in Batavia from colleagues, who had served the company there. Though designed beautifully, and built to look like Amsterdam, Batavia had soon fallen to disease due to structural problems. Malaria, which first became an epidemic in 1733, remained rampant for decades to come. In the eighteenth century, Batavia's un-healthiness was said to be sufficient to deter other nations from attempting to conquer it. Most well-to-do people had left the castle to live in gardens and country houses. It has been calculated that the mortality rate in Batavia in 1769 was thirty six percent, while in Malabar it was only five percent.[42] People may not have been aware of this high level of death rates, but how frequently one deals with death remains in people's hearts and minds. Compared to Fort Cochin, Batavia was a 'dangerous' place to live in.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Batavia was a dismal town: impoverished, partly dilapidated and largely deserted. From the point of view of the Cochin inhabitants, economically Batavia was part of the Bengal, Coromandel, and China and Japan network and was not directly linked to Malabar. Economically, Batavia would not have sounded to the inhabitants of the fort as the most practical and advantageous place to move to. Setting up shelter in or outside the castle and starting from scratch, with little capital and no friends and relatives for initial support, was hardly an attractive proposition. The new southern residential areas of Molenvliet, Rijswijk and Weltevreden were comparatively liveable. All 'decent people' lived there, visiting Batavia only when needed.[43] But, in Malabar the same was available: just outside Fort Cochin. And many like Van Spall, Lunel, Van Ochsee and many others already had gardens with houses outside the fort where they lived. John Russell of London, a private European, had a huge garden estate outside the fort.[44] The rather bad environmental conditions in Batavia, might have played a role in their decision to remain in Fort Cochin.

Another option would be Ceylon. Smaller in size, healthier and part of the trading network connecting the Maldives, Malabar, Madurai, and Coromandel, Colombo, or other places in Ceylon, seemed more attractive as a settling place than Batavia. Cochin would have been in close proximity. There was frequent shipping traffic between Malabar and Ceylon. Trade in commodities, ranging from rice to coir and slaves, between the coast and the island had always been carried out. Communication and contact between Cochin and Colombo could have been maintained without much difficulty. Many previous commanders of Malabar had, earlier or later in their career, served at Colombo or Galle. A few Cochin families even had relatives in Colombo.

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[41] See Appendix to Chapter One, Table 3: VOC Commanders and Governors of Malabar (1747-1795).
[42] P. H. van der Brug, *Malaria en Malaise, De VOC in Batavia in de achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994), 29.
[43] Van der Brug, *Malaria en Malaise*, 167 and 204.
[44] See Chapter Three for more such examples.

This should have been an attractive place to go to, if one wanted to leave Cochin. But this too had been occupied by the EIC. There was no difference in the political situation of the two settlements.

When the ship Helsingør left Bombay for Batavia, and stopped at Cochin on 15th November 1797, the eleven persons from Bombay, who had decided stay back in Cochin, disembarked, while seven employees of the former VOC boarded it. One person had joined the list later. These men were Captain Lieutenant L. van Mander with a son and a servant, Lieutenant Waldeck with a servant, Lieutenant Gieze with two servants, Lieutenant Dumont with a servant, Lieutenant Belfry with three children and two servants, and corporal Labey. Anthony Herbold, who was not in the previous list, also boarded the Helsingør.[45] Putting numbers from Bombay and Cochin together, 188 persons – 181 from Bombay and 7 from Cochin – left Cochin to head via Ceylon for Batavia. The majority of them were unmarried military, artillery or marine officers, soldiers and sailors. Of the average number of VOC personnel in Fort Cochin, which was about 700 VOC officials, less than thirty percent had decided to leave Cochin. For some reason, not stated in the records, the Helsingør returned to Cochin on 29th November with all persons on board. Thus, no one left Fort Cochin, at least not in 1797.

Thus, the first attempts of the EIC to remove VOC officials from Cochin had failed. Moreover, the majority of the servants, including the highest officials like Commander Van Spall and members of the political and judicial council, had opted not to leave Cochin. Many servants of the military and artillery also had no wish to leave Fort Cochin. One inhabitant, Jacob Meyer of Frankfurt, wrote to Jonathan Duncan, governor of Bombay that he was too sick to undertake a journey and that, if sent to Batavia on the Helsingør, he would surely die.[46] Although he had not boarded the ship the first time, now that it had returned, he feared being transported against his wish. He complained of rheumatism and was spitting blood due to infection in the chest. He was living in Cochin with a large family and had no means of supporting it. Along with this letter he also sent the report of the EIC doctor R. Richards.[47] He, his wife Francina Lampre from Quilon and their ten children had been in Cochin since the 1780s.[48] He had found means to live on in Cochin and did not intend to give up his hearth and business there to start a new in another place.

Tranquebar was still an option for migration. Johan Caspar Kautz, who was a member of the Dutch council of justice under the British administration, took permission to go there, like Van Spall had done earlier. At the time of the takeover, Kautz's family had consisted of himself, his wife Maria Elisabeth Rode and their five children. He wrote to Duncan in February 1798 that his

[45] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 1227, List of Dutch Prisoners of War leaving for Batavia: dated 15-11-1797.
[46] Robert Abercromby, Governor of Bombay from 1790 to 1795, was succeeded by Jonathan Duncan who held office till 1811. Henige, *Colonial Governors*, 97.
[47] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 2-3, Letter of J. Meyer to Jonathan Duncan: dated 01-01-1799. Attached to this was the letter of Surgeon of the 77th Regiment R. Richards in Cochin: dated 05-11-1797.
[48] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 18: dated 23-11-1783.

wife, who was in Tranquebar, had passed away and that he wished to go there with his children. He requested that his salary be paid to his lawyer. He was allowed to go.[49] At the time, returning to the Netherlands was not a feasible option. The Helsingør project showed that no shipping to Batavia was available and transport from there to Europe was very dangerous, because of the threat of the British navy.

Thus, considering their own personal and economic circumstances, the political, economic and social conditions of the places they could go to and the prospects of earning a livelihood in and around Cochin, the majority of the Dutch, mestizo and indigenous people who were once linked to the VOC, either as servants of the company or dependent on the VOC servants in Cochin, decided to continue living there under the British administration. Even Europe-born personnel like Van Spall, Lunel, Von Ochsee, Von Wrede, Hendrik Dirksz., Jean Gerard la Personne, Johannes Wolff and many more chose not to leave Cochin. With families and estates and extended networks of commercial, social and personal ties, they were simply too rooted to leave. The EIC administration was in fact even more favourable – in terms of emerging possibilities and opportunities of engaging in private country trade and make a living in Cochin – than that of the VOC.

A Season of Lovers

In the following paragraphs we shall get a glimpse of yet another aspect of Dutch life in Fort Cochin during the British administration: namely social contact or distance between the Dutch and British. Considering that the British authorities had forcefully made themselves masters of the fort, and the two trading companies were competitors, one would expect the two communities to be unreceptive to and unfriendly with each other. On the contrary, however, private written communications, though rare, and social occasions, like baptism and marriage, give information about rather close social contacts between the two communities.

For example, we know from Van Spall's memoir, that, by February 1797, about a year and a half after the capitulation, Oliphant and the Van Spall couple were enjoying supper and a game of cards together and discussing prevention against smallpox. Similarly the Van Spall couple was receiving invitations to attend evening balls and other occasions hosted by some EIC officials at their homes in the fort.[50] This suggests that the elite of both sides were getting along rather well socially and that there were no tensions among them in general.

A glimpse of the Cellarius family's social engagements with the EIC officials is provided by an entry in the Church's Baptism book, dated 9th October 1796. Cellarius' daughter Maria Helena attended a baptism ceremony along with the EIC commissioner John Hope Oliphant. The child

[49] TSA CCD 2033, fos. 84-85, Letter of J. C. Kautz to Jonathan Duncan: dated 19-02-1798.
[50] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, fo. 17. Van Spall was living in his garden house outside the fort and stated that he would visit the fort only, if the smallpox was not very widespread.

to be baptised was John, son of John Johnson and Diderika Memling.[51] They had been married on 7th December 1794 in Cochin. Johnson was Lieutenant Engineer in the service of the English East India Company. Diderika was from the Cape of Good Hope.[52] Most probably Maria Helena had stepped into her father's shoes, attending social functions after his demise. In 1796, the baptism of this boy must have been an event of some significance, as prominent Dutch and British persons attended it. Maria Helena Cellarius would have been, at that time, the richest young Dutch lady in Cochin and Oliphant would be holding the most important office under the British administration. The fact that Dutch were participating in British social functions, gives one an idea about there being no feelings of resentment or antagonism between the Dutch and British communities in general.

As indicated already, in Fort Cochin marriage between European men of the Dutch Reformed Church, serving the VOC, and Cochin-born women of the Roman Catholic Church was fairly prevalent. Now we shall see EIC men marrying locally rooted Christian women. While earlier Dutchmen married mestizo and toepas women, the newly arrived EIC men choose daughters of Dutch company servants and other Christian women, including mestizos from Vaipin, as wives.

In 1798 news went around in Fort Cochin about a rather special marriage. The daughter of Commander Van Spall was to be wedded. And who had the Dutch commander accepted as the most suitable groom for his daughter? It was an EIC officer. On 2nd September 1798, in the church in Fort Cochin, Margarita Petronella van Spall married Lieutenant James Francis Dardell, who was an engineer of the English company.[53] Clearly, the Dutch commander was convinced that the future in India was to be with the British. In James Dardell, Van Spall saw a good future for his daughter. By 1803, three children were born to this Anglo-Dutch couple. In 1801, another daughter of Van Spall, Johanna Maria, got married to Doctor Jonathan Thorpe. He too was an EIC servant.[54] And when the commander leads, naturally the rest will follow. Van Spall's daughters were not the only persons of 'Dutch' origin, who married EIC men. Such partnerships were accepted and promoted by the highest officials of the VOC. Earlier in the summer of 1796 already, Maria Elisabeth de Graaff, widow of Lieutenant artillery Karel Michael Hillerstein, married Captain Thomas Grummant of the EIC. Also Jacoba Elisabeth Verduin married Gerard Parsons of the EIC. Similarly Anna de Groot married James Ramsay.[55] In 1801, Thomas White married Clara Jacomina Groenbaart.[56] Such marriages between members of the Dutch and the British communities continued well up to the early decades of the nineteenth century. Just as the VOC servants from Europe, decades earlier, had married locally rooted women, now we see that

[51] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 363: dated 09-10-1796.
[52] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 27: dated 07-12-1794.
[53] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 29: dated 02-09-1798. See Van Spall Family-tree.
[54] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 31: dated 26-04-1801.
[55] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 28: dated respectively 21-08-1796 and 09-10-1796.
[56] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 31: dated 23-09-1801. Thomas White is described as an English lieutenant.

servants of the EIC were marrying daughters and widows of servants of the VOC-families of Cochin.

Another example of a marriage between a servant of the EIC and a locally rooted young lady of the Dutch elite, is that of Maria Helena, the daughter of Cellarius. On 13th December 1801, she married an EIC officer called Huge Massey Fitzgerald. He was serving the EIC as captain and they continued to live in Cochin, where the entire maternal side of her family lived. Maria Helena had inherited from her father a huge estate in Cochin. Two other EIC men, Major Heath and Doctor Thorpe, the son-in-law of Van Spall, were witnesses to their marriage.[57] The girl, by now an orphan, had a large set of relatives in Cochin. After her father's death, her guardian Francois Joseph von Wrede thought it was appropriate that she marry an EIC officer and continue living in Cochin. He provided her enough family support so that she could stay on. Thus, daughters of the ex-commander Jan van Spall and the daughter of the pubic prosecutor Cellarius, married EIC officials. By marrying their daughters to high ranking servants of the EIC, influential Dutch company servants adjusted to the new social and political conditions. Probably they expected that the British would stay in Fort Cochin and that a bright future for their daughters could only be secured by being on the side of the EIC. EIC officials, like the former VOC officials, enjoyed a certain status in the social milieu. While the British had occupied the fort, privately the elite inhabitants entered into affinal ties with their conquerors.

The younger Cochin-born girls adapted quickly to the political changes that brought about new social circumstances. Most of these young women were children of local-born mestizo or toepas women and European fathers in service of the VOC. The latter arranged for their daughters a suitable marriage. While most of them, including the senior officers, wished to continue living in Cochin, they found for their daughters eligible young salaried men among the EIC officials. Social contacts among the British and the Dutch were rather close. There was no antagonism, at least among some members of the Dutch and British elites. The marriages of the daughters of Van Spall, Cellarius, Verduin, etc., are proof of this.

Staying On

The project of Mr. Tate to shift the Dutch inhabitants of Fort Cochin via Colombo to Batavia, was not received very enthusiastically by them. Only a very small number were willing to leave Cochin with their families. In the end, the mission was aborted and the Helsingør returned to Cochin. In those days, Dutchmen were marrying their daughters to EIC bachelors. A happy co-existence seemed to be taking place. In the following section, we will see the conditions in which the people stayed on in Cochin and what happened to them under the British administration. The issue as to how the Dutch inhabitants were making a living in the new circumstance will also be

[57] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 31: dated 13-12-1801. See Daimichen Family-tree.

discussed. Going backwards in time, we will be able to better understand the decisions of the Dutch inhabitants at Cochin not to leave for Batavia.

The EIC men were moving into the fort, wanting to buy or rent houses there. As a result more and more Dutch inhabitants were forced outside the walls of Fort Cochin to make place for the new EIC officials and their families. Moving out was not a new feature. Some families had settled into the surrounding regions much earlier. In the following pages the post-1795 scenario is looked into.

On November 17, 1795, about three weeks after the takeover, the Bombay military council resolved that, since a number of the prisoners taken at Cochin, both Dutch and indigenous, had expressed a wish to enter the EIC's service as soldiers, they should be permitted to do so, provided their health and other qualifications proved satisfactory. In March 1796, Van Spall wrote that all members of the former Dutch administration at Cochin, at that time estimated to be around 700, except seven persons, had agreed to accept transferring their allegiance and employment to the British.[58] This meant that they would continue holding the posts and ranks they had at the time of the takeover. The majority of them would be of the non-mercantile personnel that is, military and marine. For them, the arrival of the British did not mean an interruption in their careers. Even among the mercantile section, only seven persons refused to continue their office under the EIC. Obviously, adaptation to the new conditions was beneficial to them financially. The seven men, who were unwilling to join the British, were Commander Van Spall and members of the political and judicial council of Cochin. It seems Van Spall and his senior colleagues were still officially hoping that the occupation of the fort was a temporary arrangement.

At the time of takeover, Major Petrie had received instructions that if there were any Germans in the service of the VOC, an offer should be made to them to join the English company. Cellarius, Von Wrede, Von Ochsee, Scheidsz., Wolff and many others, who were Germans, would have been welcomed into the EIC circle. And now, on request of the Dutch themselves, who had expressed a wish to enter the EIC's service as soldiers, the non-Germans turned out to be welcome too. Thus, when the winds of chance were blowing, there were many takers for it. Soon after the takeover, when the annual Dutch farms for collecting of customs from the port of Cochin expired, and new ones had to be authorised by the EIC, Johan Hendrik Meyer, a Dutchman, took up the farm of collecting the customs at the port of Cochin and thereby became the shahbandar of British Cochin.

The case of Johan Hendrik Meyer and other VOC personnel is evidence of two aspects of staying on in Cochin. First of all, there were economic means of living in Cochin. The EIC was willing to recruit fresh local personnel. Secondly, experienced merchants like Meyer started to

[58] NA The Hague, HRB 751 Memorandum Van Spall, fo. 3: dated 1798.

operate just like the local Malabar merchants. While under the Dutch, the post of shahbandar was usually held by a Jewish or a Chetti merchant, now a Dutch person could take this farm on behalf of the British and the Cochin raja.

Post-VOC Cochin would have been attractive to the former VOC servants, as the EIC's commercial policy, which allowed private trade, gave more opportunities to the former VOC servants to participate in it and earn a living. Deserting to the EIC had been a trend, at least among the soldiers. Instead of deserting and escaping to the EIC settlements, now the English company themselves were at the door, offering a livelihood.

The personal decisions of two high VOC-servants, Cellarius and Van Spall, represent the staying on. Cellarius was probably not surprised by the British takeover. He was a well-connected man and had friends and business partners in London, Ulm, Bombay and Ceylon, who could provide him with news. At Cochin he heard of efforts of the VOC to sell various offices of Malabar command, including Fort Cochin to the EIC. He had enough connections with the British, as well as with the Dutch, in India and in Ceylon; he also had the financial means to leave Cochin at that time. It was clear in 1793 already that the VOC was going to wrap up business in Malabar. But Cellarius neither tried to move out of Cochin, to go to Colombo or Batavia, nor did he repatriate back to the Netherlands or attempted to go to England.[59] With a household, family, friends, business partners and investments in Cochin, he was so rooted there that he just stayed on.

Cellarius died on 15th June 1796, eight months after the British takeover. His funeral must have been an event, where the entire Dutch community came together. He had appointed Johan Andries Scheidz. and Francois Joseph von Wrede as executors of his will and in charge of his burial ceremony. His daughter Helena – the inheritor of the house and property that he had built up in Cochin – continued to live there. As we know, she married an EIC officer Huge Massey Fitzgerald. Such means of income, inherited from parents or deceased spouses, offered inhabitants of Fort Cochin a means of sustenance in the unsettled environment of British occupation and transitional governance.

According to regulations, an inventory of Cellarius's estate was made after his death. It is still available and gives detailed information on his household things. After Cellarius's funeral, his estate and belongings were auctioned off. Friends and colleagues of Cellarius stood outside his house buying things he had owned, some for personal use and others for business. There were so many items to be auctioned that the sale lasted eight days, from 11th to 18th July 1796. One of the persons at the auction was the executor of Cellarius's will Von Wrede. He bought some books, clothes and jewellery, not for himself but for Cellarius's daughter, whose uncle he was and whose

[59] The case of the VOC-director of Bengal, Johannes Matthias Ross, who made half a million Rupees by trading with the EIC officials there (Warren Hastings in particular) is well known. He defected to the EIC and went to England. Furber, *John Company at Work*, 78-83.

guardian he had become. Her aunt – mother's sister – Anna Helena Daimichen had married him in November 1794 after the death of her first husband Johannes van Blankenburg.[60]

An inventory of Cellarius's collection of books, maps, atlases, dictionaries, etc., ran into scores of pages. Himself a well-read person, he was either a collector or trader of these items, as there was a growing market in India for European books and maps. He might have created the wealth he had by such trading. There were ample opportunities for trade in India, by which Europeans could make a living. In the previous chapters, examples of other Dutchmen, both company servants and free-burghers, who were substantiating an income or earning a livelihood through private trade and landed estates, have been discussed.

Papers relating to private trade of VOC officials are very rare in the VOC archives. The case of Cellarius is unique. His estate papers with references of private investments survived perhaps only because he died unexpectedly, and could not destroy them. There are not many details available of Van Ochsee's, Van Spall's, Groenrode's, Meyer's, Hendrik Dirksz. or La Personne's private trade or extensive estates, although exchanges of letters and other documents convinces one that they too were operating as free merchants. Many Dutch names appear often in the various leases as leaseholders or guarantors. Information on others are available to us only in instances when they were involved in commercial disputes and when they approached the courts, first Dutch and later the British ones, for grievances.

The other example of staying on is provided by Van Spall. First, he had decided to go to Tranquebar. It is interesting to observe this interest in Tranquebar. Cochin was a small community, where all personalities of consequence must have been on familiar terms with each other. It is almost certain that Van Spall's Tranquebar connection was a man by the name of William Brown. Brown was a Dane conducting business on the west coast of India. Based at Calicut, he was an agent for the British there. Evidently he owned real estate within Fort Cochin, being one of the persons who after the takeover insisted on having proofs of ownership issued by the Dutch officials. Brown probably belonged to the John and William Brown Company, which was based at Copenhagen. They had wound up business at Serampore in 1785[61] and then shifted to Calicut. It would be expected that he would want to benefit from the port of Cochin as well. Van Spall naturally would have known him. Brown, being a man with extensive connections in India, must have offered Van Spall a helping hand by offering him passage to and house in Tranquebar. Van Spall, after having gathered information on the trading prospects, must have decided to move there, at least temporarily. This way, he could convince his superiors in Batavia that he was only moving to a place that was neutral, and avoid being blamed of taking the British side. Eventually, Van Spall gave up on this idea and did not go to Tranquebar.

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[60] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 27: dated 07-11-1794.

[61] Ole Feldbæk, *India Trade under the Danish Flag 1772-1808*: *European Enterprise and Anglo-Indian remittances and trade* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1969), 120-121. Serampore near Hugli was a Danish trading settlement. The Danes referred to the place as Frederiksnagore.

When young, Van Spall had left Europe as an assistant merchant in 1765 and was posted to Malabar the same year. He served in Fort Cochin his whole life in different capacities, never serving in the smaller establishments like Cannanur or Quilon. Finally in 1793, he had become the commander.[62] He had spent 30 years in Fort Cochin itself, and slowly worked his way up. In 1795, he faced an uncertain future. Yet, he had a wide network of friends and business acquaintances in Cochin. He had married thrice and had a rather large family. His brother Pieter Van Spall, who was in the political council of Fort Cochin, was with him.[63] His son Jan Cornelis van Spall also joined the VOC. Naturally, he would not easily give up all this, leave Cochin and go to Tranquebar. And, as we know, he and his wife were pretty comfortable wining and dining with the British in Fort Cochin. Contact with them would help get business. He not only had made enough money to continue there without his VOC salary, but was well aware of the opportunities of private trade and income from land, that he could reap in Cochin. So, he carried on living in Cochin, as many other Dutchmen, and their wives and children did.

A map of Cochin made by the EIC gives away a vital clue of Van Spall's life in Cochin. In 1813 the EIC surveyor and mapmaker Thomas Arthur of the Engineers prepared a map of Cochin and its environs demarcating British boundaries. The map shows, among others, "Mr. Van Spall's house". The area described as Van Spall's house is almost as large as the Dutch fort itself. It was a house with a huge garden attached to it. It was south of the fort next to the Pandy Bazaar [64] This estate supposedly was another reason for Van Spall to stay on and not to leave for an uncertain future elsewhere. We shall return to this estate of Van Spall later in the chapter.

Since it refers in passing to a mansion beyond the walls, one case is interesting. It shows also that it was not all sugar and honey between the Dutch and the British. In 1799, an Armenian merchant Constantine D'Issa, who was a resident of Mattancheri and followed the Roman Catholic Church, complained to the British authorities against Lieutenant Carel Baron von Ochsee. The latter had been in the military of the Dutch company. Commissioner Oliphant tried to handle the matter himself without the use of courts. The case was about Von Ochsee purchasing three hundred pounds of candles from Constantine at the rate of Rs. 85 per 100 lbs. The deal had been sealed on a verbal agreement between the two parties, provided Von Ochsee received a few days credit. Constantine D'Issa had delivered the goods but Von Ochsee had refused to issue a receipt for them. When D'Issa went to his house asking for a receipt, Von

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[62] He had come to Asia on the ship *'t Huis de Bijweg*. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 198-199.

[63] Pieter van Spall jr. of Utrecht had got married to Johanna Maria Gosenson of Cochin. 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 17: dated 08-06-1783. Another brother of commander Van Spall, Cornelis van Spall of Utrecht was also in Fort Cochin and was married to Theresia Elasabeth Schudz. 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 25: dated 19-02-1792.

[64] TSA, Maps Cochin and Environs. Another source of proof that Van Spall had a house and garden outside Fort Cochin comes from a private collection of Josef Tarakan. He has in his possession an English translation of the sale deed of Van Spall's house on the *Rosestraat* in Fort Cochin to his brother Cornelis van Spall. Although the house was sold earlier, the deed was translated into English after the take-over and refers to Van Spall as the ex-commander and states his residence to be outside Fort Cochin.

Ochsee replied that it should have been mentioned as a pre-condition. When an argument broke out, Von Ochsee had allegedly assaulted D'Issa with an iron rod. So, Constantine D'Issa now stood in the court of appeal showing his wounds. As witnesses to the incident he produced a Dutchman, Johannes Anthony Soutman, and a Jewish man by the name of Elia.

The Dutch inhabitants apparently were pretty taken aback at the manner in which Von Ochsee was handled. Other former VOC military servants, Captain Elstendorp, Captain Bonnel, Captain Bisschop, Captain Dalinger, Captain J. Meyer, Captain Dandrienis, Lieutenant Muller, Lieutenant Ernst Waller and Lieutenant G. V. L. Schwager, wrote to Governor Jonathan Duncan at Bombay, protesting and expressing shock at the way Von Ochsee was arrested from his house and dragged to the criminal prison. His colleagues questioned Governor Duncan, whether that was going to be the plight of other Dutch inhabitants and their families in Cochin. Von Ochsee had been kept in a prison where only prisoners, who had been sentenced to death were kept. The ex-Dutch military servicemen were incensed that a man with military honours was kept in a jail with criminals, without first being court-marshalled. He should have been treated according to military law. They went on to complain that their court of justice had been dissolved and there was no one to take care of their honour, persons and property.[65] After this general outrage from the public, Von Ochsee was removed from the prison and kept under house arrest.

Von Ochsee took the opportunity to complain to Major Grant, who was commanding at Cochin, that Oliphant was not doing his duty properly. He then stated his case and explained his conduct. If Von Ochsee's story is to be followed, it seems that D'Issa had agreed to give him three months credit. Later however, he appeared at Von Ochsee's house to demand Rs. 82. Von Ochsee told him that he was not in a position to pay the money; neither did he have the time to discuss the matter further as Mrs. Von Ochsee was in labour. D'Issa refused to leave the house and Von Ochsee, on D'Issa's provocation, had to resort to pushing him out of the house, so that he could return to attend to his wife. That night Mrs. Von Ochsee had a miscarriage. The following morning, while she was battling for life, Von Ochsee received a message from Oliphant to report to his office, to which he replied that, being a military man, he would only respond to orders. Von Ochsee explained to Major Grant that in earlier instances, Oliphant had refused to intervene in his matters, always referring him to a military officer. Therefore, on this occasion, Von Ochsee similarly argued that only officials holding a military office, should settle the matter. He also alleged the billet that Oliphant's servant carried, was neither signed, nor was it a summons. As a result, Von Ochsee did not think it necessary to act upon it immediately. Later that afternoon he was arrested and brought to Oliphant's office.

The description of the way he was dragged across Mattancheri and through the streets of the fort, confirms that Von Ochsee was living in a house outside the fort. It was probably a house with a private garden from which he was able to make some money. It was also stated that "he

[65] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 118-119, Letter of De Can to Jonathan Duncan: dated 22-11-1799.

must not leave his house within the fort". Thus he definitely had a place of dwelling one inside and the other outside the fort. Apparently, he was a well-off man and would not have posed a threat to anyone. Yet, the EIC commissioner Oliphant dealt with him rather harshly and sent him to the criminal court. Later he was put on house arrest and asked to stay inside his house in the fort. Von Ochsee wrote to the British authorities that, if at all he had done anything wrong, he wished to be court marshalled for it. If that could not be arranged, he sought permission to proceed to Bombay to seek redress against Mr. Oliphant in the British courts there. As to the case of D'Issa, Von Ochsee agreed to pay a certain amount as security.[66]

The above two cases of Van Spall and Von Ochsee prove not only that high ranking Dutch officials, both from the civil and military were financially rather well-off and had a garden house outside Fort Cochin, as well as a house inside the fort. The account of Von Ochsee also illustrates that he was participating in the emporia trade of Cochin. The candles D'Issa had sold to Von Ochsee had been procured from traders from the north and Von Ochsee intended to sell them in Colombo. This case also proves that there were certain frictions between the Dutch and the British communities. What is also at first quite astonishing is the fact that Von Ochsee, in search of justice, preferred to approach the British judicial system at Bombay, rather than go to the court of appeal, which had been set up by the British especially for the Dutch inhabitants. On the other hand, it would be quite understandable that he did that as the British judicial system was quickly replacing the Dutch system. The sooner one accepted and adapted to the new system, the better it would be for them.

The exact details of the events that had unfolded in Cochin between Von Ochsee, D'Issa and Oliphant – whether Von Ochsee really wounded D'Issa and how Von Ochsee was handled by Oliphant – is not completely clear. As there is more that one version of the story available in the records: Von Ochsee's and Oliphant's. We will never know what really happened. Yet, it is amply clear that there were divisions within the Cochin community and that all was not running smoothly among the former inhabitants of Fort Cochin, Mattancheri and the EIC officials. Oliphant seems to have been sympathetic to the merchants of Mattancheri like D'Issa, and rather fed-up with Von Ochsee. In a report to his superiors in Bombay, he complained that Von Ochsee had been a source of trouble earlier.

