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Java's last frontier : the struggle for hegemony of Blambangan, c. 1763-1813

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of this study is to present an analysis of how the Dutch tried to transform *Java's Oosthoek* (Java Eastern Salient, Javanese: *Bang Wetan*) from a wilderness harbouring rebels, the rougher elements of society, and stubborn dissenters opposed to any foreign rule into a frontier of economic progress and colonial state-formation by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Such a process of transformation would have been impossible unless it was accompanied by political as well as social and cultural change. Unquestionably, the ever-increasing involvement of the VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) in the internal political affairs of Java played a crucial role in transforming the *Oosthoek*, but the fact that endogenous factors also provided an impetus to the changes should not be overlooked. A careful scrutiny of both Dutch and Javanese sources is essential in any balanced attempt to reconstruct a detailed and intriguing account of what was happening in *Java's Oosthoek* just as it was poised on the brink of becoming integrated into the Colonial State.

The period covered in this study is of great historical significance. J. J. Steur considers the late eighteenth century to mark the culmination of VOC territorial expansion in Java, but inopportunely this process coincided with the waning of its economic achievements in Indonesian Archipelago.¹ The Dutch East India Company was formally liquidated on 31 December 1799, and Java, then one of its possessions, was bequeathed to the Dutch State. Peter Boomgaard argues that the fall of the VOC was not an abrupt break, but simply the culmination of a succession of changes in which the Company's powers were passed piecemeal to the State. To some extent, these radical changes were only properly set in motion in the second decade of the nineteenth century under the British occupation 1811-1816. The first decade of nineteenth century (1800-1811) is therefore a necessary

¹ J. J. Steur, *Herstel of ondergang: De voorstellen tot redres van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie 1740-1795*, (Utrecht: Hes, 1984); Holden Furber, *Rival Empire of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976).

epilogue to the VOC period rather than a prelude to the radical changes of the nineteenth century.²

Subject

Early modern Java has enjoyed abundant attention from historians, of whom M. C. Ricklefs is the most influential. His works cover all the prominent events which took place in Java from the period of Kartasura (1677-1726) until the division of the state of Mataram in the second half of the eighteenth century. His recent work on the role of Islam in Java has added to his ascendancy in this field of research.³ Recently, three more works about Java in this period have just published by Atsushi Ota, Robert Van Niel, and Kwee Hui Kian. Ota's work deals with the change of regime and the social dynamic in the outer world of Banten, whereas Van Niel and Hui Kian examine the political economy of Java's North-East Coast.⁴ Sadly, all these studies are virtually silent on the role played by Blambangan, the last Hindu kingdom in Java, which had controlled the bulk of *Java's Oosthoek* since the seventeenth century. *Java's Oosthoek* was the term used by the Dutch for this easternmost peninsula of Java, at one point separated from Bali by only a few kilometres of water in the Bali Strait. Before it was ceded to the VOC on 11 November 1743, this area was an arena in which Mataram, the Balinese kingdom of Mengwi, and the VOC contested for the upper hand. Though *Susubunan* Pakubuwana II had

² Peter Boomgaard, *Children of the Colonial State: Population Growth and Economic Development in Java, 1795-1880* (Amsterdam: CASA Monographs 1, Free University Press, 1989), 11.

³ M. C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi: A History of the Division of Java*, (London-New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Idem, *War, Culture and Economy in Java, 1677-1726 : Asian and European imperialism in the early Kartasura Period* (Allen & Unwin, Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 1993); Idem, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java: History, Literature and Islam in the Court of Pakubuwana II, 1726-1749* (Allen & Unwin, Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 1998); Idem, *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions, c. 1830-1930*, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007).

⁴ Atsushi Ota, *Change of Regime and Social Dynamic in West Java: Society, State and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830*, TANAP Monographs on the History of Asian-European Interaction, Vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Kwee Hui Kian, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast, 1740-1800: Elite Synergy*, TANAP Monographs on the History of Asian-European Interaction, Vol. III, (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Robert van Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast, 1740-1840: A Study in Colonial Encroachment and Dominance* (Leiden: CNWS Publication, 2005).

officially ceded the area to the VOC, its population with the support of the Balinese remained recalcitrant to the imposition of Dutch rule, and fought doggedly against it for a protracted period, sacrificing almost all to sustain their ideal. Later, adding to the volatility of the situation, the English began to encroach on this area by the late eighteenth century in search of alternative goods to trade in China.

