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

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FALL OF BLAMBANGAN IN 1768

#### *Introduction*

Since the passing of the age of decolonization, new viewpoints have been developed which challenge the traditional perspectives on the ways and means of imperialism.<sup>1</sup> Ronald Robinson is one of the iconoclastic scholars who have devised a new explanation to unravel the mystery the sudden success of European colonization in Asia and Africa in the Age of Imperialism.<sup>2</sup> His criticism of the old theory of imperialism, which explained the genesis of new colonial empires mainly in terms of superior power and political and economic circumstances in Europe, led him to focus his analysis on the non-European foundations of European imperialism. He reached the conclusion that the success of Europeans in subduing and manipulating the polymorphic societies of Asia and Africa was determined by the degree of collaboration afforded them by the indigenous elites. G. V. Scammell adopted a similar approach with special reference to the establishment of Portuguese power in Asia a few centuries earlier. He found it paradoxical that Portugal, one of Europe's most isolated and backward countries in early modern times successfully played a pioneering role in Europe's overseas expansion into the rich and populous world of Asia.<sup>3</sup> The secret of the Portuguese success in conquest and empire-building was that they found themselves local allies: 'indigenous assistants', who could serve the imperial administration and assist in exploitation. This historiographical approach was developed further by David Henley, who proposed such concepts as the 'stranger king' and the 'invited'

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (eds.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, 117-142.

<sup>3</sup> G. V. Scammell, 'Indigenous Assistance in the establishment of Portuguese Power in Asia in the sixteenth Century', *Modern Asia Studies (MAS)*, 14/1 (1980), 1-11.

colonizer when discussing the history of the Dutch occupation of North Sulawesi.<sup>4</sup> During the protracted process of colonization, which in the case of North Sulawesi took almost three centuries, the Dutch never took unilateral initiatives on their own but reacted to unsolicited invitations from indigenous rulers to intervene in local strife. In looking at Java, Luc Nagtegaal reached a similar conclusion, arguing that the people in Java's North-East Coast and Madura felt little or no sense of supra-regional solidarity with Mataram, and that the lax political relationship between centre and periphery allowed the coastal Regents to place their loyalties elsewhere; pragmatically one option was making themselves vassals of the Company.<sup>5</sup>

This growing attention paid to local agency and the logic of the local situation has also led to a reassessment of the patterns of conquest and overseas empire-building. Resuming the work of African and Asian area specialists over the past four decades, Michael Adas has pointed out that the supremacy of the 'white hero' armies in wars and overseas conquests has been wildly exaggerated.<sup>6</sup> Though the organizational advantages of European-led military forces were apparent in Java and India by the late eighteenth century, European land weaponry was not markedly superior. On land the margin of victory which the Dutch and British enjoyed was overwhelmingly the outcome of quarrels among rival kingdoms and quarrels within indigenous ruling groups. The Europeans, moreover, had the financial wherewithal to buy allies and recruit soldiers from the peoples of the Indonesian Archipelago and South Asia and they were even open to accepting financial backing from indigenous trading groups disgruntled by the exactions and constraints imposed by their own rulers. Many of these factors also played a role in Blambangan, the eastern most region of Java to which we now shall address ourselves.

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<sup>4</sup> David Henley, *Jealousy and Justice: The Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Northern Sulawesi*, (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 2002); *See also* Idem, 'Conflict, Justice, and the Stranger-King: Indigenous roots of colonial Rule in Indonesia and Elsewhere', *Modern Asian Studies (MAS)*, 38/1 (2004), 85-144.

<sup>5</sup> Luc Nagtegaal, *Riding of the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java, 1680-1743*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996), 35.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Adas, 'High Imperialist and the 'New' History', in Michael Adas (ed.) *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 311-344.

*Between Myth and Reality: Blambangan in the Early Period*

The Kingdom of Blambangan was located at the eastern tip of the Island of Java. It had a long history of its own, developing contemporaneously with the largest Hindu kingdom in Java, Majapahit. At the time of the collapse of Majapahit in the late fifteenth century, Blambangan stood on its own as the one solitary Hindu kingdom left in Java, controlling the larger part of *Java's Oostboek*. For almost three centuries, Blambangan was situated between two different political factions, the Islamic state of Mataram in the west, and various Hindu realms in Bali (Gelgel, Buleleng, and Mengwi) in the east. Both neighbouring powers simultaneously contested the territory of Blambangan to appease their own political and religious ambitions. The Balinese used Blambangan as a buffer against the Islamic expansion initiated by Muslim Mataram from the west and also found it useful to bolster the economy of Bali which was heavily overshadowed by endemic warfare. By the late sixteenth century, a few Western missionaries arrived in East Java to try to convert the local people and one century later the Dutch and British contested each other's political and economic power in the region. Internal disputes about the succession at the court of Blambangan impaired the kingdom, making it vulnerable to foreign intervention.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The etymology of the word *Blambangan* or *Balambangan*, is explained by Atmosudirdjo as follows: The name of Balambangan was found for the first time in the *Negara Kertagama* 1365 AD. The *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. 2, refers to the *Kawi-Balinesch Woordenboek* which explains the word *lambwang* (in Javanese and Indonesian *lambung*) as meaning edge or border, which should be pronounced *Kalambwangan*. The eighteenth-century VOC documents mention *Baleamboang* or *Balamboang*(han). Other spellings were *Balaboanghan* (as found in R. van Goens, 'Reijsbeschrijvingen na Mataram' (1856), 307.), *Baliboangh* and *Balimbang* (in *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. 4, 300) or *Bolamboan*. P. J. Veth relates the word *Balambangan*, which means 'borderland' or 'frontier', to the *Wong Pinggir* or Peripheral People. Two articles in the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* under the titles 'Pinggir' and 'Tenggereezen', referring to the prisoners who were transported to Mataram from Blambangan during the Mataram-Blambangan Wars in 1625-1645. See P. J. Veth, *Java: Geographisch, Ethnologisch, Historisch*, vol. iv, 103-104. Atmosudirdjo himself offers an alternative interpretation of the word *Balambangan* which might have come from two words *bala*, 'people' and (*i*)*mbang*, 'border'. Brandes explains the spelling of *Balamboang*(han) from the Osing dialect, in which it was pronounced as *Balambjangan* or *Balambwangan*. J. L. A., Brandes, 'Verslag over een babad Balambwangan' (1894), 325. See also R. S. P. Atmosudirdjo, *Vergelijkende Adatrechtelijke Studie van Oost Javaise, Madoerezen en Oesingers*. (Amsterdam: 1952), 2-4.

Blambangan hardly figures in Indonesian historiography. In his pioneering *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia* (Introduction to Indonesian History) and his collective volumes on the *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*<sup>8</sup> (National History of Indonesia), Sartono Kartodirdjo devotes not a single sentence to the region. Before the publication of I Made Sujana in 2003, episodes of Blambangan history could be found only in the works of C. Lekkerkerker and H. J. De Graaf. Lekkerkerker's important work on *Java's Oosthoek* is very rarely consulted by Indonesian readers because it is written in Dutch. Nevertheless, I have gladly made use of his pioneering research. The dramatic story of Blambangan is nonetheless quite popular among Indonesian people, particularly those who live in Java, because the romance of the Blambangan kingdom has repeatedly been written about in various novels or recounted in the local oral and written tradition (*babad*). Hence, Blambangan is more or less a never-never land in the minds of most people in Indonesia.<sup>9</sup>

In 1935, a novel about Blambangan under the title *Digdaja* was published in the literary magazine *Penghidoepan*. The author of this novel, Tan Boen Swie (T. B. S.), tried to answer the puzzle of the origins of the *Tiyang Pinggir* or *Wong Pinggir*, a separate community living in Surakarta and Yogyakarta.<sup>10</sup> The *Tiyang Pinggir* originated from the eastern tip of the island of Java or *pinggiran* (periphery), Blambangan to be precise. The *Tiyang Pinggir* or Blambanganese people are famous of being *digdaya* (invulnerable). Tan Boen Swie narrates that in the Mataram period, men from Blambangan were used as *coban* (guinea-pigs) for the weapons which were to be used in battle. If a man died, the weapon would be declared powerful and battle worthy.<sup>11</sup> The women were in demand as wet nurses for royal children. People

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<sup>8</sup> Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia: Dari Emporium ke Imperium, 1600-1800* [Introduction to Indonesian History: From Emporium to Imperium, 1600-1800] (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1987); Idem. (et.al.), *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*. [National History of Indonesia] 6 volumes, (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan & Kebudayaan, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> I Made Sudjana, *Nagari Tawon Madu: Sejarah Politik Blambangan Abad XVIII* [The Honey Bee State: A Political History of Blambangan in the Eighteenth Century] (Bali: Larasan-Sejarah, 2001); C. Lekkerkerker, 'Blambangan' *IG*, 45/2, (1923); H. J. de Graaff, *Geschiedenis van Indonesië* (s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1949).

<sup>10</sup> Concerning *Tiyang Pinggir*, see Soehari, 'Pinggir', *Djava*, 5-6, (1929), 160-168.

