

The Colonial Clash

Colonial War and Emporial War on Taiwan in the Seventeenth Century

Colonial war has never been popular with colonial historians although film directors have found inspiration in it, as for example in movies such as *Gunga Din*, *Khartoum* and *Captain from Castile*. The Leiden professor H.L. Wesseling, however, has recently brought this important subject back to the study-rooms of colonial historians. In his article “Colonial Wars and Armed Peace 1870-1914: a Reconnaissance”, later elucidated upon in a lecture in March 1986 held for the staff-members of the Centre for the History of European Expansion and its Reaction (IGEER), he ventured some hypotheses about the nature of nineteenth century colonial war. In this article on the Dutch colonial era in Taiwan (1624-1662) I tried to make use of these hypotheses. However, I soon discovered that some of Wesseling’s hypotheses did not seem to apply to seventeenth century Dutch colonial history. As a result I set out to broaden and to refine these. I hope that this will prove useful for other colonial historians who want to enter the terra practically incognita of seventeenth century colonial war.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 1986. “Koloniale oorlog en oorlog om kolonie. Het boekjaar 1641-1642 van het comptoir Formosa”, The Hague. Unpublished article translated by Rosemary Robson-McKillop.

Between Intimidation and Conquest of the Souls

According to Wesseling, colonial war is by definition a war of conquest which has as its goal the subjugation of the local population and the permanent occupation of their territory. In some instances, the coloniser was confronted with highly organised societies that had clear-cut centers of power. In others the coloniser was confronted with loosely organised societies that had no identifiable centers of power. Wesseling asserted that the most highly developed societies were the ones easiest to conquer. Its structures could very smoothly be given a colonial superstructure. When there were no such structures, the coloniser had to invent one which would always be looked upon by the colonised as a *fremdkörper*.

The main feature of the colonial war as such was the limited deployment of European troops which did not prove an obstacle for the European powers to be ever-victorious. This is mainly attributed to the superior Western technology

and to the superior military-political organisation which incorporated a better discipline, strategy and tactics. The indigenous population had as advantages over the Europeans their greater numbers, their physical constitution and a better knowledge of the terrain.

In waging this colonial war Wesseling further distinguishes between two variants. On the one hand there was the intimidation variant, also labelled the “English School” (Calwell 1906). On the other, the “Conquest of the souls” variant, or the “French School” (Marle 1944). As I remarked earlier, Wesseling’s lecture specifically addressed itself to the nineteenth century variety of imperialism, quite natural because he is a specialist of French (African) colonial history. With the exception of one lecture all the other lectures in this series on colonial war dealt with the nineteenth century. Only the lecture by Leonard Blussé entitled, “Waves against the Chinese Wall: Skirmishes between Westerners and Chinese on the Coast of China in the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Century”, discussed some of the different sorts of conflicts involving the Dutch during the seventeenth century (Blussé 1984).

How, I asked myself, could this under-representation of the seventeenth century colonial war be accounted for? Easy accessibility of source-materials alone could not account for the strong representation of lectures on colonial wars in the nineteenth century. Then, was there no colonial war in the seventeenth century? Were there no colonies in the seventeenth century? When I put these questions into perspective, the seventeenth and nineteenth century drifted apart as though they were two very different continents. The word “imperialism” simply could not be applied to the Western expansion of the seventeenth century. Therefore I propose to use the word “Emporialism” for this period of Western expansion, and this because none of these wars were primarily waged to subjugate and colonise a territory or a people. Instead, they were simply designed to gain control over a valuable trading city or region which they could connect to similar places around the globe.

This period of “Emporialism” commenced with the exploits of the Iberian powers and lasted deep into the eighteenth century. It was characterised by an ephemeral contact with the “other” world, wherein only the outer rims were touched by the Westerners. On these rims they founded small emporia that were linked up with other emporia which for the first time in world history encompassed the entire globe. From the seventeenth century onwards, the Iberian powers were challenged by a vigorous modern state: the Dutch Republic, which itself was by nature emporial in character. The primary emporium, Amsterdam, was the main seat of the directorate of the United Dutch East India Company (VOC). From its foundation in 1602 it waged an emporial war against the Iberian powers since it was not a colonial war but a battle for trading centers (Singer and Small 1972: *passim*).

The sea-battles between the VOC and China over the Pescadores (1622-1624) and over Amoy (1630-1632) with the later Lord Protector of the Chinese coasts can be