My remarks are not intended to imply that this is a neglected area of study. It has attracted the attention of such anthropologists as Andrew Beatty and scholars of Java as Ben Arps, not to mention such other, older generations of Dutch scholars of Indonesia as C. Lekkerkerker and Th. Pigeaud.⁵ Despite such pioneering work, it can be said without fear of contradiction that so far the question of how this region was incorporated into a larger political development in Java has remained pretty much a closed book.

In many respects, *Java's Oosthoek* in the second half of the eighteenth century, when it was politically at the mercy of three contesting powers, may be called Java's last frontier. The term frontier here reflects the point of view of such neighbouring kingdoms as Bali Mengwi and Mataram. From the Balinese perspective, Blambangan was a frontier, an indispensable barrier to the encroachment of Islam which allowed it to preserve its influence in Java, as it was a border area still relatively free of Islam where Hinduism was still the main religion. The Balinese used Blambangan as a buffer against the Islamic expansion and consolidation initiated by Muslim Mataram and they also found the produce of its fertile soil a useful bolster to the economy of Bali where economic activities were heavily overshadowed by endemic warfare. From the perspective of the Javanese Muslim rulers (represented by Mataram and its outlying vassals), Blambangan was a final frontier, impeding the creation of the world of Islam in Java. Finally, Blambangan was also a frontier from the perspective of the VOC administration in Batavia, in which its nominal sovereign power over *Java's Oosthoek* in the eighteenth century was in danger of being disturbed by the British merchants.

⁵ Andrew *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Benard Arps, *Tembang in Two Traditions*: (Dissertation University of Leiden, 1992); C. Lekkerkerker, 'Blambangan', *De Indische Gids*, II (Amsterdam: De Bussy, 1923); Th. Pigeaud, 'Aantekeningen betreffende den Javaanschen Oosthoek', *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land en Volkunkende*, deel LXXII, 1932), 216-313.

The foundation of this study is a fairly simple question: Why did the VOC need such a long time (approximately forty years) to incorporate this region successfully into the VOC administration in Batavia? Another, hardly less important question is: What set of changes actually occurred and what was their well-spring?

On paper, the actual conquest of *Java's Oosthoek* was quick, but soon thereafter, the VOC had to deal with two not insignificant rebellions: those of *Pangeran Wilis* and of his successor-cum-imitator, known to the VOC as the Pseudo- (Revenant) Wilis. In the process of consolidating its power, the Company also had to deal with some unfinished business by eliminating the Central Javanese rebel prince, *Pangeran Singasari* and his son Raden Mas, who had allied themselves with the still refractory descendants of Surapati in Malang and Lumajang; thereby enabling the Company efficiently to kill two birds with one stone. But, once the resistance and rebellion had been quelled at the cost of a great loss of lives, a no less difficult process had to be confronted: the implementation of administrative change in Blambangan.

One of the direct results of the Dutch occupation of Blambangan within the larger sphere of the VOC trading network was the reaction of the 'free trader' or merchant diaspora in Blambangan, who saw the VOC monopoly as a threat of their well-established local trading network. Five years after occupying Blambangan, the Dutch had to deal with another type of resistance, an undisguised economic challenge organized by the 'free traders' and merchants diaspora in Blambangan, people who were not willing to succumb meekly to VOC rule but established an alternative trading port in the island of Nusa Barong.

Even after military and political victories had been won, the issue of how to exploit the newly conquered region for the benefit of the VOC still loomed large. Essentially, the same strategy was chosen that had been pursued successfully on Java's North-East Coast, where peace and order had been accomplished with the indispensable help of Chinese entrepreneurs, whether as tax-farmers or landlords. After fifteen years, the Dutch could finally claim to have restored the peace in the *Oosthoek*, but, by then the local economy was stagnating and depressed. Various efforts were made to bring about an economic turn around. Depopulation was the biggest problem which had to be solved first by the Dutch authorities in the *Oosthoek*. The response to attempts to bring in inhabitants from other places in Central Java and

Madura was exceedingly sluggish. In fact, this problem of the dearth of manpower was never completely solved in the *Oosthoek* until after the eclipse of Dutch rule in the early nineteenth century. As a result of the rapid changes in the colonial regime in the period 1800-1811, the seeds of social disturbance began to germinate. Aware of the need to rectify its financial problems, the new colonial regime under Governor-General Daendels adopted a pragmatic policy, either leasing or selling outright the western part of Blambangan and Probolinggo to Chinese entrepreneurs. Under their Chinese proprietors, these regions developed quickly, but at the cost of the severe oppression of the local inhabitants. This grinding exploitation incited an anti-Chinese movement, ultimately culminating in the murder of the Chinese proprietors of Probolinggo and Besuki and some British officers.