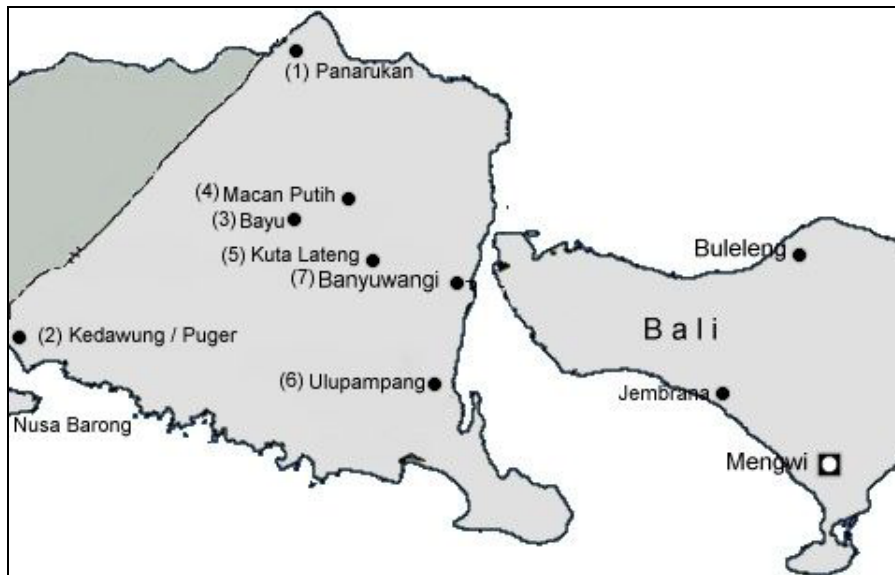
<sup>11</sup> Tan Boen Swie, *Digdaja* [Invulnerable], (Soerabaja: Tan's Drukkerij, 1935). It published also in *Penghidoepan*, no. 128, (1935). The second novel, *Tjoban: Samboengan dari Digdaja* [Guinea Pig: Prolonged of Invulnerable], (Soerabaja: Tan's Drukkerij, 1936), it published also in *Penghidoepan*, no. 133, (1936).

believed that during their pregnancy Blambangan women assiduously drank a herbal infusion made from the leaves of the *rajegwesi*. This turned the colour of their breast milk *satengah wulung* (semi-indigo), and a baby who consumed this milk would grow up a *digdaya* (invulnerable) person. When Blambangan was defeated by Mataram, the *Tiyang Pinggir* were transported to Mataram and recruited into the court army, where they were referred to as *Prajurit Blambangan* (Blambangan soldiers). After the division of the state of Mataram in 1755, the *Prajurit Blambangan* corps was also divided into two parts. One half remained under the administration of Surakarta and the other was transferred to the new Sultan, Hamengkubuwana I of Yogyakarta. In Surakarta, during the reign Pakubuwana III, the *Prajurit Blambangan* corps was disbanded because they were no longer *digdaya*, but they were recruited again during the reign of Pakubuwana IV (1788-1820). This new corps was awarded 400 *pangkon* of *lungguh* (cultivated land) or around 100 *bahu*, located in the vicinity of Kartasura and Ngadireja. During the reign of Pakubuwana IV the *Prajurit Blambangan* corps was under the command of *Pangeran Aria Mangkubumi II*. After the death of Mangkubumi II, the *Prajurit Blambangan* corps was divided into two parts; the *Suratetana* and the *Jayatetana*, which later became more popularly known under the name *Prajurit Kartasura*. After that time, the name *Prajurit Blambangan* fell into abeyance in Surakarta.

The image of Blambangan as homeland of *wong digdaya* still persists today. Banyuwangi, the current name for Blambangan, has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the most powerful centres of black magic and other supernatural powers in Indonesia; an honour it shares with Banten in West Java and the island of Lombok. The black magic practised in Banyuwangi today is believed to be a blend of animistic belief and Islamic mysticism nurtured in the atmosphere of inter-religious conflict which held the court of Blambangan in its grip from the sixteenth century. The people of Banyuwangi wholeheartedly believe that all disasters - whether personal or communal - are attributable to black magic. Unusual or sudden deaths, crop failure, death of livestock, and marriage problems are all thought to be the nefarious work of local *dukun santet* (black magic practitioners). In 1998, the massacre of over a hundred black magic practitioners became one of the major political issues of the administration of President Abdurrachman Wahid.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Concerning this massacre, see Veven S. P. Wardhana (ed.), *Geger Santet Banyuwangi* [The Santet Tumult of Banyuwangi], (Institut Studi Arus Informasi ISAI). See also S.



The Capital City of Blambangan from 1596-1774

Blambangan was a fragmentary state of which the structure had been made even more fragile by internal political disputes, war, and their inexorable consequences: foreign intervention and occupation. Since its foundation at the end of the thirteenth century, the capital city Blambangan was located in six different places.<sup>13</sup> Although significant historical artefacts have been found dating from the earliest period of the kingdom, information about this kingdom is confined solely to local historical traditions which in most cases are inextricably intermingled up with myth and legend. Many historians believe that shortly after the fall of Tumapel or Singasari and the foundation of Majapahit in the late of the thirteenth century (1293), a new realm was founded in the eastern part of Java which bore the name of Blambangan. The founder of this kingdom and the exact location of its

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Saiful Rohim, *Merah Darah Santet di Banyuwangi* [The Red Blood of Santet in Banyuwangi], Jakarta: Metro Pos, 1998); Jason Brown, 'The Banyuwangi Murders' (The Australian Consortium of In Country Indonesian Studies, 1999); Sunarlan, 'Kekerasan Negara dan Konflik Elite: Studi Kasus di Banyuwangi 1998-1999' [State Violence and Elite Conflict: The Case Study of Banyuwangi], *Jurnal Demokrasi dan HAM*, vol. 2 (2002), 110-136.

<sup>13</sup> The idea of Blambangan as fragmentary state was introduced by I Made Sujana. The author associates Blambangan with *Nagari Tawon Madu* or The Honey Bee State. See, I Made Sujana, *Nagari Tawon Madu*, 3.

capital are difficult to determine. The prose version of the *Babad Blambangan* states that the first king of Blambangan was *Menak Sopal*, but the *babad* writer explains that there is nothing which can be said about this king and his administration.<sup>14</sup> Another chronicle, the *Babad Sembar*, puts Lembu Miruda at the top of the Blambangan family tree and locates his capital city in Watu Putih (near Panarukan). Blambangan is also mentioned in the fourteenth century (1365) in a Javanese *kakawin* (Old Javanese poem), the *Nagarakertagama*, and a Malay chronicle, the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasei*. Another local source, the *Serat Pararaton*, states that during the reign of Kalagemet or Jayanagara (1309-1328), Majapahit extended its power to the eastern part of Java, penetrating the area from Lumajang eastwards including Blambangan. Later, during the administration of Rajasanagara or Hayamwuruk (1350-1389), this region was granted to his son Bhre Wirabumi. On the death of Hayamwuruk in 1389 his cousin and son-in-law, Wikramawardana, came to power, but ten years later this ruler abdicated and withdrew to the inland to become a *tapa* or hermit. He took this decision after the death of his only son, who was originally intended to be his successor. Before his abdication, he appointed his only surviving daughter, Dewi Suhita, to be his heir. Bhre Wirabumi disputed the former king's decision, and tried to liberate Blambangan from Majapahit. This led to the outbreak of the war between Majapahit and Blambangan (1404-1406), which ended in the defeat of Bhre Wirabumi, who was decapitated. His head was presented to the Queen of Majapahit.

The history of the death of Bhre Wirabumi is similar to the one told in the famous Javanese epic *Serat Damarwulan*. J. L. A. Brandes associates Bhre Wirabumi with King *Menak Jingga*, an antagonistic figure of that epic. The line taken in this story is that *Menak Jingga*, the king of Blambangan, did not recognize Majapahit sovereignty and that he was eager to marry the Queen of Majapahit, Kencanawungu (Dewi Suhita). The Queen rejected *Menak Jingga's* proposal and sent Damarwulan to Blambangan to kill him. During this war, *Menak Jingga* was murdered and his head presented to the Queen. As his reward, the Queen married Damarwulan and installed him on the throne.<sup>15</sup>

The writer of the *Babad Blambangan* also locates the story of *Menak Jingga* in the main plot of the history of Blambangan. According to

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<sup>14</sup> *Babad Notodiningratan*, in Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Blambangan*, (Yogyakarta: Bentang Budaya, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Brandes, 'Verslag over een Babad Balambwangan'.



this *babad*, after its subjugation King Brawijaya granted Blambangan to Ajar Gunturgeni, a *tapa* from Tengger, who had bravely driven the enemy out of Majapahit. This *tapa* was also given a new name, Pamengger. However, Pamengger had no children who might have succeeded. All he had was his dog. He transmogrified his dog into a human being, but the creation was imperfect, the head still retained its dogface. He named this creature *Menak Jingga* and installed him on the throne. From this point the story continues as in the above-mentioned epic. Again, *Menak Jingga* is decapitated by Damarwulan.

Bhre Wirabumi, Pamengger, and *Menak Jingga* probably all refer to one and the same figure. If the first is accepted as the more historical figure, the latter two must actually be personifications of the first. The statue which is mentioned by Veth was probably the statue of Bhre Wirabumi. Whoever the writer of the epic of Damarwulan was, he must have been someone who was passionate about the glory of Majapahit. *Menak Jingga's* attitude was considered inhuman and promptly associated with doglike behaviour. Probably, the writer of the *Babad Blambangan* was averse to accrediting such a questionable person as Bhre Wirabumi or Pamengger, to the Blambangan family tree. Therefore, he created a villain, *Menak Jingga*, who could assume all the more detestable attributes of Pamengger. In other words, the writer recognizes *Menak Jingga* as one of the Blambangan kings, but genealogically he was unrelated to the main line of the family. It was probably an attempt to expunge any political stain on the Blambangan ruling dynasty.