Another such incident, which shows resentment between the Dutch and the EIC, happened when Von Ochsee beat up a servant, who has delivering a bill on behalf of his master Meyer Rahabi. When questioned, it was found out that Meyer Rahabi owed money to Von Ochsee's wife and therefore Von Ochsee thought that Meyer Rahabi should not have sent a bill to him. Oliphant let the rest settle, as Meyer Rahabi agreed that he owed Rs. 3000 to Von Ochsee's wife.

[66] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 120-122, Letter of Von Ochsee to Major Grant, commanding officer at Cochin: dated 08-04-1799.

Yet, it was pointed out to Von Ochsee that his conduct towards the servant was improper and that matters should have been settled between Meyer Rahabi and Von Ochsee.[67]

Thus many issues remained to be settled and new hierarchical equations in the social and political scenario of Cochin had to be arrived at. Financial skirmishes among various trading communities took place. In some instances, the British officials treated the Dutch rather harshly. They were more keen to establish good relations with the local merchants. Later, when the issue of debts was mentioned again, Von Ochsee replied to Oliphant that, if he could not help him recover money from Meyer Rahabi, he should hardly expect him to pay back to D'Issa.

A census drawn up in June 1799 by the British administration recorded 127 heads of families, who were former VOC personnel employed in the mercantile, military and marine services and in the medical and ecclesiastical departments. These men continued in the status of prisoners of war on the British parole. Two of them were originally from Surat and were now residing at Cochin.[68] Information on others who stayed on but were not on parole are not available. The last complete list of inhabitants that we have from before the takeover is from the year 1792.[69] This list records a total of 318 households. This list included households of non-VOC personnel, mestizos, toepasses, single women, widows, free-burghers, other Europeans having houses in the fort, people working in the informal workforce like baker, blacksmiths, barrel-maker etc. Naturally not all of them were on the EIC's list of prisoners of war on parole. And therefore the 1799 list is only forty per cent of the 1792 list.

Although a majority stayed on in Cochin, and did not express a wish to leave the place, a few did try to go to Batavia later, but their attempts did not succeed. One such person was Arnold Lunel, once a VOC servant, now a prisoner of war. With a family of five sons and seven daughters, he had been living off his wealth in Cochin from 1795 to 1799. They had a house in Fort Cochin on the Heerenstraat. In July 1799, he wrote to Jonathan Duncan expressing his desire to go to Batavia. He stated that hopes of peace were very little and with his diminishing resources his family would soon be in a difficult position. Therefore, he now wished to go to Batavia at his own expense. His eldest son, also serving and now a prisoner of war, should be allowed to join him.[70] Lunel and family received the required passes to go to Batavia, but they did not leave. Apparently Lunel was not authorised to buy a vessel to undertake the journey.[71] We also know that he continued to live in Cochin, because Hendrik Dirksz. of the orphan board complained to Oliphant in September 1799 about a three hundred Rupees debt that Lunel owed to him and was refusing to pay.[72] Members of Lunel family, including Arnold Lunel himself were

[67] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 126-129, Letter of Oliphant to Robert Richards, Secretary to Governor of Bombay: dated 11-04-1799.
[68] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 191-195, List of Dutch Civil Servants on Parole: dated 17-06-1799.
[69] See Appendix to Chapter Four, I. List of people living in Fort Cochin in end 1792.
[70] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 230-231, Letter of Arnold Lunel to Jonathan Duncan: dated 09-07-1799.
[71] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 292-293, Letter of Arnold Lunel to Oliphant: dated 06-09-1799.
[72] TSA CCD 2034, fo. 350, Letter of Oliphant to Arnold Lunel: dated 05-10-1799.

present in Cochin in 1814.[73] Two of the daughters of this family later, married EIC officials and chose to continue living in Cochin.[74]

In September 1799, 25 heads of families, classified as 'inhabitants of Cochin', which basically meant 25 Europeans, took the oath of allegiance as burghers. These were persons who had not joined the EIC's service, and did not wish to do so either. However, they wanted to remain in Cochin independent of the company. Commissioner Hutchinson administered the oaths.[75] This new status as burgher – in comparison to prisoner of war – allowed them to continue trading, so that they could earn a livelihood. This comes to light from the letter of A. F. W. Meyer who complained to Oliphant in September 1799 about him not being allowed to trade in certain items with Ceylon. He stated that as burgher he had the right to do so. Meyer had his own ship called Dolphin. He traded in rice and other merchandise between Cochin and Ceylon.[76] His commodities had been seized from the ship Betsy at Alleppey.[77]

Frustrated with his attempts to eke out a livelihood in Cochin, Meyer, who had been among the first to co-operate with the British and had become the shahbandar of Cochin, now sought permission to leave Cochin. He wanted to go to Bombay and in the same letter asked permission on behalf of Charles Groenrode, a free-burgher living in Cochin, for the latter's ship to go to Ceylon. Meyer and Groenrode had been high officials of the VOC. Groenrode had once been a member of the judicial council. While Meyer hoped for better trading opportunities in Bombay, Groenrode had also been trading privately and was an owner of a small ship that sailed along the coast. Meyer was either going to look for better trading prospects in Bombay or this was an attempt to alarm Oliphant that, if he did not allow the Dutch inhabitants their trading rights, his doings would get reported to Bombay. Obviously Oliphant did not allow Meyer to go to Bombay or Groenrode's ship to go to Ceylon. He stated simply that he had no authority to allow either.

Related to the decision, whether to stay or to leave, former VOC-servants, who were non-Dutch, like the Germans or the Swedes, were in a special position. Von Wrede, for example, was referred to in the EIC records as a German inhabitant; probably because he was born in Heidelberg. Being German, he was in a better position than those Dutchmen who were in the VOC mercantile service, to get employed by the EIC. And that is what he did.

Around 1800, a fight erupted between Hendrik Dirksz. and Lieutenant Von Wrede.[78] Replacing Cellarius, Von Wrede was holding the office of public prosecutor and superintendent of police. He was also the president of the council of justice. Hendrik Dirksz. had become

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[73] See Appendix to Chapter Five, List of Dutch Inhabitants in Fort Cochin in 1814.
[74] In September 1812, Elizabeth Lunel married Lieutenant Pickering of the Indian Army. In September 1820 Archibald Ewart of the Madras Medical Service married Susanna Petronella Lunel. They were the daughters of Arnold Lunel, who was in the political council of Cochin at the time of the takeover. See Lunel Family-tree.
[75] TSA CCD 2034, fo. 315, List of inhabitants admitted to the right of Burghers: dated 12-09-1799.
[76] TSA CCD 2034, fos. 319-320, Letter of Meyer to Oliphant: dated 19-09-1799.
[77] TSA CCD 2034, fo. 329. Letter of Meyer to Jonathan Duncan.
[78] Hendrik Dirksz. had got married in 1793. His witness then was Commander Van Spall. 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 359: dated 10-11-1793.

captain of the burghers.[79] In October 1800, Von Wrede filed a defamation suit against Dirksz.[80] Dirksz. wrote to Oliphant about Von Wrede's misuse of power bestowed upon him as president of the council of justice. The letter was signed by other members of the council of justice: Pieter Schemering, Charles Groenrode, Andrew Henry Brandt, Joachim Marques de Queiros and Johannes Traats. When Dirksz. was fined by Von Wrede in a civil case, Dirksz. wrote to Oliphant asking for protection against the violence of Von Wrede and stated that Von Wrede should address Oliphant and not "his own court" for his grievance of defamation.[81] Oliphant replied that, since Dirksz. was in charge of the Dutch citizens, burghers and residents, and Von Wrede was president of the court of justice, Oliphant did not intend to interfere in their affairs.[82] Since the matter remained unsolved, Dirksz. wrote to the Diaconate's treasurer Mr. Vogt, that de did not have the means to pay the fine of five hundred rupees.[83] Instead, he gave a bill upon Meyer Rahabi.[84] But Vogt, himself hard on funds and burdened with the responsibility of arranging money for the daily working of the lepers house and the Dutch orphanage, did not intend to let Dirksz. get away without paying the fine. He arranged to meet Dirksz. in his garden house outside the fort. It was agreed that, if Dirksz. was unable to pay the fine, then his house within the fort, on the Esplanade, might be auctioned off to recover the amount.[85] This case indicates friction between an inhabitant who had joined the EIC-administration, and members of the former VOC council of justice.

These private stories not only tell us that the majority of the Dutch inhabitants in Cochin were not willing to leave, Van Spall, Von Wrede, Hendrik Dirksz., Von Ochsee, Meyer and many more had moved out of Fort Cochin. Lunel, Groenrode, A. F. W. Meyer, Von Ochsee were participating in private coastal trade. Some like Groenrode and Meyer even had their own ships. Yet, some of them faced problems to make ends meet. Indeed a few had tried to leave, but their plans did not materialise.

Some had good relations with the British and others not. While some had gardens to fall back on, others were completely dependent on trade. However, profiting from trade under the uncertain political times was proving to be difficult. Thus a number of the Dutch inhabitants had found avenues to trade, but their status as Dutch inhabitants caused hurdles. Under British administration they could trade freely, but their 'prisoner of war' status caused problems. Some of them, as we have seen, became free-burghers and could trade more freely.

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[79] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 21, Decree of Court of Justice: dated 31-10-1800.
[80] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 20, Decree of Court of Justice: dated 01-11-1800.
[81] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 21, Decree of Court of Justice: dated 31-10-1800.
[82] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 25, Letter of Oliphant to Hendrik Dirksz.: dated 12-11-1800.
[83] Fines had to be paid to the treasurer of the Diaconate. From this money, the charitable institutes like the Lazarus House etc. used to function.
[84] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 26, Letter of Hendrik Dirksz. to Johannes Vogt: dated 13-11-1800.
[85] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 27, Letter of Hendrik Dirksz. to Johannes Vogt: dated 13-11-1800.

There were skirmishes and bickering within the Dutch community. The VOC court of justice, in the view of some, was not functioning very well. Oliphant as well as Van Spall tried their best to stay away from the conflicts. As most of the VOC-institutions still functioned under supervision of the EIC-administration, many individuals were confused and felt a general lack of law and order. While the British favoured some communities, they kept others at a distance. So, this was the general social, political and economic condition in Fort Cochin after the takeover. Two aspects become abundantly clear. Firstly, important inhabitants of Fort Cochin were moving out to settle in their garden estates in the vicinity of the town. Secondly, the greater number of the inhabitants of the fort stayed on as there was ample opportunity for private trade or for generating income from land.

Moving on to the other sections of the Fort Cochin population, let us look into the lives of those who were connected to the households. These were mostly families and widows of the VOC personnel. While many military personnel were taken as prisoners of war to Bombay, their families were left behind to fend for themselves. A rather well-to-do couple was that of the commandant of the artillery Captain Pieter Elstendorp and his wife Helena Suzanna Philipsz. While Elstendorp was from Haarlem, his wife Helena was Cochin-born. She was the daughter of VOC-servant Philip Philipsz. and Aurelia Bek. Helena's brother, Philip Philipsz. was also a resident of the fort and was the reserve officer of the citizens. Their father had held the same post earlier. Helena's first spouse was Johan Seversen, a billet-master.[86] Pieter and Helena had been married in Cochin in 1783.[87] They had a son who had been baptised in the church of the fort, but he did not live very long.[88] Pieter Elstendorp probably died in 1798. Helena died on 4th October 1804. As there were no heirs, her estate was settled by Jean Gerard la Personne, who was at that time serving as the secretary to the orphan board. Helena would have lived in a modest house in Cochin. She had not only inherited wealth from her two husbands, she had also received gifts from her parents. Thus, she was well-to-do, but after the death of her husband, she had no source of fixed income. From her estate papers it can be gathered that she had pawned most of her valuables to many different persons, Dutch and indigenous.[89] So, for about five years after her husband's demise, she probably lived off her accumulated wealth. Since she had no children of her own, most of her estate, after paying the creditors went to her niece and nephews, who were living outside the fort on Vaipin and in Palghat. Helena Suzanna Philipsz. is typical of many such women of Fort Cochin who stayed on. For some, life became rather difficult, as their capital was slowly getting depleted. Others, who had lent out money to earn a living by receiving interest, could not get their money back and later had to resort to surviving on handouts from the Diaconate, or other charity institutions.

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[86] TSA DR 1556, Wills, Legal records, 1803.
[87] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 18: dated 14-12-1783.
[88] 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 351: dated 16-12-1787.
[89] TSA DR 1556, Wills, Legal records, 1803 and TSA DR 1478, Wills, Legal records, 1796, 1797.

Yet another section of the fort population was that of the orphans. Numbering between eight and twelve in the post-1795 years, they seem to have suffered most after the British takeover. In 1792, there were fifteen orphans living in the Dutch orphanage. Five of them, three boys and two girls, were children of the Weinsheimer family.[90] After the death of their father, the children went to the orphanage and their inherited property was to be taken care of by the orphan board. How the takeover affected the lives of orphan children is illustrated most clearly by the case of one of the Weinsheimer orphans, namely Elisabeth Wilhelmina.

Elisabeth Wilhelmina wanted to marry a young Dutch lad called Hermanus Mesman. Her guardian Johannes Wolff did not allow the marriage on grounds that she was a minor. Hendrik Dirksz., the president of the orphan board, however, gave permission for the marriage. Wolff and Dirksz. got into a feud over this issue and Wolff wrote letters to almost every member of Dutch society, impressing upon them, the mismanagement of the orphanage and its funds. He complained against Dirksz. to the council of justice – the public prosecutor at that time was Von Wrede – and even wrote to the EIC governor at Bombay requesting him to intervene in saving the girl's life. The judicial council gathered for a special meeting to settle the matter. On the request of Wolff, the orphan's guardian, it was decided not to take the matter to court, as a legal battle and expenses on it would further impoverish the orphan's estate. The case led to a long discussion on the rights of the orphan board to take decisions and the powers enjoyed by the president and the secretary.[91] Wolff quoted the Batavian statutes to disallow the marriage. He pleaded that a boy would be considered minor up till the age of 21 and a girl up till the age of 18.

Dirksz., to prove his point that the court of justice had the authority to allow the proposed marriage, in a letter to Oliphant quoted the Batavia ordinances and instructions for councillors of justice in Dutch India: "no. 30: all public officers and members of orphan board, except the immediate representatives of government, are subordinate to the court of justice and must be answerable to it for the misdemeanours in their respective charges and functions, no one but the court is authorised to amend them, and to fine them and even, according to the importance of the cause, to suspend them from their functions."[92] As we know from another case Von Wrede and Dirksz. had been involved in a feud earlier. Finally, Elisabeth Wilhelmina and Hermanus Mesman were not allowed to get married at that time, but they did get married later on. Thus, wherever applicable and possible, the Dutch laws and court remained in function and some members of the Dutch community tried to maintain the old systems, that is, keep things going as it were. The case also reflects the internal strife within the community and, as will be discussed later, the declining condition of the institutions of the VOC, after the takeover.

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[90] NA The Hague, HRB 758, Papers concerning 'the commission to the levy of the 50th penny as a liberal gift to the company in Malabar', 1791-1793. See Appendix to Chapter Four, List of people in the orphanage on the Heerenstraat in 1792, whose estates were being managed by the orphan chamber.
[91] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 12. The first few folios of the diary are missing. So, the exact date cannot be determined. It is however dated before 08-09-1800.
[92] TSA CCD 2035, Document no. 10. Letter of Hendrik Dirksz. to Oliphant.

To conclude, when the fort came under EIC-administration, there was no immediate exodus of the inhabitants to Batavia. The mestizo women, married to European servants of the VOC were not allowed to go to the Netherlands, which was at this time known as the Batavian Republic. Some of them moved out of the fort. Through uncertainties and hopes, the lives of the company servants, Eurasian women – wives and widows – and orphan children of Fort Cochin continued. Leaving Cochin was not a feasible option. The majority chose to stay on. No woman, daughter or widow, left Fort Cochin. With the arrival of the EIC servants, many daughters of VOC servants married young EIC officers and set up home either inside or outside the fort. Elite VOC servants encouraged such behaviour and approved it. So, social and familial relations were established between the Dutch and the British. For some, like the orphans and those dependent on allowances from the EIC or funds of the Diaconate, times were difficult. For others who earned an income through private trade or from land, there was only a loss of status and power. While British control of the port and the sea hindered their trade and general movement, life continued. Though there were frictions among the different communities, winds of new chances were blowing in Cochin.

5.3 British Administration of Malabar

As its title suggests, this section basically deals with EIC's expansion and administration in Malabar and the consequences of the takeover for the inhabitants of the fort. A subsection titled 'Ongoing War' refers to the international political context after 1795 and the consequences of it for the fort and its inhabitants. The attitude of the British, as we have seen, was not that of a nation that was in Malabar for the 'protection against French invasion', as they had claimed at the time of the takeover. The last subsection deals with the ultimate fate of the fort.

Ongoing War

As all matters concerning the territories of the EIC, the Dutch and the French in India were to be decided in Europe, Wellesley informed Henry Dundas, the president of the board of control (1793-1801), about the advantages of the Malabar Coast and the threat posed by the French in India. His argument was to secure Malabar so that Mysore could not have access to future communications with France by sea and he stressed the need to control Tipu and his French connection.[93]

Tipu Sultan of Mysore, having eaten sand from the hands of the English in the 1792 settlement, after the second Anglo-Mysore war, was looking for allies against them. He continued to have contact with revolutionary France and sent missions to Arabia, Afghanistan and Turkey

[93] Edward Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India: The Private Correspondence of Mr. Dundas and Lord Wellesley, 1798-1801* (Bath: Adams & Dart, 1970) 55, 62.

in an effort to forge an anti-British front. The EIC, now led by Governor-General Richard Wellesley, was anxious to show his power in India.[94] In 1798 the fourth Anglo-Mysore war broke out when Wellesley attacked Mysore. In 1799, Tipu died defending Seringapatam. The EIC now gained Kanara, Wynad, Coimbatore, Daraporam and the sea coast of Mysore. Thus, by 1799, British paramountcy in southern India was almost complete.

A certain section of the EIC, was sure that Britain would not only not suffer in India because of the French in Europe, but that they should, as much as possible, benefit from France's neglect of its colonies in Asia. Wellesley, with this aim in mind, gave the office of the Governor-General in India a regal imperialistic status. He was able to envision an Indian Empire for Great Britain to make up for the loss of the American colonies. He endeavoured to create a British Empire in India. His views were justified, developed and pushed forward by promoting the threat of the French who were seen as Catholic, republican and imperialist. Territory could be useful in bargaining peace, or have long-term commercial advantages.[95]

On the other hand General James Stuart, who later served as commander-in-chief at Madras between 1801 and 1804, wrote in 1798 to Henry Dundas, about his critical views on the errors on the part of the EIC in administering Malabar. The private correspondence between these two officials – of whom Stuart had been closely linked to Malabar and had spent years in Calicut supervising the British administration of Cochin after the takeover – throws light on British expansion on the Malabar Coast. Stuart was of the opinion that Malabar should have been acquired "by secret and progressive operations." He further goes on to state that "our conduct was neither politic nor just … it was contrary to equity, as the object was inconsistent with former or existing connections with many of the rajas." He explained that all Malabar sovereigns were allies of the EIC against Tipu Sultan. "They could not long remain impressed with sentiments of affection or gratitude when they saw us acting on the rights of absolute conquest, and passing an edict that reduced the native rajas and princes to the level of *ryots* …we altered the ancient system of legislature." He further states that these measures, which were sufficiently unpopular, were made more obnoxious by the mode of executing them. In addition, he explained that the province of Malabar had never been directly under the Mughals and that 'it was only briefly disturbed by Haidar Ali. Now that it was under the EIC administration, it was proving to be too expensive. If it had not been conquered the way it has been, the way of gradual subversion of the influence of the chiefs should have been followed, aided by a watchful conduct on our part.' What Stuart meant was that, if Malabar had not been conquered, the local chiefs, who could have been kept submissive, could have administered it. By conquering Malabar, the

[94] Richard Colley Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, later Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) had succeeded Sir John Shore as Governor-General of Bengal. Henige, *Colonial Governors*, 125.
[95] C. A. Bayly, "The British Military-Fiscal State and the Indigenous Resistance, India 1750-1820" in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), 322-354, especially 342. Henry Dundas was the president of the board of control between 1793 and 1801.

company had taken upon itself immense administrative expenses, while the gains from Malabar were limited due to the wars with Tipu.[96]

So here we have two contrasting points of views on the importance of Malabar. While Malabar was deemed necessary for the empire, it was proving expensive for the EIC. While higher officials at Calcutta were enthusiastic about the EIC's expansion in the south, local officials at Malabar itself, like James Stuart, were somewhat pessimistic about the situation. Henry Dundas at London wrote to Wellesley that Malabar could be either a great security or a great annoyance and whether it should be one or the other, would depend on the manner in which it would be managed.[97]

With Cochin also coming under British control, the EIC and private British traders had complete access to Malabar pepper.[98] From the case of Cochin also, it is clear that the British expansionist policy used political and military power to promote and safeguard its trade.[99] The takeover was a move of Britain's Bombay bridgehead, not to protect the Dutch from the French, but one to expand EIC's own political and commercial interests in the south.[100] Wellesley doubted the Bombay Presidency's capabilities at managing territories, especially where revenue and government was involved. He suggested that Malabar and Canara be part of the Fort St. George administration, that is, that it be transferred to the Madras Presidency.[101]

On the issue of how the British were to handle the Dutch, it becomes clear from the correspondence among the EIC officials within Malabar and with Bombay, and between the various Dutch inhabitants and the EIC that everyone wanted to wash their hands off them. The civil administrators took the point of view that they were prisoners of war and therefore should be taken care of by the military, but the British military officer maintained that they were not on military parole, but were to be treated as civil prisoners. Therefore, the latter did not wish to have anything to do with them.[102] The numerous narratives of incidents earlier in this chapter are ample proof of this approach of the British towards the Dutch inhabitants.

While matters remained unsettled regarding the future of the fort and its people, individuals suffered. The memoir of Van Spall, which runs more like an irregularly kept journal, is filled with incidents, which reflect confusion and mayhem. It reads like a diary of a person who had lost office and charge over his commandment, and was left to fend for himself. Major Petrie left for

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[96] BL London, OIOC Mss Eur D 607, Extract letter from General James Stuart to Henry Dundas: dated 20-11-1798.
[97] Edward Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India*, 139.
[98] Amales Tripathi, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency 1793-1833* (Calcutta 1979), 14.
[99] Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, 236.
[100] For EIC interests in Malabar pepper, and attempts to control the pepper of Cochin and Travancore, see Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, 84-127, especially 97, 104 and 108. She offers a study of Malabar for a brief period of two decades between 1784 and 1806. Although the EIC could not control the entire pepper produced in Malabar, private trade by EIC officials flourished in the region, including by James Stevens, who was in Malabar at the time of the takeover of Fort Cochin, 108.
[101] Edward Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India*, 162.
[102] TSA CCD 2034, 130-131, Alexander Stewart, British military officer at Cannanur to William Grant: dated 16-02-1799.

Ceylon and was replaced by Captain Anderson. The cash box in the former VOC office was broken into and the contents taken over by the new EIC commissioner. On pleas of Van Spall, the matter got reported and was dealt with formally. Neither the British nor the Dutch maintained detailed accounts of what happened after October 1795. Van Spall attempted to have direct contact with the EIC in Bombay, but his requests were of no avail. His letters to Bombay were returned to him on the pretext that he had not paid for the stamps.[103] As the British largely controlled the seas, Van Spall's superiors in Colombo and Batavia could not send instructions or advice to him.[104] With no fort to command, no pepper or taxation accounts to supervise and no port to inspect in search of prospective trade opportunities, he retreated to his house outside the fort, waiting, watching and hoping that this state of affairs was a temporary one.

Van Spall never received a receipt for the documents and assets that he had handed over to the British. In his memoir he writes how he went from one EIC official to another, requesting them to give him a list of things that the British had taken into their possession. However, nothing was done about it.[105] By November 1795, Van Spall's guards outside his residence in the fort were removed. By then, he had started living with his family in his country house outside the walls of the fort.[106] In mid-November, Jonathan Duncan, the EIC supravisor of Malabar, was in Cochin. Van Spall, stripped of his high position and place within the fort and harassed by the British officials, went to meet him, to complain about the fact that he had not received any papers from them about the takeover. He was treated rather coldly and referred to Major Petrie for his grievances. In December, he came to know that one of the British commissioners was being court-marshaled in Calicut on charges of selling clocks, small cannons and gunpowder, presumably belonging to the Dutch, an incident that had occurred just after the takeover.[107] The fact that the VOC commander's office within the fort was looted by British officials shows, how dismal the condition of the fort and the Dutch people must have been after the takeover. It gives us an early indication of the difficult times that they would have to face in the future. By December 1798, the Dutch had taken a back seat, busy with their own lives and trying to deal with the situation.

In 1800, Malabar was transferred to Madras Presidency. The posts of northern and southern superintendents of Malabar were done away with. The area was divided into ten districts within the Madras Presidency, with each district having a revenue collector who also held some legal authority. Only the department of trade remained with Bombay Presidency. The civil and military administrations were taken over by Madras Presidency.[108] Following complaints and losses for the EIC in Malabar, a fifteen-month enquiry was held, but nothing substantial came out of it. In

[103] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 3: dated 1798.
[104] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 3: dated 1798.
[105] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, *passim*.
[106] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 2: dated 1798.
[107] NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, 1798, fo. 2: dated 1798.
[108] Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 103.

1802, Edward Clive, the governor of Madras, prepared an eighteen folio 'Minute on Malabar', defending his re-organization of Malabar and reporting on the revenue. Clive had removed the former commissioners and had appointed a certain Major Macleod in Malabar. The appointment of Macleod had been central in improving the situation of the Dutch inhabitants in Cochin.[109] He did a lot to solve the problem of Dutch inhabitants in Cochin and get a grip over the orphan board's embezzlement of funds that we will later learn about.

Since the takeover had been carried out based on developments in Europe, let us once more assess the political situation there. The Netherlands continued to be under the French and Stadhouder Willem V was still in exile in England.[110] On 25th March 1802, the Peace Treaty of Amiens was signed. By article 3, England was to return to the Batavian Republic all settlements and colonies occupied. The Dutch possessions on Ceylon were an exception. The restitution had to be effected in Asia within six months after the ratification of the treaty, which had to be done within thirty days.[111] Thus, in principle the British were to return the captured possessions in Malabar back to the Dutch. But in reality, as we shall see, for Cochin the Peace of Amiens had other consequences. In 1803 war broke out again between the British and the French and the British did not restore back Fort Cochin to the Dutch.

The Demolition of Fort Cochin

In the following pages we will witness the final years of Fort Cochin, before the walls were pulled down and Fort Cochin's existence came to an end. Within three years of the takeover almost all Dutch activities ceased and the British were in charge of all administration. Few Dutch public institutions remained functional. It is clear that the orphanage and the orphan board continued, probably because of its moral and financial obligations. In principle these were to be supervised by the EIC officials and regular reports had to be written about their management. In reality the EIC was not much interested in the welfare of the Dutch in Cochin. Consolidation of their economic and political power in southern India and, in the case of Malabar, using as much as possible the Dutch rights and privileges, were their main concerns. Four years after the takeover, in 1799, the commissioner's house, formerly the Dutch commander's house, along with the secretary's office and the warehouse received an overhauling or a facelift.[112] This was not for the Dutch inhabitants but for the comfort of the EIC officials who were using these offices. Also, according to Wellesley's plans, the show of British power, wealth and presence in India had to be made apparent.

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[109] BL London, OIOC Mss Eur F 128/126, Letter of Clive to the chairman of court of directors and his minute on Malabar: dated 1802.
[110] Rietbergen, *A Short History of The Netherlands*, 119-121.
[111] Cornelis van der Aa, *Geschiedenis van den jongst-geëindigden oorlog, tot op het sluiten van den Vrede te Amiëns, bijzonder met betrekking tot de Bataafsche Republiek*…, Vols. 10 (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1802-1808), Vol. 9, 446-66.
[112] TSA CCD 2034, fo. 63: dated 02-1799.