While these events have been successively incorporated into a chronological narrative, sight should not be lost of inextricably linked larger themes which can be found back throughout the whole book. These bring together such issues as the encounter between Javanese Islam and Balinese Hinduism, and the Islamization politics of the VOC, ultimately revealing the innate uniqueness of Blambangan and its people which has endured to this day, still giving them a claim to an identity of their own.

Java's Oosthoek in the eighteenth century was the last battlefield in the clash of civilizations between two religious powers: Hinduism and Islam. In the late sixteenth century, Mataram emerged as the successor of Demak and continued to encourage the elimination Hindu elements in Java. After conquering Surabaya and Pasuruan, the king of Mataram, Sultan Agung (1613-1646), continued his pursuit of territorial expansion into Blambangan. Mataram was able to destroy the city but failed to Islamize Blambangan as a whole. Upon the death of Sultan Agung's successor, Amangkurat I (1613-1677), Mataram withdrew from the contestation of Blambangan. Nevertheless, the influence of Islam gradually insinuated itself into the court of Blambangan through marriages between members of the court elite of Blambangan, including the King himself, and members of the Islamic elite from such outlying Mataram regions in East Java as Lumajang, Probolinggo, and Pasuruan. Over time, the descendants of these Blambangan-Javanese alliances were numerous enough to create a political faction inside the court, judiciously planting the seeds of anti-Balinese sentiments, which eventually erupted in a systematic attempt to eliminate all Hindu-Balinese elements from the court of Blambangan.

This interference ignited a major political dispute within the court itself involving two main factions: the Hindu-Balinese party and the Javanese-Islam party.

The intervention of the Dutch East India Company in Blambangan fanned violence and strengthened ethnic sentiments. The Dutch acknowledged Islam as the new religion of the region, and exerted every means to suborn any Hindu-Balinese elements in Blambangan politics. Inevitably, this unexpectedly pro-Islam and pro-Javanese policy aroused local opposition, which could always count on Balinese support. The beleaguered local resistance found expression in an outburst of revivalism characterized by the appearance on the scene of a series of pretenders, claiming genealogical credentials or asserting they were imbued with supernatural powers. The first pretender was *Mas Rempeg* (1771) or *Susuhunan Jagapati*, who declared himself to be Prince Wilis, the Prince of Blambangan who had been banished to Banda. Just as he was staking his claim, another pretender appeared in the western part of Blambangan. *Sayu Wiwit* (1771), the daughter of *Pangeran Wilis*, who claimed to be the *Susuhunan Ratu*. Ten years later, other pretenders appeared in Blambangan and Malang respectively: a man named Singa, a former servant of the chief rebel *Bapak Endo*, proclaimed himself to be *Susuhunan Sukma Manguntapa* (1781), and a Javanese, *Pangeran Serang*, said he was *Malayakusuma* (1778), the former Regent of Malang who had been slain on the south coast of Java. In an earlier period, *Pangeran Singasari* had led a rebellion against the Dutch under the name of *Susuhunan Prabujaka*. Later, even after the entrenchment of the colonial administration, other pretenders occasionally appeared on the scene in Blambangan. Among them were *Mas Sekar* (1797), *Kyai Mas*, *Demang Muneng* in Probolinggo, and *Jang Girinata* or *Arya Galedak*, *Durasit*, and *Wirasetya* (1813) in Bondowoso.

The second over-arching theme running through this story is the increasing friction between the VOC and ethnic communities of trading diasporas. This clash of economic interests was not specific to Java's *Oosthoek*, it was also inherent in other regions as demonstrated in studies by Reinout Casper Vos on Riau, Atsushi Ota on Banten, James Warren on Zulu, Muridan Satrio Widjojo and Leonard Andaya on Maluku and, last but not least, the very influential but not yet published thesis of Adrian B. Lapien on Sulawesi.⁶ In Blambangan, the

⁶ Reinout Casper Vos, *Gentle Janus, Merchant Prince : the VOC and the Tightrope of Diplomacy in the Malay World, 1740-1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993); Atsushi Ota,

diaspora communities of Chinese, Malay, Buginese, Mandarese, and Balinese merchants had traditionally played an important role in economic and trading activities. In the late eighteenth century their world was crumbling and they were faced with seemingly insurmountable problems. The protracted warfare and concomitant turmoil in Blambangan caused by the Rempeg uprising, which lasted almost a decade, destroyed most of the trade and economic activity in the region.