The famous Javanese chronicle, the *Serat Pararaton*, gives no useful clue to the fate of Blambangan after the death of Bhre Wirabumi in 1406, but the *Babad Blambangan* clearly mentions a certain *Menak Dadaliputih*. This *babad* explains that after the death of *Menak Jingga*, the King of Majapahit, Brawijaya, appointed *Menak Dadaliputih*, the son of *Menak Jingga*, the new lord of Blambangan. *Menak Dadaliputih* was also assassinated when the king found out that he had stolen a prominent Majapahit *pusaka*, a *keris* (dagger) named *Kyai Sumelagandring*. However, here there is an inexplicable gap in the story. The *babad* writer suddenly jumps to another event which took place in Blambangan one and half century later. Another Blambangan chronicle, *Babad Sembar*, presents a completely different version about Blambangan's ruling dynasty. As mentioned above, the *Babad Sembar* states that Lembu Miruda, the son of Brawijaya of Majapahit, was the first king of Blambangan. This would seem to suggest that, after the

assassination of *Menak* Dadaliputih, the Majapahit ruler preferred not to install a new lord of Blambangan from the rebel dynasty of Bhre Wirabumi, but his own son, Lembu Miruda. In other words the writer of *Babad Sembar* traced the Blambangan ruling dynasty only from the line of King Brawijaya which was genealogically related to the Blambangan rulers of the eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

### *Blambangan in the Seventeenth Century*

By the late sixteen century, Blambangan had fallen under the sway of the Balinese King of Gelgel. Lekkerkerker believes that after 1600 the kings of Blambangan shared Balinese origins. In the meantime, Mataram also began to consolidate its power in East Java. In 1625, Sultan Agung (1613-1646) sent military expeditions to Blambangan, involving 20 to 30,000 warriors. In 1628, Blambangan asked for Dutch assistance to repulse these invasions of Mataram, but the siege of Batavia by Sultan Agung's troops (1628-1629) vitiated this appeal. In 1631 Panarukan, the capital city of Blambangan, was destroyed by pirates, and its inhabitants fled six miles inland. In 1636, Mataram launched a new attack on Blambangan laying the whole land waste. With the help of the Balinese, reconstruction work commenced. Governor-General Van Diemen wrote to the *Heeren XVII* on 18 December 1639 that the *Susubunan* had again sent troops to Blambangan, and had also attacked Bali. The *Babad Tanah Djawi* says that this expedition was carried out under the leadership of *Pangeran Selarong* and *Raden Padureksa*. Pasuruan was attacked first. The King of Blambangan, Sang Dipati, asked assistance from Bali, but received only 500 men under the leadership Dewa Lengkar, Dewa Agong Panji Buleleng and Panji Macan Kuning. Sang Dipati was defeated but it was not clear whether or not he was killed. His son, *Mas Kembar*, succeeded him, but after a long and bloody war Blambangan was conquered. *Mas Kembar* was deported to Mataram with a large number of his followers, but after he promised to remain loyal to Mataram he was re-installed as the King of Blambangan.<sup>17</sup>

After the death of Sultan Agung of Mataram, the Dewa Agong of Gelgel recaptured the suzerainty of Blambangan, and a new king was installed. Angered by this insubordination, Amangkurat I sent troops

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<sup>16</sup> *Babad Sembar* in Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Blambangan*.

<sup>17</sup> Lekkerkerker, 'Blambangan', 1038.

to Blambangan under Wiraguna, Danupaya, and the *Bupati* (Regent) of Sampang, forcing *Mas Kembar* to flee to Bali. Another 1,500 inhabitants were deported to Mataram but never reached their destination. On the way back to Mataram, Wiraguna and Danupaya were assassinated on the order of Amangkurat I, because they had failed to pursue their attack to Bali. The deported Blambanganese were abandoned in Taji (Prambanan) from where half of them fled home. The king of Blambangan returned to his country. In 1647, the Dewa Agong of Bali sent another envoy to Batavia, asking for Dutch assistance, but in February 1648 the envoy returned empty-handed.<sup>18</sup>

In 1651 Governor-General Reiniersz sent an envoy, Jacob Bacharach, to Gelgel offering an alliance against Mataram, but when he arrived in Gelgel, he found the Balinese kingdom had fallen apart. Karangasem, Mengwi and Buleleng were now independent. The *Gusti Agong* of Karangasem seized power in Gelgel. Under these circumstances, the King of Mataram retained his suzerainty over Blambangan, and henceforth the ruler of this kingdom had to send envoys and tribute presents to Mataram on an annual basis. In 1659, Mataram mounted another expedition to Blambangan. Mataram troops attacked and destroyed Puger on the south coast of Blambangan and its inhabitants were again deported to Mataram.<sup>19</sup>

Blambangan entered a peaceful and prosperous period during the reign of Tawangalun (1665-1692). There is no much information to be found in the VOC archives about the situation of Blambangan during this reign except for the last year of his administration, just before his death in 1692. Fortunately, a few local manuscripts, composed half a century after his death, are still well preserved. Three philologists, Brandes, Winarsih Arifin, and Darusuprpto have examined these texts.<sup>20</sup> In his analysis on the *Babad Blambangan* in *tembang* version, Brandes says that the writer of this *babad* was pro-Balinese.<sup>21</sup> By

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 1039; See also H. J. De Graaf, *De Regering van Sultan Agung, vorst van Mataram, 1613-1645, en die van zijn voorvanger Panembahan Seda-ing-Krapjak, 1601-1613*, (s-Gravenhage: Verhandelingen van het KITLV, No. 23, 1958).

<sup>19</sup> Lekkerkerker, 'Blambangan', 1039.

<sup>20</sup> Brandes, 'Verslag over een Babad Balambangan' *TBG*, 37, (1894), 325-365; Idem, 'Nalezing over een Babad Balambangan', *TBG*, 38, (1895), 282-288; Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Blambangan*, (Yogyakarta: Benteng, 1995); Darusuprpto, 'Babad Blambangan: Pembahasan - Suntingan Naskah - Terjemahan' [Babad Blambangan: Discussion, Text Editing and Translation] (Dissertation of Gadjah Mada University, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Brandes: 'Verslag over een Babad Balambangan', 453-457, and 348-365.

comparing three different sources from De Jonge, Brandes, and J. C. Wikkerman, Lekkerkerker tried to reconstruct the history of Blambangan during the reign of Tawangalun.

Tawangalun was the son of Tapauna of Kedawung. He came to power in 1655. His younger brother, *Mas Wila*, held the office of *Patih* (Prime Minister), but four years later, he rebelled against his brother. Tawangalun fled from the palace and found shelter in Bayu, the place which was to become the headquarters of the Blambanganese rebel, the Pseudo-Wilis one hundred years later. Here he built a new *kraton* and won the support of the people of Blambangan. Six years later his younger brother, *Mas Wila*, came to attack and lay protracted siege to Bayu. Eventually the invader was killed. Afterwards, Tawangalun controlled the whole realm of Blambangan. He was given the title *Pangeran Adipati* of Macan Putih, after he withdrew to live as an ascetic in Pangabekten, to the south-east of Mount Raung.<sup>22</sup>

The prose-*babad* edited by Brandes says that he was the founder of the city Macan Putih in the wilderness of Sudyamara. Wikkerman believed that this was indeed the capital city of Blambangan during the reign of Tawangalun (now the ruins are still cared for by the local inhabitants. This mainly concerns the *Kraton* Macan Putih, a place where the body of Tawangalun underwent *moksa* (disappeared or in Buddhism became free from reincarnation) and went to heaven. Interestingly, the *jurukunci* (caretaker) of this place believes that Tawangalun is considered as a kind of *Wali* (saint) who propagated Islam in this region.<sup>23</sup> In 1805, some ruins of brick walls were still visible inside the wilderness. Macan Putih, located in the village Malar to north of Ragajampi, is now nothing more than a little mound and brick ruins. The house of Macan Putih was once surrounded by a big brick wall.<sup>24</sup> This ruin indicates that during the reign of Tawangalun, Blambangan was growing in prosperity and there were well established temples and cities before they were destroyed by Mataram. Around 1676, Tawangalun decided to try to liberate himself from Mataram and consequently stopped paying his annual tribute visit to Mataram.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1040.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 1041.

<sup>24</sup> N. J. Krom, *Inleideing tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, vol. ii, ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1920), 409-416. See also Idem., 'De regering van Matjan Poetih', 429.

<sup>25</sup> Lekkerkerker, 'Blambangan', 1041.