In September 1803, news reached the Dutch inhabitants about orders of the Madras government to flatten Fort Cochin. This was a result of the Peace of Amiens signed in March 1802. While it was decided in Europe, that the British in India would return Dutch captured possessions, in India the EIC officials were on quite a different path. Such a strategic location on the coast, with a European built fort and a foothold for expansion into the interior, was surely not to be given back to their once commercial rivals on the subcontinent. Therefore, the EIC officials wanted to demolish the fort completely. They feared that it would pose to be a problem for them in the future. And if the EIC could not have it, they would destroy it. This was the surest way to preventing an enemy, indigenous or European, from having access to the strategically located strong fort.

The Dutch inhabitants were naturally concerned about their own private properties within the fort. Members of the orphan board, which at that time, among others, included Jan Lambertus van Spall, Charles Groenrode, Joachim Marcus de Queiros, H. J. Verduin, Jan Hardegen and its president Hendrik Dirksz., wrote to Major Macaulay, commissioner of the British government at Cochin, about the damages that would be caused to the houses, and the people in general from their demolition plan. Queiros, Groenrode and Verduin translated the letter into English. To warn the British of the impending ruin it would cause to the Dutch inhabitants, they explained how the properties were linked to the orphan chamber and how the demolition would ring the final bell of destruction and destitution for the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin. They reminded the British authorities that at the time of capitulation, the British had promised to take care of the properties and lives of the Dutch people.[113]

Yet, Fort St. George ordered demolition of the fort. The actual pulling down of the walls took place in early 1804. It was executed partly under directions of the military board of the EIC and was supervised by the British resident at Travancore in communication with the commander-in-chief.[114] The fortress at Quilon was also demolished. An agent was appointed for the sale of the materials. The money received from the sale of demolished material went to the EIC account. In Cochin, the cost of destroying the works and public buildings nearly equalled the profits from the sale of the material. In 1804, Cochin and Quilon were not the only forts destroyed by the EIC. Numerous other forts on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, that would have posed a threat to the British if they came under enemy occupation, were also destroyed. These included the forts at Cuddalore, Nellore, Arcot, Ambur, etc.[115]

This was the end of hundred-and-forty years of Fort Cochin which had been built by the Dutch in 1663-1665. It was the last remaining Dutch fortification on the Indian subcontinent. A

[113] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department fos. 109-111: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[114] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/193/4397, fos. 1-3, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Extract Military Letters: dated 23-03-1804.
[115] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/193/4397, fo. 7, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Extract Military Letters: dated 23-03-1804.

few houses and the church remained standing, but most of the fort, was completely destroyed. The first European fort in Asia, first built in 1505 by the Portuguese, made smaller and re-built by the Dutch in 1663, was pulled down by the British in 1804. The people of Fort Cochin, some of whom had spent their entire lives there, many of whom would have been born in the fort and others who had built families and lived there, simply had to carry on with their lives amongst the ruins, melancholy, and uncertainty. The destruction would have affected everyone who had once been connected to the fort and its institutions.

Two years after the demolition, in 1806, when Hendrik Dirksz. and others wrote to Governor Lord William Bentinck at Fort St. George about the miserable state of affairs of the orphan board and the orphans, the wretched situation of the once lively and enviable fort was described by them in the following words: 'Nearly all the houses have developed cracks due to the blowing up of the bulwarks and the hospital. The principal public channels and sewers which ran under the works into the ditch are stopped by the debris on account of which the rainwater remains standing in the town, which soaks the foundations of the houses, in consequence of which five houses have fallen already, two of which were mortgages of the pupils of this board'.[116]

Thus the breaking down of the fort walls brought great distress to many among the Dutch community of Cochin. Their properties were linked to it. They lost their homes and their wealth and their financial situation could be described to be desperate. Earlier, immediately after the takeover, they had decided that they would continue living in Cochin, as they had felt at home there and there were avenues of sustaining themselves financially. Many had moved outside the walls, yet the fort had remained the core political, commercial and social hub in the region. Without it, their hardships would increase and a sense or feeling that they were a Dutch community in an enclave, that had bound them together, would vanish. Their status as servants of the Dutch company was gone. Their property inside the fort was destroyed. Now the Dutch inhabitants might want to leave Cochin.

Simultaneous with the destruction of the fort, the allowances that the Dutch had been receiving from the British were stopped. With this the situation of some of the inhabitants became so miserable that the English resident at Travancore Lieutenant-Colonel Macaulay wrote in March 1806 to Lord William Bentinck to bring the matter for the governor's consideration.[117] This was in reaction to Van Spall writing to Macaulay earlier in February 1806, drawing his attention, in depth, to the misery and despair of the Dutch inhabitants, which the stopping of allowances had brought with it.[118] So, on orders of Bentinck, the Dutch inhabitants were granted another twelve months of allowances.

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[116] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546/61597, fo. 123. Board's Collection. Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 05-09-1806.
[117] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 5-6, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[118] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fo. 21, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.

Almost every year after the demolition of the fort, some Dutch inhabitants wrote letters to Fort St. George asking for financial relief. There were constant applications for allowances for survival and often letters were written describing the state of the Dutch people of Cochin as "reduced to a state of extreme misery without the hope of relief".[119] The EIC authorities hoped that the paying of allowances would induce them to pay for the passage to Batavia. They also always threatened that allowances would be stopped after a certain period for those who stayed back.[120] While many former VOC-servants had been successful in earning a livelihood through private trade, a few did suffer because of the abolishment of the Dutch company.

Macaulay had tried in the past to send the Dutch inhabitants to Ceylon and had hoped for the co-operation of the British governor of Ceylon Thomas Maitland (1805-1811), in transferring the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin to Batavia. Fort St. George had also taken to corresponding with Batavia for the transfer of Dutch inhabitants of Cochin to Batavia, but in vain. Those Dutch inhabitants, who had taken the oath of allegiance to the British, were allowed to go to Batavia, provided they did not expect any more allowance from the British government.[121] The sick were exempted from the journey. And an allowance to them, the aged and the infirm would continue. Yet, several people had solicited permission to remain at Cochin without receiving further allowance. The British authorities felt that allowances should continue, as it was essential to their support.[122] The same was the case for the Dutch inhabitants in Pulicat, on whom the Madras government had been spending money since the takeover. The EIC authorities there had given up hope that the Dutch government at Batavia would ever make arrangements to remove them.[123]

Thus while the British tried all it could to remove all traces of the Dutch, in and around Cochin, the Dutch there actually, time and again, as we shall see, made clear that they would not leave their homes to be shipped off to places they had little to do with. The insightful words of James Forbes, the EIC official who in the 1770s had visited Cochin, and stated that the Dutch seldom think of returning to Europe and were right to cultivate their interests towards land, again proved to be correct.

Finally, Batavia did react to the constant EIC coaxing and pleading to rescue their own men. Commissioner C. J. Prediger was sent from Batavia to Colombo to look into the affairs of Dutch inhabitants in Ceylon. Two ships from Batavia arrived to take the Dutch inhabitants, but there were not enough places for all. Batavia made clear that it would not be able to send another ship. Maitland suggested that a British or neutral ship should take the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin to Colombo. Fort St. George agreed to the plan and Macaulay was to make such arrangements.[124]

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[119] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 1-2, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[120] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 1-2, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[121] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 6-8, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[122] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 9-10, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[123] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 10-11, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[124] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 13-14, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.

Commissioner Prediger, who had been sent to Asia by the Committee for the East Indies Trade and Establishments in the Batavian Republic, was asked by Maitland to go to Cochin to arrange the ship with Colonel Macaulay.[125] Among the qualified servants of the company, six persons, Van Spall, Lunel, Johannes Bos, Schacht, Surgeon Sothman and La Personne agreed to depart for Colombo. There were 41 more non-qualified servants, including military men, who wished to leave Cochin.[126] Thus in 1804, after witnessing the destruction of the fort, a total of 47 ex-servants of the VOC agreed to leave the place. But they would have to wait.

In March 1806, there were a total of 431 persons who were referred to as Dutch inhabitants in Cochin. These comprised of 129 heads of families.[127] Of these 172 persons, including wives and children of former VOC servants, were willing to go to Batavia. This meant that less than forty percent agreed to go to Batavia, while the majority decided to still continue living in Cochin.[128] Macaulay wrote to Madras that none of those wanting to stay on in Cochin could be considered as "dangerous characters to be forcibly removed".[129] The list of those willing to leave included names of the six persons mentioned above and others such as Verduin, Muller, Vernede, Mesman etc.[130]

As fate would have it, a ship from Cochin to Colombo could not be arranged. The British were willing to give the Dutch inhabitants six months allowance and free passage between Cochin and Colombo.[131] Maitland wrote to Bentinck in October 1806 that this "may eventually be the means of getting rid of a class of men who otherwise will be a permanent encumbrance to your Lordship's government".[132] Bentinck promptly agreed to Maitland's suggestions on transporting the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin to Colombo. Instructions were sent to Macaulay to co-ordinate with Maitland about the hiring of ships to send the Dutch inhabitants off to Ceylon.[133]

By November 1806, when the time drew near to finally leave Cochin for Batavia, Macaulay received numerous letters from the Dutch inhabitants requesting that they be exempted from undertaking the journey to Ceylon. They now wished "most strongly to remain in Cochin". De Can stated reasons of health; La Personne was indisposed due to the management of the orphan board and Vernede's mother had refused to leave Cochin and therefore he could not leave either.[134] In 1807, 76 heads of family including Van Spall, Lunel, Johannes Bos, Vernede, Schacht

[125] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 14, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[126] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 15-20, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[127] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 39-42, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[128] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 61-68, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[129] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fo. 61, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[130] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 64-68, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[131] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fo. 14, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[132] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 93-96, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[133] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 95-96, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[134] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 101-104, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.

and La Personne were receiving allowances from the British in Cochin.[135] And their minds were set on staying on.

In July 1807 Maitland wrote to Bentinck that the government at Batavia had changed. Commissioner Prediger was not sure if the new government would agree to what Prediger had promised. Maitland doubted Batavia's intention and stated that the British should do everything possible to "get rid of the Dutch inhabitants at their own expense as Batavia will most probably never take the initiative".[136] Once more the fate of the Dutch in Cochin was being decided by events taking place in Europe.

Finally in December 1807, when Prediger and Macaulay arranged a ship, The Coromandel to take the people from Cochin to Colombo, only 14 former servants agreed to board it with the intention to proceed to Batavia. One among these was Von Ochsee. Other names included Bisschop, Brandt, Classen, Vogt, Sothman, etc.[137] Others, like Van Spall, Vernede, Wolff, Lunel, and many more, once more found reasons not to leave Cochin.

Eventually, it so happened that Batavia wrote to Macaulay that there were 700 Dutch inhabitants to be removed from Ceylon to Batavia and this meant that there was not enough place for the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin in the two ships that had arrived from Batavia.[138] So, for the second time, the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin did not leave their homes. Twice, the EIC officials offered a chance to the Dutch inhabitants to leave Cochin; at both opportunities the majority did not wish to be deported. They had decided to stay on in Cochin, even without the company, the fort and the privileges they had enjoyed in the past.

The experiences of the Dutch inhabitants in Cochin between 1795 and 1807 are illustrative of how the society as a whole underwent turbulence, tribulation and transformations, which were a direct consequence of events in Europe. The interconnectedness of events in Europe and Malabar, forced the people to re-organise themselves. The 1802 peace of Amiens and the war again in 1803, attitudes or plans of the British towards expansion in India, and the condition of the Dutch in Europe and Asia in general, all of these led to alterations in the lives of the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin. There was a strong relation between the EIC's ambition in India with the overall condition of the Dutch and their personal dispositions. The Dutch inhabitants of Cochin were forced to make decisions about their future and adapt to the new situation. Doubts permeated their everyday life. In the days of uncertainties, there arose a necessity to re-invent themselves, on the basis of emotional ties and economic needs. Most of them chose to stay on in Cochin, and face the hardships rather than go somewhere else.

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[135] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/245/5548, fos. 42-44, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 25-02-1808 to 29-02-1808.
[136] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 105-110, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[137] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/245/5548, fo. 51, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 25-02-1808 to 29-02-1808.
[138] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fo. 59, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.

The enclave had been demolished. While earlier there was a concentration of VOC officials and institutions within the fort walls – where they enjoyed certain rights and privileges denied to those living outside the walls – , in the post-1795 period, the people were spreading out and new inhabitants occupied their place. Also both the insiders and the outsiders were choosing to use the newly established British institutions. In the old scenario, the Dutch had their own fort with rights of jurisdiction, their own legal, educational and charity institutions in which they followed policies of inclusion and exclusion, now all these were lost and were being replaced by the new colonial governance of the EIC. The garden of VOC ex-commander Van Spall was not very far from the warehouse of the Chetti merchants. The house of John Russell, the Englishman from London who had a garden estate outside the fort, was quite close to the Jewish quarters. Armenian merchant Constantine D'Issa and private trader Murdoch Brown had houses in British Cochin. Von Ochsee had his own warehouse next to other Malabar merchants. Neither had a special position or status and all were trying to get on with their lives within the fast changing Malabar social, economic and political milieu. All these people now approached the British *kachahri* (judicial court) for their disputes.[139] How the Dutch coped with their situation in these transient circumstances is the matter of discussion in the following section.

5.4 At Home in British Cochin

This section brings an end to a history of the once flourishing Dutch society in Cochin. The emergence of British Cochin is described in contrast to the decline of the Dutch town with its people and institutions. While the first subsection named Lingering Shadows throws light on VOC institutions that continued to function in British Cochin, the second looks at the larger Malabar Coast and the opportunities it offered to the people who had made it their home.

With the transition from Dutch to British, the town and port had changed from a walled enclave, and its social and economic connections with the outside world, to a town without a fortified area specifically marked for Europeans and company servants but one which attracted traders of many nationalities. Now British Cochin, Mattancheri and the surrounding area could be seen as an urban cosmopolitan trading port and town where Europeans and Asians of numerous cultural and religious backgrounds were not divided by walls and where servants of one European company did not enjoy an exclusive territorial and judicial space.

Lingering Shadows

By 1800, not only the orphan board, was functioning according to the whims and fancies of its members, but also the orphanage was in a state of decline. It had no fresh water supply. The

[139] A *kachahri* (Cutchérry) is a judicial court or an office of administration. Hobson-Jobson, 287-288.

authorities there complained about it to the British administration. The hospital and the leper house would also have continued functioning but not much information is available about them. Their fate would have been similar to that of the orphanage. Both orphanage and leper house used to receive money from the church's poor relief and the Diaconate. Since 1797, however they had no source of income. The residents of the orphanage and the leper house had had no new clothing and there was a severe shortage of funds for their daily functioning. The Reverend Pieter Cornelisz. wrote to the British authorities requesting them for an advance of approximately Rs. 300 for their clothing, which could be obtained back by the British from the orphan board funds once Boganta Chetti paid his due to it.[140] Thus the financial condition of the Dutch institutions and persons dependent on it were pretty bad.

Of the Dutch institutions in Cochin, the court of justice and the orphan board remained functioning. While the British had set up a court of appeal in Cochin, the Dutch court of justice was only functional until the time that cases already running in the court had been solved. Trials of new disputes were held in the new court of appeal. The Dutch orphan board on the other hand remained functional. While all other institutions slowly died or were taken over by the British, the Dutch inhabitants, because of its role as a financial institution, kept the orphan board functional for quite some time.

The problems within the board began in the year 1790 when Captain Weinsheimer died leaving behind an estate worth Rs. 20,000.[141] His two remaining orphaned children Johan Jacob and Elisabeth Wilhelmina were to receive the estate when they came of age. According to the law, the estate was to be taken care of by the orphan board.[142] A part of the estate was in bonds in the name of the company. The orphan board received the remainder of the estate, consisting of a house and proceeds from the sale of household items and jewellery. The VOC could not settle the bond amounts, as it was broke. When in 1795, the company was wound up, the amount remained as a claim.

The takeover of the fort and its destruction affected the general functioning of the orphan board's finances. There were major discrepancies in the accounting of the board, which basically operated as a bank. As many Dutch servants had been taken to Bombay as prisoners of war and others were in a state of flux in Cochin, there were many debtors of the board, who had defaulted in their payments. Since the administrative machinery of the Dutch was crumbling, these defaulters were not hard pressed to pay back immediately and not much was done in the chaos that ensued the capitulation.

Apart from many Dutch names, like Arnold Lunel who had borrowed Rs. 7,000, there were many toepasses, Jews like Meyer Rahabi and Chetties like Boganta Chetti who frequently took

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[140] TSA CCD 2034, fo. 444, Orphans and Lepers have had no clothing for the last two years. Letter of minister Peter Cornelisz. to Oliphant: dated 20-12-1799.
[141] TSA DR 1230, Wills, marriage settlemenst etc. Will dated 20-08-1785.
[142] Lee, *An Introduction to Roman-Dutch Law*, 100.

money from the orphan board.[143] Also many widows had taken loans by hypothecating their houses. The value of these houses rapidly declined after the destruction of the fort. Members of the orphan board, it seems, also took money from its treasury in times of need. As there was neither a central Dutch administrating authority, nor regular auditing of the account books, embezzling of funds and defaulting in payment of loans remained hidden for some time.

Francois Joseph von Wrede, who was in charge of the assets of Cellarius, was the first to write to Bombay about the mismanagement of funds. As we have seen earlier from the fights between Von Wrede and Hendrik Dirksz., matters were not going smoothly among the Dutch inhabitants. There was internal strife among the community. For one, Von Wrede as a German was in a more favourable position with the British than the Dutch persons. Von Wrede, with consent of the British authorities had taken over the office of public prosecutor of Cochin after Cellarius's death. He had also been appointed by the British as the superintendent of police. Actually, the fight between Von Wrede and Hendrik Dirksz. continued for a few years. The former was president of the court of justice and public prosecutor appointed by Oliphant and the latter was the president of the orphan board. So, now two Dutch institutions headed by two members of the Dutch community in Cochin opposed each other. Jonathan Duncan at Bombay, after receiving the complaints, asked Commissioner Oliphant to look into the conduct of the orphan board and ask them to reply to Von Wrede's charges against the members of the board.[144]

Another Dutch resident of Cochin, Jacob Lucas de Graaff, also complained to Jonathan Duncan about not receiving the amount due to him from the orphan board. Jacob Lucas was son of Jan Willem and Meresina Lucasz. He was married to Johanna Cornelia Meyer. Both he and his wife were Cochin-born. He was supposed to get Rs. 2000 from his paternal and maternal estate as per the laws of inheritance, but had received only Rs. 1484. For the remaining amount "a kind of assignation upon the Dutch East India Company payable when they should have the means was proposed". De Graaff refused this offer made by the secretary to the orphan board. He later approached president of the board, Hendrik Dirksz., but did not receive a reply. On approaching Oliphant, he was told that the latter would not intercede until he got a response from Bombay about a similar matter on which Von Wrede had written to Bombay.[145]

Later, Oliphant had taken up the matter with Hendrik Dirksz. He asked him to explain why amounts had been deducted from the estates of De Graaff, Vogt and the Weinsheimer children.[146] In due course, other Dutch inhabitants also complained. Hendrik Dirksz. sent a long letter to Oliphant explaining the situation of the orphan board.[147] Later the treasurer of the orphan board, Abraham Gerrit van der Sloot, wrote to Oliphant stating that the members of the board acknowledged a debt of Rs. 1,110 to Jacobus Johannes Vogt, son of the senior Vogt. The

[143] TSA DR 1557, Papers concerning the estate of J. A. Cellarius. Legal Records, 1803.
[144] TSA CCD, passim.
[145] TSA CCD 2033, fos.146-147.
[146] TSA CCD 2033, fo. 164.
[147] TSA CCD 2033, fos.12-17.

amount was to be paid to him from the money the board had in the Dutch company's funds. He received a voucher for the same.[148] But by March 2nd 1799, de Graaff had not yet received any money.[149]

In 1799, Van Spall and Verduin had formed a commission to look into the affairs of the orphan board, but they could not come up with any answers.[150] In 1806 president Dirksz., Groenrode, Queiros, Jan Hardegen and La Personne wrote to Lord William Bentinck, governor at Fort St. George, appealing for funds and requesting that the matter be settled as the wards of the orphan board were in a very distressed state.[151]

After the death of Van der Sloot in 1804, Jean Gerard la Personne had come to the office as secretary cum treasurer. Since Hendrik Dirksz., Van der Sloot and La Personne were all in the fraud together, this was a convenient appointment both for the president and the new secretary, one taking up the other's post, helping to keep matters within the circle. The deficiency in the cashbooks during the time that La Personne held the office amounted to Rs. 648. In 1813 John Hodgson Pearson was put on the task of unravel the orphan board's financial mess. He stated that the "deficiency stands in need of no other explanation further than that his necessities obliged him to make use of money which did not belong to him." La Personne had also taken some jewels from the estate of Weinsheimer. Pearson was of the opinion that this amount should be recovered from him and restored to the heirs of Weinsheimer.[152]

La Personne was linked to the board's funds in more than just one way. On 24th June 1798, he had married Helena Josina Weinsheimer, daughter of Captain Jacob Bernhardt Weinsheimer. After Captain Weinsheimer had passed away in 1790 and his widow Wilhelmina van Harns re-married, the estate of Captain Weinsheimer came under the orphan board's management.[153] As Captain Weinsheimer' son, Jan Jacob Weinsheimer had passed away, La Personne as husband of Helena Josina laid claim to Jan Jacob's part of the Weinsheimer estate.

It is difficult to find information on the background of La Personne. Correspondence between Van Spall and La Personne, which are in Dutch, English and French, show that they were good friends. When times were difficult, Van Spall even wrote a beautiful poem on La Personne's birthday to cheer him up.[154] In 1808, La Personne resigned as secretary of the board,

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148 TSA CCD 2033, fo. 311.
149 TSA CCD 2034, fo. 75.
150 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 90-91, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
151 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 119-126, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
152 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 23, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
153 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 23: dated 26-09-1790. She was married to Lodewijk Josef Souter of Elsas.
154 TSA DR 1491, Letters Received 1797-1800. On 9th October 1800, Van Spall, who was then on Vaipin Island wrote this poem to La Personne in Fort Cochin: *O! Hemel aan welke een zoete vreugd, verwikte mijn hart en ziel, ik koom nu vrolijk en verheugd, dees dag mijn te binnen viel; En wensch dat u den hemel geeft, dat gij nog meenig jaar, in vreugde en in voorspoed leeft, tot dat uwe hens: hier naar; Ontboden van dit aardsche verdriet, op eene volmaakte wijs,*

planning to move to Batavia. In the end, however, perhaps because of his family relations in Cochin, he never left.

Thus, in the years after the takeover, the Dutch community, institutions and persons suffered financially because of a lack of control that the Dutch company formerly had over these institutions and persons. As we shall see, some persons took advantage of the situation and benefited personally from it.

Hermanus Mesman, the Dutchman who had fought with Johannes Wolff, the guardian of Elisabeth Wilhelmina Weinsheimer, to marry her, did succeed in doing so.[155] He too had benefited from the embezzlement, by marrying the orphan daughter of Captain Weinsheimer. In this way, in 1797, Mesman and La Personne together had taken over the entire Weinsheimer estate. This had happened with the knowledge of president Dirksz.. When news spread in the community about La Personne and Mesman unjustly taking over of the Weinsheimer estate, the EIC Collector Mr. Rickards ordered Hendrik Dirksz. to restore the property back to the orphan board. This was done, but only partly. The heirs of the other heirs of Weinsheimer estate, who were still minors, received some money, but Mesman and La Personne were not made to refund.[156] Thus, Dirksz. was hand in glove with La Personne and Mesman in appropriating the money. In 1803, both Elisabeth Wilhelmina Weinsheimer and her brother Jan Jacob died. The case was now referred to Batavia and later to the Netherlands. Van Spall did nothing about the matter. Only Von Wrede and some Dutch servants who had suffered losses, tried to bring things in order, or at least bring the embezzlement to the notice of the British authorities.

In 1795, Arnold Lunel was the president of the orphan board and things seemed to have functioned smoothly.[157] Although Lunel had himself taken a loan of Rs. 7000 from the board, this did not seem to be a problem. Only after 1795, when Hendrik Dirksz. had become the president, the embezzlement had begun.[158]

In 1813 John Hodgson Pearson, as judge and magistrate for the town of Cochin and its dependencies, tried to unravel the board's financial mess. As soon as he arrived in Cochin, a number of Dutch inhabitants wrote to him about the imminent ruin of the Dutch inhabitants in Cochin caused by "the acts of a few persons".[159] The loans had been given out at the time when Cochin was a prosperous town. Mortgages of houses were secured against the loans, as at that time the houses were in good condition and money could be recovered by the sale of houses. But

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uitgalmt het driemaal stijlig lied, in Hemelsche Paradijs. The poem basically wishes La Personne a long life before he is called to the paradise.

155 Their two children were baptised in 1801 and 1803. The first baptism ceremony of Jan Frederik was witnessed by La Personne and his wife Helena Josina Weinsheimer. 'Het Doop/Trouwboek van Cochin', 368 and 369: dated respectively 20-12-1801 and 20-07-1803. See Weinsheimer Family-tree.

156 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 31, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.

157 NA The Hague, HRB 751, Memorandum Van Spall, fo. 3: dated 1798.

158 TSA CCD 2033, fo. 12.

159 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 103-108, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.

since 1795, the fortunes of the city and its inhabitants had changed drastically. Pearson prepared detailed accounts of the funds, mortgaged estates, creditors and debtors.[160] In Cochin, it was disputed by whom and how the amount 'missing' was to be paid. The members of the board were first and foremost held responsible for the embezzlement. These included Hendrik Dirksz. as president, Abraham Gerrit van der Sloot as secretary cum treasurer and among others, Groenrode, Queiros and Verduin, as members.

Soon two factions emerged in Cochin. One which felt that only the president and secretary should pay as the members were unaware of financial matters, and another holding the view that the members were equally responsible and should be asked to pay as well. A great deal was written and said on both sides.[161] The general feeling among the British was that Dirksz. had misled many of those who were uninformed about the regulations, customs and usages of the board. Also, the members could be at the most held guilty of signing the accounts books without proper scrutiny – for which they blamed their simple minds – and not of actually appropriating the funds.[162] The members could plead innocent on the ground that the account books seemed all right and the balances matched.[163] Since the entries were faulty, there was no way of detecting the fraud as figures in the books matched with what was available in the treasury. The secretary Van der Sloot managed to keep the fraud undercover by showing bonds of merchant Baruch Meyer Rahabi. Later, after the death of the secretary, it was discovered that though the bonds were already paid for, he had managed to keep them with him in order to deceive the board members.[164] Thus he had pocketed the money paid by Meyer Rahabi. It was also found out that in one incident, Dirksz. had paid money to Hermanus Mesman and La Personne without asking for receipts.[165] Members of the board felt that the president and the treasurer should be made to pay as only they were responsible for the cash box. To further strengthen their standpoint they quoted the 1708 Batavia Resolution which stated that all deficiencies in accounting must be paid by the one responsible for it and not the whole body.[166]

The problem was that once the fraud was brought to light, members of the board and the larger community started fighting and blaming each other. In any case it had become clear that Henry Dirksz. did not have much money. To keep up their accustomed lifestyle, he and Van der

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160 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 3-7, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
161 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 13-37, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
162 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 75-78, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
163 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 79, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
164 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 80-81, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
165 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 88, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
166 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 85, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835, Resolution dated 24th January 1808.