Thinking pragmatically, the mercantile communities tried to develop an alternative trading port on the south-east coast of Java, outside the confines of the Dutch monopoly. The island of Nusa Barong was chosen as the most apposite site for a rendezvous. This initiative was considered a serious threat by the Dutch establishment in *Java's Oosthoek*. Consequently, in 1777, the VOC sent a military expedition to clear the island of these intrepid free traders or, as the Dutch sources chose to designate them, *smokekelaars* (smugglers). Their settlement was destroyed but this expedition failed to halt the piracy and contraband trade in this region. In their efforts to cope with this situation, the Dutch employed Mandarese merchants to guard the south coast of Java against such interlopers.

The third theme which is inextricably mixed into this history of Blambangan is the emerging Anglo-Dutch rivalry. The arrival of Western intruders (British merchants) in the Java Sea around the middle of the eighteenth century connected the local economy in the Indonesian Archipelago to the booming markets in Bengal (textiles, opium, and guns) and China (tea trade).⁷ The reason for the British presence in the region was closely connected with the burgeoning English trading activities in Canton. The English East India Company

Change of Regime and Social Dynamic in West Java: Society, State and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830, TANAP Monographs on the History of Asian-European Interaction, Vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Muridan Satrio Widjojo, *Cross-Cultural Alliance Making and Local Resistance in Maluku during the Revolt of Prince Nuku, c. 1780-1810* (Dissertation, Leiden University, 2007), James F. Warren, *The Sulu Zone: The world Capitalist Economy and the Historical Imagination* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998); Adrian Bernard Lapian, 'Orang Laut, Bajak Laut, Raja Laut: Sejarah Kawasan Laut Sulawesi pada Abad XIX' [Orang Laut, Pirate, and Raja Laut: The Maritime History of Sulawesi in the Nineteenth Century], (Dissertation Gadjah Mada University, 1987)

⁷ Concerning the Dutch-Chinese tea trade in this period, see Liu Yong, *The Dutch East India Company's Tea Trade with China, 1757-1781*, TANAP Monographs on the History of Asian-European Interaction, Vol. VI, (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

had difficulty in paying for its expanding exports of silk and tea from Canton and sought to limit its shipments of silver to China by using South-East Asian produce as an alternative form of payment. The English also hoped to attract Chinese junks to an entrepôt in the Indonesian archipelago outside the monopoly of the Co-Hong, where the terms of exchange would be more favourable than in China itself. The establishment of a new British settlement was thought to be a solution to these problems.

In 1763, the VOC had still refused the unsolicited invitation from the deposed king of Blambangan, *Pangeran Adipati* Danuningrat or *Pangeran Pati*, under the pretext that Dutch rule in the Indonesian Archipelago had been overextended. Within the space of a few years, the arrival of English merchants in *Java's Oosthoek* proved to be the catalyst which made the Dutch reconsider their options. A military campaign to Blambangan was mounted to protect the VOC interests there, and it was hoped it would have the added bonus of eliminating the rebel bands sheltering in Malang and Lumajang. Collaboration was sought with Javanese and Madurese allies to ensure the success of the military campaign. In 1768, Blambangan, Malang, and Lumajang were conquered and new administrations were formed.

Previous Research

Recently two very well researched monographs on the history of Java's North-East Coast have been published. Robert van Niel's study is based on extensive historical research examining the formation of Java's North-East Coast as an economic and political entity by the Dutch and the transformation it underwent during the transition from the VOC period to that of the Dutch Colonial Government.⁸ Kwee Hui Kian's work emphasizes the political behaviour of the main parties revealed in the way their roles were played out in the arena of the economy and politics of this region.⁹ Before these studies appeared, only few people had touched in their research on the history of East Java during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The classic monograph by H. I. Domis on Pasuruan and two articles by C. Lekkerkerker on Blambangan and J. G. W. Lekkerkerker on

⁸ Robert van Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast, 1740-1840: A Study in Colonial Encroachment and Dominance* (Leiden: CNWS Publication, 2005).

⁹ Hui Kian, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast*.