The Grave of Tawangalun in Macan Putih, Banyuwangi (Pic.2004)



The Grave of Tawangalun in Macan Putih, Banyuwangi (Pic.2004)

During the reign of Amangkurat I (1646-1677) of Mataram, many outlying vassals rose against this tyrant king. In 1680, a Dutch captain, Jeremias van Vliet, was sent to Blambangan to root out the Makassarese and the Malay rebels who had assisted Trunajaya in his rebellion. Van Vliet tried to bring Tawangalun to the *Susuhunan* of

Mataram, unaware he had declared his own freedom under the title of *Susubunan* of Blambangan. In 1685, Governor-General Camphuys sent Van Vliet to Blambangan again, with an offer of partnership to join Tawangalun who it was realized, was trying to liberate himself from Mataram. There is no single report to be found which records Tawangalun's response, but in 1690, Tawangalun did send his envoys to Jepara and Surabaya to co-operate with the VOC against Surapati, who had robbed him of part of his territory. Batavia responded by sending two envoys to Blambangan, Captain Jan Bervelt and Lieutenant Jan Francen on 14 September. They arrived in Macan Putih, and the King wanted to meet them on 18 September, but on the promised day the King died. Shortly afterwards a dispute broke out among the sons of Tawangalun about who would succeed their father and this was followed by a war of succession. The two Dutch envoys were expelled by the two oldest sons of Tawangalun, and returned to Batavia.<sup>26</sup>

It seemed nothing could blemish Tawangalun's name among the Blambangan people. According to the *Babad Blambangan* his body was laid down in the wilderness of Mlecutan, and on 13 October, or twenty-five days after his death, it was cremated in a gigantic sati together with 270 of his 400 wives. Seven days after the death of Tawangalun, *Pangeran Adipati* Sasranagara who had won the disputed succession died, and another son *Pangeran Adipati* Mancanapura or the *Pangeran* of Macan Putih, came to power. Wikkerman states that he set up a new *kraton* (court) in Wijenan, to the south of Macan Putih, because Macan Putih had been ruined. The new place was named Blambangan (Wijenan was located to the west of Macan Putih, but the new capital city of Blambangan was located further southwards, inland from Muncar). Mancanapura continued to rule independently, but Panarukan, Jember and Malang were occupied by Surapati who installed his relatives there as Regents.<sup>27</sup>

#### *Blambangan under the Suzerainty of Buleleng and Mengwi (1697-1764)*

After the war of succession, two sons of the deceased Sasranagara, *Mas Purba* and *Mas Patih*, sought assistance from the Kings of Buleleng *Gusti Ngurah* Panji Kertanagara and Panji Sakti. Perhaps they had been

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1041.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1043.

encouraged by their mother, *Mas Ayu Gading*, to seize the throne from their uncle in 1697. They also won the support of Karangasem and the Makassarese, the enemies of the VOC and the friends of Surapati. Part of the troops landed in Tanjungjajar or Watudodol, to the north of Banyuwangi, the others landed in Banyualit. Mancanapura with his few followers fled to Pasuruan via Garahan, Besuki, and Probolinggo. In Pasuruan he converted to Islam. He waited there to return to Blambangan but he was poisoned by his nephew and successor.



Umpak Songo in Muncar Banyuwangi which is believed to be a remnant of the Blambangan Palace

Upon the return of the Buleleng troops to Bali, 800 Blambanganese were transported to Buleleng taking with them, the king's *pusaka* which meant the sovereignty was symbolically transferred to Buleleng. *Mas Purba* was installed as the King of Blambangan under the name *Pangeran Adipati Danureja* (1698-1736). The Balinese called him Dewa Nyurga. He built his new court at Kebrukan, in Lateng, near Ulupampang. Danureja reigned for thirty-nine turbulent years. He was forced by the Balinese king to fight against Mataram and its ally. In 1726, Gusti Panji of Buleleng was at war with *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi, which ended with the defeat of the former. Consequently,

Buleleng had to hand over Blambangan to Mengwi. In 1729, *Gusti Agung* of Mengwi sent 700 warriors to occupy Blambangan.<sup>28</sup>

*The Cession of Java's Oosthoek to the VOC*

The series of massive military expeditions to Blambangan undertaken by Mataram in 1635 and 1636-40 resembled robberies more than occupation.<sup>29</sup> Mataram never exercised real power in the newly conquered land. Its armies plundered the goods and property of the court, and spirited away its inhabitants to be serfs in the capital city. Nor did the Islamization which is usually connected with the conquest take place at this time. Blambangan was never completely subjected, even if Mataram claimed that it held suzerainty over the whole of Java.

A century later, in 1743, King Pakubuwana II of Mataram ceded *Java's Oosthoek*, including Blambangan, to the VOC as reparation for the return of his throne which the VOC had snatched from the hand of the rebels.<sup>30</sup> The cession of this region was based on an old territorial claim of Mataram, which was far from being an actual political fact. In the late seventeenth century Pasuruan, Probolinggo, Malang, and Lumajang had been usurped by the famous rebel Surapati, and on the death of Surapati in 1705, Mataram was able to reoccupy only Pasuruan and Probolinggo. The other areas, such as Malang and Lumajang, were still held by the descendants of Surapati and constituted a virtually independent polity, whereas Blambangan in the eastern tip of Java was incorporated by the Balinese.<sup>31</sup> In other words, Pakubuwana II handed over lands that were not under his control.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 1043-1044.

<sup>29</sup> Concerning the attack on Blambangan by Sultan Agung *see* de Graaf, *De Regering van Sultan Agung, vorst van Mataram, 1613-1645, en die van zijn voorganger Panembaban Seda-ing-Krapjak, 1601-1613*, (s-Gravenhage: Verhandelingen van het KITLV, No. 23, 1958), in Indonesian translation, *Puncak Kejayaan Mataram: Politik Ekspansi Sultan Agung*, [The Peak of Mataram Glory: The Political Expansion of Sultan Agung] (Jakarta: Grafitipers, 1986), 262-271.

<sup>30</sup> Concerning this rebellion *see* W. G. J. Rummelink, *The Chinese war and the collapse of the Javanese State, 1725-1743*, (Leiden: KITLV, 1994).

<sup>31</sup> The Balinese realm of Buleleng under Gusti Panji Sakti had occupied Blambangan since 1659. *See* Soegiarto Sastrodiwiryo, *I Gusti Anglurah Panji Sakti Raja Buleleng, 1599-1680* [I Gusti Anglurah Panji Sakti the King of Buleleng, 1599-1680] (Kayu Mas Agung, 1995).





Map of *Java's Oosthoek* and Bali

After the treaty of 1743, Governor-General Van Imhoff and the Council of the Indies did not take any immediate action to exercise power in *Java's Oosthoek*, with the exception of Pasuruan and Probolinggo. In both places, Batavia established small fortresses which were manned by only a few European soldiers. The occupation of the rest of the region of *Java's Oosthoek* remained pending because of two reasons. First of all, the Company was again dragged into political disputes in Central Java which were not settled until 1757 when the Mataram kingdom was split up into three parts. At that time, the Dutch authorities in Batavia were not yet fully aware of the real political situation in the Oosthoek and of the latent threats coming from its main European competitor, the English East India Company, which at that time was extending its tentacles into the Archipelago and had even the temerity to establish an outpost near the Bali Strait. Though *Gezaghebber* Hendrik Breton of Surabaya had strongly urged for the construction of a new post in Blambangan, Batavia stuck to its decision not to establish a new settlement for the time being because the Company felt it had already overextended its presence in Java.

*Two Plots of Unsolicited Invitation*

A few years after the last assault on Blambangan by Mataram in 1647, Balinese troops from Buleleng conquered the region without eliciting any reprisal from Mataram. Since the second half of the seventeenth century, the fate of Blambangan was determined by the fragile political climate in Bali which was rife with conflict and war. The possession of Blambangan was contested by the three main realms in Bali, Buleleng - Gelgel in the north, Mengwi in the south, and Karangasem in the eastern part of the island. Blambangan, rich in timber, bird's nests, and rice was seen as a priceless acquisition by the kingdoms of densely populated Bali. In 1726, the tug-of-war between two Balinese realms, Buleleng and Mengwi, ended in the victory of the latter. Consequently, the King of Buleleng, Gusti Panji, had to hand Blambangan over to *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi. During almost one century of occupation, thousands of Balinese people moved across the strait and settled in Blambangan. This had a positive effect as the population increased and the economy began to flourish again.

In 1736, the King of Blambangan, *Pangeran Adipati* Danureja, passed away. *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi immediately sent forty Balinese soldiers under *Gusti Gedhe Lanang Denpasar* to intervene in the succession. *Raden Mas Noyang* (13 years old), son of the late king was proclaimed the new ruler under the name *Pangeran Adipati* Danuningrat or *Pangeran Adipati* Mangkuningrat (in the Dutch sources *Pangeran Pati*), while his brother, *Raden Mas Sirna* or *Mas Wilis*, was installed as *Patih* (chief minister), under the name *Wong Agong Wilis*. Because the new king was still very young, *Gusti Agong* installed a guardian Regent named *Ranggasatata*, a Balinese from Klungkung, to run the administration.

The politics of Blambangan during the reign of Danuningrat was heavily influenced by the influential aristocrat, Tepasana, whose ancestors had come from Lumajang.<sup>32</sup> Tepasana was disturbed by the fact that Blambangan was under Balinese control. He encouraged

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<sup>32</sup> The name of Tepasana is mentioned twice in local sources. First was the former Regent of Djapan who took refuge in Blambangan after the failed uprising against Mataram in the beginning of 1760s. Tepasana's connection with Danuningrat strengthened after the latter married his daughter. The second Tepasana is *Mas Bagus* Tepasana, the son of *Mas Ayu Tawi*, the sister of Danuningrat's father, Prince Danureja. This means that this Tepasana was cousin to Danuningrat. See Appendix 1, Family Tree of Tawangalun.