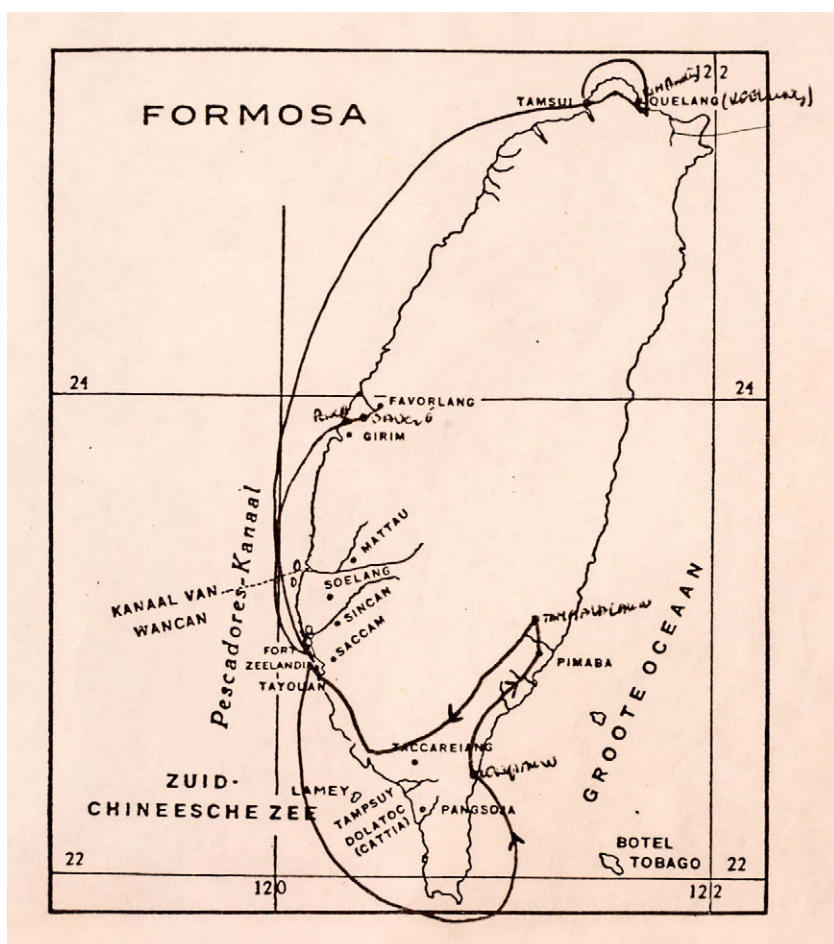


Figure 4. Map of Taiwan in the 17th century. Photo Cindy Bakker.

seen as outbursts of emporial war. These skirmishes between the Dutch and the Chinese were however over-shadowed by the emporial war raging between the VOC and the Iberian powers. By 1640 the VOC had dealt the Iberian powers heavy blows in the Far Eastern theatre (Parry 1967: 249). Before 1640 the emporial war was fought over the control of the spice trade. In the 1640s its locus shifted towards the control over Chinese trade (Glamann 1981: 57).

The VOC-emporium on Formosa, founded in 1624 near present day Tainan, had since the 1630s been successful in capturing an increasing share of the trade between China and Japan. It should be noted that from 1639 onwards, the VOC was

the only Western power that, along with the Chinese, was allowed to trade with Japan. The Dutch emporium on Taiwan preceded the Spanish one in the north in Keelung by two years. While the Spanish sphere of influence was confined to a small area around their fort, the Dutch sphere of influence reached over the whole south-west of the island by 1640. The probability of an outbreak of emporial war on the island was thus inherent.

On the other hand, Formosa also illustrated what in a limited sense might be compared to the colonial or extra-systemic war; a war of a state against a tribal community that was not connected to the international system (Singer and Small: 1972, *passim*). This variety of conflict, so typical of Wesseling's nineteenth century, was introduced to Formosa with the VOC expedition against Mattau in 1630. This exploratory article will limit itself to the fiscal year 1641-1642 that ran from October 1, 1641 to September 30, 1642. Based on an inventory of the conflicts on the island in this period, I will describe the conqueror's tactics, the troop-composition, the type of terrain and the costs and profits of colonial war. At the same time Wesseling's hypotheses about nineteenth century colonial war will be tested in an emporial seventeenth century setting. As far as emporial war is concerned, I will only briefly address the motives for the VOC's attack on Keelung in 1642.

To Convert Deer for their Skins

The expeditions to Davolé and Vavorlangh and Tammalacauw in the years 1641 to 1642 which I will treat later on in this article were not the first expeditions the VOC undertook on Formosa. In fact these expeditions initiated the second phase of the expansion process on Formosa which was mainly aimed at the north-west and south-east of the island. The first phase of expansion was directed at the south-west of the island. The location of the fort Zeelandia on a sand-bank off the coast of Formosa accentuated the emporial transit-character of the settlement. The main goal of it was to increase the share in the lucrative trade between China and Japan. As far as the indigenous Austro-Melanesian population was concerned, they were left alone or were presented with small gifts to keep them at bay.

The VOC direction was not in the least interested in territorial expansion at this stage. The protagonists of territorial expansion (pacification) were Calvinist ministers for whom Formosa promised to be an excellent field for their proselytising activities (Blussé 1984). There was however another side to their interest. Ministers in many cases were, just as all other VOC-employees, engaged in private trade. In the eyes of the ministers Formosa was an excellent place for agriculture and chase. At that time Formosa had an abundant stock of deer which explains a proverb current at that time: "To convert deer for their skins!". The ministers had to come

up with these arguments for expansion since the VOC was not founded to spread the word but to reap the benefits.

The ministers G. Candidius and R. Junius are particularly associated with the expansion on Formosa. After Candidius's arrival on Formosa in 1627 among the retinue of the newly appointed governor Pieter Nuyts, Candidius settled down in the village Sincan which lay opposite Zeelandia on the mainland of Formosa (Ginsel 1931). After a while he came to grips with the Sincanese language and gained insight into the habits of the Sincanese and became in that way, just as Junius later on, a connoisseur of Formosan tribal society (Candidius 1903: 9-25). As such they can be labelled as proto-anthropologists. Based on his experiences Candidius concluded that the conversion of the inhabitants would only be possible if the VOC would expand its authority over the Formosan coastal area: "(...) mission work could only be carried out with administrative backing" (Blussé 1984: 170). At first his requests were denied by the authorities in Fort Zeelandia.

A change in the initial anti-expansionist attitude of the VOC was brought about when on July 13, 1629, a Dutch search party, on the look-out for Chinese smugglers, was ambushed and annihilated by inhabitants of Mattau. Sixty soldiers were killed and only Nuyts managed to escape with his life. The Mattaunese also destroyed or robbed the VOC possessions in Sincan. The prestige the VOC enjoyed under the inhabitants of Sincan thanks to the arduous labour of Candidius was destroyed overnight. The Sincanese found out that the presence of a white man in their midst didn't shield them from the attacks of other villages, a prospect Candidius had dangled before their eyes. This so-called inter-village violence was a central feature in Formosan society because of the socio-religious connotations attached to it (Blussé 1984: 170).