Sloot started to keep false account books. In principle, only the treasurer was responsible for the account book. It appears to have been possible, however, to keep a false account book either with the connivance or because of the gross neglect of the president.[167] Often the secretary cum treasurer, Van der Sloot, received interests on money, but did not enter these in the books. In 1804 the treasurer Van der Sloot died and the discrepancies came out. An enquiry revealed that cash was withdrawn and falsely charged to the president and the members.[168] Fraudulent acts ranged from the president arbitrarily withdrawing Rs. 4,000 from the treasury to the secretary cum treasurer giving money unofficially from the treasury to La Personne and Hermanus Mesman, at a higher interest rate than to the other debtors.[169] This was obviously to show that the secretary cum treasurer was working in the best interest of the board's funds, but in reality he was aware that neither the principal would be returned, nor the interest be paid. Some mishandling of funds would not have been possible without the knowledge of the president. For others, only the treasurer was responsible: like the case where he had issued receipts for Rs. 20,000, but had deposited only half the amount to the treasury.[170] Several of the books were full of erasures and interpolations making it impossible find out the exact amounts, date and nature of the fraud. Yet, it was remarkable that petty frauds of the cashier which could have been found out at the time of the annual auditing of the account had remained unknown.[171] It also became clear from the general poor financial condition of the Dutch inhabitants that neither the heirs of the secretary Abraham Gerrit van der Sloot, nor his securities possessed the means of paying anything to help clear the accounts.[172] Similar was the case of Hendrik Dirksz. who had died in 1808, leaving his debts to be cleared by his heirs, though they had little means of doing so. He had remained president of orphan board till 1805.[173]

The 1813 appointment of John Hodgson Pearson to solve the orphan board financial embezzlements hardly led to a solution. After a study of all the account books and documents of the orphan board, he himself prepared fresh accounts and recommended that Dutchmen Abraham Vernede, Groenhardt and Johan Kautz. be appointed as commissioners for six months

[167] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 17, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[168] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 18, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[169] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 87, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[170] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 19, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[171] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 22, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[172] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 23, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[173] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 170, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835. Pearson sent ten orphan board books of account from Cochin to Fort St. George, Madras.

to solve the matter. Kautz, had helped Pearson with preparing the account sheets for a small amount of 50 *pagodas*.[174]

As of 1813, the orphan chamber funds stood at Rs. 61,099. Only Rs. 7,578 was in the treasury. Rs. 20,000 was with the now-non-existent VOC and the rest had been given as loan to the numerous Dutch inhabitants of Cochin. Of these Van der Sloot had to pay the maximum amount, more than Rs. 9,000. While almost every other person of any financial standing had borrowed or embezzled money from this fund, President Hendrik Dirksz., had to pay about Rs. 5,000.[175]

Once Pearson's report was written and the account books sent to Madras, all papers were sealed and stored. Matters were forgotten for a while. In 1815, the British judge and magistrate at Cochin, Septimus Money, looked into the affairs of the board briefly, but achieved nothing substantial.[176] One of the solutions suggested was that the British pay some money to the board, so that accounts could be settled, the books closed and the institution dissolved.

In 1835, the total claim of creditors and claimants whose property was under the care of the orphan board, had risen to Rs. 35,542. Many claimants were still writing letters to the British government at Fort St. George asking for the settlement of their claims.[177] To solve the claims of the Dutch inhabitants, the British government in Cochin decided to sell the houses mortgaged with the orphan board. The deficit, not exceeding a certain amount was to be paid as a donation by the British government at Madras. In principle this was a good solution, but conditions in Cochin had changed a lot from the time when the houses were mortgaged. Due to the war and decay because of neglect and poverty, the houses now stood in a more or less ruinous state. A maximum of not more than Rs. 5,000 could be expected from the sale of the houses. The British government agreed on a donation of Rs. 3,525. This still meant that there was a deficit of Rs. 22,073.[178]

The case of the orphan board funds remained unsettled and was a major cause of anguish, both to the Dutch inhabitants and the British administrators. By 1834-35, still no settlement had been found. [179] More calculations were made and accounts books prepared.[180] In the mid-1830s,

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[174] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 37, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[175] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 145-151, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[176] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 171, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[177] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 3-7, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835. One of them was Helena Elisabeth Tupke. She was the granddaughter of Christiaan Nicolas Tupke and Maria Wilhelmina Seijffer. Their only child, Coenraad had married one of the Groenrodes and produced five children, all of whom were born between 1794 and 1800. Helena Elisabeth Tupke was one of them and was expecting that she would receive money from the board.
[178] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 3-7, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[179] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 36-40, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835. Attachment A.

the Dutch creditors to the board and persons whose estates were involved were still expecting some money to be paid back to them. This, they stated in their letters to the British administrators at Madras, would be 'a liberal help in their financially exacting days'. Children of Dutch inhabitants with family names as Meyer, Tupke, La Personne and Van Spall, hoping to get some money back, kept writing to Fort St. George.[181] By this time, most debtors were declared bankrupt and had no means of paying. Some of the creditors had died, some with heirs, others without. The British, as is apparent from the correspondence and attempts to solve the problem, just wanted to settle all issues concerning the Dutch once and for all.

The general withering away of the Dutch community, its institutions and individuals, emerges from the fact that during the 'VOC period' in Cochin, the orphan board and its members were functioning without any problems. The board had lent and taken care of assets, that is, worked as a bank or as a financial body giving and taking money on loan for decades without any problems. But with the British takeover, Dutch institutions started to fail. The embezzlements originated from the general impoverishment of the Dutch inhabitants. The ruin was caused by the stagnation of trade after the British takeover. Due to the political uncertainty about the future of Cochin, there were no capitalists and entrepreneurs willing to visit or invest there. The wars of Tipu Sultan added to the uncertainties and kept merchants at bay. The unstable economic situation also meant that there were no tenants for the Dutch houses. Lack of income of the Dutch inhabitants from their houses rendered them, firstly, unable to maintain and repair the houses and, secondly, unable to pay the interests on loans from the orphan board. Eventually, their debts were beyond liquidation. Out of necessity most of the Dutch inhabitants sold their moveable goods. The demolition of the fort added to their misfortunes. As the houses suffered structural damage, they were soon beyond repair. Some even fell down during the demolition itself. The foundations of other houses were damaged during the demolition and since the walls of the fort had been completely pulled down, the strong sea-winds caused further damage, so that they fell within a few months. Thus the total ruin of the properties, on which the loans and mortgages were based, led to the ill-functioning of the orphan board. In times of need, its officials resorted illegally to taking money from its treasury.

This study of the affairs of the VOC's orphan board at Cochin provides evidence of the neglected state of the Dutch inhabitants and institutions in Cochin after the British takeover. In the absence of a centralised controlling authority like the VOC, some persons, like Hendrik Dirksz., Van der Sloot and La Personne, exploited the available resources for their own interest. Others like Hermanus Mesman, by marrying the orphan Weinsheimer girl, also tried to benefit from the situation, although not in a very blatant manner. Yet others who were creditors of the

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[180] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 190-201, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.

[181] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 133, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835. Apparently the money claimed by the descendants of La Personne were the funds of the Weinsheimer estate.

board suffered financially as their investments were lost. There was a general lack of control or concern on behalf of the Dutch authorities in Batavia about the affairs of the Dutch inhabitants in Cochin. They were just lingering shadows, forgotten by the people in Batavia and the Netherlands, and considered as a burden by the new British administrators.

Although the Dutch company was wound up in 1795, this was not the end of Dutch institutions and VOC personnel in Cochin.[182] The Dutch inhabitants continued to live there, even though they were divided on issues of management of their institutions, taking oath of allegiance, and the like. Twice – once in 1797 with Helsingør and then again in 1807 when The Coromandel had been arranged – they had the option to leave. They were twice faced with a dilemma of choosing between staying on in Cochin and going to Batavia. Both times the majority decided to stay on. In British Cochin their life histories continued.

Through these turbulent times, Macaulay and Prediger together did what they could to help the Dutch in Cochin. Macaulay's role was the more remarkable. He first brought the miserable condition of the Dutch to Governor Bentinck's attention and later, when he realised that not many were willing to leave Cochin, he tried to help them in other ways, by pressurising the British government to continue paying them allowances. In 1809, Macaulay made it possible for the remaining persons of Dutch origin in Cochin to take up service with the British. Under his guidance, a proclamation was published whereby those willing to take the oath of allegiance to 'His majesty the King of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland' would be treated as British subjects. They could approach the district courts for justice and freely trade in licensed commodities.[183] In an attempt to limit the movements of the Dutch inhabitants, the EIC officials came up with regulations regarding their movement. Dutch inhabitants were not allowed to cross a demarcated part of Cochin: a boundary which commencing at the sea near the Church of St. Louis, about two miles southward of the town, carried on through Pallurutti, then Anjikaimal (Ernakulam) and Verapoly (Warapoly) proceeding to Cruz de Milagre (Murinalli) and the Island of Vaipin, about one and a half miles north of the town.[184] Later Cochin was annexed to the district of Angadipuram (District of Ernakulam).[185] This restriction on movement was probably imposed upon the Dutch inhabitants, so that, if another opportunity arose, they could still be transported out of Cochin to Ceylon or Batavia and would not be a cause of worry to the EIC in India anymore.

Dutch inhabitants, who had taken the oath of allegiance, were to be employed on board vessels bearing British colours.[186] Some enterprising men sought permission to be allowed to

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[182] Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 184.
[183] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/277/6187, fos. 13-15, Fort St. George, Political Letters: dated 24 to 27-01-1809.
[184] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/277/6187, fos. 16-17, Fort St. George, Political Letters: dated 24 to 27-01-1809.
[185] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/277/6187, fo. 18, Fort St. George, Political Letters: dated 24 to 27-01-1809.
[186] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/347/8143, fo. 1, Fort St. George, Public Letters: dated 06-02-1810.

navigate under British colours for the purpose of gaining a livelihood. After having taken the oath of allegiance, they were allowed to do so.[187] Other Dutch inhabitants could get British passes to participate in coastal trade.[188]

Von Ochsee left Cochin in 1807 for Colombo, probably in search of opportunities for trading. His estate in Cochin, which he had created through years of hard work in Malabar, including the warehouse outside the fort used for private trade, lay in ruins. In 1804, only parts of the walls were standing. His house and surrounding garden was occupied by Mrs. Vogt. She claimed she should get what was retrievable from the warehouse.[189] Von Ochsee kept returning to Cochin now and then to take care of his estate there. But for most of the time he did remain in Colombo. In April 1813, he was in Cochin again. Macaulay had asked him to dispose of his house and garden, and also of the warehouse, for what it would fetch. But Von Ochsee knew he would get little from such a sale. He preferred to hand over his property to Mr. Vogt, a relative of his wife.[190] In 1814 he wrote to Madras, asking that his son's inheritance should be released from the Cochin orphan board funds, as his only source of income was his allowance as prisoner of war which was insufficient to pay for his son's education.[191]

Van Spall first tried to avoid going to Batavia on grounds that he could not sell his house and garden in Cochin. He wrote to Macaulay about how he had acquired the house and garden and that he was bound by law not to sell it as private property to private individuals.[192] The property in question was a house in the company's garden, south of Fort Cochin. Van Spall had become the owner of it by his virtue of holding the office of the Commander of Malabar. The house and garden, just outside the fort had been in state of decay in 1784. Repair and renovation would cost Rs. 15, 500. Since the Dutch company had not been able to find that sum of money, the then governor Van Angelbeek decided to pay for it himself. It was proposed that the governor would use the property while he was there. After him, he would hand it over to his successor. Every time the property got transferred, it would de de-valued by certain amount and eventually it was hoped that one of the commanders or governors would buy it. All this was agreed upon by the political council in Cochin in 1785 and confirmed by the High Government. In this way Van Spall, had come to possess the house and garden which, in 1808 was worth Rs. 60,000.[193] Van Spall used to live in it with his family. The company's garden and the house are depicted in a 1778 illustration of VOC's Fort Cochin. In 1807, having heard that Van Spall and other Dutch persons might have to leave Cochin, the raja of Cochin sent his minister Govinda Menon to Van

[187] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/347/8143, fos. 5-11, Fort St. George, Public Letters: dated 06-02-1810.
[188] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/347/8143, fos. 13-16, Fort St. George, Public Letters: dated 06-02-1810.
[189] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 26-27, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[190] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fo. 27, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[191] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1546, fos. 130-131, Board's Collections, Fort St. George, Public Department: dated 27-10-1835 to 10-11-1835.
[192] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 47-48, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
[193] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 48-52, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.

Spall to persuade him to sell the garden to the raja for Rs. 40,000. Van Spall declined. He stated the same reasons as the former Governor Van Angelbeek: such a large property so close to the fort should not fall in indigenous hands.[194] Realising that there was not much he could do in these circumstances, Van Spall tried to sell the estate to the EIC.[195] The EIC authorities advised him to sell the property, but that was not what happened. [196] The Van Spall family continued to live there for generations.[197]

Van Spall did leave Cochin at least once to go to Colombo. But this was done privately, that is, by himself without the support – financial or material – from the British or Dutch authorities and for his own personal or commercial reason. Van Spall is not to be found in Cochin papers after about 1807. Thus, he must have died or left Cochin around then. His son Pieter van Spall, who was born in Cochin in 1772 and died in 1820 served as Dutch resident at Tuticorin between 1818 and 1820. Tuticorin was handed back officially to the Netherlands in 1818.[198]

Meanwhile in the Netherlands, Louis Napoleon ruled as King of Holland from 1806 to 1810. In 1810, due to economic recession, anti-French feeling had started to run high and a reversal of the French tide in Europe was imminent. The defeat of Napoleon by a European coalition near Leipzig in 1813 signalled the retreat of French troops from Dutch soil.[199] Then in May 1814, peace came in Europe with the 'first' Treaty of London. Cochin was finally lost to the United Kingdom by a convention signed at London on the 13th August 1814. It was exchanged against Bangka, on which the rights of the United Kingdom were questionable. The other possessions in India were returned to the Netherlands.[200] By the 1824 Convention of London with the United Kingdom, the Netherlands received Sumatra and lost all possessions in India for good.

By 1815, the EIC's dominions stretched continuously across northern India from Delhi in the north to Assam in the east. The entire east coast of the Indian peninsula was in the English company's hands together with strategic points on the west coast between Gujarat and Cape Comorin.[201] Naturally, as we have seen, they were not about to give up their new foothold in the southwest coast of India.

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194 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fo. 53, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
195 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fo. 48, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
196 BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/217/4780, fos. 54-55, Fort St. George, Political Letters, 1807-1808.
197 A lady Van Spall used to live on the estate, till about the 1970s. It was then called Fernandes Garden. She was very proud of the jackfruit trees of her garden and guarded it against theft every afternoon and night. Private conversation with Ivan D'Costa, former president of the Anglo-Indian Society of India and resident of Burger Street, Fort Cochin (January 2007). His house is one of the best maintained Dutch houses, structurally and aesthetically, in present day Fort Cochin.
198 P. H. van der Kemp, 'De Nederlandse factorijen in Voor-Indië in den aanvang der 19e eeuw' in *Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 53 (1901), 285-512.
199 Rietbergen, *A Short History of The Netherlands*, 122.
200 P. H. van der Kemp, *De Teruggave der Oost-Indische Koloniën 1814-1816* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1910), 73-75, 406. In 1815 the Prince of Orange returned from England and was proclaimed King of the Netherlands as Willem I.
201 P. J. Marshall, *Problems of Empire: Britain and India 1757-1813* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), 15.

The harder edge of British empire-building after 1798 was in part a reflection of commercial and financial pressures. The company's debt soared even as Wellesley tried to stabilize it, drawing more states into lucrative subsidiary alliances. The Indian and European wars also encouraged both the company and private entrepreneurs to attempt to gain control of supplies of tropical produce and manufacture. The wars in the south, for instance, were in part struggles over the control of the pepper-trade; but there were also conflicts about power and authority. After 1798, the company entered the phase of 'constructive imperialism'.[202] By 1815, Britain was celebrating a providential recovery of fortunes compared to the 1770-1780 period when it was facing a recession due to the loss of the American colonies and the numerous wars and mismanagement in India.[203] Partly, this recovery had to do with the rapid British expansion in Southern India.

New Prosperity or Wishful Thinking?

The question, as to where the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin and their descendants lived after the British had duly taken over the administration around 1830, still lingers. Unfortunately, no lists of inhabitants after 1815 have been found either in the Dutch archives or the English one. However, no evidence has been found of a massive migration to other parts of India, or Ceylon either. Consequently, it is almost certain that the heads of the 318 households registered in 1792, or their descendants, stayed on in Cochin, in the surrounding area, or along the Malabar Coast, in Calicut or Anjengo and in the hinterland up to Palghat. In 1814, only 52 heads of households in Cochin considered themselves Dutch and came forward to get themselves registered, when a list was being drawn up.[204] From this it can be concluded that at that moment only a very small number of the inhabitants of Cochin felt that they belonged to the Netherlands. The others had become either a part of British Cochin, or of the larger Malabar milieu. This is more telling, because excluding widows, free-burghers and Malays, from the list of 1792, there remains at least an odd 176 male with a name that indicate that they, or their fathers, originated from the Netherlands.[205] In 1814, there were only 52 who declared to be connected to the Netherlands. Thus, between 1792 and 1814 there had been a decrease of about 126 "Dutch" citizens of Cochin. While some died and a handful might have left, a considerable number stayed there. They had mixed with the local population, be it with the mestizo and toepasses, the Chetties, Baniyas, Jews or the other local and foreign mercantile communities.

The Dutch, private British traders and the itinerant mercantile communities were also attracted to the British centres of commerce and administration on the Malabar Coast. Another

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[202] C. A. Bayly, "The British Military-Fiscal State and the Indigenous Resistance, India 1750-1820" in Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War*, 322-354, especially 343.
[203] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, 2-3.
[204] See Appendix to Chapter Four, I; List of people living in Fort Cochin in end 1792. And Appendix to Chapter Five, I; List of Residents of Cochin on 5th April 1814.
[205] See Appendix to Chapter Four, I; List of people living in Fort Cochin in end 1792.

factor that might have influenced the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin to remain on the Malabar Coast was the emergence of Alleppey as a trading port. Part of the Travancore raja's territory, it was about sixty kilometres south of Cochin and mid-point between Cochin and Quilon. It developed as a port in the 1760s and gained prominence steadily in the late eighteenth century. Suited to British colonial interests, after 1800, it was increasingly being developed as a spice exporting port. Other Malabar products like coir-products, timber, tea, rubber, copra etc. were also exported from there.[206] Like Cochin, Alleppey too was home to traders from Surat, the Konkan Coast and to a few Arabs. The emergence of this port would have brought new energy and new force in the economic lives of the people of Malabar. However, the inhabitants of Fort Cochin who stayed on, could they provide for the living?

It seems that the entire northern Malabar Coast from Tellicherry to Quilon was abuzz with numerous Asian and European traders who were settled in the various ports and could move around in search of commodity and traders. Many held landed estates. The most prominent of these who also had close contact with the Dutch of Cochin was Edinburgh-born Murdoch Brown (1750-1828). He had established a company called Messrs Brown and Dineur which had establishments in Malabar, Madras, Mahé, Tellicherry and Calicut. He was settled with a house and family consisting of wife Eliza, son Francis Carnac Brown and daughter Maria Jane Brown in Calicut. He was owner of plantations and traded in pepper. In 1799, he had, for ninety-nine years, leased, the Anjrakandy estate situated near Cannanur, from the EIC. He had first arrived in Malabar in 1755 as consul at Calicut for the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. Engaging in trade almost immediately, he made a name for himself in the region and among the EIC officials. Jonathan Duncan, governor of Bombay, wrote in 1792, that 'Brown was the most considerable of any British subjects on that side of India'. He had lost eleven ships, East Indiamen, of 1,000 tons or more in the war with France and became one of the earliest British landholder in India.[207] In the 1790s he was the deputy superintendent of police at Mahé and was owner of large plantations in Malabar.[208] Of course, not all who stayed from Dutch Cochin did as well as Murdoch Brown, yet his enterprise testifies that the opportunities were there.

The decision of the majority of the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin to stay on probably proved to be a sensible one in the end. In the 1830s, Francis Carnac Brown, son of Murdoch Brown, was involved in a discussion with the EIC for making Cochin into an emporium of commerce and a dockyard for shipbuilding and repairs. Brown had been a resident of Malabar for a long time. He first criticized the lawlessness in Malabar and the fights between Europeans and Indo-Britons, later known as Anglo-Indians. He wrote about an interesting social practice popularly called "Malabar Code". Apparently it had become common practice among the people to take the law in their own hands and hire ruffians to 'take care' of opponents, or whomsoever they

[206] Hans Schenk, 'Views on Alleppey' (Ph D Dissertation University of Amsterdam 1986), 22.
[207] BL London, OIOC IOR, Mss Eur F/227/1, Murdoch Brown Collection.
[208] Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, 93-103, specially 97, 101-103.

owed a grudge against. The 'taking care of' was done by administering the bamboo on the opponents. Anyone could hire ruffians to settle scores in this way, by paying the hired persons a fixed price of Rs. 15 per assignment.[209]

But later Brown described Cochin as having "a large heterogeneous assemblage of people forming the population of the place and consisting of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Portuguese, Europeans, Creole, Dutchmen and their descendants, legitimate and illegitimate". There were also Turks, Arabs from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, Baniyas, Mamuns (Islamic merchants) from Bombay and Gujarat, indigenous white and black Jews and the local Malabaris.[210] He wrote to the EIC on how naturally gifted Cochin and the whole of Malabar was. The region had a good supply of teak from Cochin and Travancore, which could be used for shipbuilding and repair. Cochin had a potential of developing into a significant shipbuilding and repair centre on the Malabar Coast, next only to Bombay. Brown pointed out that just sixty years ago, in the hands of the Dutch, Cochin was what Bombay had become later, the emporium of the western coast.[211] He further detailed how viable the natural harbour of Cochin was, that apart from Bombay, there was no other significant seaport on the west coast of India, and that the EIC could benefit immensely from the development of Cochin.[212]

A travel account from early twentieth century mentions a third generation of Dutchmen in British Cochin. Known as Captain J. E. Winckler, in the year 1907 or 1908 he was seventy-five years old and lived in British Cochin in one of the most splendid houses there, that of the old governors of Dutch Cochin. His grandfather, who was a VOC servant, was originally from Schleswig-Holstein. Captain Winckler's father was supposed to be the last man in Cochin in the 1880s who could read Dutch documents. He had married a Jewish woman from Mattancheri.[213]

5.5 Conclusion

On 31st December 1799, the VOC lost its octroi. Its charter came to an end and it was not renewed. Hardly any attention was paid to Malabar. There were two attempts, by the British to make the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin leave the place and go to Batavia, but there were few takers for such a move. The lives of the Dutch company servants after the end of the VOC was tough. Many faced the dilemma of staying in Cochin and making a living in the new political and economic environment, which offered them more opportunities for private trade. Economic

[209] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1507, fos. 1-3, Board's Collection, Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation: dated 18-04-1834.
[210] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1507, fos. 3-5, Board's Collection, Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation: dated 18-04-1834.
[211] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1507, fos. 5-10, Board's Collection, Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation: dated 18-04-1834.
[212] BL London, OIOC IOR, F4/1507, fos. 11-15, Board's Collection, Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation: dated 18-04-1834.
[213] Henry Bruce, *Letters from Malabar and on the Way* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1909), 46-48.

means of survival were available in Cochin even without the VOC. The people were so rooted in Cochin that leaving it was not their first choice, at least, not for the majority of the people and not immediately after the takeover, or demolition, of the fort. Considering circumstances at Colombo and Batavia and their own personal attachments and social and familial relations in Cochin, staying on there was the obvious option for the majority of the VOC servants and families. The majority of the wives of VOC personnel were born in Cochin or elsewhere in India and although most children at the orphanage carried the status of being European, they had really not much to do with Europe. Daughters of VOC servants married EIC servants and started new lives. Almost all continued to stay in and around Cochin where they were born and had lived all their lives. When the winds of chance blew, many went along with it and took up oaths of allegiance to serve the British.

Yet, the post-VOC condition of the Dutch inhabitants of Fort Cochin declined at a very fast rate. Within a decade, most of them were impoverished. Problems like conflicts within the community that stayed back and impoverishment of the people which led to embezzlement of orphan board funds which further affected the financial conditions of orphans, were what the Dutch inhabitants were left to deal with. The main reasons of their changed circumstances were: the transfer of the settlement to the British, war in Europe and consequent stagnation of VOC trade, and confusion about attempts to transfer the people to Colombo or Batavia.

When the British in India heard that there was a possibility of Fort Cochin being restored to the Dutch due to developments in Europe, they pulled down the fort walls and completely destroyed the 300 year old fort, thus bringing to an end the physical existence of the first European built fort on the Indian subcontinent and one which had accommodated Portuguese, Dutch and British men and women through the centuries and created a world where European, Eurasian and Asian people met and shared their lives.

While the mestizo and toepas community continued to live around the fort, in Vaipin Island, in Mattancheri and surrounding areas, the Dutch community of Fort Cochin was simply left to either wither away, or join the larger Malabar Christian community consisting predominantly of Roman Catholics and Syrian Christians. The Dutch Reformed Church, and other reformed churches like the Anglicans and Lutherans, had had a presence in Malabar, but in small numbers. So, to remain protestant was not easy. Probably the mestizo wives brought up their children to believe in the Roman Catholic Church.

The coming of the British had disturbed all communities equally. Their differences – cultural or religious – were overshadowed by their common experience and the changes brought about by the expansion of British dominion in Malabar. Though, a number of Dutch continued living in Cochin, there was a change in their position. Their special status, the fort, its institutions all were lost. They were now more incorporated in the changing Malabar milieu, on the one hand by

physically moving out of the fort and on the other hand by integrating with other mercantile communities.

The demolition of the fort, and the utter confusion in the affairs of the orphan board, remained the lingering shadows of the Dutch in British Cochin. A demarcation came about between Dutch and British colonies in Asia. Up to the Second World War the Dutch East Indies, which is present day Indonesia, was a Dutch colony while the British ruled India. The Dutch officials and their families had mainly decided to stay on in British Cochin and the larger Malabar region, and mingle with the crowd. Repatriation or the option of going to Batavia was not what they wanted. Decisions were made. Economics, as well as faith and belief, had influenced them. For the majority Malabar was home. There was change, but there was also continuity.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to go beyond countries and companies, focus on individuals and community and place them in the context of their times. It focused on the interaction between the institutional experience of the VOC in Cochin and the individual experiences of those connected to the company.

The importance of Fort Cochin for the VOC lay in the pepper monopoly that the company wanted to maintain. The fort was meant to be an enclave for its servants. It was a conquered settlement. Through the years, the VOC had carved a niche for itself in the politics of Malabar. In 1741, its rather powerful position was challenged on the battlefield of Colachel. The rise of Travancore and the subsequent treaties with the VOC meant that the company had to acknowledge its weakened position on the coast. It was now dependent on Travancore for receiving pepper. The pepper monopoly remained only on paper. The High Government at Batavia and the Gentlemen XVII in the Netherlands were aware of this. Individuals, who served the VOC at Fort Cochin, had as such not much to do with the politics of the region. On the other hand, they were in close contact with the people living outside the fort walls and relied on them for their basic needs of food, clothing, water etc. The inhabitants moved around in Mattancheri, the Vaipin area and on Bolgatty Island. Their daily life was little affected by the new balance of power.

After its decline set in on the Malabar Coast, the company continued to function there for different reasons. From the description of Fort Cochin in Chapter One, three main perceptions are discernable. In the opinion of the Gentlemen XVII, Malabar's pepper monopoly was not working, but to them it was important that the VOC continued to stay in Malabar to protect Ceylon. In their view the main competitors of the VOC in Malabar were the French and the English, who also exported Malabar pepper to European markets. Batavia, in an attempt to curb expenses, ordered the commanders in Malabar to stay away from local politics, minimise expenses, and as far as possible reduce the size of their establishments. According to the High Government the main opponents on the coast were firstly Travancore and then Mysore. While the VOC was dependent on the former for supplies of pepper, the latter was gaining political ascendancy and wanted to expand territorially in order to benefit from the high prices the companies were willing to pay of pepper. For the servants in Malabar – the men on the spot – Fort Cochin itself was very important. It was their place of residence and means of earning a livelihood. For some VOC servants, it was their place of birth and the place where their families

lived. For them it was most important that the fort be defendable, not just against the English or the French, but also against the expanding states of Travancore and Mysore. Clearly, there were differences of opinion and policy with regard to the future of the VOC on the coast. This led to confusion and to the general decline of the company on the coast. Business opportunities had dried up, but other factors kept the company on the coast.

Historians up to now have claimed that to call the Dutch presence in India as an imperial or colonial undertaking would be inappropriate. The Dutch have generally been described as the friendliest of all Europeans on the subcontinent. According to Winius and Vink, they were neither colonizers nor conquerors. They insist that they were never imperialists, but exclusively emporialists. In Chapter Two we have proposed to go beyond these terminologies and redefine the Dutch presence in India, specifically in Malabar.