Danuningrat to subdue the Balinese influence in his administration which had grown stronger over the past few years. His influence became even more apparent when Danuningrat decided to dismiss Wilis, whose mother was from Bali, from his position as *Patih*. Wilis was devastated by this decision, but he raised no objection. He decided to leave Blambangan and build a new settlement at Pasisir Manis, on the southeast coast of Blambangan.<sup>33</sup> In 1763, an even more obvious attempt to reduce Balinese influence was engineered by Danuningrat, when he had his Balinese guardian, Ranggasatata, assassinated. A dispute between Sutajiwa, the son of Danuningrat, and Ranggasatata which had arisen during an *adu jengkerik* (cricket fight) was used as the pretext for this murder.<sup>34</sup>

Wilis interpreted both incidents as efforts to liberate Blambangan from the prevailing presence of Mengwi. He reported this situation to *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi, and the latter made a strong appeal to Danuningrat to extradite both Sutajiwa and Tepasana to Mengwi. After his first appeal was ignored by Danuningrat, a second appeal was delivered with the threat that *Gusti Agong* would send his troops to Blambangan to capture Sutajiwa and Tepasana by force. Since the departure of Willis, Blambangan had been defenceless because the Blambangan military forces were loyal to Wilis, who was very popular among the ordinary people, rather than to the King himself. Danuningrat's influence was limited only to the elite members within the court circle. When the Balinese soldiers invaded the palace, they met with no significant resistance. Danuningrat fled from the palace accompanied by his son and some other loyal followers and hurried to Banger, where he hoped to find mediators who could arrange a meeting for him with the Dutch authorities in Surabaya. With the help of the Regent of Banger and the Regent of Pasuruan, Danuningrat was able to meet the *Panembahan* of Madura, Cakradiningrat who did indeed introduce him to the Dutch commander of Pasuruan, Hogewitz, and the *Gezaghebber* of Surabaya, Hendrik Breton.

Besuki was chosen for the rendezvous between *Gezaghebber* Breton and Danuningrat. On 19 October 1763, Danuningrat accompanied by his two sons-in-law and 100 followers arrived there but was unable to meet Breton immediately, because the latter suggested he rest first and they meet on the following day. The Regent of Surabaya,

<sup>33</sup> *Babad Tawangalun* in Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Blambangan*, canto vii, 12-18.

<sup>34</sup> This dispute began in an *adu jengkerik* (cricket fight) arena. *Babad Tawangalun*, canto viii, 14-21.

Candranagara, the Regent of Pasuruan, Nitinagara, and the *Scriba* Jan Lapro also attended the meeting on October 20. Danuningrat announced that he had come to submit to the Company and requested assistance in expelling the Balinese who had been incited by his brother to occupy his territory. He promised to cede Blambangan and Lumajang, and to deliver the products required by the Company. Breton welcomed Danuningrat's offer to submit to the Company, but he would only accept it if Danuningrat put it in a written statement. He gave him some guidelines about how such a statement should be written and under what condition he would like to surrender. In his written statement, the contents of which he first discussed with the *Panembahan* of Madura, Danuningrat promised to deliver 600 *koyan* of rice, 10 *pikul* of wax, and 4 *pikul* of bird's nests. Those amounts were to increase in peace time. He also requested the Company to establish a military stronghold in Blambangan in order to pre-empt future Balinese invasions. He even promised to provide the materials necessary and the workers to build the fortress. All of these promises were written down and personally signed by Danuningrat.<sup>35</sup>

Breton regarded this offer as a good opportunity for the VOC finally to assert its sovereignty over the whole of Java and, at the same time, to increase the profit from this so far neglected territory. On 30 October 1763, he submitted a proposal to Batavia in which he stressed why the VOC should set up an establishment and raise its flag in Blambangan. In the preface to his proposal, Breton advised that if the VOC did not secure Blambangan immediately, the Balinese would entrench their occupation there. Breton was very concerned that many local inhabitants would perish in the ensuing warfare.<sup>36</sup> To avoid this lamentable situation the VOC should send troops and establish a trade factory in Blambangan, which would also stop the smuggling, indulged in by the British and the flow of foreign goods brought in to Blambangan by *smokkelaars* (smugglers) from Bali. The ruler of Palembang, who had established a trading relationship with Blambangan, should sign a contract with the Governor of the VOC in Semarang if he wanted to avoid being treated as a smuggler and prohibited from sailing to the Bali Strait. Blambangan was a potential market for opium, because many of inhabitants were opium-smokers. Therefore, the Company should dispense opium there to prevent the

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<sup>35</sup> Collectie Engelhard 19a, Consideration over Blambangan by Hendrik Breton, Surabaya 30 October 1763, 152.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 152

distribution of the foreign opium by Balinese and British merchants. In Blambangan an irrigation systems which utilized the many rivers could increase the local paddy cultivation, and provide a back-up supply for Batavia during periods of drought. Finally, the occupation of Blambangan would allow the Dutch to eradicate the rebels who were hiding in Malang and Lumajang.<sup>37</sup>

The negative response from Batavia and Semarang took Breton and Danuningrat completely by surprise. The Director of Java's North-East coast, Willem Hendrik Ossenberch, flatly rejected Breton's proposal, and suggested that Danuningrat should be left to face his own fate. The Governor wrote:

I admit that initially this project was not wholly objectionable to me, especially because *Pangeran Adipati* [Danuningrat] promised that if he could get his land back with the help [of the Company], a contract with the Company would be made, which all seemed promising. However, Their Excellencies are right in their opinion, that the purview of the Company has already been extended enough, and that new settlements do not correspond with the interests of the Honourable Company. Therefore, we have refused this request, and we leave *Pangeran Adipati* to his own fate.<sup>38</sup>

Failing to obtain Dutch assistance, Danuningrat sought alternative protection from the Regent of Lumajang, Kartanagara, the grandson of the famous rebel Surapati. But for the second time, Danuningrat's efforts were in vain. His arguments failed to convince the Regent, and he had to leave Lumajang empty handed. The upshot was that Danuningrat and Wilis were both confined in Mengwi by the *Gusti Agong* who was in control of Blambangan.<sup>39</sup>

It is obvious that there was a difference of opinion between the authorities in Batavia and Surabaya about Breton's proposal.

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<sup>37</sup> Malang and Lumajang were the residence of *Pangeran Singasari* and Raden Mas who collaborated with the descendants of the famous rebel, Surapati. They had strongly opposed the Giyanti Treaty of 1755 which divided Mataram into two parts.

<sup>38</sup> *Memorie opgesteld door den Raad Extraordinaris van Nederlansch-Indie en afgaand Directeur van Java's Noord-Ooskust, Willem Hendrik Ossenberch, om te strekken tot narigt van zijnen successeur, den Heer Johannes Vos, aankomend Gouverneur en Directeur van Java's Noord-Oostkust,* in De Jonge, *De Opkomst*, vol. xi, 24; *Babad Wilis* describes that Breton was very angry about this refusal and even Hogewits who was in charge of informing this bad news, had harshly condemned it. Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Wilis*, p. xxxv.

<sup>39</sup> According to the *Babad Tawangalun*, Wilis voluntary went to Bali with his brother *Pangeran Adipati* Danuningrat. *Babad Tawangalun*, in Winarsih Arifin, *Babad Blambangan*, canto viii, 27-35.

Ossenberch in Semarang should have been better acquainted with the real situation in the *Oosthoek*, but in his ignorance he did not undertake any vital action to convince the Batavian authorities of the significance of this proposal. Breton was transferred to Ambon not long after. Another reason behind the refusal was that the High Government in Batavia felt that, formally speaking, Danuningrat had no right to surrender his land to the Company, because under the terms of the treaty of 1743, Blambangan already belonged to the VOC. In other words, the Dutch Colonial Government in Batavia thought in legalistic terms and ignored the actual situation on the ground in this region.



The Governor-General in Batavia discusses the unsolicited invitation from the King of Blambangan (Coll. KBG 63, National Library, Jakarta)

The Dutch authorities had reacted differently to an earlier unsolicited invitation from King Tawangalun of Blambangan in 1692. At that time, Tawangalun offered the High Government in Batavia a military alliance united in the mutual purpose of destroying Surapati and his followers, who had plundered the property of Blambangan people and had devastated his territory. The King had promised to submit himself and assist the VOC in building a trade factory in Blambangan. Batavia responded immediately by sending two envoys,

Jan Francen and Jan Bervelt, but this alliance aborted because of the outbreak of the War of Succession in Blambangan. It seems that Batavia had reacted so promptly because it expected that a formal agreement could be reached with Blambangan.<sup>40</sup>

At the beginning of 1767, Batavia had a change of heart in its policy towards *Java's Oosthoek*, and it prepared a military expedition in response to reports concerning disturbing political developments in the *Oosthoek*, particularly in Blambangan, after the Balinese occupation of 1764. The Dutch uncovered a plot to set up an economic and political alliance between the Balinese rulers, both in Bali and Blambangan, and British merchants. This posed a threat to the position of the VOC in Java, particularly in the *Oosthoek*.

#### *The Motives for the Invasion*

After the death of Danuningrat, Blambangan was completely dominated by Mengwi. The outward and visible sign of this was that the King of Mengwi, *Gusti Agong*, installed two Balinese, Kotabeda and *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba, to administer it. During their administration, these Balinese governors tried to attract more local and foreign traders, especially English merchants, to visit Blambangan. Crucially this coincided with the English East India Company's plans to expand into the eastern part of the Indonesian Archipelago, in particular to ports in and around the Strait of Bali.

The reason for this new presence in the region was closely connected with the burgeoning English trading activities in Canton. The English East India Company 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* outside the monopoly of the Canton Co-Hong, where the terms of exchange would be more favorable than in China itself. The establishment of a new British settlement somewhere in the Indonesian Archipelago was thought to solve these problems. This scheme involved both the EIC and the British 'country traders'. In 1765, the Council of the EIC had already recommended some ports which might prove worthy of investigation to put this plan into action.

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<sup>40</sup> ANRI, Banyuwangi 5, A report written by J. Bervelt and J. Francen to the *Susubunan* of Blambangan in 1691-1692.

Among them were Pasir in East Kalimantan, the islands of Sumbawa and Bali and other ports eastwards of these.