The villages on Formosa were almost completely autarkic. Everything which happened outside of their village belonged to chaos. The nature of this society excluded therefore, an endogenous generated central power system. The knowledge about and the predictions about the chaos were, in these matrilineal societies, concentrated in the hands of priestesses. The so-called *Inebs* were fixed days on which the men could measure themselves with the evil powers of chaos. Most of the time this boiled down to a head-hunting expedition to a neighbouring village or a satellite-village. Within this framework of inter-village violence a head or heads wrestled from the tentacles of chaos was seen as a mark of courage. Probably Candidius soon realised that the power of the *Inebs* was the key to power over the society. To break their power and replace them, Candidius was dependent on the military might of the VOC.

After strong pressure was put on the new governor H. Putmans by the ministers, he hesitantly decided to mount a punitive expedition against Mattau. Because of a lack of knowledge of the environment Putmans did not succeed in reaching Mattau.

Instead of Mattau he plundered Bacloangh, a satellite-village of Mattau. This expedition formed the matrix for the troops make-up of all future expeditions. It consisted of Dutch soldiers and local auxiliary troops that acted as shock-troops (in the case of the expedition against Mattau, Sincanese were employed). Their share in the loot mainly consisted of the hunted heads of the adversaries: "It was nothing less than a head hunting expedition under the auspices of the Company" (Blussé 1984: 174). The VOC as director of the ritual inter-village violence not only restored its own prestige but also that of Candidius even to such a degree that the village converted en masse to the "true belief". On the strength of his spiritual authority over the Sincanese, Candidius was also accorded political power over them. This divine guidance coupled with worldly authority was an exceptional executive element in the VOC administration that would last on Formosa until 1651 when alongside the ministers so-called "Politieken" (policy officers) were appointed.

Because of his militant Calvinistic schooling Candidius was well equipped to replace the *Inebs*. It was he who expelled the evil spirits of chaos and replaced them, in the eyes of the indigenous peoples, with a god who protected everybody and everything. At the same time however, it was a god of wrath of whom Candidius was the sole representative on earth. The *Inebs* were unduly banished. The frequency of the outbursts of wrath of this god was decided by the governor who gave "his" ministers orders to amass indigenous troops for the occasion. When they were gathered Candidius would start an inspiring *veldpreek* (battle sermon) which must have been a very strange happening indeed (Ginsel 1931: 114).

Whether "through his Christian inspired punitive expeditions" *colonial war* (my italics; PvdV) was introduced to the Formosan countryside, sounds somewhat exaggerated since decisions about expeditions were always taken by the governor (Blussé 1984: 175). But that Candidius contributed to a change in attitude of the VOC towards a more expansionistic attitude cannot be denied. Also he enabled the VOC to operate more effectively because, by using indigenous scouts, Candidius significantly increased the knowledge of the geography of the lowlands of Formosa. Anyway, the tandem VOC-Minister succeeded by exploiting the inter-village violence to subdue the south-west of Formosa by 1636. Other "God sent allies", in the form of contagious diseases, facilitated their job since by 1635 these invisible viral allies had wiped out fifty percent of the indigenous population.

After 1636, four years of consolidation followed wherein the ministers amongst others occupied themselves with the administration of souls. At the same time a new phenomenon could be noted on the island. From 1635 an increasing number of Chinese farmers on the run from the war devastating their country, migrated from mainland China to the island. By 1640 a thriving agricultural community had come into being that produced sugar for the world market and rice for the local and Chinese market. These agricultural interests gave further impetus to the

expansionist attitude of the VOC because the income derived from the colony was in the form of all kinds of taxes of which the poll tax was the most important (incidentally collected by the ministers), and was soon to surpass the income derived from trade. The first phase of the expansion was administratively crowned by the establishment of the *landdag* (general meeting) for the south-west of Formosa in 1641. On this *landdag*, which was held once a year, the indigenous heads came to pledge loyalty and submission to the governor. Thereby the VOC acted as a kind of arbiter in disputes between the villages. Stabilisation of the lowlands could, however, only be brought about by subduing the northern part too. The expedition to Davolé and Vavorlangh heralded the second phase of the pacification of Formosa.

The Expedition to Davolé and Vavorlangh, 1641-1642

Davolé and Vavorlangh were located north of the already pacified territory (Van der Chijs 1887: 98-101). Junius who had his base in Mattau was tolerably well informed about the situation in this not yet pacified part of Formosa. Amongst other things Junius had warned the governor P. Traudenius that the tribesmen of Vavorlangh would not tolerate any penetration of their territory by foreign hunters (Ginsel 1931: 118). Therefore Junius was not in the least surprised about the murder of three Dutchmen who were hunting in the vicinity of Vavorlangh. This murder caused Traudenius to organise a punitive expedition. On the 24th of December 1641 he went thither on sampans at the head of a force consisting of 400 Dutch soldiers and sailors and 300 Chinese, Quinamese and Jambynese coolies. They landed the same day on the coast near Ponca. Here the main body of the force was joined by Junius heading 1400 auxiliary troops.