Probolinggo are the only historical works published so far.¹⁰ Robert Elson's work on Pasuruan is the first study which gives a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the colonial economy on the peasant society, but it covers a much later period (1830-1940).¹¹ Other short studies on *Java's Oosthoek* have been written by J. C. Hageman, John Bastin, and Claudine Salmon.¹² Their articles focus on the role of the *peranakan*-Chinese, principally the Han family, in the political and economic development in this region, covering the period of the British occupation of Java (1811-1816). J. L. A. Brandes, Darusuprpto, and Winarsih Arifin have analysed various versions of a Javanese chronicles (*Babad Blambangan*), but their main concern has been philology rather than history. Other brief discussions on the late eighteenth century in *Java's Oosthoek* can be found in the works of Th. Pigeaud, H. J. de Graaf, and Ann Kumar.¹³

Domis's work on Pasuruan lacks analysis and should be characterized as a Dutch official's journals rather than a historical study. He describes the general condition of the Pasuruan region,

¹⁰ H. I. Domis, *De residentie Passoeroeang op het Eiland Java* ('s-Gravenhage: 1836), C. Lekkerkerker, 'Blambangan', *De Indische Gids*, II (Amsterdam: De Bussy, 1923), J. G. W. Lekkerkerker, 'Probolinggo: Geschiedenis en overlevering', *Nederlandsche Java-Instituut*, no. 9, (1931).

¹¹ R. E. Elson, *Javanese Peasants and the Colonial Sugar Industry: Impact and Change in an East Java Residency, 1830-1940* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984).

¹² J. C. Hageman, 'De Adipatti van Besoeki op Java, 1811-1818: Historisch Onderzoek' *TNI*, vol. i, (1865), 444-452; John Bastin, 'The Chinese Estates in East Java During the British Administration', in John Bastin, *Essays on Indonesian and Malayan History* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press Ltd, 1961), 92-101, first published in *Indonesie* 1953-1954, ('s-Gravenhage: N.V. Uitgeverij W. van Hoeve, 1954), 433-439, Claudine Salmon, 'The Han Family of East Java, Entrepreneurship and Politics (18th-19th Centuries)', *Archipel*, 41, (1991), 53-88.

¹³ Darusuprpto, 'Babad Blambangan: Pembahasan - Suntingan Naskah - Terjemahan' (Dissertation Gadjah Mada University, 1984), Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Wilis* (Naskah Dokumen Nusantara), Lembaga Penelitian Prancis untuk Timur Jauh: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Jakarta, Bandung, 1980; *Babad Sembar* (Naskah Dokumen Nusantara), Lembaga Penelitian Prancis untuk Timur Jauh: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Jakarta, Bandung, 1980; *Babad Blambangan* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Budaya, 1995), Th. Pigeaud, 'Aantekeningen betreffende den Javaanschen Oosthoek,' *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land en Volkunkende*, LXXII, (1932), 216-313; H. J. de Graaf, *Geschiedenis van Indonesie* ('s-Gravenhage: Van Hoeve, 1949), 272-275; Ann Kumar, 'Javanese Historiography in and of the Colonial Period: A Case Study,' in Anthony Reid and David Marr (eds.) *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (ASIA) LTD, 1979), 187-206; Ann Kumar, *Java and Modern Europe: Ambiguous Encounters* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997).

concentrating on the period of his own administration. Nevertheless, he presents an abundance of useful information about the natural richness of this region, as well as the different kinds of crops and other natural resources produced there. He predicts that the *Oosthoek* will become an area of some significance in Java and will yield the Dutch copious economic benefit. Its geographical position and its fertile soil will provide a proper basis for encouraging the cultivation of export crops.¹⁴ If Domis did not fail to spot the potential, Elson's study supplies ample evidence of the development of export crops and Dutch plantations in this region in the later period. Of all the regions in Java where the colonial sugar industry found a footing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Pasuruan area has been the most intensively and continuously exploited. For much of the nineteenth century it was the greatest sugar-producing region of Java, and it remained a major sugar centre throughout the subsequent decades of colonial rule.¹⁵

The studies of Hageman and Bastin provide important clues for tracing the significant role of the *peranakan*-Chinese group in the political and economic development of this region in the preceding period. Both of them examine the political and economic motives behind the displacement of prominent Chinese landholders in East Java during the British occupation.¹⁶ Salmon traces the origin and network of the Han family in East Java and China from the first generation down to the nineteenth century.¹⁷

The compilation, translation, analysis, and publication of the most prominent East Javanese chronicles which are available in both the Netherlands and Indonesia have been undertaken by Brandes, Pigeaud, Darusuprpto, Kumar, and Winarsih Arifin. Their works are of great assistance to historical research based on this type of local sources. Brandes' work concentrates on a prose version of the *Babad Blambangan*, and gives a detailed annotation of some of those episodes in the history of Blambangan which can also be found in the Dutch sources.¹⁸ Analysing another version of *Babad Blambangan* (the so-called *Babad Tawangalun*), Pigeaud identifies some prominent figures who are mentioned in the *babad* and he chose to emphasize the religious aspect

¹⁴ Domis, *Pasuruan*, p. vi.