In August 1766, three large British ships followed by fifteen *chialoup*, twenty-five *pancalang* and one hundred smaller vessels, carrying Buginese and Madurese noblemen aboard, arrived in Blambangan under the command of Edward Coles.<sup>41</sup> They approached one local Chinese merchant named *Encik* Lok, and gave him two pieces of green *laken* and two rolls of *armasijn* with the request that he help them obtain a permit from *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi to purchase rice. Through *Encik* Lok, the English merchants succeeded in exchanging one package of opium, twenty-one pieces of firearms, and two tons of gunpowder for ten *kojan* of rice.<sup>42</sup> The British also brought firearms and sold eight of them, purchasing rice, buffaloes, and cows from the Balinese governor of Blambangan, Kotabeda. Another ten buffaloes, several *kati* of rice, and a large quantity of timber of different sizes were acquired from *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba, *Gusti* Kotabeda, and *Gusti* Pasekan.<sup>43</sup>

Not unexpectedly, the Balinese rulers tried to benefit from the British arrival to further their own political interests. When the British landed in Buleleng, two different factions approached them offering partnership. The first offer came from the King of Karangasem who requested British support for his pending invasion of Blambangan. The British temporized by suggesting that the invasion should be postponed until December, and hinted that the peaceful benefits which might be derived from a British settlement would surpass those acquired as spoils of war in Blambangan. The second invitation came from a Chinese, Kay Ban, who claimed to have had a conversation with *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi, in which the latter had indicated his wish to see the British Company open a settlement in Blambangan. This offer whetted the British appetite to explore Blambangan. Therefore, they sailed westwards to Pangpang Bay on the east coast Blambangan. This visit seems to have made a good impression on the English captain. He postponed his voyage to Sumbawa and returned immediately to Bengkulu to discuss the outcome of the voyage. Before their departure, the British sent Kay Ban to Mengwi to obtain

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<sup>41</sup> VOC 3186, Report by the indigenous *Vaandrig*, *Bapak* Banjer, 16 August 1766, 673-7.

<sup>42</sup> VOC 3186, Report by *Encik* Mida, 4 September 1766, 699-704.

<sup>43</sup> VOC 3186, Report by the *Mantri* of Banger, Sastrayuda, 15 August 1766, 677-679.



confirmation of *Gusti Agong's* offer. Kay Ban was given some cloth to sell and a *perahu* to enable him to sail to Bengkulu afterwards with his report.<sup>44</sup>

The British expected that their presence in Pangpang Bay would stimulate the local Chinese to resume their arrack and sugar production and invite other Chinese immigrants to come and help them. The junks which brought the immigrants from China would give a boost to the local trade and provide Chinese goods at better terms than in Canton. The English East India Company could expect to benefit from the sale of iron, steel, copper, saltpeter and opium, the export of sandalwood, and the duties on arrack and sugar manufacture. Finally, the British settlement at Pampang Bay would allow the English Company to break the Dutch spice monopoly.

Shortly after the departure of the first British expedition, two British country traders visited Blambangan. They also became embroiled in the local conflict, but tended to support Karangasem's plan to occupy Blambangan by force after *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi refused their request to re-install Danuningrat and Wilis in Blambangan.<sup>45</sup> Immediately, a plan and preparations for an assault on Blambangan were made. If this assault succeeded, the British planned to build a *logie* (trading house) in Blambangan. A spy was sent ahead to Blambangan and two English ships, thirteen barks, and a numbers of *paduwakan* were prepared with a mixed company of troops from Karangasem, Tabanan, Badung, Sumenep, and Madura who be involved in this assault. A spy was also planted in Blambangan.<sup>46</sup> It was rumoured that the British also sought military assistance from Sumbawa.<sup>47</sup> Certainly, the British did discuss this plan with a Balinese

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<sup>44</sup> D. K. Basset, 'British Trade', 215.

<sup>45</sup> In 1766, the British presented some gifts; 1 gold *boker* [Javanese: *bokor*), 1 *lalanjang* or *tempat sirih* and a few packs of opium, to *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi with the friendly request to release both Blambangan noblemen. But *Gusti Agong* refused and said that *Pangeran Adipati* Danuningrat and *Pangeran Wilis* were his own business. VOC 3186, Report by Salammudin, 17 July 1766, 693-698; on that occasion the British also requested authorization to attack Madura, but *Gusti Agong* Mengwi also refused this because it would invite the Dutch to interfere, since Madura was a loyal subject of the VOC. VOC 3186, Report by indigenous *Vaandrig*, *Bapak* Banjer, 16 August 1766, 673-677.

<sup>46</sup> VOC 3186, Report by Bagusmida, Semarang 21 December 1766, 457 – 462.

<sup>47</sup> VOC 3186, Report by the indigenous *Vaandrig*, *Bapak* Banjer, 16 August 1766, 673-677.

from Buleleng, named Endo Banda Yuda.<sup>48</sup> A Buginese, named *Daeng Calak* (or *Daeng Mancalak*), was also involved in negotiations with the Mandarese and Chinese merchants who resided along the River Pangpang to win their support for this plan. The British had given one Chinese merchant 1,000 Rds to build a sugar-mill and plant sugar cane there.<sup>49</sup> Blambangan had built a few *benteng* along the shore, from the mouth of the River Pampang in the north, to the mouth of the River Pakem in the south, in order to repel an invasion by Karangasem.<sup>50</sup>

The Dutch were convinced that the British presence in Blambangan would not remain limited to just the purchase of rice and timber. The Governor of Semarang, Johannes Vos, as well as the *Gezaghebber* of Surabaya, Coop à Groen, reacted instantly to the growing trade by sending some *mata-mata* or spies to Blambangan and Bali to investigate British movements and collect information about possible local participation there. All these spies returned with confirmation that the British arrivals had not simply contented themselves with distributing opium and cotton, but that they also were trying to obtain a foothold there. However, the Dutch still needed more confirmation about the local participation. In August 1766, Governor Vos sent *Encik Mida* (Bagusmida) to Blambangan and Bali to find out more about the response of Blambangan and the Balinese people to the political crisis in Blambangan and the British arrival there. In Blambangan, to the disappointment of the Dutch emissary, Kotabeda was reluctant to express his own opinion on the matter, although *Encik Mida* had conveyed the *Gezaghebber's* promise to lend him one 1,000 Rds to resist the British.<sup>51</sup> The Balinese responded in a similar vein. *Gusti Agong* of Mengwi welcomed the Dutch envoy with surprise: Why did the Dutch so strongly oppose the arrival of British merchants in his territory? He tried to convince the Dutch envoy that the British had no other intention than selling opium, firearms, and retailing textiles, but when *Encik Mida* explained that the Dutch

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<sup>48</sup> VOC 3186, *Ngabehi* Surapernala of Besuki to the commandant of Pasuruan, Casper Lodewijk Tropponegro, 11 Augustus 1766, 707. *See also* VOC 3186, *Ngabehi* Surapernala to the commandant of Pasuruan Casper Lodewijk Tropponegro, 708.

<sup>49</sup> VOC 3186, Report by Bagusmida, Semarang 21 December 1766, 457 – 462; VOC 3186, *Ngabehi* Surapernala of Besuki to the commandant of Pasuruan, Casper Lodewijk Tropponegro, 4 September 1766, 705.

<sup>50</sup>VOC 3186, Report by indigenous *Vaandrig*, *Bapak* Banjer, 16 August 1766, 673-7; VOC 3186, Report by the *Mantri* of Banger, Sastrayuda, 15 August 1766, 677-9.

<sup>51</sup> VOC 3186, Kotabeda of Blambangan to *Ngabehi* Surapernala of Besuki, 23 August 1766, 677.

opposed the arrival of British merchants because they had sold opium at a very low price, the Dutch envoy was at loss of words.<sup>52</sup>

*Free Trade in and around Bali Strait*

One of the significant effects caused by the British presence in the region was the escalation in the free trade or as the Dutch preferred to call it, *smokkelhandel* or smuggling. The indigenous merchants from the surrounding areas were attracted by the opium and cotton which were distributed by the British at quite a low price, and offered the latter salt, rice and other foodstuffs in exchange. In fact, opium and textiles were also distributed by the Dutch, but the local traders preferred to buy these from the British merchants who offered them for more reasonable prices. Among these merchants were Buginese and Mandarese who were already acquainted with the British merchants and their merchandise because many Buginese were in the habit of sailing to Bengkulu in West Sumatra. The arrival of the British in the seas to the east of Java now shortened their voyage considerably and they could easily pick up the opium with only a minor risk.

These indigenous traders usually sailed without the obligatory pass as required by the Dutch authorities, because they were reluctant to purchase it from the local *sabbandar* or *bandar* appointed by the Dutch. In view of this oversight, the Dutch categorized them as *smokkelaars*. To avoid the Dutch patrols, these traders employed such risky strategies as sailing to the south of Java to Bengkulu in small vessels. Another strategy was pretending to be merely passengers and to use the ships of other traders who did hold a pass to sail from one place to another. In some cases they paid them, but in many cases they did not eschew the use of force to compel them to do so.