With this considerably expanded expeditionary force they attacked Davolé on the 25th of November. This village, consisting of 150 houses and 400 paddy-barns, was put to ashes. Thirty villagers were killed in action. This was however not the only loss the Vavorlanghese suffered. By cutting their fruit-trees the Dutch struck a heavy blow to their means of existence. Meanwhile, the auxiliary troops got in a row over the distribution of the booty: the thirty hunted heads. Hereupon, Traudenius decided to dispatch 1,200 of them home. With the remaining 200 and the main body of his force he attacked Vavorlangh on the 27th of November. Vavorlangh with its 400 houses, 1600 paddy-barns and 4-5,000 inhabitants, was one of the biggest on Formosa. As a sign of good-will 30 houses were spared destruction. Traudenius demanded the immediate release of the three Dutch heads. If this was not carried out forthwith the whole village would be destroyed (Colenbrander 1900: 101). On his return to Fort Zeelandia on the 2nd of December (with the 3 heads) he remarked laconically that: "Bij d'omleggende dorpen en volckeren een grooten schrick (was) gemaect". ("We

scared the hell out of them".) No mention was made of casualties during this punitive expedition. Intimidation however, undeniably preceded the conquering of the souls.

The configuration of the grounds of the south-eastern part of Formosa, where Tammalacauw was situated, differs altogether from that of the lowlands of Formosa. It is mountainous with a dense over-growth. The knowledge of these grounds was practically nil. Up until that time this part of Formosa had only attracted some gold-seekers; the heralds of Western culture par excellence. The murder of one of them, M. Wesseling, by inhabitants of Tammalacauw caused the bellicose Traudenius to organise another punitive expedition. The expeditionary force consisted of 225 Dutch soldiers, 110 Chinese and 18 Jambynese coolies. On 11 January the expedition left on 3 junks and a pilot boat for the other side of the island. The real purpose of the expedition was to find the goldmines that were rumored to be there (Colenbrander 1900: 146-9).

The next day the fleet arrived at the eastern side of the island. After landing, they continued their way through mountainous terrain and on the 22nd of January they arrived in Pimaba. Just as in all the other villages they had passed, they were greeted with friendliness by the Pimabanese (Blussé and Roessingh 1984). By putting some pressure on the village headman, Traudenius secured a fair amount of auxiliary troops. The Tammalacauwnese however, seemed to be prepared for the attack because the avant-garde of the force was ambushed. It was to no avail for the Tammalacauwnese. Musket fire killed 27 of them and an unknown number were wounded. The Tammalacauwnese warriors thereupon retreated behind the bamboo fortifications of their village, that was strategically located on the top of a hill. After fierce combat the whole village was put to ashes. In the treaty thereafter concluded, the Tammalacauwnese were forbidden to rebuild their village and later on were reallocated to the Pimaba area. On the Dutch side 2 soldiers were reported killed and 5 wounded.

From Pimaba the expedition headed north with the conviction that the goldmines were there. When their search proved to be in vain, Traudenius decided to return to Zeelandia overland. On the 7th of February the expedition was attacked by ferocious mountain tribes but 100 musket shots worked miracles: "40 (inlanders) met ronde gatties int lijff gequetst becomen hadden sulcx niet begriipen conden, waer 't selve van daen gecomen was" ("40 indigenes were shot. They could not understand where the round holes in their bodies had come from") (Colenbrander 1900: 148). These piercing culture-shocks proved to be lethal for those touched by it. After a hazardous journey the force reached Zeelandia on 23rd of February. The attention given to the pacification of this not easily accessible far corner of Formosa temporarily waned under the influence of the preparations for the attack on the Spanish stronghold in the north.

The *Armada of the East* and the Conquering of Keelung in 1642

When the Spaniards planted their flag on Formosa on May 11, 1626 they realised an intention they had been cherishing for more than 40 years (Verhoeven 1930: 46-76). The strategic position of Formosa, north of Manila, near China and Japan, had not escaped their attention (ARA: 4866). When in 1624 the VOC settled down on Formosa the Spanish, in order to counter the influence of the Dutch, thought it necessary to have their own fortification on the island. In 1627 the Spanish even equipped a considerable fleet to chase the Dutch from the island. The fleet never reached Zeelandia because most of the ships sank during a violent storm (Verhoeven 1930: 67). As such it could be labelled the *Armada of the East*.

In 1629 the Spaniards expanded their sphere of influence by building a fort in Tamsui on the Formosan coast south-west of Keelung. The dramatic decline in the trade volume of their Asiatic trade forced the Spaniards to remove their settlement in Tamsui in 1635 and to reduce their military force from four to one company of soldiers (Parry: 249). The Spanish governor, G. Portillo, recognised the increasing threat posed by the VOC. His request to enforce the garrison was not honoured by the Spanish government in Manila. This attitude of the Spanish government was quite understandable in view of the mounting tension among the Chinese population of Manila which would eventually erupt in a mass-insurrection of the Chinese in 1640 which the Spaniards could scarcely suppress (Van der Velde: 1982). It became clear that the Spanish had both militarily and financially overreached themselves with their settlement on Formosa.

Plans for the conquest of the Spanish fort in Keelung had been circulating in VOC circles for some time. In 1640 the first concrete steps were taken to reach that goal. That year captain M. Gerritsen-Vries went on a reconnaissance trip around the north of the island on two yachts manned by 70 Dutchmen and 50 Chinese. Swept by typhoons, he was forced to return to Zeelandia where he arrived on the 24th of December. This reconnaissance trip produced no results (Van der Chijs 1887: 116-17). The following year the captain J. van Linga sailed to Keelung with a fleet of two yachts, one flute ship and one pilot-boat (Colenbrander: 59-61). Van Linga carried a letter from Traudenius for Portillo, wherein the former demanded the surrender of the Spanish fort (Valentijn 1726: 72-73).

After Van Linga had handed over the letter, he reinforced Traudenius's demand by a bombardment of Kimpanlij, a village within easy reach of the Spanish fort. Portillo was not impressed and utterly rejected the demand of Traudenius (Valentijn 1726: 72-73). Thereupon Van Linga sailed away because he judged his force too weak to be able to launch a successful attack on the Spanish fort. On his way back to Zeelandia he landed in Tamsui and solemnly put this area under the jurisdiction

of the VOC (Colenbrander 1900: 61). In October 1641, indigenes from Tamsui came to Zeelandia for an official submission ceremony.