The foremost conclusion drawn in that chapter is that the VOC in Malabar was undergoing a metamorphosis from trader to landlord. Its profits were being generated not only from pepper, but also for a considerable part from non-trade income. Judging on the basis of land lease documents and memoirs of the commanders and governors, it is possible to redefine the Dutch in the case of Cochin as proto-colonialists. After 1750, the men on the spot were changing the company's mode of operation. Efforts of these men led to an alteration of the VOC-presence from that of a pacified merchant-warrior and emporialist to that of one aiming to become a landlord. They were not only controllers of a highly regulated port which was once a free entrepôt, they also brought land under their control. They systematically began to impose and collect taxes and claimed other judicial rights over the inhabitants of these lands. Thus there was a drastic change in the company's functioning in Malabar. This change was not brought about to control pepper, but to harness income from the port and the land. While earlier the VOC's judicial administration was limited to the fortified area and Roman Catholic Christians on the coast, in the later years the company actively extended both its judicial and its fiscal administration beyond the walls of Fort Cochin. It was undergoing a metamorphosis, from being only an owner and administrator of a fortified enclave and port to moving towards territorial expansion and colonial exploitation. It was a foreign entity that acquired the right to impose taxes, primarily land taxes, and rights of jurisdiction, and moved towards establishing itself permanently in many different ways. It acquired land and hired local-born persons to serve in civil capacities. The VOC in Malabar functioned as one among the many sovereigns waging wars, signing treaties of mutual friendship and protection. It made collaborative networks with other sovereigns against expanding powers, such as Travancore and Mysore. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Dutch were on the path of becoming a colonial power. This process was not completed for a variety of reasons, some internal and others external. The High Government remained sceptical about the future of the company on the coast and sent its own men to take charge. There were political upheavals in the Netherlands and different views about reforming

the company. The internal strife within the Netherlands and the war with England had adverse effects for the VOC. In these circumstances it could not compete with the EIC in becoming a colonial power in India.

The institutional and individualistic forces at work in Fort Cochin have been described in Chapter Three. The people who lived within the walls were all connected to it in one way or the other. It was clear who could and who could not own a house inside the fort. Fortifications were naturally, first and foremost, meant for defence against an enemy. The enemy, however, was never a fixed entity. In trade, other European Companies – the French and the English – were the main competitors. With respect to political and territorial power, at first Travancore and then Mysore were perceived as the enemy. Ultimately, though, it was the EIC that annihilated the VOC presence on the coast and destroyed the fort.

To be a servant of the Company meant that the persons had a regular income and status within the fort. Only they enjoyed certain privileges. However, some European soldiers preferred to desert and seek work in the armies of Travancore, Mysore or with the EIC. Yet, after the 1750s, the number of company servants was on the increase and a considerable part of them were locally recruited. At the same time, the number of European company servants did not decrease in spite of desertions and local recruitment. New European servants of the company kept arriving.

The data on VOC personnel in Fort Cochin, particularly the qualified employees, prove that a considerable number were local-born and recruited. These persons could reach high offices. This meant that the company was localising its personnel. Further research on the employee composition and recruitment pattern of the European Companies would yield interesting results both with respect to company histories, as well as to colonial towns and cities.

To the majority of its inhabitants, Fort Cochin was not a totally strange or foreign environment, as it would have been to new-arrivals from Europe. The fort and its institutions were a Dutch creation, built and established on the lines of Batavia. It is, however, clear that non-Dutch persons living around the fort used some VOC institutions like the court of justice. All merchants used the port of Cochin. As a result, the circle of acquaintances, personal and commercial relations, friendships and enmities of the inhabitants went beyond the fort walls.

Since the establishment had been taken over from the Portuguese, the fort's culture was a Eurasian one that had roots in the Portuguese period. Mestizo culture continued and mestizos were an important section of the population. The one aspect that gave Fort Cochin its character was the presence of a large number of mestizos. With their cultural baggage of Roman Catholicism and Portuguese language it was through them that European men established social and commercial networks on the Malabar Coast. Company men married mestizo women. Through these women, the men gained knowledge of the environment and culture of their place

of residence, as well as access to economic and social networks. The indigenous merchants of Malabar played a similar role. The role of mestizos and Malabar merchants in the localization process of the company's servants was, therefore, quite significant. Through them, the social world of Fort Cochin included those living beyond its walls. As a result, the larger Malabar milieu had an impact on the social composition and character of the fort.

Personal, commercial and legal interaction between those living inside and those outside was frequent. This merging of the worlds of the enclaved people with those outside, was made possible because of the presence of the mestizo and the toepas population. Since they lived both inside and outside the fort walls, they became a strong medium of interaction and agency of transfer of cultures. The Malabar merchants and the Jews, the Chetties and the Baniyas helped in forging commercial relations. Mestizos and merchants were the main defining elements in this process.

The characteristic features of the interactions between the people living inside, and those outside, is more than from anything else, apparent from the study of the VOC's public institutions. People from outside the fort walls were using some of the institutions inside the fort, but with reservations. While the Christian and Jewish sections of the outside population used the VOC courts for personal and commercial disputes, the non-Christian mercantile section of the outside population, mostly Hindu and Islamic merchants, only used the court for commercial disputes. Although the company followed administrative policies, which excluded non-VOC persons from having access to the school, the orphanage, and the funds of the Diaconate, a process of adaptation was going on between the people living inside and those outside the fort.

Analysing the VOC as an administrator, it becomes clear that it followed policies of selective and inconsistent inclusion and exclusion with regard to access to its various institutions. This strategy was meant to maintain social distances. It was backed by ideas of social difference. While Europeans had the highest status, however, locally recruited people could reach high offices too. Social distance between the Christian and non-Christian, the European and non-European population was concrete, yet in certain cases, as in economic partnerships, the distances were bridgeable.

The Dutch language could not be passed on to the mestizo population. Only some of them spoke and understood basic Dutch. Nevertheless, all reports and court proceedings were held and written in Dutch. Translators were often used in court proceedings and for recording statements. For many, Portuguese remained the lingua franca and was the un-official second language in which the mestizos wrote their private letters, wills and personal papers.

The fort's material culture reflects its linkage with the VOC's network of settlements in Asia as becomes clear in the trade goods and people going back and forth between the fort and the larger VOC network. It reflects the cultural affinity of the fort's community with other VOC

settlements. At the same time, there were local inputs that were incorporated into daily life: evidence of endeavours to adapt to the local environment. Simultaneously, the social, economic, and political contacts of Fort Cochin with Batavia and the Netherlands were decreasing, whereas those between Fort Cochin and the immediate outside world increased. It is difficult to judge which of the two ongoing processes, was the cause and which an effect. It was probably a matter of what was practical and possible and what was in the interest of the VOC servants in Fort Cochin.

Change is often difficult to come to terms with and it is hardest on those who are caught by surprise. This is the main theme of Chapter Four. On the one hand, after the battle of Colachel (1741), the VOC in Malabar was on the decline, while, on the other hand, after the battle of Plassey (1757) the EIC was gaining territory rapidly and was anxious to annihilate contenders in the south. The VOC's attempt to play a role in Bengal politics was snubbed by the EIC. The Dutch in Cochin were aware of this. The EIC extended its power by territorial conquest and taxation of income from land. The VOC in Malabar had been on a similar path, opening avenues of income from taxation and landed interests.

In hindsight, in general the Dutch company's best years were over by the 1740s, its decline was due to lack of capital and strong competition from its English counterpart. During 1780-84, when it completely lost control over the seas and communication between Batavia and Netherlands was severely affected, the smaller VOC establishments in India were left standing on their own weak legs. The main strengths of the EIC at that time consisted of its superior military power and presence in India. It had better communication, both within the subcontinent and outside. It had a broader establishment in India with three centres of power: Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Its presence in India in the 1790s was much more extensive than that of other Europeans. Added to this was the British confidence of military superiority over other European powers in India. During 1780-84, Nagappattinam and a number of other VOC settlements came under English control. The weakness of the VOC lay also in its damaged navy and shipping, which never recovered after the fourth Anglo-Dutch war. This affected communication severely. Also the concentration of power in Batavia meant that the VOC offices in Ceylon could do little to protect the company's establishments on the subcontinent.

The inhabitants of Fort Cochin were not caught by surprise, when in 1795 EIC forces under Major Petrie arrived outside the walls of the fort, across the water on the Vaipin Island. They had anticipated it. They had been aware of the fact that circumstances were about to change. In hindsight, it can be said that, had it not been for Mysore and Tipu Sultan who kept the English busy, Fort Cochin would have been taken over by the English at the time of the 1780-1784 Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, just as the rest of the Dutch territories in India were overrun by the

EIC. Both the company and the individuals living in Fort Cochin were aware of the threats they faced and would be facing in the future.

In 1795, Fort Cochin underwent an upheaval, which was impelled by events beyond the imagination and control of its people. Willem V's Letter of Kew played a key role in the lives of the inhabitants of the fort. It gave the British legitimate grounds to occupy the fort and bring their 'ally' – the Dutch in Malabar – under their control. When the fortunes of the company men, mestizo women and orphan children changed in 1795, they had to face the dilemma of staying on in Cochin or leaving the place.

The fact that the VOC commander gave in rather easily to the forces of the EIC, shows the immediate concern of the servants of the VOC in Cochin: keeping the fort safe. This was the commercial end of the VOC in Malabar, just like everywhere else in India. Individuals, and the community as a whole, had to decide on the future course that their lives would take. The VOC did not exist anymore and the EIC became the new administrator of the fort. The servants of the Dutch company had to weigh their options of surviving without their employer. Trading privately, just as the other Malabar merchants did, was always an option they were well versed in and with which they could compensate the loss of their VOC salaries. Thus economic means of sustenance were available. The EIC takeover did not suddenly deprive them of economic opportunities and social incentives to stay on. The EIC's expansion in the Malabar region even ensured new opportunities for private trade. The British could establish colonial rule very quickly. The former VOC servants and others living around Fort Cochin could adjust and adapt.

This does not mean that the post-VOC condition of the Dutch inhabitants of Cochin did not decline. This is clear from Chapter Five. While former company servants and free-burghers earned an income through private trade and by joining the EIC, some of the families were impoverished, especially widows and orphans. A central organising authority was lacking and there was internal strife within the community. While the EIC considered them to be a burden, they had been forgotten by the High Government at Batavia. For some, the changed political circumstances brought many difficult days. The institutions of the VOC, especially the orphan board ran into financial troubles and people were involved in fraud and false bookkeeping. The impoverished families who suffered due to this and the orphan board itself remained the lingering shadows of the Dutch in British Cochin. Yet, the former VOC personnel were so rooted in Cochin that leaving was not their foremost choice, even when arrangements were made for their transportation out of Cochin. Considering the circumstances at Colombo and in Batavia and their own personal attachments and social and familial relations in Cochin, staying on there became the only option the majority of the VOC servants and their families had.

The high-ranking officials were busy securing their own positions. For the European servants of the company, there was an option to return to Europe, but without their families. For the

local-born and recruited servants of the company the option was to cross over and intensify their relationship with the larger Malabar milieu. At a later stage, there came about a realisation among the European servants that joining hands with other Europeans in Malabar was a wiser option than to go to the Netherlands without their families. The non-Europeans would anyway not be welcomed there and for them to go to Colombo or Batavia was not an attractive choice either.

After 1795, while the Dutch moved out, the EIC officials moved into the fort. While non-Hindus did not wish to live in British Cochin, at least in the very beginning, some Jewish merchants of Mattancheri did buy houses in British Cochin. New inhabitants, new constructions, new offices and a new judicial institution slowly replaced everything Dutch: persons, property and institutions. With time, the walls of the fort were pulled down and the former VOC people moved into the surrounding hinterland. Fort Cochin became British Cochin and its new inhabitants were the EIC officials. Only a few Dutch edifices remained.

Two decades between 1795 and 1815 can be termed as transitional years for its Dutch inhabitants. While the mestizo and toepas community continued to live around the fort, in Vaipin Island, in Mattancheri and surrounding areas, the Dutch fort community it seems, slowly either withered away, or joined the larger Malabar Christian community. While some merged into the mestizo community, many others joined hands with the English. Their special position, the fort, its institutions all were lost. By moving out of the fort and by integrating with other mercantile communities, many among the former VOC-personnel and their families slowly got incorporated with the Malabar milieu.

This case study of the Dutch in India, done through the life narratives of the VOC personnel of Fort Cochin, has thrown up this rather unexpected result, where a European migrant community which had roots in the Netherlands, decided to stay on after the Dutch company wrapped up business on the coast. Why this happened can be explained with the fact that there were economic means of survival. This next to the fact of the fort's people's networks not extending beyond the South India and Ceylon region, remains the basic cause. Nonetheless it can be argued that the nature of the host society, that is, Malabar's socio-cultural and historical background, also had a role to play in the decision. Malabar and particularly Cochin, through the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, had contact with the Portuguese *Estado da India,* and the Dutch, French, English companies. These contacts left behind linguistic, religious and cultural imprints on the Malabar milieu. And these played a role in the decision of the VOC employees about staying on in Cochin, as opposed to returning, to the Netherlands, or going to Colombo or Batavia.

While, after 1663, most of the Portuguese of Cochin stayed behind in Goa, or elsewhere in Asia, and continued to take part in the inter-Asian trade, the Dutch in Cochin before 1795 had also learnt to be content with land leases and the growing profits flowing from it. Thus, in

comparison with the Portuguese in Asia, the Dutch present a fairly similar picture, at least in the case of Cochin. While the *Estado da India* suffered massive attacks from the Dutch, the Dutch lost parts of their Asiatic "seaborne empire" due to the Revolutions in Europe and the Napoleonic wars. The Anglo-French rivalry in Europe was played out in Malabar as well and, in 1795, the VOC's Malabar Command was lost to the English 'allies'. Both the Portuguese and the Dutch suffered losses, due to their problems with shipping, and both had to deal with growing corruption among their employees. While the Portuguese merchants continued to live under the limited protection of the *Estado da India*; the Dutch servants of the company at Cochin, after 1795, did the same under the British administration.

The former VOC servants of Fort Cochin formed a community, to which the different individuals – be they Dutch, German, French or local-born – consciously felt that they belonged to. They were linked together by the institution they had joined: the VOC. Apart from the community and the institution, however they belonged to the place and to each other. This was the place where they had a certain status, for some it was the place where they were born and had spent a lifetime, for others a place where they had families, wives and children. To be taken away from all this and to return without family to what they had left behind a long time ago, was not what they wanted. For many, Cochin was home and therefore to be uprooted and move to another place was not acceptable. With the change of guard in 1795 from VOC to EIC, most former VOC employees decided to stay on in the region and, for better or worse, join hands with the EIC.

The relations forged between the English and the Dutch communities, give proof of the power of individuals to collaborate for mutual economic interest and social benefits. These people, be they Dutch, German, indigenous merchants like the Jews, Chetties, Baniyas, or the mestizos were perfectly capable of evaluating their circumstances, positions, status and interests. They anticipated changes and quickly adapted to the new political and social scene. New collaborations were formed quickly in the new political and social landscape.

The social and economic condition of the Dutch, and of the mestizos, who were in partnership with them, deteriorated during British rule. The reason for their rapid deterioration and the neglect of the Dutch on the part of the British administration was linked to the political circumstances in Europe. In India, the fear of the EIC was that a strong Dutch community might claim back the fort and their rights and privileges in Malabar and therefore the EIC did little to support and maintain the community. In fact, the EIC considered them to be a burden to be got rid off. The fort was destroyed by the EIC, so that it would never become a Dutch stronghold again, if eventually the territory had to be restored to the Dutch.

There were complexities of reasons for the decision of the community to stay on. Diverse agencies and processes worked unobtrusively in that direction. This study, of individuals families,

and the institution they were attached to, shows how a community in transition, undergoing changes, through the changing times, decides about staying on. From the lessons learnt from this case study of Cochin and the "Dutch" community there, I argue that apart from economic factors, social-cultural factors played an important role in the decision-making of migrant communities, communities in between, or individuals who are involved in the dilemma of staying on or leaving. A similar situation occurred in Ceylon in the beginning of the nineteenth century. There too, the majority of the VOC personnel, with similar social and economic ties, stayed on and is in fact still surviving as the Burgher community. In the case of Cochin, the numbers were so small that, instead of remaining as an entity or a community in itself, they merged with the larger Malabar milieu. Adaptation to changing circumstances became a necessary strategy of survival.

If researched further, a study based on this research will bring out whether Cochin was similar to or diverse from other VOC establishments in Asia and Africa. The conclusions about Fort Cochin allow us to compare the social and economic presence of the VOC in Cochin in a comparable light with those in Batavia, Colombo or Galle and Cape Town. As a result, it seems to me, the unique features of Fort Cochin will emerge even more convincingly.

In this book, through the lens of a single organisation, the attempt has been to understand a society that came into being, evolved and then disappeared in a relatively short period of time: a hundred and sixty-seven years, if 1663 is taken as the year of inception and 1830 as the closing year. What has emerged in this study is a portrait of the Dutch community in an Indian milieu during the 1750 and 1830 period. The study has lead to findings about European-Asian interaction, colonial towns and cities, and the Dutch overseas empire. It has shown how dependent the servants of the company were on the larger Malabar social milieu. Such dependence definitely had counterparts in other parts of Asia and Africa, yet we found that, because of its socio-historic and economic background, political setting and social composition, the social formation of Cochin had certain distinguishing characteristics.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER ONE: GETTING TO KNOW PLACES AND PEOPLE: COCHIN CIRCA 1750

I. A comparison of number of servants of the VOC in offices in India and Ceylon.

Table 1: The number of employees in India and Ceylon prior to 1750

Years	Ceylon	Malabar	Coromandel	Bengal	Surat
1691	--	1336	521	126	77
1699	2897	739	631	178	90
1706	3100	1775	642	151	107
1713	2766	1024	664	180	92
1720	2804	1297	454	142	178
1726	3371	1432	674	569	205
1730	3392	1535	762	697	190
1740	3797	1881	701	383	214

Source: W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op hare Buiten-Comptoiren in Azië* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Libaert, 1944), 16.

Table2: The number of employees in India and Ceylon (1751-1789)

Years	Ceylon	Malabar	Coromandel	Bengal	Surat
1751	4079	1264	792	520	239
1756	4185	806	754	--	186
1761	4043	963	1127	387	150
1766	5670	970	1254	313	55
1776	4072	867	1168	200	62
1786	3250	754	145	125	25
1789	3568	--	--	166	34

Source: W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De Gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 16.

Note: The numbers represent total number of servants of the company, mercantile and military. These exclude those from the marine.
--: Data not available.

II. Table 3: VOC commanders and governors of Malabar (1747-1795)

	Names	Birth: Year/Place Death: Year/Place	Year of joining VOC/ years in Asia	Years in Cochin as commander	Total number of years in Malabar	Other VOC offices in which they served
1.	Corijn Stevens	- / Groede 1751 /Cochin	1729/22	1747-1750 (3)	16	Ceylon, Batavia
2.	Abraham Cornelis de la Haye	1709 / Colombo 1752 / Cochin	1723/29	1751 (1)	4	Batavia, Surat
3.	Frederik Cunes	- / 's-Gravenhage - / Netherlands	1739/17	1751-1756 (5)	5	Batavia, Ceylon
4.	Casparus de Jong	- / Amsterdam - / Netherlands	1731/31	1756-1761 (5)	10	Ceylon, Batavia
5.	Godefridus Weyerman	- / Gulik 1779 / Batavia	1734/45	1761-1764 (3)	23	Batavia
6.	Cornelis Breekpot	- / Middelburg 1770 / Batavia	1729, 1752/41	1764-1768 (4)	4	Surabaya, Semarang, Japara, Batavia
7.	Christiaan Lodewijk Senff	- /Bismarck 1771 / Batavia	1737/34	1768-1770 (2)	2	Surat, Batavia, Sumatra's West Coast, Surat, Batavia
8.	Adriaan Moens	1729 /Middelburg 1792 /Batavia	1751/41	1771-1781 (10)	10	Ceylon, Batavia
9.	Johan Gerard van Angelbeek	1727 /Wittmund 1799 / Ceylon	1756/43	1781-1793 (12)	12	Batavia, Bengal, Ceylon
10.	Jan Lambertus van Spall	- / Utrecht - / -	1765/30	1793-1795 (2)	30	--

Source: W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op hare buiten-comptoiren in Azië* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Libaert, 1944), 85-86, 191-199.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER TWO: METAMORPHOSIS OF THE MALABAR COMMAND (1750-1784)

I. Table 1: Amounts of pepper in pounds bought in Malabar and other places by the VOC averaged per year (1740-49=100)

Years	Pepper from Malabar	Pepper from Ceylon	Pepper from Banten	Pepper from Palembang
1740-44	84.7	16.4	104.0	116.0
1745-49	115.3	183.5	96.0	84.0
1750-54	128.8	36.6	68.5	55.5
1755-59	216.8	43.6	55.8	86.2
1760-64	147.8	37.6	60.0	47.2
1765-69	133.0	30.9	92.5	102.5
1770-74	128.6	29.7#	99.0	38.7
1775-79	136.7	30.3	61.5¢	25.4
1780-84	90.2*	25.5	77.5	18.5
1785-87	77.3	21.8¤	55.9	9.1

Source: Steur, *Herstel of Ondergang*, 209-211.
As data for 1774 are not available, this is an average of four years.
¢ As data for 1777 are not available, this is an average of four years.
* As data for 1781 are not available, this is an average of four years.
¤ As data for 1785 are not available, this is an average of two years.

III. Table 2: Memorandum of gardens and lands belonging to the VOC on the coast of Malabar: dated 1781.

1. The island Bendurty lying half an hour south of this town, containing
   4,990 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   314 parras of cultivated lands,
   9,300 salt-pans.
2. A garden called David de Castella lying at Aru about two hours south of this town, containing:
   3,275 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   490 parras of cultivated lands,
   2,980 salt-pans.
3. A garden called St. Jago lying by the third Roman Church on the southern shore of Cochin, containing:
   3,116 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   48 parras of cultivated land.
4. A garden called Hendrik de Silva lying at Malambelly one and a half hours south of Cochin on the sea-shore, containing:
   1,659 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   728 parras of cultivated land.
5. The island Muttucunu and two [islands] belonging to it lying nearly half an hour south of Cranganur, all three containing:
   3,673 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   531 parras of cultivated land.
6. A garden called Illawada lying west of the company's outside garden, on the shore, containing:
   1,563 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   503 parras of cultivated land.
7. The island Calliacatte or Morenbril lying in the back-water between Calicoilan and Coilang, containing:
   5,462 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   41 parras of cultivated land,
   1,300 salt-pans.
8. The island Bettenienny lying a little to the east of the above mentioned island Callicatte, containing:
   423 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   2 parras of cultivated land.
9. A garden at Calichery Bitjur lying to the east of the back-water, 8 hours south of Cochin, containing:
   1, 570 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
   44 ½ parras of cultivated land.
10. A garden at Purpencarre called Mathys Mendes, containing:
    315 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    4 parras of cultivated land.
11. A garden at Purpencarre called Anthony Fernando Piloot, containing:
    257 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    22 parras of cultivated land.
12. A garden at St. Andries lying six hours from Cochin, containing:
    983 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    44 ½ parras of cultivated land.
13. A piece of land called Gasany on Vypeen island, containing:
    108 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    225 parras of cultivated land.
14. A garden called Bellestor Rodrigus lying one hour south of this town, containing:
    195 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    10 parras of cultivated land.

15. The Verdronken (submerged) island lying north-east in the back-waters in front of Cochin, containing:
    14 parras of cultivated land,
    400 salt-pans.
16. A little parcel of land on the shore south of the company's outside garden, containing:
    96 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    5 parras of cultivated land.
17. A little parcel of land behind or beside the Banyas' village, containing:
    177 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    ½ parra of cultivated land.
18. Five parcels of land lying west of the Sacrifice Tree in Canarin bazaar, containing:
    34 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    1 parra of cultivated land.
19. Two little gardens lying on the old channel from the Canarin bazaar, containing:
    213 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    300 salt-pans.
20. Ten little parcels of land lying between the two channels on this side of the Canarin bazaar, containing:
    513 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    180 salt-pans.
21. A garden lying east of the company's outside garden, containing:
    314 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    8 parras of cultivated land.
22. A piece of land called Malliencarre opposite to the out-post Aycotta, containing:
    487 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    25 parras of cultivated land.
23. The plain (military free zone), beginning at the company's garden and ending at Calvetty: a piece of land lying north of St. Andries, containing:
    289 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    2 parras of cultivated land.
24. A piece of land of 1,699 roods in extent lying at Calvetty on the side of the channel from the Canarin bazaar, containing:
    112 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    10 parras of cultivated land.
25. A piece of land at Cattur, containing:
    166 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees.
26. The island of Malliencarre, opposite the out-post Aycotta, containing:
    466 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    20 parras of cultivated land.
27. A piece of land at Paliaporte (Pallipuram) on which the trees have been cut down and the lease money has been reduced, but is still planted with:
    243 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
28. A garden at St. Andries, containing:
    298 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    5 parras of cultivated land.
29. A garden lying at Carcarpally, containing:
    121 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees.
30. A garden lying at Cheramangalam 8 hours south of Cochin, containing:
    69 fruit-bearing coconut trees.
31. A garden at Manicorda, containing:
    493 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
32. A garden called Hendrik de Silva Pequena, containing:
    1,119 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    20 parras of cultivated land.
33. A garden at Senhora De Saude, containing:
    1,222 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,

29 parras of cultivated land.

34. A garden at St. Louis, containing:
    333 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    7 parras of cultivated land.
35. The Musquiten (Mosquito) island opposite to Cranganur, containing:
    233 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    308 parras of cultivated land,
    103 salt-pans.
36. A garden at Crus de Milager, containing:
    100 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    2 parras of cultivated land.
37. The Paulist Island, otherwise called Wallerpart, containing:
    676 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    325 parras of cultivated land,
    1,324 salt-pans.
38. The garden called Ballegatty (Bolgatty), containing:
    297 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    562 salt-pans.
39. A garden at Angecaimaal, containing:
    82 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    92 parras of cultivated land.
40. A garden called Catharina Cardoza at Irreweni, containing:
    82 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    4 parras of cultivated land.
41. A garden called Joan Correa de Silva, containing:
    148 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    4 parras of cultivated land.
42. A garden at Castella, one and half hours south of Cochin, containing:
    930 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    20 parras of cultivated land.
43. A garden called Ilha de Lethy, or Carmarta: lying near Cranganur, containing:
    338 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    80 parras of cultivated land.
44. A garden called Domingo Fernando lying one hour from Cochin, containing:
    217 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    42 parras of cultivated land.
45. The island St. Domingo lying half an hour north-east of Cochin, containing:
    476 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    126 parras of cultivated land,
    900 salt-pans.
46. A garden at Aycotta of 3 parcels of 21,281 ½ roods, containing:
    587 fruit-bearing coconut and some other trees,
    2 parras of cultivated land.
47. A garden at Aycotta of 2 parcels, containing:
    721 fruit-bearing coconut trees,
    6 parras of cultivated land.
48. A garden at Aycotta of 2 parcels, containing:
    631 fruit-bearing coconut trees,
    2 parras of cultivated land.
49. A garden at Aycotta of 2 parcels of land, containing:
    359 fruit-bearing coconut trees.
50. Still another garden at Aycotta of 4 parcels of land, containing:
    182 fruit-bearing coconut trees.
51. A garden lying on the old channel of the Canarin bazaar, containing:
66 fruit-bearing coconut and some other trees,
    1 parra of cultivated land.

52. A little garden lying near Calvetty, containing:
    22 fruit-bearing coconut trees.
53. A garden lying at Alipe of nine hours south of Cochin, containing:
    76 fruit-bearing coconut and some other trees,
    2 parras of cultivated land.
54. A garden on the Vreede (Peace) island at Allepaar lying 2 or 3 hours north of Coilan, containing:
    265 fruit-bearing coconut and other trees,
    30 parras of cultivated land,
    490 salt-pans.
55. Two little pieces of land, or cultivated fields of 32 parras in extent lying near Aycotta.