The adventures of *Encik* Saleh shed some light on the practice of 'smuggling' in this region. At the beginning of 1766, *Encik* Saleh, a petty Mandarese merchant who had been living in Batavia for two years, decided to move to Sumenep. Stories about the increasing demand for salt, rice and other foodstuffs by local and foreign merchants in East Java and Madura encouraged him to start a new business there. His fledgling enterprise began promisingly. He obtained a license from the Dutch in Sumenep to sell some foodstuffs in Blambangan. In March 1766, he sailed to Pampang Bay with six

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<sup>52</sup> VOC 3186, Report by *Encik* Mida, Semarang 21 December 1766, 457 – 462.

other Mandarese and Buginese aboard. He loaded his *gonting* with one *keoyan* of salt and a large quantity of coconuts to be exchanged in Blambangan for rice. *Encik* Saleh described Pampang Bay as one of the busiest ports in and around the Bali Strait. Many traders from different ethnicity, as Buginese, Mandarese, Chinese, Malays and Javanese regularly congregated there. When he entered the port of Pampang, he witnessed two British ships which were unloading opium and cotton. On that occasion, the British purchased timber, rice and salt. As he was about to return to Madura, four Malays merchants requested he take them to Buleleng. On the way to Bali they encountered a Dutch ship which was patrolling the strait. After *Encik* Saleh's vessel had been boarded, it was discovered that the four Malay merchants were carrying 20 *kati* of illegal opium which they had purchased from the British.<sup>53</sup> The Malays were arrested and sent to Surabaya, but escaped. When the captain of the Dutch patrol vessel found out about this, he asked *Encik* Saleh to pilot him to Buleleng where the fugitives were probably hiding, but *Encik* Saleh refused to do so saying that he no longer dared to sail to that port.<sup>54</sup>

The opium trade around the Bali Strait also involved members of the Javanese elite and Chinese merchants. In January 1767, three Regents from the northeast coast of Java, *Raden Tumenggung* Suradiningrat of Sedayu, *Raden Tumenggung* Tirtadirja, and *Raden Tumenggung* Astanagara of Gresik were summoned to the *landraad* in Semarang. These Regents were accused of participating in the opium trade in Pasir (East Kalimantan). The three Regents strenuously denied the accusation. They argued that the smugglers had forced their merchants to bring the opium over to Java from Pasir.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, a similar accusation was also levelled at the Regent of Juwana, *Ngabehi* Sebjaya. Two of his merchants, *Tosaya* and *Bapak* Sabra, in companion with two passengers, a Macassarese, *Si* Munen, and a

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<sup>53</sup>VOC 3186, Governor Johannes Vos to Governor General Petrus Albertus van der Parra, 1766, 643.

<sup>54</sup> VOC 3215, Copy report by Mandarese, *Encik* Saleh, 14 October 1766, 257-259.

<sup>55</sup> VOC 3215, the record of the *Landraad* meeting held in Semarang, 13 January 1767, 253-256. This meeting was also attended by Johannes Vos, the extraordinary councilor of the Indies, the Governor and Director of the Java's North-East Coast, *Adipati* Sura Adimanggala the Chief Regent of Semarang, *Raden Adipati* Jayaningrat the Chief Regent of Pekalongan, *Raden Tumenggung* Sumadiwiryana the Chief Regent of Kaliwungu, *Tumenggung* Sumanagara the chief Regent of Kendal, *Tumenggung* Wiranagara and Suradirja the Regent of Demak, and *Tumenggung* Citrasoma the Regent of Japara.

Malay, *Encik* Manan, were captured when the Chinese *bandar* of Pagirikan discovered a packet of British opium in their vessel, which they had tried to smuggle to Java from Buleleng. The *bandar* also discovered that these Javanese *juragan* (merchants) had sailed without a pass. The three Regents were fined 100 to 300 Rds.<sup>56</sup>

This British opium trade also drew in a number of Chinese merchants including the Captain Chinese of Surabaya, Han Bwee Kong (Han Boeijko in the Dutch archives). Kan Ga Sing, a man who introduced himself as a merchant of Han Bwee Kong, had sold his vessel to the British merchants in Pasir (East Kalimantan), and returned to Java with one and half chests of British opium.<sup>57</sup> Further investigation indicated that this man was a fugitive from Batavia. Meanwhile, the *Raad van Justitie* in Semarang was also investigating the case of the discovery of 200 pounds of opium in one *gonting* belonging to the Chinese merchant, Thee Kong. The opium, together with two cannons and some blunderbusses, had originated from *Gusti* Kotabeda of Blambangan, and was supposed to be delivered to *Gusti* Tamboa in Buleleng. Another Chinese merchant who worked for *Gusti* Kotabeda was captured as he was transporting opium from Batavia.<sup>58</sup>

Two Dutch ships sailing to the Bali Strait also seized a significant amount of British opium.<sup>59</sup> Captain Dekker, the captain of the ship, reported that no single British ship was to be found in Besuki, but he had discovered evidence that opium had been widely distributed there. In Panarukan, he arrested one *gonting* belonging to a Chinese merchant from Blambangan. The small vessel was loaded with illegal opium and some other goods, such as *strooisuiker*. In the Bali Strait, Dekker also captured some Malay merchants from Buleleng with twenty *kati* of opium and a letter which indicated that this opium had been ordered by the Chinese *bandar* of Surabaya. Another fifteen *kati* of British opium were discovered in one vessel belonging to a Javanese merchant from Bali. In the same vessel, Captain Dekker also came across one and a half chest of opium which had been purchased from the Dutch.

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<sup>56</sup> VOC 3215, Copy extract of the record of the *Rade van Justitie* of Semarang, Tuesday, 28 October 1766, 249-253. The report is written by Jacob Spiegel to Hermanus Munnik.

<sup>57</sup> VOC 3186, Governor Johannes Vos to Governor-General Petrus Albertus van der Parra, 1766, 655-6.

<sup>58</sup> VOC 3186, Governor Johannes Vos to Governor-General van der Parra in Batavia, 12 November 1766, 439-444.

<sup>59</sup> VOC 3186, Copy of the copy instructions for the *Opperstuurman* Jan Smit who was to sail from Sumenep to Bali, 683-686.

According to the investigation, the 'legal' opium was used as pretext for the 'illegal' one.<sup>60</sup>

*Collaboration and Indigenous Assistance*

The decision to mount a military expedition to Blambangan was made by the High Government in July 1766. After receiving additional reports from Surabaya and Semarang, Batavia decided to expand the scope of the project. The aim of the expedition now was not just to obstruct the British efforts to establish a trading factory in Blambangan, but also to eliminate the escaped rebels, *Pangeran Prabujaka* or *Singasari* and his son *Raden Mas*, who were reported to have found a new refuge in Malang. Prabujaka was the half brother of Sultan Mangkubumi, the first Sultan of Yogyakarta. When Mangkubumi concluded an agreement with the Company and Pakubuwana III to end the war, Prabujaka left Central Java determined to continue his resistance. The latest report about him mentioned that he had joined up with the descendants of Surapati in Malang and Lumajang. Another reason why the expedition was extended to Malang and Lumajang was because the Regent of Malang, Malaya Kusuma, refused to release several European soldiers who had been held by him in Malang since 1757.<sup>61</sup> This made the preparations for the expedition in Semarang and Surabaya more time-consuming than expected.

It actually took more than six months before the troops were ready to march. The realization of this project was overshadowed by financial difficulties and the lack of big ships needed to support such a massive expedition. To hurry matters up, the Governor of the North-East Coast of Java, Johannes Vos, paid a personal visit to *Java's Oosthoek*. Vos noticed that it would be very risky to mount the expedition in the rainy season. The only big ship available in Semarang was the bark *De Draak* which was very slow. If small ships were used, it would also take much more time. The Governor himself had to take

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<sup>60</sup> VOC 3186, Governor Johannes Vos to Governor-General Petrus Albertus van der Parra, 1766, 649-51.

<sup>61</sup> VOC 3186, Governor Johannes Vos to Governor-General Petrus Albertus van der Parra, 15 March 1767, 39-72.

the land road to Surabaya which was not easy either because the steady rains had caused the condition of the roads to deteriorate.<sup>62</sup>



*Tumenggung* Jayanegara, the Regent of Probolinggo during the expedition to Blambangan (Coll. KBG 63, National Library, Jakarta)

Another significant problem in the organization of this project was the lack of able-bodied troops. Most of the European soldiers for this expedition were drawn from the Surakarta garrison which combined with the Semarang and Surabaya garrisons amounted to no more than 200 men. The only possible solution to carry out the plan was to re-establish collaboration with the main allies of the Company, in Java, namely Mataram, (Sultan Mangkubumi), Pasuruan, Banger, Surabaya, and Madura. The Company had a strong reason for involving Sultan Mangkubumi in this expedition, imposing on him the responsibility of persuading his half-brother, *Pangeran* Prabujaka, to forego his resistance. This was one of the unwritten agreements between him and the Company when the treaty of Giyanti of 1757 was concluded. The Sultan did take some steps to effectuate this by appointing the *Rangga* of Jipang to set about making preparations to accomplish the undertaking. Some of his troops were located in the vicinity of Malang.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 40-1.

Although the Sultan preferred to make a peaceful end to Prabujaka's rebellion, Batavia succeeded in convincing him that such efforts would no longer be feasible.<sup>63</sup> Among its other allies, the *Panembaban* of Madura was the most important. He had shown himself very loyal to the Company in the past. He had helped to end the rebellion of his own father Cakraningrat IV, and had been prepared to let him and his brothers face the misery of banishment to Ceylon. The *Panembaban* promised to provide 2,000 Madurese warriors under the command of his own son and Brajamanggala. From its other allies, especially Surabaya, the Company gathered a few hundred warriors more. As a result, the expeditionary force consisted mainly of indigenous warriors.