In order to conquer Keelung an expeditionary force the same size as those mentioned in the introduction in relation to China, which on average consisted of 10 yachts manned by 1,000 soldiers, was split in two. The first part headed by Captain H. Haroussee left Zeelandia on August 18, 1642 with a force which was labelled in his instructions a considerable one (Leupe 1859: 27). It consisted of 369 soldiers, 222 sailors, 48 Chinese, 30 Quinamese and eight slaves. They were shipped on five yachts, two junks, six sampans and a big pilot-boat. The second force was headed by Major J. Lamotius, who a year earlier had played a crucial role in the conquest of Malacca from the Portuguese. The deployment of Lamotius proved amongst other factors that the VOC attached great importance to the good outcome of the expedition. Lamotius headed 161 soldiers and 162 sailors (Leupe 1859: 92-93). He would leave in September for Keelung. In all, 11 big ships and 1,000 men were deployed in this expedition.

The main goal of Haroussee's expedition was the conquest of the Spanish fort "La Sanctissima Trinidad" (Verhoeven 1930: 46-76). Chinese spies in Manila had informed Zeelandia earlier that, apart from two Chinese ships manned by 15 Spaniards and 60 Chinese, no reinforcements were sent to Keelung (Leupe 1859: 78). When the fleet sailed by Tamsui, a small force headed by Lieutenant T. Pedel, who was known in the area, went to command the indigenes to fulfil their duties as stipulated in the agreement with the VOC. These duties consisted of sending food and auxiliary troops to Keelung. After the fleet had arrived for the roadstead of Keelung it was fired at by batteries of the redoubt and the fort. The yacht *Waterhondt* was hit but only slightly damaged.

The bombardment could not prevent the troops from landing. But they were shot at by the Spaniards from a hill opposite the redoubt. Nevertheless, the Dutch made their way uphill. The Spaniards believed that by planting crosses they could stop the apostates but the holy symbols were no match for the Dutch and they started installing a battery. The battery was ready to shoot on the 24th of August. One hundred canon shots were enough to blow a hole in the redoubt. On inspection the redoubt was found empty. The Spaniards had withdrawn in time to "La Sanctissima Trinidad". Meanwhile 1,000 natives of Tamsui had arrived, without however, the promised refreshments. Haroussee decided not to employ them in battle since their bows and arrows were no match for the brick walls of the fort (Leupe 1859: 79). The presence of the indigenes couldn't escape the attention of the Spaniards on whom the psychological pressure was in this manner mounted.

In a letter of the 24th of August to Portillo, Haroussee demanded an unconditional surrender. If this were not obeyed nobody would be spared. After two days of negotiating, the governor surrendered. Next to 100 Spaniards, 150 Panpagerans (Philippine auxiliary troops) and 250 Chinese along with slaves were found in the

fort. Later on they would be evacuated to Batavia and from there they would be returned to Manila with the exception of Portillo who went elsewhere. The loss of Formosa was a blow to Spain, for it afforded the Dutch Republic an excellent base of operations just north of Luzon. Moreover, Formosa lay strategically in the path of the junks coming to Manila from Amoy and Nagasaki (Zaide 1951: 264). This base would indeed play a key role in the resupplying of the Dutch blockade fleets of Manila in the years 1644 to 1648. The conquest of the fort, an imposing structure with 38 canons, would further facilitate the pacification of Formosa.

Scorched Earth Tactics

On the 8th of September 1642, Lamotius left with four yachts for Keelung where they arrived five days later (NA: 1053). In his instructions for Lamotius, Traudenius assumed that upon his arrival in Keelung the fort would have already been conquered. This assessment proved to be correct. Therefore Lamotius could immediately pursue the main goal of his expedition: the discovery of the gold-mines that were rumored to be south of Keelung in the neighborhood of Tamsui (Leupe 1859: 94). The skipper S. Cornelisz was sent on a scouting expedition to the alleged gold river the “Danube”, southeast of Keelung. His mission however, did not produce the hoped for results.

Closely related to the discovery of the gold-mines was the subjugation of the indigenes in the surroundings of Tamsui so that they would not present an obstacle for future exploitation of the goldmines. In his instruction Lamotius was told how to proceed with this subjugation. He had to wrought as much damage as possible. That is to say; to capture the indigenes dead or alive; to ruin their crops and houses; in short to inflict as much damage as possible because this godless crowd had to be governed in a harsh manner (Leupe 1859: 95). This summarises very poignantly the VOC’s rule of thumb for the “pacification” of the indigenous population of Formosa.

Before Lamotius started out in the direction of Tamsui on the 24th of September, word of the coming expedition had spread to the surrounding area, which resulted in the subjugation of 14 villages to the enlightened rule of the VOC. The expeditionary force consisted of 378 soldiers, 61 sailors and 89 auxiliary troops, in all 528 men. The “road”, however, made hard going. Therefore Lamotius decided to return to Keelung where he arrived on the first of October one day after the fiscal year 1641-1642 had ended. Only later on in October would Lamotius find a better route and succeed in subjugating the whole area in the surroundings of Tamsui. However, the supposed gold mines were never found.

The costs and profits specified per expedition can, as a result of the lack of relevant data, never be properly assessed. Only in the financial year 1641-1642 does the factory give us some very global information. In that financial year the factory recorded a loss

of 61,315 guilders (Coolhaas 1964: 176). On the one hand this was due to the many expeditions. On the other hand it had to be attributed to the stagnation in the supply of precious metals from Japan since 1640. The next financial year of the Formosa factory would show a profit of 196,003 guilders (Coolhaas 1964: 176). At the end of the forties, Formosa would become one of the most profitable factories of the VOC thanks to the income derived from a wide variety of taxes imposed on the swelling Chinese population.