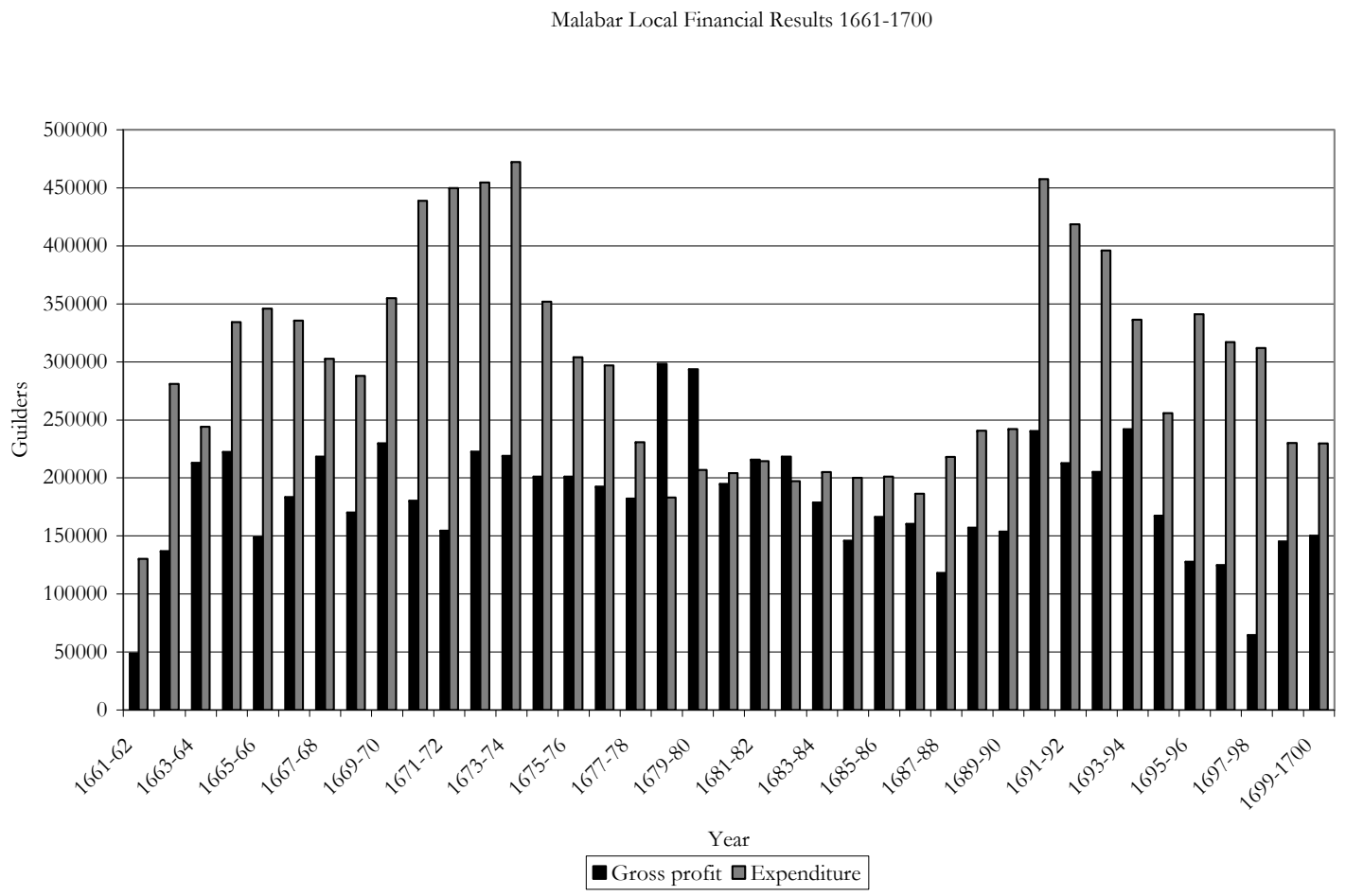
Source: MvO Adriaan Moens, 250-253: dated 1781.

IV. Table 3: Malabar Local Financial Results 1750-1794

Year	Gross Profit	Expenditure	Net Profit	Net Loss
1749-50	277927	346993	-	-69066
1750-51	381920	378075	3845	-
1751-52	311130	495395	-	-184265
1752-53	249678	473903	-	-224225
1753-54	370804	425117	-	-54313
1754-55	245125	443883	-	-198758
1755-56	226846	354435	-	-127589
1756-57	226373	337843	-	-111470
1757-58	351992	351554	438	-
1758-59	367000	317352	49648	-
1759-60	377797	302268	75529	-
1760-61	334474	317747	16727	-
1761-62	343574	331427	12147	-
1762-63	412947	329501	83446	-
1763-64	292693	314575	-	-21882
1764-65	263327	265688	-	-2361
1765-66	390476	255052	135424	-
1766-67	281764	295253	-	-13489
1767-68	487888	244022	243886	-
1768-69	207705	197831	9874	-
1769-70	192468	212264	-	-19796
1770-71	325688	205571	120117	-
1771-72	227211	171211	56000	-
1772-73	290979	166851	124128	-
1773-74	300960	225485	75475	-
1774-75	475960	201117	274843	-
1775-76	443120	304508	138612	-
1776-77	395929	497446	-	-101517
1777-78	385325	555866	-	-170541
1778-79	414978	489645	-	-74667
1779-80	217639	377918	-	-160279
1780-81	254148	350839	-	-96691
1781-82	392465	613347	-	-220882
1782-83	381107	704555	-	-323448
1783-84	380659	442465	-	-61806
1784-85	270706	314898	-	-44192
1785-86	500027	267325	232702	-
1786-87	370507	272617	97890	-
1787-88	229820	342072	-	-112252
1788-89	423897	341744	82153	-
1789-90	385339	381996	3343	-
1790-91	176797	317990	-	-141193
1791-92	143974	330969	-	-186995
1792-93	131161	278006	-	-146845
1793-94	107970	348733	-	-240763

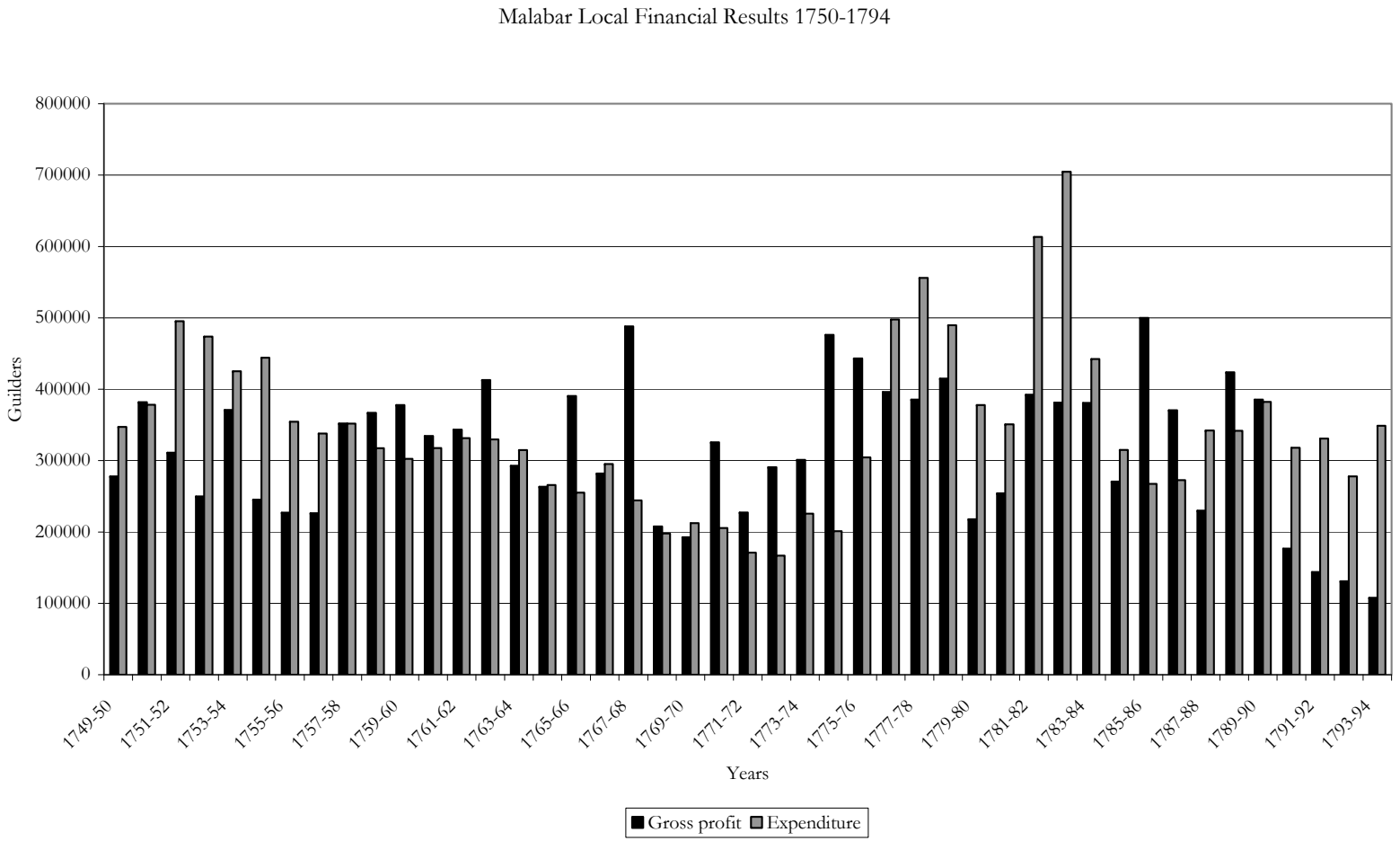
Source: Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 169-172.

V. Chart 1: Malabar Local Financial Results (1661-1700)



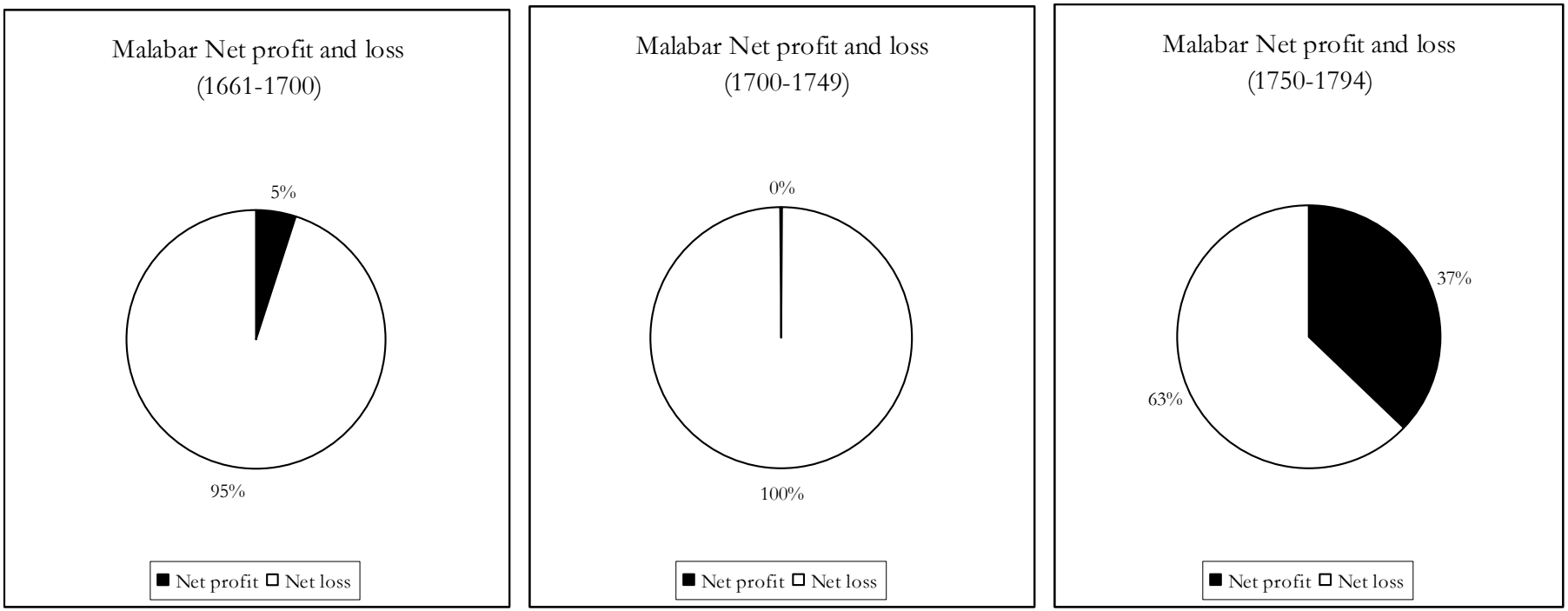
Source: Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 169-172.

VI. Chart 2: Malabar Local Financial Results (1750-1794)



Source: Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 169-172.

VII. Chart 3: Malabar Net Profit and Loss (1661-1795)



Source: Winius and Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified*, 169-172.

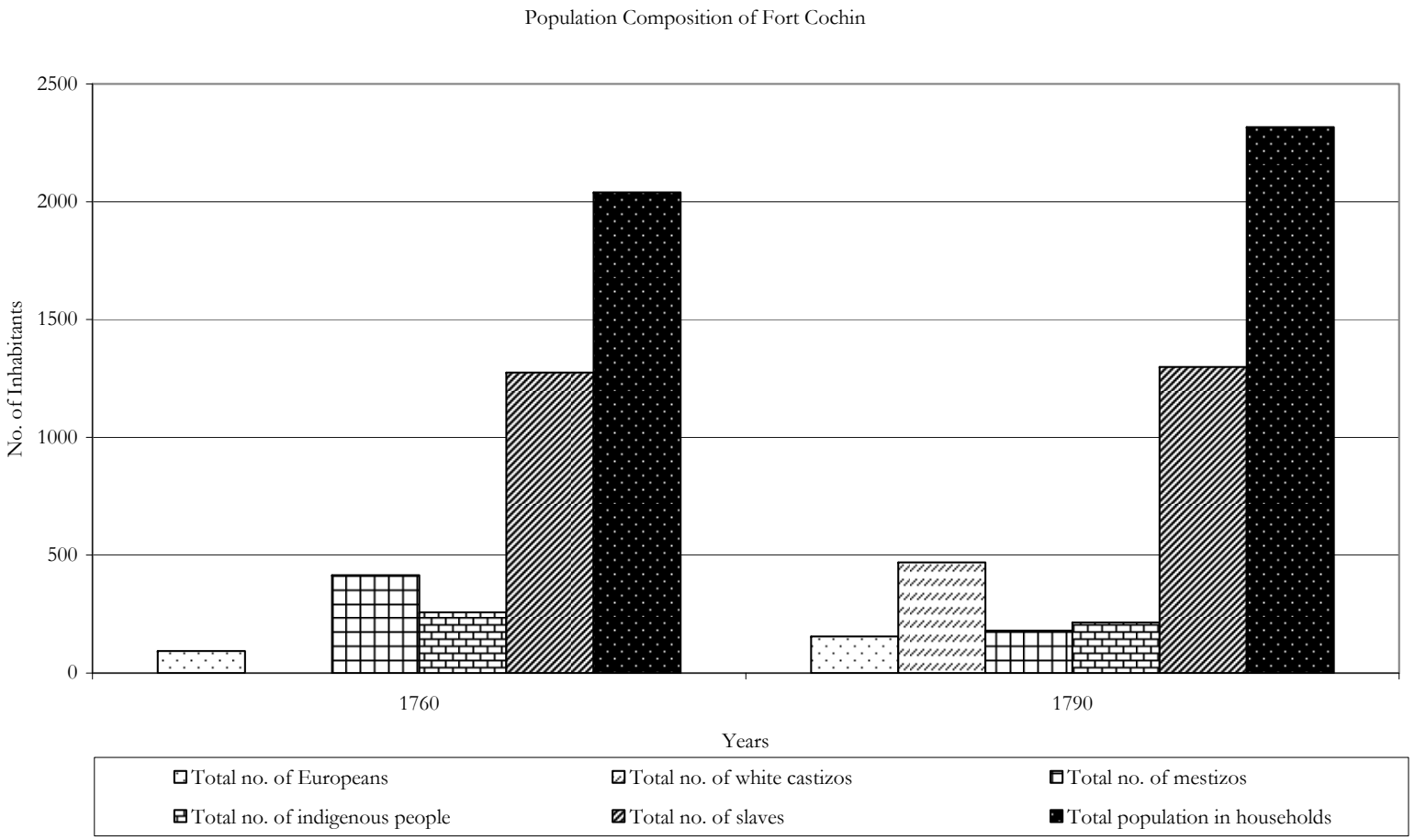
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER THREE: THE SOCIAL WORLD OF FORT COCHIN

I. Table 1 Persons in Fort Cochin as part of households in Fort Cochin (1760 and 1790)

Year	1760	1790
European man	89	152
European women	-	3
European sons	4	-
European daughters	-	-
Total no. of Europeans	93	155
White castizo men	-	43
White castizo women	-	117
White castizo sons	-	150
White castizo daughters	-	159
Total no. of white castizos	-	469
Mestizo men	50	22
Mestizo women	172	102
Mestizo sons	98	26
Mestizo daughters	95	30
Total no. of mestizos	415	180
Indigenous men	54	66
Indigenous women	128	94
Indigenous sons	37	27
Indigenous daughters	38	27
Total no. of indigenous people	257	214
Slave men	433	457
Slave women	460	542
Slave boys	216	157
Slave girls	166	143
Total no. of slaves	1275	1299
Total population in households	2040	2317

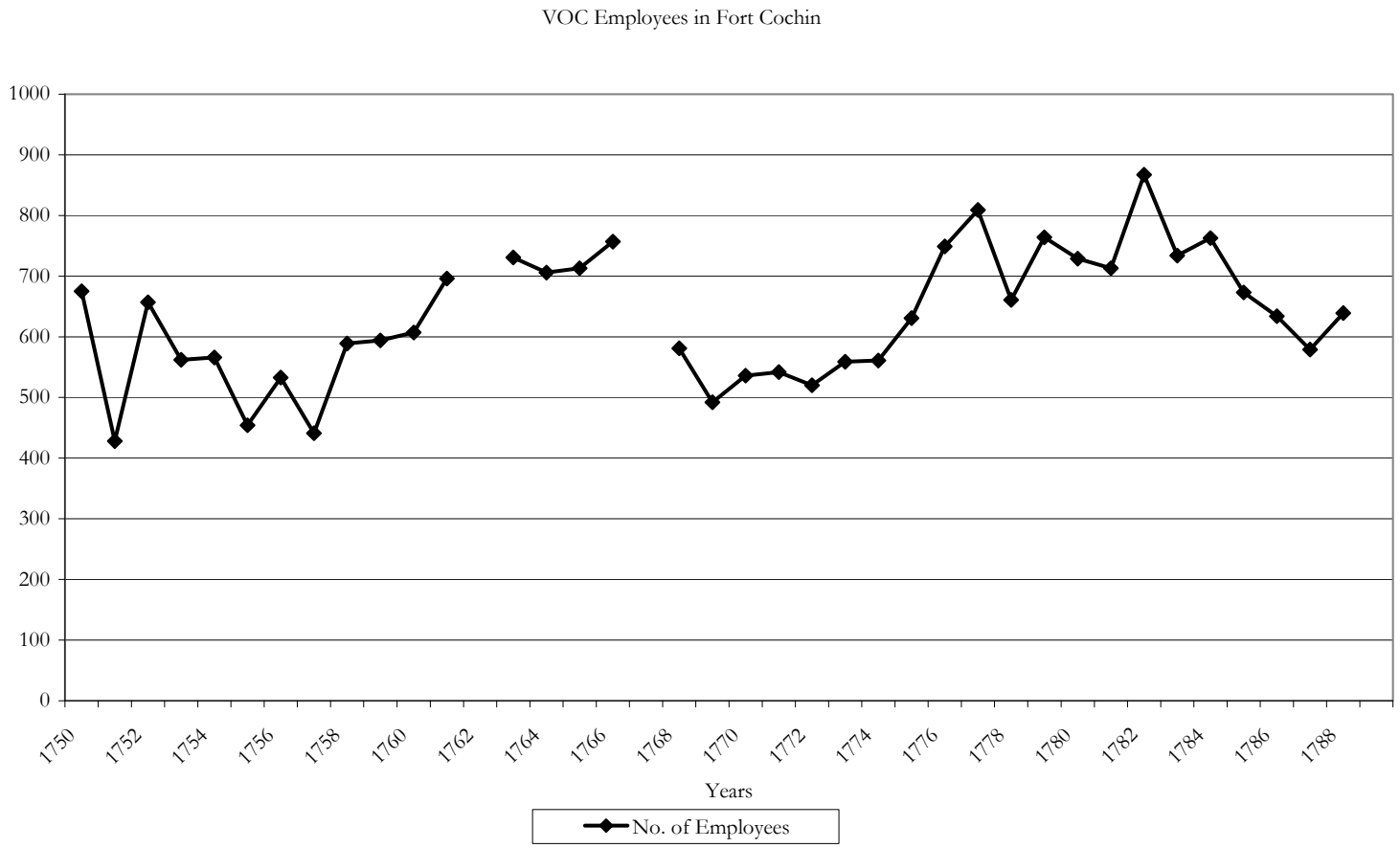
Source: Marianne Wolff, 'Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India' (MA thesis, Leiden University, 1992), 71-72.

II. Chart 1: Population Composition of Fort Cochin (1760 and 1790)



Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 71-72.

III. Chart 2: VOC Employees in Fort Cochin (1750-1788)



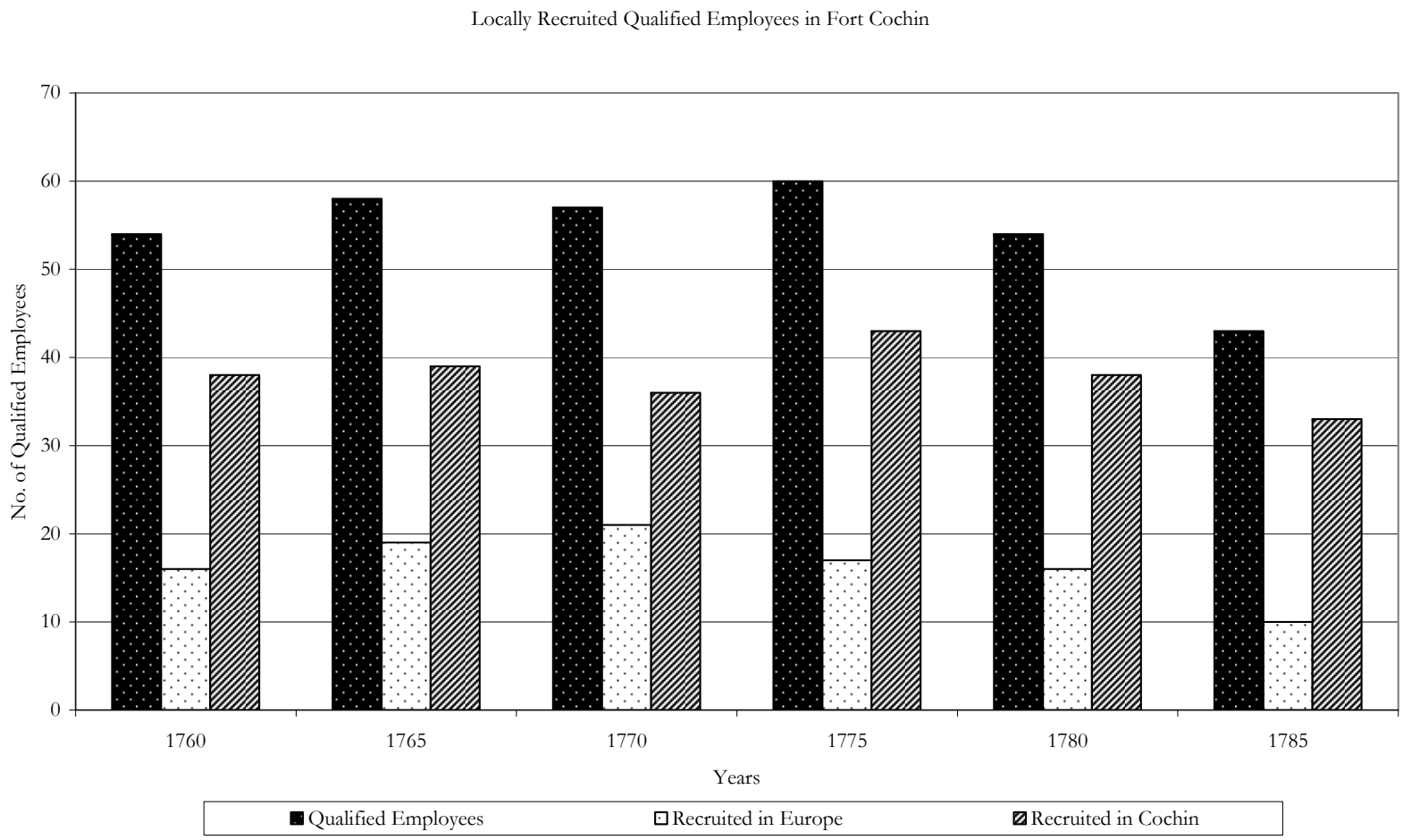
Source: NA, The Hague, VOC 5198 to VOC 5236. Data collected from Land Pay Rolls the Amsterdam Chamber for the years 1750-1788. In this collection, data are not available on Malabar for the years 1762, 1767, and 1789 to 1791. For the years 1792 to 1795, no personnel data are available about any of the VOC establishments.

IV. Table 2: Number of VOC Employees (on land) in Fort Cochin (1750-1788)

Year	No. of Employees	Year	No. of Employees
1750	675	1770	536
1751	428	1771	542
1752	657	1772	520
1753	562	1773	559
1754	566	1774	561
1755	454	1775	631
1756	533	1776	749
1757	441	1777	809
1758	589	1778	661
1759	594	1779	764
1760	607	1780	729
1761	696	1781	713
1762	-	1782	867
1763	731	1783	734
1764	706	1784	763
1765	713	1785	673
1766	757	1786	634
1767	-	1787	579
1768	581	1788	639
1769	492	-	-

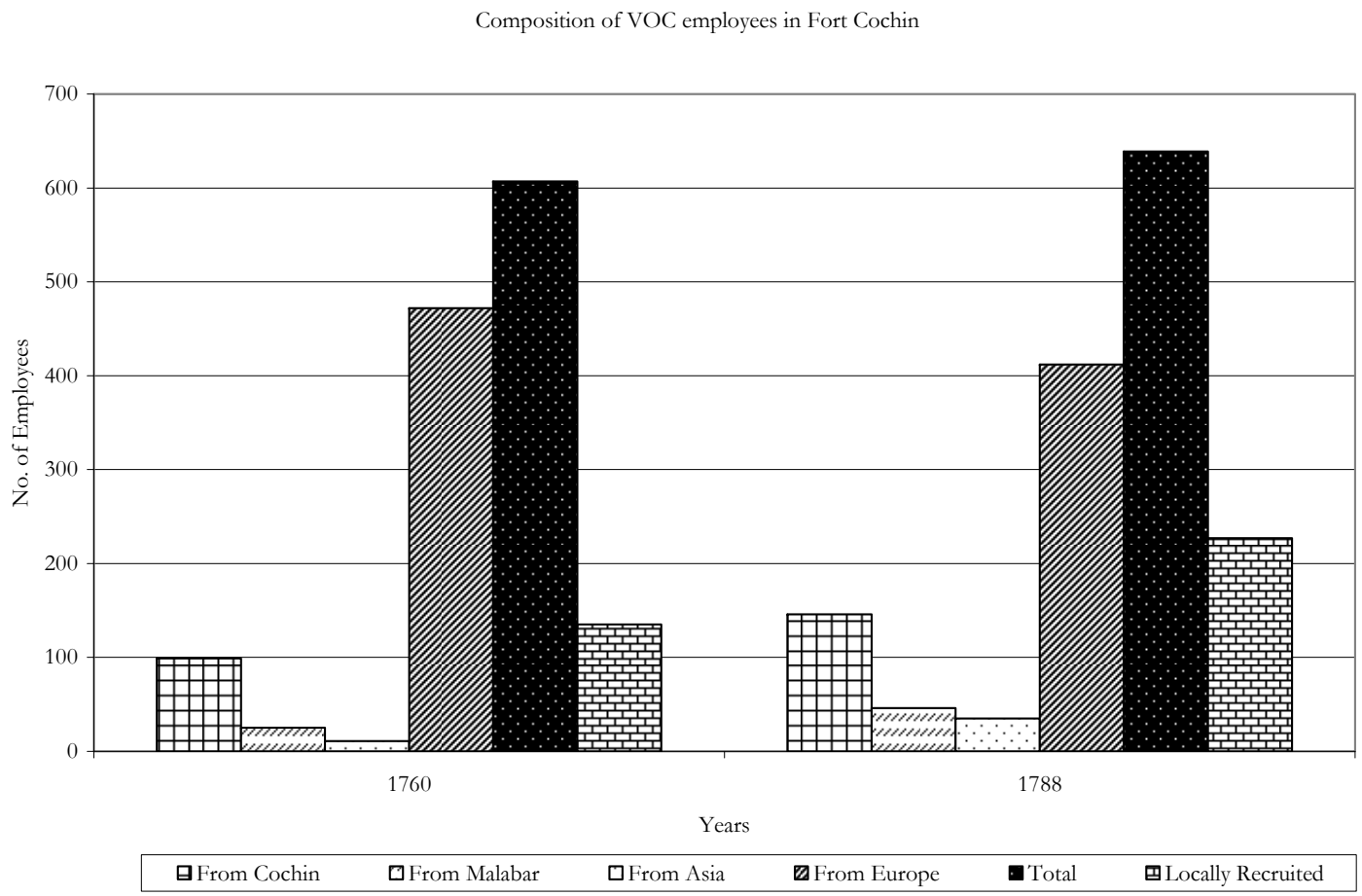
Source: NA, The Hague, VOC 5198 to VOC 5236. Data collected from Land Pay Rolls of the Amsterdam Chamber for the years 1750-1788. In this collection, data are not available on Malabar for the years 1762, 1767, and 1789 to 1791. For the years 1792 to 1795 completely no personnel data are available about any of the VOC establishments.