After all these difficulties had been overcome and enormous exertions had been made, the expedition was finally launched in February 1767. Several Dutch vessels among them the *Geertruijde Susanna*, *De Meem*, *Vosmaar*, *De Buijs*, *De Vrijbeijt*, *De Dankbaarbeijd*, *De Draak* and many other smaller ships were employed in this expedition. On 16 February, two ships, the bark *De Draak* and the *chialoup De Geertruijde Sussanna* departed from Semarang. Both ships transported two platoons of European infantry each consisting of fourteen soldiers under *Cornet* Reijgers and *Vaandrig* Walter. The next day, 17 February, another company consisting of 104 European soldiers, departed from Semarang under the command of Captain Blanke and *Vaandrig* Wipperman and Biesheuvcl. They would join Captain Casper Lodewijk Tropponegro and thirty other militia members from Besuki, in Panarukan. On 20 February, the Madurese troops departed from Kwanyer to support the ship *De Draak* under *Opperstuurman* Simon Feijke.<sup>64</sup>

On 21 February, Captain Tropponegro and the Madurese troops landed in Panarukan. Their first priority was to locate an appropriate place to build a military camp, and a landing stage for the Company ship which would bring Governor Vos to Panarukan. A small village on the western bank of the River Pulosari was chosen as the temporary camp for the Dutch troops. When they planted the Dutch flag on the beach, the local people showed some resistance, but this could easily be overcome. In this assault, Madurese troops played the main role. The *demang* (village chief) of Pulosari and his people

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<sup>63</sup> VOC 3186, Batavia to the Director of the East Indië Company, 12 March and 16 June 1766.

<sup>64</sup> VOC 3215, Governor Johannes Vos to Governor General Petrus Albertus van der Parra, 15 March 1767, 39-72.



submitted to the Company, but the second chief, who was a *peranakan*-Macassarese, escaped. Meanwhile, most of the women and children fled away from their village and concealed themselves in the forest, fearful of the supposedly wild and vicious Madurese troops.<sup>65</sup>



Dutch ships and vessel employed in the Blambangan Expedition 1767  
(Coll. KBG 63, National Library, Jakarta)

Another unit of thirty indigenous soldiers from Pasuruan also landed in Besuki. They moved inland and occupied the *dalm* (court) of the late *Ngabehi* of Besuki in the village Sela Katupang. The main road connecting Blambangan and Malang passed nearby the *dalm*. Here a watch post was placed to grab any fugitive who tried to escape to Malang from Blambangan. The people of Sentong and Bondowoso also offered resistance, but they could be easily subjugated. The village of Sentong, which was located in the border between Panarukan and Besuki, was considered a strategic location for preventing any fugitive from escaping either from Blambangan or Lumajang. There another military post was built, manned by around thirty to fifty soldiers.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 39-72.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 39-72.

In Blambangan, the Dutch and Madurese troops under Captain Blanke were confronted with a completely different situation when they arrived on 15 March. No resistance was offered by the Blambanganese or the Balinese when they landed in Banyualit. Previously, it had been reported that *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba had strengthened his position by gathering more fighters to defend his position in Kota, but none of these was found. When the Dutch entered into the city, they found a scene of carnage. Heads and trunks were found scattered everywhere, most of them Balinese. It seems that heavy fighting had occurred only shortly before. Eventually, they found out what had happened inside the capital city when they encountered two Blambanganese noblemen, *Mas Anom* and *Mas Uno*, in Banyualit. Both princes declared themselves willing to submit to and ally with the Company. They had armed 300 soldiers to help the Company fight against the Balinese. They also requested to be allowed to occupy Kota, the capital city of Blambangan, and use it as a military base. Captain Blanke did not fully trust them, but he allowed both princes to join him on his march to Kota. Half way to Blambangan, they received a message that Kotabeda, one of the Balinese rulers in Blambangan, had been killed by the Blambangan people. Blanke continued his march to Kota, and there he received a number of Blambangan people who surrendered all sorts of weaponry and presented him with the head of Kotabeda. They also showed a number of heads of Balinese whom they had killed. It was assumed that *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba had also been wounded in the fighting. In the afternoon, fifteen Chinese and a number of Blambanganese people appeared from the direction Ulupampang, the place where the merchants of different ethnic origins were living. The Chinese inhabitants had stored guns in some vessels on the River Pampang to defend themselves against the Dutch. But when the ship *Vosmaar* and *De Dankbaarheid* dropped anchor there, they decided to surrender.<sup>67</sup>

Across the River Pampang, 100 Buginese and Malay had built a small fortress and offered to co-operate. At the midnight, they came aboard the Company ship, and requested to be allowed to meet Captain Blanke. The Dutch commander promised them protection, but he wanted them to prove their loyalty by bringing to him as many heads of Balinese leaders as possible. Two days later, one Buginese envoy came to the Dutch Captain bringing the head of one of the

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<sup>67</sup> VOC 3215, Missive from the Governor Johannes Vos to Batavia, 29 March 1767, 71-2.

family members of *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba as a proof of his loyalty to the Company. The Buginese also said that the other night he had chased and killed a number of Balinese, and assumed that *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba had been killed as well, but his body had not yet been found. Meanwhile, the Dutch troops relentlessly pursued the Balinese who were still hiding somewhere in the wilderness. On 29 March 1767, Captain Blanke and his troop marched to Ulupampang. There, he encountered a number of Buginese and Malays carrying two white flags and the head of *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba. The captain let them spike the head on to a piece of wood and continued his hunt for the Balinese in the woods across the river. The next day, *Gusti* Ketut Musap, the half-brother of *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba, surrendered to the Company. He confessed that he had killed the family members of his half-brother. He did it voluntarily as a proof of his loyalty. He brought the Dutch commandant three heads. *Gusti* Ketut Musap said that he was not of Balinese origin, he had been born in Blambangan, and that his mother was Javanese. He also said that he had never fought against the Company. Captain Blanke responded by promising him clemency, however for the moment he was to be detained, and sent to Surabaya.<sup>68</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Hageman, who actively collected old memories of colonial society in Java in the mid-nineteenth century, writes that Blambangan which on earlier occasion had been forced into submission by Mataram with a lot of fighting was conquered by the Dutch with only four soldiers and one *tamboer* (drummer) riding a buffalo-cart: by the sound of the drumbeats, the enemy was chased away.<sup>69</sup> He narrates that the leadership of Adriaan van Rijcke, the commandant of the expedition, was the overriding decisive factor in this effortless conquest. J. K. J. de Jonge, the Dutch archivist who selected and edited lengthy contemporary accounts of the VOC in Java, chronicled the stunning victories of small bands of well-disciplined, stalwart European soldiers over motley 'hordes' of ill-disciplined 'native warriors'. Both authors contributed to

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<sup>68</sup> VOC 3215, Extract missive from Captain Blanke to Governor Johanes Vos, 31 March 1767, 131-136.

<sup>69</sup> J. C. Hageman, *Handleiding tot de kennis der geschiedenis, aardrijkskunde, fabelleer en tijdrekenkunde van Java*, Vol I, (Batavia: Lange & Co, 1850).

the elaboration of the myth of heroic white conquerors, sweeping aside the 'native' defenders of degenerate and despotic Javanese rulers and imposing the honest and efficient rule of the European colonizer.

To say this is a warped view of what happened would go some way to redressing the balance. It is obvious that indigenous assistance did play a significant role in the VOC conquest of Blambangan. The ordinary people of Blambangan and also the elite had expected the invasion. They had found no other way to drive the Balinese rulers out of the area, since their two main leaders *Pangeran Adipati* Danuningrat and *Pangeran* Wilis had been exiled to Bali. The local sources describe how the people of Blambangan felt oppressed under their Balinese rulers and therefore it is understandable that they chose to support the Dutch invasion. A petty trader from Sumenep, named Kacung Besar, described the situation and the attitude of the Blambangan people just before the arrival of the Dutch and Madurese troops in Blambangan. On 27 January, Kacung Besar left Sumenep for Panarukan. He spent one night on his vessel at the mouth of the Panarukan River. That night the village chief of Panarukan approached him and asked him whether or not the Company controlled Madura. He also asked about the situation in Sumenep. Kacung Besar said that he did not know anything except that the *Panembahan* of Madura was still in Semarang. He went ashore and visited the local *bandar*. The latter said that if the Company and the Madurese were to attack Blambangan, the local people would be pleased and would support them. The Blambangan people were actually waiting for this. They rather preferred to be governed by the Company than by the Balinese.

The next morning, Kacung Besar continued his voyage, and six days later he arrived in Kota, the capital city of Blambangan. He informed his fellow countrymen about the plan of the Company and Madurese people to attack Blambangan. They were amazed by the news but confirmed that everybody would be happy to see the Balinese driven out. After staying in Blambangan a few days, Kacung Besar returned to Madura, and at sea he met with the convoy of the Dutch and Madurese invasion force near the Cape of Sudana.<sup>70</sup>

The success of this invasion was determined by the opportunistic assistance of local individuals and groups. The attitude of the Malay and the Buginese communities in Blambangan who supported the invasion was indeed highly opportunistic, if not a betrayal of their allies,

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<sup>70</sup>VOC 3215, Report by a Javanese living in Sumenep, Kacung Besar, about his experiences in Panarukan and Blambangan, 17 February 1767, 113-8.

because in the past this group had been very loyal to the Balinese. Perhaps they had a change of heart when they saw that the Blambangan people themselves supported the invasion, and used their guns and ammunition to eliminate the Balinese.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The behaviour of *Gusti* Ketut Musap, the half-brother of *Gusti Ngurah* Ketut Kabakaba, was extraordinary because he acted so brutally towards his own Balinese family. Commander Blanke himself recognized what he had done was cruel and had him arrested and sent to Surabaya. Governor Vos expected that he would be granted clemency. VOC 3215, A Copy missive from the Governor Johannes Vos to Commander Blanke, 15 April 1767, 141-48.