The gold-mines would never be found but the Japanese were very much taken in by the conquest of the “popish” fort by the Dutch so that from 1643 a regular flow of precious metals from Japan to Formosa was guaranteed (ARA, 1140). Of the VOC settlement in Keelung, the chronicler F. Valentijn would three-quarters of a century later remark that in regard to trade we had nothing but the disadvantages of the settlement (Valentijn 1726: 73). The importance of the settlement should, however, be attributed to the strategic value within the bigger framework of the emporial war. In relation to the colonial war, Keelung meant a second bridge-head for the pacification of Formosa that in combination with Zeelandia in the south made a pincer movement possible. This movement would bring about the complete subjugation of the lowlands of Formosa by 1645. The second phase of expansion on Formosa was administratively crowned by the foundation of a *landdag* for the north in 1646.

This administrative configuration was later continued by the Chinese Ming loyalist Coxinga, whose Family ruled the island from 1662 to 1683 when Formosa became an official part of the Chinese empire and as such was the first and last Chinese overseas colony. The indigenes cherished the paper remainders of the Dutch presence deep into the eighteenth century and while I was on Taiwan in the years 1984 to 1985, a song was still current with one of the mountain tribes in the south that bewailed the departure of a Dutch father who had failed his indigenous wife and children.

Conclusion

That colonial war was, also in its emporial setting, a continuous process of warfare is confirmed by this study. In the span of time dealt with, no less than 3 expeditions in the framework of colonial war were held. Initially however, the VOC saw their settlement on the rim of Formosa as an emporium *tout court*. As a result of the pressure from the ministers who stressed the agricultural potential of Formosa, the VOC took a more expansionistic stance after the incident in which 60 Dutch soldiers were killed (the murder of Dutchmen was to be the immediate cause of two of the three expeditions). The manipulation of the inter-village violence by the tandem VOC-ministers resulted in the subjugation of the south-west of the island by 1636. In combining their spiritual and worldly power, the VOC put the administration of the conquered territory in the hands of the ministers. The foundation of the *landdag*

in 1641 formalised the occupation of the territory and marked the beginning of the second phase of expansion.

From the second phase we can gain amongst other information, a good insight into the troops composition. On average, 300-400 Dutch soldiers, 1,000 indigenous auxiliary troops and 200 Chinese coolies were deployed. The expeditions as such unfolded as follows: The Dutch soldiers and Chinese coolies were transported overseas to a point on the coast closest to the goal of the expedition. After landing, a rendezvous with the auxiliary troops took place (if not they were press-ganged later on). They acted as shock-troops in the attack on the village that had to be subjugated. The limited deployment of European troops was therefore only made possible by the massive deployment of indigenous auxiliary troops who bore the brunt of the battle. In general, this battle was short and intensive. Hereby the musket acted as a kind of magic stick rather than as a weapon deciding the outcome of the battle. Neither technological superiority nor superior tactics, unless one considers “go at it” as a superior tactic, played a decisive role in winning the colonial war.

The number of casualties resulting from these engagements was relatively small. Because the number of casualties is incomplete, history will remain more a matter of recounting than counting in this case. One can only say in general that the number of casualties on the Dutch side was small in comparison to the number of casualties among the indigenes, who fought on both sides. The material damage caused by these expeditions was on the contrary large. By applying scorched earth tactics the economic means of existence of the indigenes were destroyed. The reallocation of villagers to centers of Dutch administration then facilitated control over them. Whether this was typical for the whole expansion process remains a question. However, without doubt the advantages the indigenous population of the lowlands of Formosa had over their Dutch adversaries had by this time been eroded. The Dutch had increased their knowledge of the ground considerably and the indigenous population of the lowlands had seen their numbers reduced by 50 per cent. This numerical advantage was further undermined by the increasing number of Chinese (on Formosa there would be an insurrection of the Chinese in 1652) (Van der Velde 1982).

From the foregoing one can conclude that Wesseling's hypothesis that the highest developed society was the one easiest to conquer, doesn't hold for the emporialist era. On the contrary, only when central power was absent did the Western powers succeed in gaining control over (tribal) societies. China, Japan or mighty kingdoms in Africa for that matter never were at risk of being conquered by Western powers. Besides, the main focus of the Western powers, certainly of the Dutch, was trade not territory. A colony would involve too much administration that in turn would immobilise the working capital. So there had to be strong motives for a colonial policy to be condoned by the VOC-directorate. What then were the motives which could justify the existence of a colony, and concomitant colonial war, in an otherwise emporial world?

The first motive that stands out is the income derived from the colony in the form of a wide variety of taxes that paid for the upkeep of the colony. The expedition to Davolé and Vavorlangh should be seen in the light of a further stabilisation of the fertile lowlands of Formosa. Here an increasing number of Chinese took to farming which resulted in ever higher income from taxes and high profits on sugar sold by the VOC on the world-market. The second motive that stands out was the search for precious metals. The expeditions to Tammalacauw and Tamsui must be seen from this perspective. Because of the stagnation in the supply of precious metals from Japan, the VOC was in want of alternative sources in view of their trade with China. It was during the later expedition that colonial war and emporial war were conjectured for a moment, since the conquest of the Spanish fort was a precondition to approach the gold-mines.