V. Chart 3: Locally Recruited Qualified Employees of the VOC in Fort Cochin (1760-1785)



Source: NA, The Hague, VOC 5198 to VOC 5236. Data collected from Land Pay Rolls of the Amsterdam Chamber for the years 1750-1788. In this collection, data are not available on Malabar for the years 1789 to 1791. For the years 1792 to 1795 completely no data are available.

VI. Chart 4: Composition of VOC Employees in Fort Cochin (1760 and 1788)



Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 71-72.

VII. Table 3: Total number of employees of the VOC in Fort Cochin (1760-1785)

Year	Total number of employees	Recruited in Europe	Recruited in Cochin	Percentage of locally recruited
1760	607	475	132	21.74
1765	713	444	269	37.72
1770	536	407	129	24.06
1775	631	434	197	31.22
1780	729	552	177	24.27
1785	673	401	272	40.41

Source: NA, The Hague, VOC 5198 to VOC 5236. Data collected from Land Pay Rolls of the Amsterdam Chamber for the years 1750-1788. In this collection, data are not available on Malabar for the years 1789 to 1791. For the years 1792 to 1795 completely no data are available.

VIII. Table 4: Company servants in Fort Cochin and their places of origin (1760 and 1788)

Year	1760	1788
Total	607	639
From Cochin	99	146
Percentage from Cochin	16%	23%
From Malabar	25	46
From Asia	11	35
Percentage not from Europe	22%	36%
From Europe	472	412

Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 73.

IX. Table 5: Qualified employees of the VOC in Fort Cochin (1760-1785)

Year	Qualified Employees	Recruited in Europe	Recruited in Cochin	Percentage of locally recruited
1760	54	16	38	70.37
1765	58	19	39	67.24
1770	57	21	36	63.15
1775	60	17	43	71.66
1780	54	16	38	70.37
1785	43	10	33	76.74

Source: NA, The Hague, VOC 5198 to VOC 5236. Data collected from Land Pay Rolls of the Amsterdam Chamber for the years 1750-1788. In this collection, data are not available on Malabar for the years 1789 to 1791. For the years 1792 to 1795 completely no data are available.

X. Table 6: Single women in Fort Cochin (1760 and 1790)

Year	1760	1790
Free Women	5	4
Housewives	4	6
Widows	30	35
Total	39	45

Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 43.

XI. Table 7: Size of Households in Fort Cochin (1760 and 1790)

Size of Households/Year	1760	1790
1-5 persons	66	81
6-10 persons	76	94
11-15 persons	38	34
16-20 persons	12	16
21-25 persons	4	5
26-30 persons	5	5
31-35 persons	-	1
36-40 persons	2	1
More than 40 persons	3	4
Total Households	206	241

Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 53.

XII. Table 8: Slaves in Fort Cochin (1760 and 1790)

Year	1760	1790
Total Population of Fort	2040	2317
Total Number of Slaves	1275	1299
Slaves per 100 inhabitants	62.5	56.1
Male Slaves	433	457
Female Slaves	460	542
Slave Girls	216	157
Slave Boys	166	143

Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 50.

XIII. Table 9: Slaves per Household (1760 and 1790)

Year	1760	1790
Households without slaves	23	39
With 1-2 slaves	46	69
With 3-10 slaves	107	100
With 11 and more slaves	30	33

Source: Marianne Wolff, *Cochin: Een Mestiese Samenleving in India* (MA thesis, Leiden University 1992), 51.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FOUR: DAYS OF RECKONING (1785-1795)

I. List of people living in Fort Cochin towards the end 1792

On the Ossestraat

1. Willem Bruidegom, Soldier
2. Desrivisres Chardin, French Trader
3. Pedro de Croes, Toepas Citizen
4. Jan Baptist Dukaman, Bombardier
5. Karel Julius Sprenger, Supervisor of the Blacksmiths at the Smithery
6. Amat Kepping, Malay Lieutenant
7. Maskarenza, Tamboer
8. Augustus Frederikus Wilhelmus Meyer, Reserve Officer of the Citizenry.
9. Wife of Pauswijn, Bombardier
10. Elizabeth Pietersz., Widow
11. Jonas van der Poel, Sworn Clerk
12. Antonie Joseph de Silva, Sailor
13. Barend Tieman, Bombardier
14. Johannes van Blankenberg, the Equipage Master at the port
15. Philip Walong, Boatswain
16. Christoffel Wilberts, Javanese of the blacksmiths
17. Johannes Wolff, Shahbandar
18. Elizabeth Woudenburg, Widow

On the north side of Kalverstraat

19. Margaritha Pires, Widow
20. … Meulleman, Widow of Meulleman, Assistant
21. Pieter Izaaks, Sergeant
22. J. C. Kautz, Assistant
23. Johannes Rosemeijer, Writer
24. Markus Lengie, Soldier
25. Adam Sauer, Captain of Artillery
26. Noach van den Bosch, Sailor

On the north side of the Dwarsteegje

27. Karel Bellefrooy, Corporal

On the Burgerstraat

28. Hersel, Major Tamboer
29. Hofman, Bombardier
30. Hendrik Oselet, Assistant
31. Reijschten, Captain of Artillery
32. Widow of Willie, Sergeant
33. Miegel Lagas, Soldier
34. Van Goes, Shooter
35. Wixra Mangale, Captain of the Malays
36. Ellekram, Soldier
37. Jan Neevens, Barrel-maker
38. Andries Stepper, Free-burgher
39. Joachim de Silva, Free-burgher
40. Fredrik Meels, Soldier
41. P. Boetnoot, Sergeant of the Citizenry
42. Lambert Piris, Free-burgher
43. Deelkoer, Soldier
44. Clas Vogt, Free-burgher
45. Arnoldus Fransz., Corporal
46. Sies, Sergeant
47. Weijnant van Weesen, Cannonier
48. Nikolaas Spal, Book-keeper
49. Sergeant of the Malays
50. Palkoerlzo, Toepass
51. Fredrik Weegers, Free-burgher
52. Leendert Cardoes, Translator
53. Teresia Pereira, Toepas
54. Dalinger, Officer
55. Breusel, Sergeant
56. Widow of Kraamer, Soldier
57. Franchiskos Morera, Whistler
58. Milius, Officer
59. Pieter Noe, Soldier
60. Vink, Sergeant
61. Roberto de Kroes, Free-burgher
62. Manuel de Kosta, Whistler
63. Widow Maria Swaarus
64. Fransisko de Kroes, Soldier
65. Aerklis de Kroes, Whistler
66. Loeis Paije, Cannonier

On the Gasthuisstraat

67. Waarnik, Soldier
68. Overhuisen, Drill-master
69. Widow Klermond
70. Jan Hendrik Salig, Writer
71. Caspar, Junior Warrant-officer
72. Zoutman, Assistant Surgeon

73. Smit, Corporal
74. Smit, Gardener
75. Gratman, Captain

On the east side of the Pieterseliestraat

76. Barend Jaager, Corporal
77. Frans Blom, Boatswain
78. Pieter Schabas, Sergeant of the Citizens
79. Lourens Hansen, Sail-maker
80. Adriana de Rozaijro, Widow
81. Barend Priez, Smith
82. Jan Hendrik Drikkel, Soldier
83. Joan Berkemeijer, Soldier
84. Fredrik Meijer, Coach-maker
85. Schraader, Sergeant
86. Cornelis Cassier, Smith
87. Clas Broekman, Striker
88. Joanis Gotlid Pels, Soldier
89. Muller, Sergeant

On the east side of the Prinsestraat

90. Widow Behoureijs
91. Boeregter, Book-keeper
92. Widow Brouwer
93. Philip Philips, Free-burgher
94. J. Zeijsig, Trade-officer
95. Pedro Rodrigo, Free-burgher
96. Sluiter, Soldier
97. Widow of Bapa Salgo, Captain
98. Domingo Rodrigo, Free-burgher
99. Francisko de Kroes, Free-burgher
100. Pal de Kroes, Free-burgher
101. Batenberg, Assistant
102. Matijs Kraamer, Free-burgher
103. Hornef, Soldier
104. Markos, Soldier
105. Joas de Kosta, Toepass
106. Andre Corea, Soldier
107. Widow Konsman
108. Pieter Mateijs, Tamboer
109. Alliks Boded, Frenchman

On the Sluipsteegje

110. Widow Francisko de Kosta
111. Andre Pires, Free-burgher

On the Breestraat

112. Willem van Haaften
113. Johan George Muller, Lieutenant
114. Jacob Meyer, Captain of the Artillery
115. Charles Groenroode, Lieutenant of the Citizenry
116. J. M. de Queiros
117. Abraham Samuels, Jewish Merchant
118. Charles Louis Lemoine, Free-burgher
119. Godlieb Hendrik Bakker, Assistant
120. Martinus Schuurman, Junior Segeant
121. Maurik Fitzgerald, Clerk/Pennist
122. Robbert Wegwermer, Sergeant
123. Pieter Mans Jospan, Sergeant
124. Fredrik Henring, Sergeant
125. Kasper Oostendorp, Soldier
126. Jan van der Sloot, Soldier
127. Anthonie Herbout, Soldier
128. Pieter Kok, Soldier
129. Heillert Vast, Soldier
130. Hermstad, Nurse
131. Leonard Folder, Soldier
132. Jan de Wall, Sailor
133. Karel Prier, Smith
134. Johan Adam Pauschiet, Smith
135. Widow of Van Asbeck
136. Widow of Van Eik
137. Widow Fitzgerald
138. Widow of Philip Termeizo, Visitor of the sick
139. Widow of Kiswaldt, Surgeon
140. Johanna de Kraijer
141. Pieternella Gosenzon, Widow
142. Anna Echberts, Widow
143. Widow of Krause, Soldier
144. Widow of Pieter Mozin
145. Elisabeth van der Werf, Free-woman
146. Dominga de Rosairo, Free-woman

On the south side of the Bloemendalstraat

147. Johan Wilhelm Kelner, Book-binder
148. Widow of Johannes Banning, Book-keeper

On the west side of Pieterseliestraat

149. Koenraad Stelling, Reserve Officer
150. Johannes Traats, Civil Warrant-officer
151. Cornelis Dirk Swabe, Assistant
152. Pieter de Isaij, Assistant
153. Joachim Joze Lassanha, Free-burgher
154. J. C. Grever, Former Civil Warrant-officer
155. Lourens Ferreira, Free-burgher
156. Jan Babtist Gieze, Sergeant
157. Anthonij Markgraaff, Sergeant
158. Jan Paridon Arends, Sergeant
159. Marcus Eggers, Corporal
160. Louis Verkruis, Soldier
161. Van Doorn, Corporal
162. Jan Bonet, Soldier
163. Widow of Thiel, Sergeant
164. Jan Lodewijk de Ridder, Assistant
165. Francisko Pieters, Toepass
166. Oesoep Jakarta, Captain of the Easterners
167. Kassim, Reserve Officer of the Easterners
168. Oisman, Reserve Officer of the Easterners

On the west side of the Roosesstraat

169. Johan Andries Lintzer, Military
170. Jacob Beeme, Reserve Officer of the Military
171. Johannes Martinus Nuijens, Senior Translator
172. Christiaan Lambertus Meijn, Book-keeper
173. Philip Coen, Soldier
174. Hendrik Beering, Soldier
175. Justus Jacob Hekvisser, Soldier
176. Widow Meijn
177. Johannes Martensz., Writer
178. Widow Hendel
179. Coristman and Widow Martensz
180. Widow of Simon van Tongeren
181. Widow Sterk

On the east side of the Roosesstraat

182. Cornelis van Spall
183. Nicolaas Roose, Reserve Officer and Warrant-Officer
184. Christiaan Waller, Reserve Officer
185. Nicolaas Bisschof, Reserve Officer
186. Andreas Heinrich Schacht
187. Johannes Pauswijn, Reserve Officer
188. Johan Hendrik Schuurman, Surgeon
189. Jan Groenbaard, Visitor of the sick
190. Samuel Vink, Sergeant Military
191. Johan Joost Kappes, Sergeant Military
192. Willem Jacobus van Asbeek, Assistant
193. Carel van Leeuwen, Assistant
194. Domingo Dunon, Book-keeper
195.Cornelis Kellens, Free-burgher
196. Sebastiaan Nasse, Free-burgher
197. Widow Dunon
198. Widow of Warnar Florijn
199. Widow of Nasse
200. Wife of Jan Pieter Hubner, Soldier

On the west side of the Prinsesstraat

201. Wilhelmus Krams, Lieutenant Military
202. Ignatio Rodriguez, Captain of the Black Citizenry
203. Anthoni Rodriquez, Reserve Officer of the Black Citizens
204. Jan Hardeegen, Assistant
205. Philip Deusschen, Sergeant Military
206. Johann Adam Smith, Corporal Military
207. Cornelius Dermee, Corporal Military
208. Johannes Corbach, Soldier
209. Widow Claas Muller
210. Widow of Claasen, Lieutenant
211. Widow of Joseph Creira, Lieutenant
212. Pas, Fire-lighter
213. Widow Jacob Vogt
214. Frans Niewenhuijs, Free-burgher
215. Pieter Hermanus Muller, Free-burgher
216. Francina Marqués de Queiros, Dry-nurse
217. Elizabeth Hesseling
218. Maria Groen
219. Alleta Beekman

On the south side of the Kalverstraat

220. Albert van Keulen, Sergeant Military
221. Dirk Stigter, Barrel-maker
222. Christiaan Estendonk, Soldier
223. Jan Voette, Soldier
224. Frans Hippel, Soldier
225. Willem de Roo, Assistant
226. Abdul Samat, Sergeant of the Easterners
227. Widow Kersnack
228. Widow of the writer

On the Dwarssteeg

229. Jozeph Faria, Free-burgher
230. Johan Christiaan Seijffert, Soldier
231. Willem Buitenwijk, Soldier

In the Stable

232. Christiaan Meijer, Equerry

The Government

233. Johan Gerard van Angelbeek, Governor
234. Jan Lambertus van Spall, Second-in-Charge
235. Assistant of the Sexton

On the Heerengracht

236. Willem van der Sloot, Book-keeper
237. Lipschwaager, Sergeant
238. Widow of Duming, Assistant Merchant
239. Widow of Hilverstein, Lieutenant
240. Duming, Assistant
241. Pulger, Sergeant
242. Wife of Bernhard, Corporal
243. Daniel van der Schoot, Doctor

On the west side of the Heerenstraat

244. Lunel, Junior Merchant
245. Widow of Polvliet, Junior Merchant
246. Josef Decan, Captain
247. Berger, Lieutenant
248. Widow of Schruk, Corporal
249. Pieter, Assistant
250. Pankras, Cannonier
251. Eernhard, Sailor
252. Keisser, Soldier
253. Widow of Faaber, Reserve Officer
254. Miegel de Roseijer, Jailor
255. Berrends, Reader
256. Horn, Soldier
257. Osentin de Cruz, Toepass
258. Gerrit van der Schloot, Assistant
259. Widow of Kruse, Lieutenant
260. De Koste, Toepass

On one part of the Prinsesgracht

261. Widow of Rulof Pantsen, Chief Carpenter
262. Förstner, Assistant
263. Mottau, Writer
264. Scale, Soldier

On the Wapenkamerstraat

265. Widow Warner Florijn
266. Lukas Worne, Coppersmith
267. Schmit Eevers
268. Schremer, Corporal
269. Hommelhaus, Sergeant

On the Heerenstraat

270. Constantin D' Issa, Free-burgher
271. Lottig, Corporal
272. Wife of Coint, Reserve Officer of Military
273. On behalf of the wife of Heijman, Corporal
274. Elisabeth van Sompel, Widow of Cornelisz, Minister
275. Friend of the wife of Schalies, Corporal (and in their lodge the under named Malays: nrs. 276-282)
276. Barie, Reserve Officer
277. Assen, Sergeant
278. Kadier, Corporal
279. Niemang, Soldier
280. Nala, Soldier

281. Soiwang Sarka, Soldier
282. Kakant, Soldier
283. J. Gunther, Assistant Surgeon (and in his lodge the Jacob Pieters, Assistant, and his wife and children)
284. Waldeck, Cannonier (and his mother-in-law and sister and in the lodge Abbas, Malay Soldier)
285. Mrs. Van Wullen, Matron of the orphanage

On the Prinsesgracht

286. Willem de Zilva, Book-keeper
287. Louis van Mander, Lieutenant military
288. Anabie, Indigenous Teacher
289. Johan da Gama, Free-burgher
290. Froona Batavia, Malay Soldier
291. Kassie, Malay Corporal
292. Kaggies Batavia, Malay Soldier
293. Johan Willem Heijer, European Corporal
294. Bartelomeus Scheere, European Soldier
295. Hommel, European Soldier
296. Widow of Fransisko Gonsalvo, Free-burgher

On the Leliestraat

297. Jonkman, Military Corporal
298. Martens, Assistant
299. Nimijer, Bombardier; and Beelig, Soldier
300. Hendrik Dirksz., Captain of the Citizenry
301. Widow Mools (and in the lodge Van Ongeveer, Soldier; Cruing, Reserve Officer of Military; and Boolveldt, Soldier)
302. Widow of Groeneveld, Book-keeper
303. Waag, Corporal (and in the same lodge Krieger, Soldier)
304. Jansen, Bombardier
305. Dons, Hangman
306. Verduijn, City master
307. Benouweris, Fine collector
308. Children of Captain Hupner

On the Lindestraat

309. Matthias Jacob van Leeuwen, Assistant
310. Jacob Vogt, Captain of Artillery
311. Slittiitsz, Assistant
312. G. W. Kautz, Assistant
313. Grissing, Lieutenant of the Artillery
314. Hendrik van Rossum, Public Prosecutor
315. Widow Sonklaas
316. Heupner, Captain of the Artillery
317. Elstendorp, Lieutenant of the Artillery
318. Gephardt, Major and Chief of the Military

Source: NA The Hague, HRB 758, Papers concerning 'the Commission to levy of the 50th penny as a liberal gift to the Company in Malabar', 1791-3.

Note: The list of heads of household appears as it is in the archive. Spellings of places and persons' names have been made uniform according to the following order: first name, surname, job and/or family, whenever the information is available. From this the spatial occupation of the fort and who is who's neighbour is clear.

II. List of people in the orphanage on the Heerenstraat in 1792, whose estates were being managed by the orphan board:

1. Hendrik Berger
2. Christiaan Tupke
3. Jacob Lucas de Graaf
4. Fredrik Gosewijn van Marken
5. Elisabeth Hesseling
6. Jan Hendrik Palm
7. Magdalena Wilhelmina Andre
8. Adriaan Reinier Weinsheimer
9. Johan Jacob Weinsheimer
10. Helena Josina Weinsheimer
11. Willem Johannes Weinsheimer
12. Elisabeth Wilhelmina Weinsheimer
13. Rachel Augustina Jansen
14. Andries en Maria Dons
15. Maria Francina Arends

Source: NA The Hague, HRB 758, Papers concerning 'the Commission to levy of the 50th penny as a liberal gift to the Company in Malabar', 1791-3.

III. Table 1: Number of households per street (1792)

Names of Street	Nr. Households	Names of Street	Nr. Households
The Ossestraat	18	West side of Prinsesstraat	19
North side of Kalverstraat	8	South side of Kalverstraat	9
North side of Dwarssteegje	1	The Dwarssteeg	3
The Burgerstraat	39	The Stable	1
The Gasthuisstraat	9	The Government	3
East side of Pieterseliestraat	14	The Heerengracht	8
East side of Prinsesstraat	20	West side of the Heerenstraat	17
The Sluipsteegje	2	The Leliestraat	4
The Breestraat	35	One part of the Prinsesgracht	5
South side of Bloemendalstraat	2	The Wapenkamerstraat	16
West side of Pieterseliestraat	20	The Heerenstraat	11
West side of Roosestraat	13	The Prinsesgracht	12
East side of Roosestraat	19	The Lindestraat	10
Total			318

Source: NA The Hague, VOC 758, Papers concerning 'the Commission to levy of the 50th penny as a liberal gift to the Company in Malabar', 1791-3.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FIVE: LIFE AFTER THE VOC (1796-1830)

I. List of Residents of Cochin on 5th April 1814

1. Asbeek, Willem Jacobus van
2. Bakker, Godlieb Hendrik
3. Bos, Johannes
4. Brand, Hendrik
5. Bruidegom, Willem
6. Cornelisz., Willem Christiaan Gerard
7. Daimichen, Johan Andries
8. Duron, Domingo
9. Ebert, Fredrik
10. Engel, Jacobus
11. Fethaak, Alexander
12. Gijzelaar, Manuel
13. Goliath, Andries
14. Graaff, Jacobus Lucas de
15. Groenbaart, Hendrik Leendert
16. Gunther, Johannes
17. Haak, Anthonie van
18. Hardegen, Jan
19. Kautz, Christiaan Wilhelmus
20. Kellens, Carel Sebastiaan
21. Leeuwen, Carel van
22. Leeuwen, Matthias van
23. Liebschwager, Godfried
24. Lunel, Arnoldus
25. Lunel, Pieter Frans Arnoldus
26. Maas, Bonifacius van der
27. Mähl, Frederik
28. Martensz., François
29. Meyer, Frederik
30. Meyer, Pieter
31. Muller, Willem
32. Paulus, Anthonie
33. Personne, Jean Gerard la
34. Quiros, Joachim Marques de
35. Redeker, Klaas Otto
36. Schalé, David
37. Sies, Willem
38. Sloot, Jan Daniel van der
39. Spall, Jan Lambertus van
40. Stolsenberg, Jan Hendrik
41. Swabe, Cornelis Dirk
42. Verduin, Hendrik Jacob
43. Vogt, Johan Hendrik
44. Walona, Philip
45. Walthoorn, Anthonie
46. Walthoorn, Benedictus
47. Warnar, Barnard
48. Wijngaard, Cornelis
49. Witman, Frederik
50. Witman, Jan
51. Wolff, Johannes
52. Zilva, Willem de

Source: P.A. Christiaans, 'Inwooners van Cochin in april 1814' in *De Indische Navorscher, Orgaan van de Indische Genealogische Vereniging* (jaargang 5, nr. 1, 1992), p. 151.
In the Staatscourant of Friday, 6 January 1815, (nr. 5), this list of Dutch persons still living in Cochin was published. The list was drawn up by J. Goldberg who had the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Colonies.

II. A few grave-stones of Dutch persons connected of Fort Cochin, that could be traced in Malabar up to mid-nineteenth century.

1. D'Rozario, Benjee 11th September 1869, born at Cochin, the son of John and Susanna, aged 9 yrs 3 months and 3 days at St. Mary's Cemetery (old).
2. D'Rozario, Clara Joana, 29th December 1843, born 12th August 1781. at Roman Catholic Cemetery at Calicut.
3. D'Rozario, Dominga, 2nd November 1873, aged 61 years at Roman Catholic Cemetery at Cannanore.
4. D'Rozario, Mathias, 9th August 1848, born 30th October 1776. at Roman Catholic Cemetery at Calicut (Many more D'Rozarios, but I have not listed them all, as not all were connected to Fort Cochin).
5. Daimichen, Johan, 30th November 1784, aged 56 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
6. Muller, Helena Elizabeth, 2nd December, 1814, aged 3 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.

7. Muller, Sophie, 2nd August 1870, born on 2nd March 1829 at Basel German Mission Cemetery at Nittur.
8. Philipsz., Philip of Cochin, 3rd July 1827, aged 55 years and 22 days at Anjengo.
9. Pillardth, Anna Roza, 1st January 1887, daughter of Thomas and Margaret Pillardth, born on the 23rd May 1872. At Roman Catholic Cemetery at Meppad (??) (Pillartdh could be a corruption of Pullardt, Jan Pullardt the glassmaker of Cochin).
10. Poolvliet, Adrien, 10th September 1799, at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
11. Rode, Maria Elisabeth Née, 10th January 1798, aged 26 years, 2 months and 19 days at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
12. Van Blankenburg, Johannes, 2nd April 1794, aged 45 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
13. Van Haeften Van Shenar, 1st March 1790, aged 44 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
14. Vogt, Cornelia Elisabeth, 11th February 1804, wife of Baron Von Ochsee, aged 20 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
15. Wolff, Mr., 15th December 1815, aged 67 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
16. Wolff, Mrs., 15th November 1820, aged 60 years at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.
17. Zeizig, Dorothea Lambertina Daimichen nee, 9th January 1800, at Dutch Cemetery at Cochin.

Source: List of European, &c., Tombs in the Malabar District (Calicut 1894).
Printed at the Malabar Collectorate Press.