¹⁵ Elson, *Javanese Peasants*, p. vii.

¹⁶ Hageman, 'De Adipatti van Besoeke op Java'; Bastin, 'The Chinese Estates'.

¹⁷ Salmon, 'The Han Family'.

¹⁸ Brandes, 'Verslag over een Babad Blambangan'.

in his interpretation. He argues that this *babad* provides valuable information which illuminates the local perspective, mainly the religious transformation throughout the whole process of the political development in *Java's Oosthoek* during the period of VOC intervention.¹⁹ Kumar analyses another version of the *Babad Blambangan* (Purwasastra-version) which originates from Pasuruan. This *babad* sheds yet more light on the local perspective of the political events which took place in *Java's Oosthoek* from the perspective of Pasuruan, an ally of the VOC during the conquest of *Java's Oosthoek*. Kumar states that Purwasastra, the *babad's* author, is noticeably pro-Dutch whom he depicts the Dutch as the real *prawira* (heroes) of the *babad*. In this, as Ricklefs says, it diverges from other Central Javanese *babad*, which often assign the Dutch the role of *punakawan* (clown servants) in the Javanese shadow puppet theatre. Purwasastra's *babad* quite realistically delineates the Dutch as *satriya* (knights), who are more powerful than the local ruler (the *Sunan* of Surakarta). Elsewhere, the Governor in Semarang is described as having the power to make and unmake *tumenggung* and *bupati*, and the conquest of Blambangan is hailed as a step towards making all the native rulers on Java their servants.²⁰

The Sources

This study has employed a great number of contemporary Dutch sources. A large proportion of these sources are found in the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* (Letters and Papers Received) preserved in the *Nationaal Archief* (NA) in The Hague and the *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (ANRI) in Jakarta. This corpus contains correspondence between the upper echelons of the local administration, between them and the Governor-General and the Council of Indies in Batavia, and between *Hoge Regerering* (High Government) Batavia and the Gentlemen XVII (the board of of the VOC) in the Netherlands. Another important corpus is composed of the *Memories van Overgave* (end of term of office reports written to inform a successor of present conditions) and the *Reis Journalen* (travel accounts) kept by VOC officials, and the *Residentie Archief van Nederlandsch-Indië* preserved in the *Arsip Nasional* Jakarta. This study

¹⁹ Pigeaud, 'Aantekeningen betreffende den Javaanschen *Oosthoek*'.

²⁰ Kumar, 'Javanese Historiography in and of the Colonial Period', 198-199.

also considers a few documents from among the *Generale Resolutien des Casteel Batavia genomen bij den Gouverneur Generaal en den Raden van Indië*, which contain some important decisions on crucial political and economic affairs which occurred at the local level. Some Indonesian researchers are rather reluctant to consult such sources in order to avoid being accused of having a European bias. However, if historians ignore such sources, they will be unable to construct a proper analysis to determine whether there was a gap in the implementation of policy between the Governor-General and Council in Batavia and the local administrators, or indeed if there matters were indeed practised as they were preached. All these kinds of sources provide the essential framework for developing a historical understanding, giving detailed, sometimes daily, chronological information and much else.

Dutch Sources on Java's Oosthoek

Browsing through the VOC sources on the *Java's Noord-Oostkust* (North-East Coast of Java), a strong impression grows on the reader that during the period 1743-1766 the VOC was primarily concerned about the implications of the events in Central Java: the problem of the succession and the Chinese war of the 1740s; the rebellion of *Pangeran* Mangkubumi and *Raden Mas Said*, followed by the divisions of the kingdom of Mataram in 1755 and 1757. Consequently the *Oosthoek* is given fairly short shrift. In their reports the three Governors of the North-East Coast of Java in the period of the study, Johan Andries Baron Von Hohendorff (1748-1754), Nicolaas Hartingh (1754-1761), and Willem Hendrik van Ossenberch (1761-1765), mention only brief bits of information about the *Oosthoek* region.²¹ Yet a considerable fund of information about the Eastern Salient at this time can be found in the report of the official inspection tour made by Governor-General Van Imhoff through Java in 1746.²² The tide turned in 1766. By the beginning of 1767 there was a markedly higher influx in reports

²¹Memorie opgesteld door den heer Nicolaus Hartingh als aftredend gouverneur en directeur van Java's Noord-Oostkust voor zijn vervanger en opvolger den heer W. H. van Ossenbergh, Samarang, 26 October 1761', in De Jonge, *De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Nederlandsch-Indië*, ('s-Gravenhage, 1862-1909), vol. x, 330-372.

²² Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, 'Reis van den Gouverneur-Generaal van Imhoff, over Java in het jaar 1746,' *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* (BKI), (1853), 191-440.

and other correspondence sent from the *Oosthoek* of Java to the Governor-General and Council in Batavia. During the decade 1767-1777, the Governor-General in Batavia received no less than 450 reports and documents sent by various ranks of Dutch VOC officials serving in *Java's Oosthoek*.²³ These documents contain sophisticated reports about the social, economic, and political developments which could be observed in the six main regencies of the *Oosthoek*: Pasuruan; Probolinggo (Banger); Malang; Lumajang; Panarukan; and Blambangan (Banyuwangi). Some of these documents were edited and published by De Jonge.²⁴

Statistically, there is a decline in the number of reports and correspondence produced after 1778, but plausible information about this region can still be found in the *Memories van Overgave* of the four VOC Governors of *Java's Oosthoek*, Johannes Robbert van der Burgh (1771-1780), Johannes Siberg (1780-1787), Jan Greeve (1787-1791), and Pieter Gerard van Overstraten (1791-1796). These are complemented by the report written about the economic development in *Java's Oosthoek* by W. H. Ysseldijk (1799) at the end of the eighteenth century.²⁵

Some reports and journals of official duty tours undertaken by Dutch officials at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century are useful sources of more information about social and economic conditions in some areas in *Java's Oosthoek*. Two such important journeys were made by two Dutch officials in Java: the first by S. C. Nederburgh, Commissary General of the Netherlands East Indies, in 1798; and the second by N. Engelhard in 1802.²⁶ In the fullness of time, both officials eventually wrote extensive

²³ This survey is based on *Overgekomende Brieven en Papieren* (Letters and papers received) of Java's Noord-Oostkust, 1743-1798.

²⁴ De Jonge, *De Opkomst*, vols., x-xii.

²⁵ 'Memorie van J. R. van der Burgh, aftreden gouverneur van Java, 19 September 1780', in De Jonge, *De Opkomst*, vol. vi, 395-487; 'Memorie van Joh. Siberg, aftreden gouverneur of Java, 18 September 1787', in De Jonge, *De Opkomst*, vol. xii, 81-123; KITLV, H 19, 'Memorie tot informatie van Jan Greeve, Gouverneur & Directeur van Java's Noordoostkust aan Mr. P. G. van Overstraten, aankomend Gouverneur & Directeur van Java's Noordoost-kust, Semarang, 31 Augustus. 1791; 'Verslag van W.H. van Ysseldyk, over de gesteldheid van *Java's Oosthoek* (1799)', in De Jonge, *De Opkomst*, vol xii, 464-556.

²⁶ M. S. C. Nederburgh, *Journaal der Reize van M.S.C. Nederburgh, Gewezen Commissaris Generaal over Nederlands Indië, Langs Java's Noordoostkust in 1798* (Amsterdam: W. Holtrop, 1804), Engelhard, 'Verslag der reis van N. Engelhard naar de Hoven van

reports about *Java's Oostboek*. Information concerning the political and economic development of *Java's Oostboek* was given a more rounded dimension at the end of the century with the publication of Van Hogendorp's document during his years as *Gezaghebber* of Java's *Oostboek*.²⁷ For the subsequent period, the two publications of H. J. Domis, Resident of Pasuruan and Surabaya, are irreplaceable. The first publication is the journal of the journey through Java which he undertook in 1808, and the second is a monograph describing the Residency of Pasuruan during the first two decades of nineteenth century.²⁸

The Javanese Sources on Java's Oostboek

The bulk of Javanese sources employed in this study are *babad* (Javanese chronicles). It is important to consider these indigenous sources in order to construct a local perspective. In Javanese historiography, such sources are categorized as *Babad Pasisiran* (coastal/peripheral chronicles) to distinguish them from all other *babad* produced in the Principalities of Central Java, Surakarta and Yogyakarta. Significantly, a number of these *Babad Pasisiran*, though retaining the structure of a traditional chronicle, was written with reference to Western sources and information. A series of East Javanese *babad* was composed during both the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. Originals and manuscript copies of these *babad* are now available in the *Universiteitsbibliotheek* (UB) Leiden (Leiden University Library), the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta, and the Library of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Indonesia likewise in Jakarta.