In a broader context, the attack on Keelung fitted with the overall offensive of the VOC against the Iberian powers that had, in the forties, as its main goal the monopolisation of Chinese trade. The combat force which the VOC deployed against Keelung was as big as the forces it deployed in the sea-battles against the Chinese. It consisted of 10 big naval vessels and 1,000 soldiers. In the case of Keelung, 1,000 indigenous auxiliary troops were press-ganged but they were not actively used. The emporial war was of an altogether different nature than the colonial war. The war with the Iberians was a war that strictly obeyed the rules of classical warfare with the difference that it was fought in the Far Eastern theatre. The fall of Keelung increased the VOC pressure on the last Spanish bulwark in the Far East: Manila. The subsequent VOC-blockade fleets of Manila (1644-1648) used Keelung as a port of call. An unexpected consequence of the VOC conquest of Keelung was an increase in the prestige it enjoyed with the Japanese. Therefore, from 1643 onwards there was a steady supply of precious metals from Japan which was much-needed since the hoped-for gold-mines were never found. In the pacification of the lowlands, Keelung was to become a second bridge-head, but Zeelandia would remain the commercial, agricultural and administrative center of the colony until it was captured by the Chinese warlord Coxinga in 1662.

The colonial war and the emporial war seemed to intertwine in the last part of this study. They were however, two completely unrelated phenomena. The emporial war was fought intermittently throughout the emporial era. A colony on the contrary, was an exceptional phenomenon in the emporial era that only occurred under insular circumstances (such as on Formosa) where there was no central power and where the income generated by the colony more than paid for the upkeep of it. Around 1650, many voices were heard in VOC circles calling to relocate its Indian headquarters from Batavia to Zeelandia. That this was considered was a clear indicator of the degree of success of this colony in an otherwise emporialist era.

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From Sabang to Merauke: Dutch Imperialism in the Light of a Blazing Discussion

M. Kuitenbrouwer's doctoral thesis should be seen as a belated attempt to accord the Netherlands a place in modern imperialism. When all is said and done, in the foreign literature about imperialism the Netherlands is conspicuous by its absence. At first glance this seems paradoxical. Wasn't the Netherlands the greatest colonial power after England? However, taking into account the fact that the concept of imperialism is tightly bound up with the idea of the territorial expansion of European powers in Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, on second thoughts, it does seem more plausible. Viewed from this angle, the Netherlands misses the boat because its colonial sphere of influence lay in Asia and, furthermore, on the eve of the scramble for Africa, by signing the Second Sumatra Treaty with the English in 1871, it exchanged its last trading emporium on the coast of West Africa, Elmina, for Dutch supremacy over the whole of Sumatra. Another factor militating against making this claim is that the Netherlands abstained from expansion into other areas beyond its already existing sphere of influence.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 1988. "Van Sabang tot Merauke. Het Nederlandse imperialisme in het licht van een oplaaiende discussie", *Theoretische Geschiedenis* 15 (2). 250-254. This is a review of a book and an article: M. Kuitenbrouwer, M. 1985. *Nederland en de opkomst van het moderne imperialisme. Koloniën en buitenlandse politiek, 1870-1902*. Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw: and, H.L. Wesseling, 1986. "Bestond er een Nederlands imperialisme?", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 99: 214-225. This review article was translated by Rosemary Robson-McKillop.

Kuitenbrouwer is not really so concerned about the expansion aspect of modern imperialism, choosing instead to concentrate on the aspect of enlargement of territory: "The striving to *establish formal* or informal political rule over other societies" (Kuitenbrouwer 1985: 229, my italics. PvdV.). The territorial enlargement which occurred within the confines of the Dutch East Indies between 1870 and 1902 is discussed in three chapters. The link between Dutch foreign relations and imperialism is also investigated in these chapters. The general conclusion to be drawn from this is that the Dutch response to the imperialism of others was opportunistic: cautious towards the great powers; hard-hitting towards the smaller players. The consular reports which he has used are an enrichment to our arsenal of knowledge.

These three chapters are preceded by an introductory chapter consisting of two parts. The first is composed of a lucid, albeit condensed, review of the theory of imperialism (Mommsen 1979). In the second part, Kuitenbrouwer examines the Dutch debate about the place of the Netherlands in modern imperialism or rather, the lack of such a place. In the concluding chapter, the findings of the three core chapters are tested against the international and local debate set out in the

introduction. This done, Kuitenbrouwer takes the first step in making comparisons between Dutch imperialism and that of England, Portugal and Belgium. These comparisons deserve to be worked out in more detail and as they stand provide a justification for a study on the same scale as Kuitenbrouwer's dissertation.

Kuitenbrouwer found the similarity between Dutch imperialism and that of other countries in the book *The False Dawn* by R. Betts (Oxford 1976). The central theme of this book is the concept of *contiguity*. Betts uses *contiguity* to describe how the (colonial) powers expanded their spheres of influence from existing positions. This does not mean, as H.L. Wesseling proposes in his criticism of Kuitenbrouwer, that colonial territories were literally adjacent to their mother countries as these positions were expanded with the "finalised" map of Europe in mind. The fact that the regions on the world map did not literally border the mother country was neither here nor there.