General Appendix

Appendix I: VOC and EIC Commanders, Governors and Governors-General

VOC Commanders and Governors of Malabar at Fort Cochin (1743-1795)

Julius Valentijn Stein van Gollenesse	1734-1742
Reinier Siersma	1742-1747
Corijn Stevens	1747-1750
Abraham Cornelis de la Haye	1751
Frederik Cunes	1751-1756
Casparus de Jong	1756-1761
Godefridus Weyerman	1761-1764
Cornelis Breekpot	1764-1768
Christiaan Lodewijk Senff	1768-1770
Adriaan Moens	1770-1781
Johan Gerard van Angelbeek	1781-1793
Jan Lambertus van Spall	1793-1795

VOC Governors-General at Batavia (1743-1801)

Gustaaf Willem, baron van Imhoff	1743-1750
Jacob Mossel	1750-1761
Petrus Albertus van der Parra	1761-1775
Jeremias van Riemsdijk	1775-1777
Reynier de Klerck	1777-1780
Willem Arnold Alting	1780-1796
Petrus Gerardus van Overstraten	1796-1801

EIC Governors of Bombay at Bombay Castle (1790-1830)

Robert Abercromby	1790-1795
Jonathan Duncan	1795-1811
George Brown	1811-1812
Evan Nepean	1812-1819
Monstuart Elphinstone	1819-1827
John Malcolm	1827-1830

EIC Governors of Madras at Fort St. George (1794-1832)

Robert Hobart, Earl of Buckinghamshire	1794-1798
George Harris	1798
Edward Clive, Baron Powis	1803-1807
George Hilaro Barlow	1807-1814
Hugo Elliot	1814-1820
Thomas Munro	1820-1827
Stephen Rumbold Lushington	1827-1832

EIC Governors of Bengal at Fort William (1758-1774)

Robert Clive (1)	1758-1760
Henry Vansittart	1760-1764
Robert Clive, Baron (2)	1764-1767
Harry Verelst	1767-1769
John Carter	1769-1772

Warren Hastings	1772-1774

EIC Governors-General of Bengal at Fort William (1758-1774)

Warren Hastings	1774-1785
John Macpherson	1785-1786
Charles Mann Cornwallis, Marquess Cornwallis (1)	1786-1793
John Shore, Baron Teignmouth	1793-1798
Richard Colley Wellesley, Earl of Mornington	1798-1805
Charles Mann Cornwallis (2)	1805
George Hilaro Barlow	1805-1807
Gilbert Elliot-Murray-Kynynmond, Earl of Minto	1807-1813
Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Earl of Moira	1813-1823
William Pitt Amherst, Earl Amherst	1823-1828
William Cavendish Bentinck	1828-1833

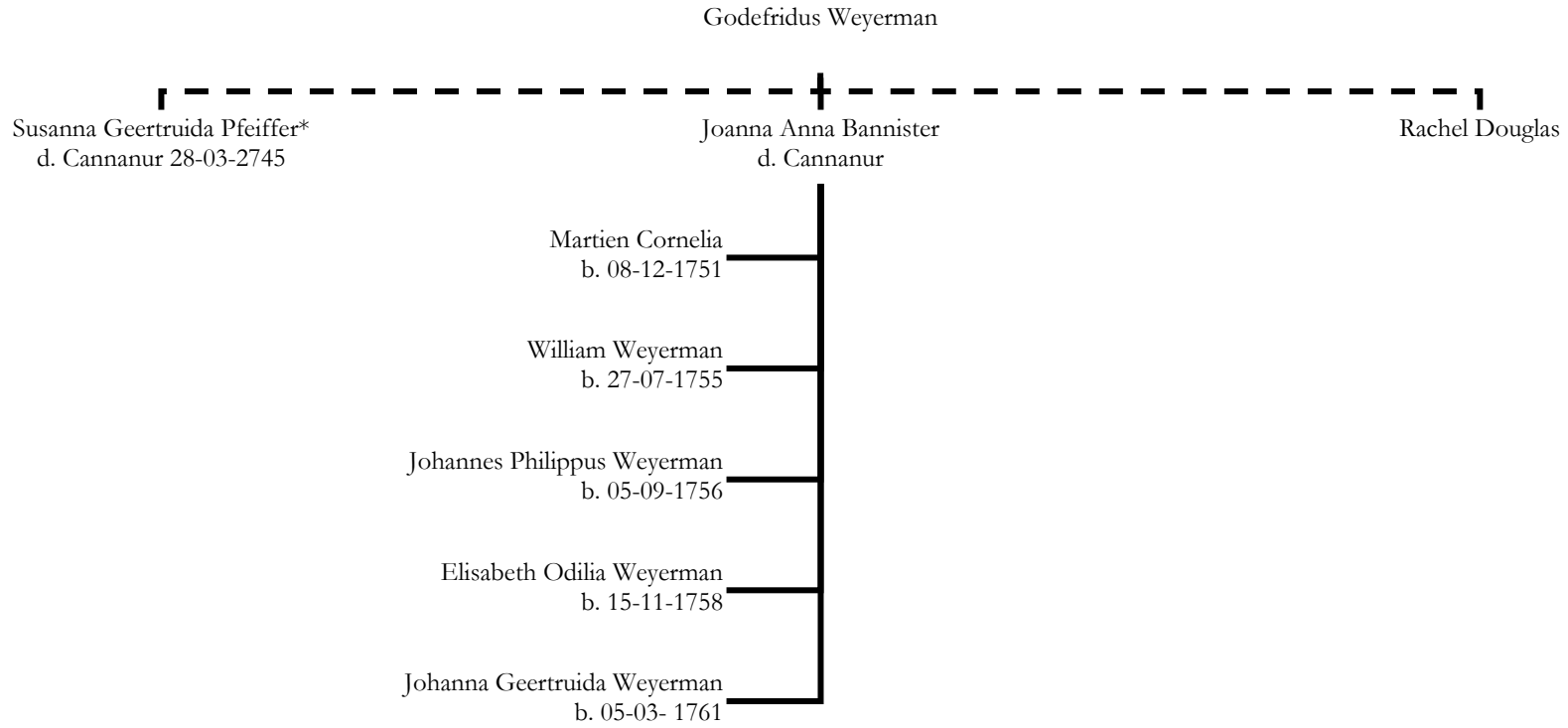
EIC Governors-General of India at Fort William

William Cavendish Bentinck	1833-1835
Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, Baron Metcalfe	1835-1836

APPENDIX II: FAMILY-TREES

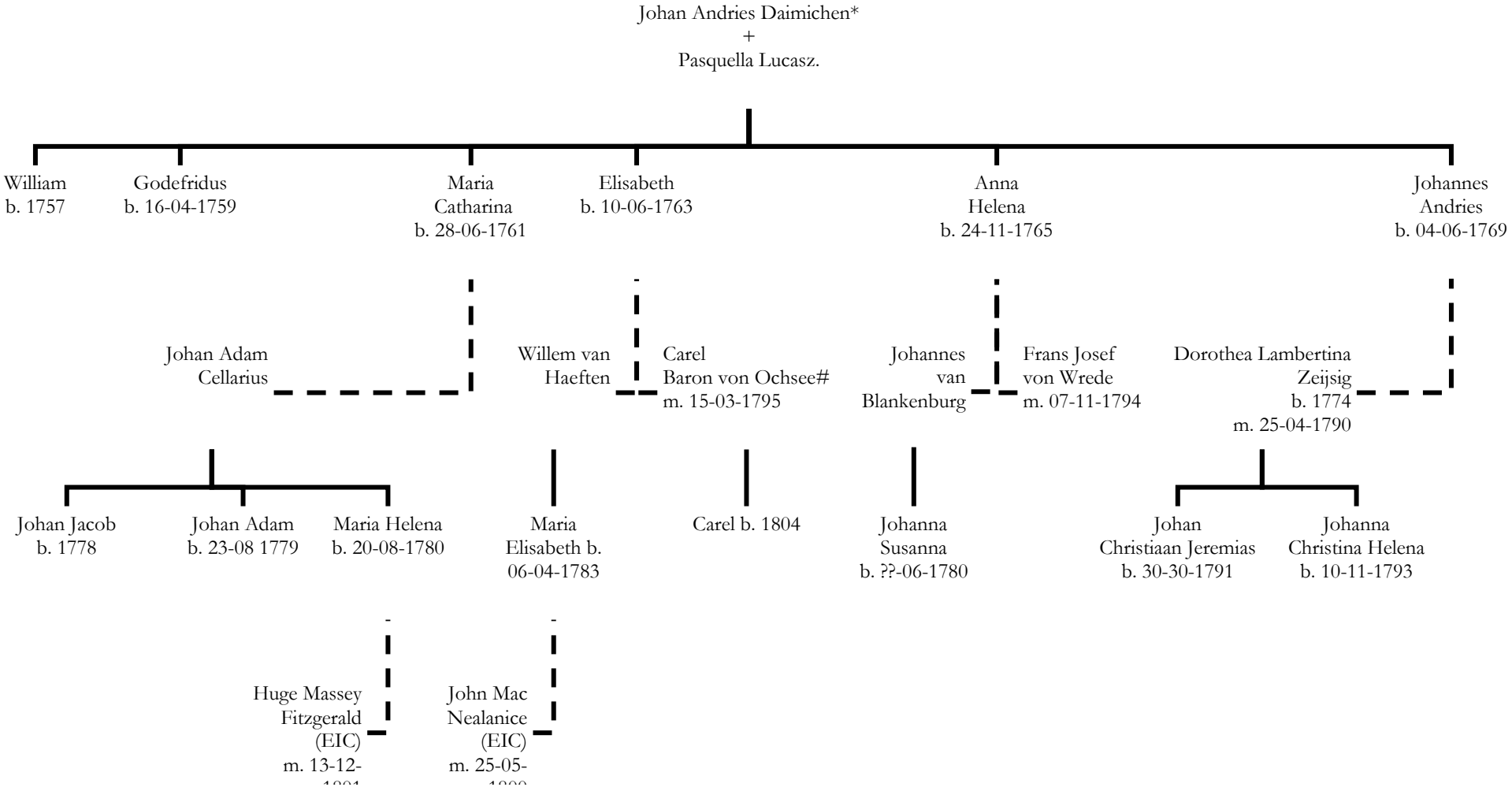
Legend: b.: baptised; d.: died; m.: married; ——— Parent(s) of; - - - Married to;

I. Weyerman Family-tree



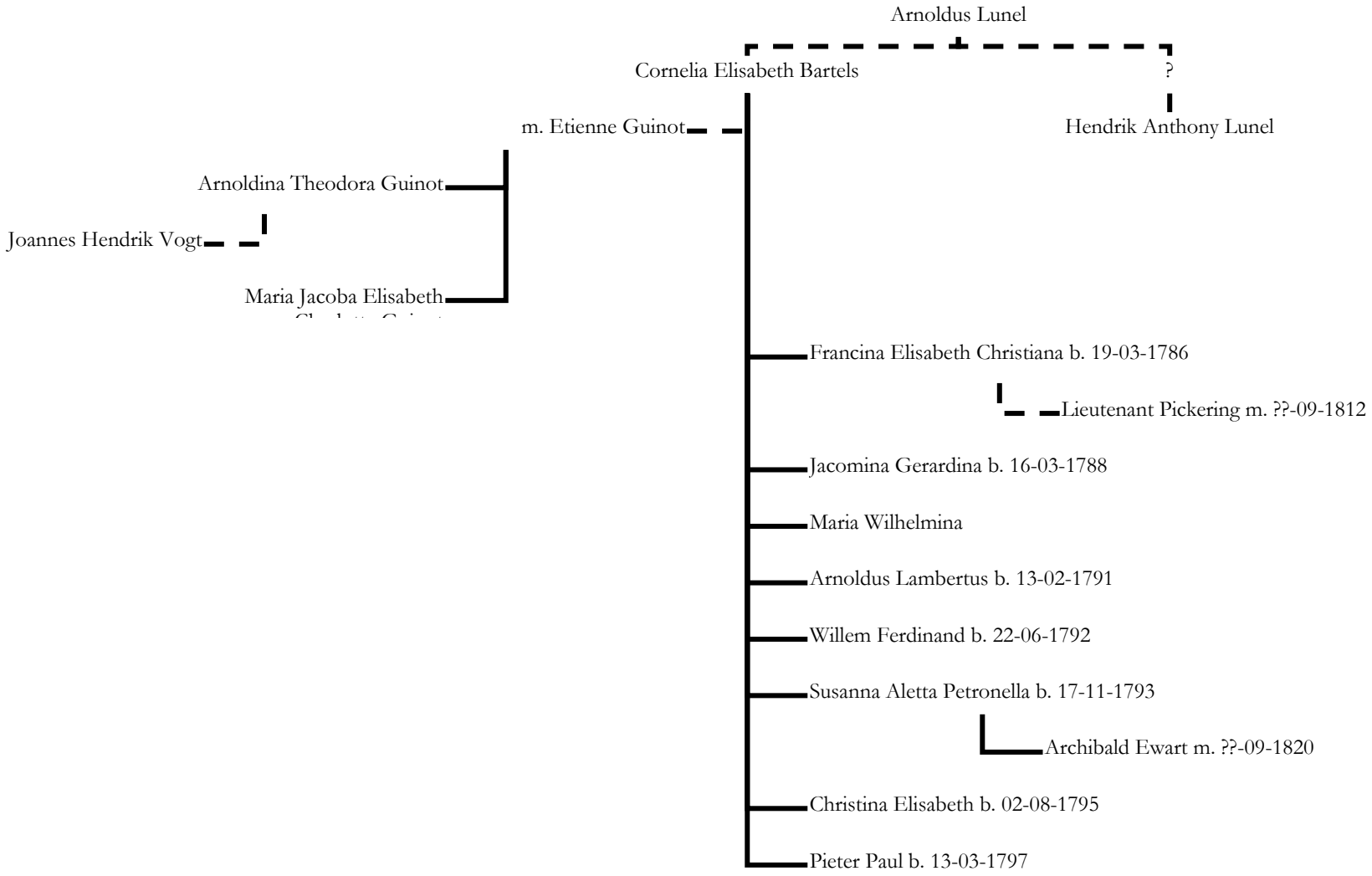
*She was the daughter of Matthijs Pfeiffer (chief of Porto Novo) and Margaretha Hackaart. She is buried with her two children in Cannanur.
Weyerman's first three children from second wife Joanna Anna were baptised by Roman Catholic priest Marcus Lopes. The baptism was later put on the register of the St. Francis Church by Pieter Cornelisz.

II. Daimichen Family-tree

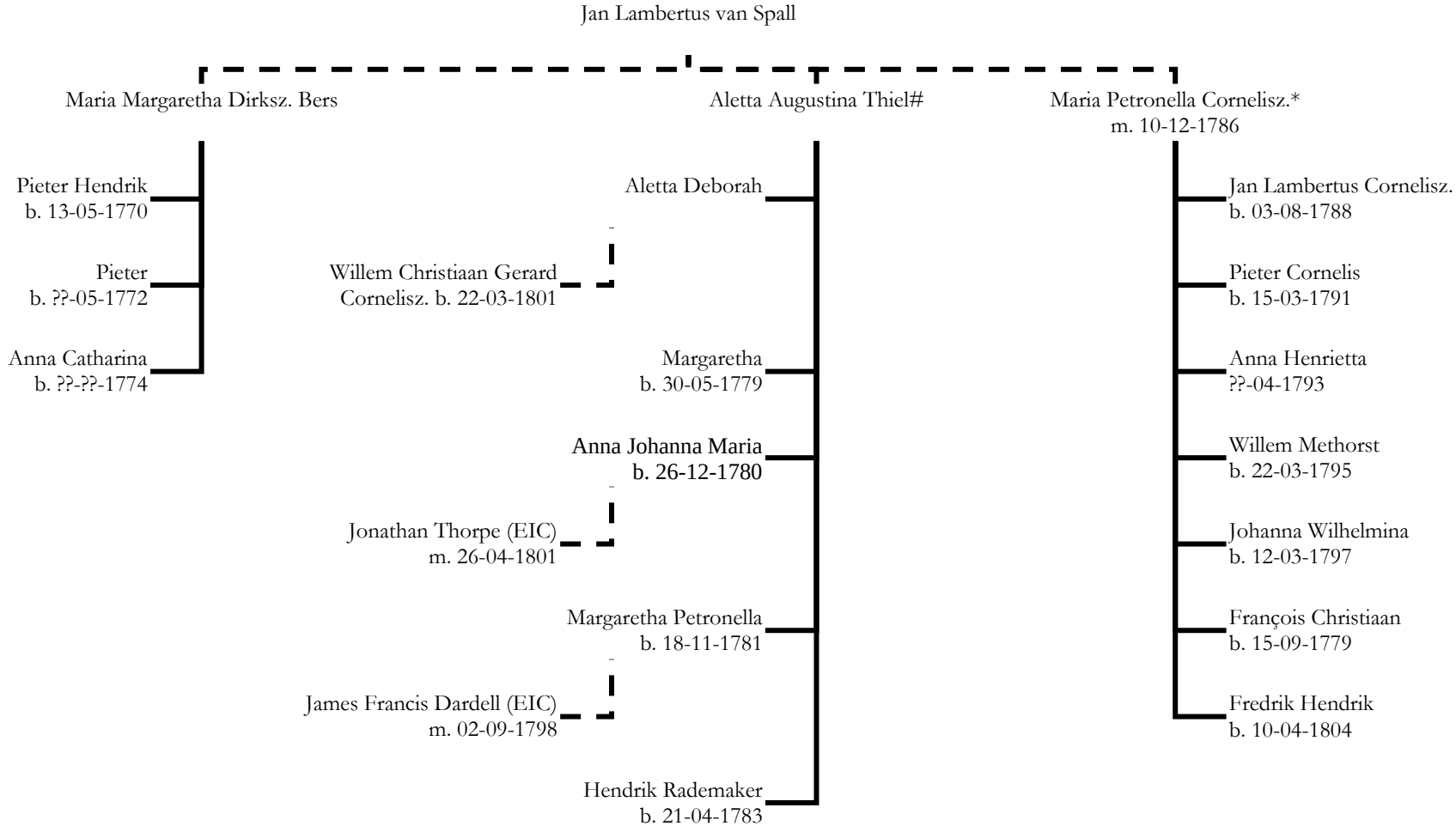


*Johan Andries Daimichen was Lutheran. Pasquella Lucasz. was Roman Catholic. # Carel Baron von Ochsee was Roman Catholic.

III. Lunel Family-tree

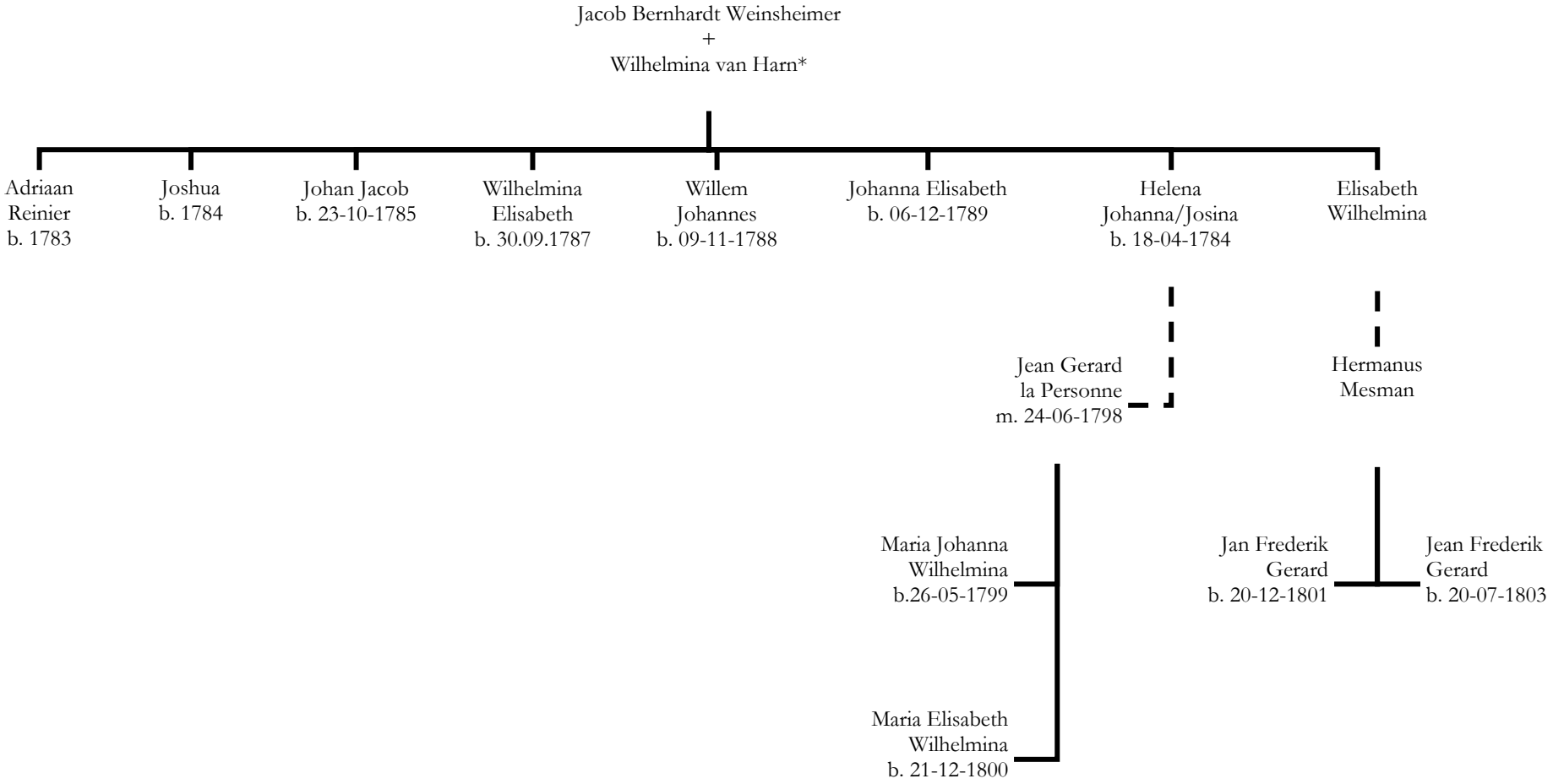


IV. Van Spall Family-tree



She was born in Cochin in 1760, and was daughter of Hans Caspar Thiel and Aletta van den Berg. * She was born in Cochin to minister Pieter Cornelisz. and Elisabeth van Sompel.

V. Weinsheimer Family-tree



* Wilhelmina van Harn married Lodewijk Josef Souter. Their daughter Maria Wilhelmina Johanna was baptised on 30-03-1794.

Illustration 1: Dutch houses in Fort Cochin (photos by the author, 2007)

1. House on Burgher Street

2. House on Rose Street

Illustration 2: Gravestones of VOC personnel and family in Fort Cochin (photos by the author, 2007)

1. Johan Andries Daimichen

2. Mr. and Mrs. Wolff

3. Alleta Augustina Thiel, wife of Commander Van Spall

4. Johan Adam Cellarius

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5218	5219	5220	5221	5222	5223	5224	5225	5226	5227
5228	5229	5230	5231	5232	5233	5234	5235	5236	5237
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SAMENVATTING

Deze studie van het commandement Malabar (gelegen aan de zuidwestkust van India) tussen 1750 en 1830 biedt een gedetailleerd onderzoek naar het functioneren van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) en haar personeel ter plaatse. De economische en sociale omstandigheden van de inwoners van Fort Cochin zijn bestudeerd aan de hand van de levensloop van een aantal individuen. Op deze manier zijn de institutionele en individuele ervaringen van de Compagnie en haar personeel op deze kust met elkaar verweven. Het voornaamste doel was daarbij de individuen, hun familie en de organisatie in de context van de tijd te plaatsen.

De meeste historici zien de slag bij Colachel in 1741, waarbij de VOC werd verslagen door de koning van Travancore, als het eind van de Nederlandse invloed in Malabar. Maar in feite bleef de Compagnie in het gebied totdat haar vestigingen in 1795 werden overgenomen door de Engelsen. Vragen als hoe de VOC tussen 1750 en 1795 in Fort Cochin functioneerde en wat er na de Engelse overname met haar personeel gebeurde, worden in deze studie beantwoord.

In *Malabar in Asian Trade* vestigt Ashin Das Gupta de aandacht op inheemse handelaren die, net als de Nederlandse Compagnie, actief waren op de kust. Winius en Vink beschrijven in *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified* de VOC als een gepacificeerde krijger-koopman, terwijl Els Jacobs in *Koopman in Azië* de Compagnie toch vooral als koopman typeert. Deze studie daarentegen borduurt voort op de observaties van eerdere onderzoekers zoals Meilink-Roelofsz, die erop wijzen dat de VOC-archieven een schat aan gegevens bevatten over individuen en dat deze gegevens gebruikt zouden moeten worden voor geschiedschrijving. Daarom kijkt deze studie verder dan de hierboven genoemde termen en categorieën door heel andere aspecten van de Compagnie in Malabar voor het voetlicht te brengen.

Hoofdstuk 1 bevat een introductie op de aanwezigheid van de Compagnie op de kust van Malabar rond 1750. Het plaatst het commandement Malabar in het grotere netwerk van de VOC en geeft een eerste indruk van Fort Cochin en de mensen die er op dat moment mee verbonden waren. De Nederlanders waren op alle strategische plekken langs de kust neergestreken om de inkoop van peper te controleren en ervoor te zorgen dat de producten uit de regio in de pakhuizen van de VOC terechtkwamen. In de loop van de tijd hadden ook Deense, Engelse en Franse compagnieën zich op de kust van Malabar gevestigd en deze waren eveneens geïnteresseerd in de peperhandel. De VOC deed er alles aan om een pepermonopolie op de kust te bemachtigen maar kon niet voorkomen dat ook anderen in peper bleven handelen. De positie van de VOC in Malabar was zeker verzwakt na de slag bij Colachel, maar opmerkelijk genoeg trof dit de dienaren van de Compagnie en de vrijburgers van Fort Cochin nauwelijks. Voor hen waren het fort zelf en de directe omgeving het belangrijkst omdat zij daar in hun dagelijks leven van afhankelijk waren.

In hoofdstuk 2 komen het functioneren van de VOC en de winstgevendheid van het commandement Malabar aan de orde. Terwijl men er over het algemeen van uitgaat dat de VOC na de jaren '40 van de 18de eeuw in verval raakte, laat de boekhouding van het commandement Malabar ter plekke juist in de periode 1750–1780 ongekende winsten zien. Dit hoofdstuk kijkt naar de oorzaken daarvan. Daarnaast toont dit het belangenconflict tussen het personeel in Fort Cochin en de leden van de Hoge Regering in Batavia. Terwijl men in Batavia probeerde zoveel mogelijk te bezuinigen op het commandement Malabar, richtten de commandeurs in Malabar zich juist op het vergroten van de inkomsten door het uitbreiden van het grondgebied. Zo werkten drie opeenvolgende commandeurs tussen 1751 en 1764 voortdurend aan het verwerven van territoriale bezittingen voor de VOC op de kust. Uit onderzoek blijkt dat zij daarin succesvol waren en dat het aandeel van de inkomsten dat niet uit handel afkomstig was, in de tweede helft van de 18de eeuw aanzienlijk groeide. Hoewel deze ontwikkeling door Batavia werd stopgezet, realiseerden ook de daaropvolgende commandeurs, die in de jaren '70 en '80 door Batavia naar Cochin werden gestuurd, dat zij inkomen konden vergaren uit het land en uitten zij hun waardering voor de pogingen die hun voorgangers daartoe hadden ondernomen.

De opbouw van de samenleving van Fort Cochin en de verhoudingen tussen de verschillende groepen die samen de sociale wereld van Fort Cochin vormden, worden in hoofdstuk 3 besproken. De analyse van de herkomst van de mannen die in dienst van de Compagnie waren en de wijze waarop de VOC deze mannen rekruteerde, brengt opmerkelijke feiten aan het licht. Het grootste deel van het civiele personeel werd ter plaatse gerekruteerd. Niet alleen het personeel in de lagere rangen maar zelfs het grootste deel van dat in de hogere kwam uit de regio. De dienaren van de Compagnie, vooral het civiele personeel, ontwikkelden particuliere economische netwerken met lokale handelsgemeenschappen, zoals die van de Joden, de Baniyas en de Chetties. Als we naar het vrouwelijke deel van de samenleving van het fort kijken, valt op dat het voor het overgrote deel mestiezen waren; Europese vrouwen zag men eigenlijk maar zelden in Fort Cochin. De Europese mannen van de Compagnie trouwden deze mestiezen en gingen Cochin als hun nieuwe 'thuis' beschouwen. Hun zoons werkten weer voor de Compagnie en op deze manier ontstonden typische VOC-families. De Europeanen creëerden dus ook sociale netwerken met leden van de mestiezengemeenschap, die zowel binnen als buiten het fort leefden. Deze studie laat bovendien zien dat de Compagnie intussen een selectief en inconsistent beleid voerde bij het toelaten van de inwoners van het fort tot haar instellingen.

In hoofdstuk 4 wordt nagegaan welke andere bronnen van inkomsten de inwoners van het fort hadden. Veel vrijburgers verdienden hun brood door deel te nemen aan de kusthandel en door contracten aan te gaan om tol en andere belastingen te innen. Personeelsleden van de Compagnie gingen steeds vaker buiten de stadsmuren wonen en bouwden zo aan hun toekomst op de kust van Malabar. Intussen breidde de Engelse Oostindische compagnie haar macht in India verder uit. Gedurende de Vierde Engelse Oorlog (1780–1784) verloor de VOC veel van

haar nederzettingen elders in India aan de Engelsen. Dit lot ging vooralsnog voorbij aan Fort Cochin omdat de Engelse compagnie al haar krachten moest aanwenden in haar strijd tegen Mysore, een geduchte macht in het zuiden. Nadat Tipu Sultan van Mysore in 1792 was verslagen, kreeg de Engelse compagnie een sterke positie in Malabar. De 'Kew letters', geschreven door stadhouder Willem de Vijfde, die vanuit Nederland naar Engeland was gevlucht nadat de patriotten met Franse steun aan de macht waren gekomen, gaven de Engelsen een legitieme reden om de macht op Fort Cochin over te nemen. In oktober 1795 deden ze dat daadwerkelijk, met als doel de Nederlandse bezittingen in Azië te beschermen tegen de Fransen. De dienaren van de Compagnie ter plaatse waren daardoor gedwongen een besluit te nemen over hun toekomst.

In hoofdstuk 5 wordt het leven van de voormalige VOC-dienaren en hun families ná de VOC beschreven. Hoewel de Engelse compagnie het bestuur van het fort overnam en de Nederlanders tot tweemaal toe een overtocht aanbood naar Ceylon of Batavia, besloot het overgrote deel in Cochin te blijven. De elite van de VOC ging al snel samenwerken met de Britten om zijn positie en toekomst in Cochin veilig te stellen. De sociale en economische netwerken, het socioculturele milieu, het gevoel er thuis te horen en de nieuwe mogelijkheden in de particuliere handel die samenwerking met de Engelse compagnie bood, waren factoren die de beslissing om te blijven sterk beïnvloedden.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Anjana Singh was born in Patna, India, on 25 October 1976. She received a BA (Honours) in History from Gargi College, University of Delhi, in 1997. She obtained her MA in History from the University of Mumbai in 1999, and received an MPhil. degree in 2001. Since then she has been affiliated with Leiden University as part of the TANAP project of the Department of History. She has conducted archival research in India, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and uses English and Dutch archives for her research and writing. Her main fields of interest are European overseas expansion, early modern India and Europeans in India. Her PhD thesis, to be defended in June 2007, is a case study of the Dutch in Malabar between 1750 and 1830.