As in other Javanese *babad*, the main concern of the compiler is to record political events and note down genealogical information about the ruling dynasty. As can be seen in some major *Babad Blambangan*, of which there are six: namely: *Babad Wilis*; *Babad Sembar*; *Babad Tawang Alun*; *Babad Bayu*; *Babad Mas Sepuh*; and *Babad Notodiningratan*, the story

Soeracarta en Djocjacarta, naar *Oostboek* en de Residentien Japara Rembang and Joana (1802)', in De Jonge, *De Opkomst*, vol. xiii, 118-233.

²⁷ Dirk van Hogendorp, *Verzameling van Stukken Rakende de Zaak van Dirk van Hogendorp, Oppor-Koopman in Dienst der Oost-Indische Compagnie, en Gezaghebber over Java's Oostboek gedrukt voor den Auteur*. (Den Haag: 1801).

²⁸ Domis, 'Aantekeningen'; Idem, *De Residentie Passeroean*.

of the struggle of the consecutive kingdoms of Blambangan to defend their sovereignty against the invasion of Mataram and the Dutch Company is well documented. These *babad* complement each other in both their versions of events and their content. The *Babad Blambangan* (KBG 63) is the most interesting collection. It features very beautiful illustrations. Wherever possible I have inserted them into the two first chapters. Discussion of these *babad* in this thesis keeps very close to the philological research done by Winarsih Arifin, Pigeaud and Darusuprpto.²⁹ Note that in the titles of the *babad* a slightly different spelling is used for some place names, for example *Babad Bandawasa* instead of Bondowoso.

Structure

The first two chapters of this study introduce the political history of *Java's Oosthoek* up to the first half of the eighteenth century, with special reference to the fall of the Blambangan dynasty and the actual incentive which prompted the Company to dispatch a military expedition to occupy Blambangan. It also elucidates the fate of the Central Javanese prince, *Pangeran Singasari* and his son, Raden Mas, who persisted in their opposition to the Company for twenty years, and the final outburst of resistance offered by their allies, the descendants of the famous rebel Surapati, to the Company in Malang and Lumajang. It shows the intractability of these two rebel families in their opposition to the Dutch.

The political developments in the first five years of the Dutch occupation in Blambangan are described in Chapter Three and Four. It examines the origins and the sudden appearance of the rebel *Pangeran Wilis* in 1768 and Regent Sutanagara in 1770, and the Pseudo-Wilis in 1771. The plan of rebellion drawn up by Regent Sutanagara robbed the Dutch authorities in Blambangan of their trust in the local elite. After forcing the people of Blambangan to accept Islam, the Company handed over the reins of the administration to some members of the

²⁹ Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Blambangan* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Budaya, 1995); Idem, *Babad Sembar* (Naskah Dokumen Nusantara), Lembaga Penelitian Prancis untuk Timur Jauh: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, (Jakarta - Bandung, 1980); Idem, *Babad Wilis* (Naskah Dokumen Nusantara), Lembaga Penelitian Prancis untuk Timur Jauh: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Jakarta, Bandung, 1980

Javanese elite imported from Surabaya. If the forcible imposition of Islam had incited Sutanagara's rebellion, it was the Javanization being thrust upon the area which fed the desire for rebellion of the Pseudo-Wilis.

Chapter Five examines the administrative changes in Blambangan. It discusses how the Company set about dealing with the thorny problem of local ethnic sentiment in its organization of the local administration and leadership. After the rebellion of the Pseudo-Wilis, the Dutch authorities in Blambangan grew more aware of the problems engendered by religious and ethnic sentiment in this region, realizing that the Balinese element had its roots deep in the history of the region and had become an integral part of the ethnic composition of Blambangan. Although the problem of local leadership did not adhere strictly to this pattern, pragmatically the election of a local leader had to be permitted to be swayed by the local sentiment. This chapter also examines some of the reasons which prompted the Dutch to reorganize the administration and to try to redress the depopulation in Blambangan.

Chapter Seven analyses the reaction of the mercantile communities to the Dutch presence in *Java's Oosthoek* in the late eighteenth century. It explains the role of the Buginese and Mandarese merchants in the trade and politics of this region, and then moves on to the destruction of the island base of Nusa Barong as an alternative trading port and shelter for an eclectic mixture of free traders, smugglers, and Buginese pirates.

Finally the book closed with political development in *Java's Oosthoek* during the transition period, 1800-1813, examining the roots of social disturbances in Probolinggo and other places in the western part of Blambangan as a result of the colonial policy of leasing and selling the western part of Blambangan and Probolinggo to the Chinese entrepreneurs.