Pertinently, where were the borders in Africa before 1880? For the Netherlands, the situation was simple. Already set on the track of inward expansion, there were opportunities aplenty in the Dutch East Indies to indulge in this propensity. There was still a liberal sprinkling of white spaces on the map of areas under Dutch authority and those areas in which influence was already a given still needed to be defended against intruders. Apart from a few small concessions, for instance, in North Borneo, the sphere of influence could be kept intact during the upsurge of modern imperialism. Kuitenbrouwer sees this *contiguity* at work in the process of Dutch expansion in the Dutch East Indies. The Policy of Abstention, which could be translated as a policy of non-intervention in the Outer Provinces, displayed its first cracks after the abolition of the Culture System in 1870. The first wedge in the Abstention Policy was the Aceh Expedition of 1873. This expedition, which failed to deliver the expected victory, would become a suppurating wound on the body of the Abstention Policy and continue to fester until this was also rescinded in 1896. Kuitenbrouwer sees the Aceh Expedition as the first shot across the bows in a process of the expansion of power which would thereafter lie dormant until 1894. This was the year in which the Lombok Expedition set the scene for the new Pacification Policy which was resurrected in 1896. When this state imperialism was given an ethical boost in 1901, the expansion of power gained momentum: preceding this, Kuitenbrouwer also draws attention to a new drive for expansion in the 1880s instigated from *within Dutch society* (my italics. PvdV). Its objective was South Africa, the country of our kinsfolk (Kuitenbrouwer 1985: 81). Kuitenbrouwer is right when he assigns national, economic and cultural motives a big role in what was going on during this "dormant" period. It is a pity that Kuitenbrouwer has not included the zenith of Dutch imperialism (1902-1908) within the scope of his book (Kuitenbrouwer 1985: 211). It would provide a wonderful example of *contiguity* and *continuity*, if these years were added as an addendum to his dissertation.

The Leiden School

Among the proponents of the “Leiden School” were I. Schöffers, C. Fasseur and H.L. Wessling. Prompted by Kuitenbrouwer’s thesis, in a rather extensive “*Korte Verklaring*” (Short Note) (once used by the Dutch powers-that-be in the Dutch East Indies to subjugate indigenous rulers formally to their authority), the last has repudiated Kuitenbrouwer’s conclusion that Dutch imperialism did exist. Wesseling does take note of the absence of the Netherlands from the international debate, but fails to draw any conclusions from it. In discussing the expansion of Dutch power, he resorts to the euphemism *invulling* (filling-in, joining up the dots). He argues that this filling-in could be seen happening all over The Dutch East Indies throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. He also admits that it was more forcibly underwritten by the government after 1896. Despite this concession, he dismisses it as a reason to speak of Dutch colonialism (Wesseling 1986: 224).

The second argument Wesseling adopts to refute the existence of Dutch imperialism is of a conceptual nature and concerns the periodisation. An imperialistic period implies a break/rupture whereas, he argues, everything continued as before in the Dutch East Indies. “Every now and again the Netherlands punished a people, ‘pacified’ an area” (Wesseling 1986: 225). The break which he observed in other European powers was manifested in new motives, new policies and new results (Wesseling 1986: 223). The new motives could be traced back to autonomous driving factors, whether nationalist, economic or cultural. Wesseling argues that, prior to 1896, these apparently did not weigh heavily in the Netherlands. For instance, Schöffers has stated that the nationalist motive only began to play a decisive role after the close of the nineteenth century. To counter this, Kuitenbrouwer indicates the virulent nationalism in the Netherlands in 1880, aroused after Britain had annexed the Boer Republic, which Schutte himself had mentioned earlier. Furthermore, Kuitenbrouwer also draws attention to the activities of the Dutch Geographical Society founded in 1873, among other reasons as a response to the First Aceh Expedition.

However, Kuitenbrouwer lets the chance slip of putting a stronger emphasis on what this Society, whose membership included almost all the Dutch elite, was getting up to as an example of the extremely loaded imperialist tendency before 1896. Against a Darwinist background, nationalist and economic motives fused together in the idea of Greater Netherlands. Although this idea was largely concentrated on the kindred Boers in South Africa, other areas did not escape the purview of the Society, among them the Congo Basin in which the Rotterdam-based *Afrikaanse Handelsmaatschappij* (Africa Trading Company) had established a number of trading posts. In 1877 the Society also established a Dutch branch of the Association Internationale Africaine (AIE), the brainchild of King Leopold II of Belgium. Contrary to what Kuitenbrouwer claims, the Netherlands was not invited

to the Internationale Geographical Congress in Brussels in 1876 (Kuitenbrouwer 1985: 55). However, when it turned out that Leopold II had failed to drum up enough support for his initiative, he approached the president of the Society, P.J. Veth who, after being royally wined and dined in Leopold's palace, founded the Dutch branch of the Association: in reality, a platform to attract the financial means needed to realise Leopold's noble ambitions.

However, despite such distractions, in the 1870s the Dutch East Indies was the heart and soul of the Society. Nationalist and economic motives played a predominant role in the Society-sponsored Sumatra Expedition (1877-1879), which Kuitenbrouwer discusses (Kuitenbrouwer 1985: 75-76). Besides its stated economic goal, looking for an export route to transport the coal from the Ombilin coalfield which had been discovered earlier, this "scientific" expedition also had a political purpose: to collaborate with the authorities to strengthen Dutch power in Jambi. The incumbent Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, J.W. van Lansberge (1874-1881) was a proponent of expanding power. This goal was almost accomplished but, after the premature death of the Minister of Colonies, P.P. van Bosse, also an advocate of expansion, it was torpedoed by his successor, O. van Rees, who supported a Policy of Abstention.

Modern Imperialism

This policy was also doomed to succumb in the 1890s, crumbling under the pressure of the autonomous motives foisted on the government by Dutch society. The slogan: "The Indies lost, disastrous cost", was heard ever more vociferously. The pacification policy, formulated after far-reaching physical and anthropological research, hammered the nails into the coffin of the Policy of Abstention and, in 1901, it was given a thin layer of ethical icing free, gratis and for nothing. The subsequent Pacification Policy did not beat about the bush, as its results unequivocally demonstrate. The Aceh War was done and dusted in 1903 and, by 1910, the *Pax Neerlandica* reigned throughout the whole archipelago. The reason these new motivations were translated into the new policy so late must be sought in the fact that the imperialist wave swept across Asia only at the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s. The additional participation of both Japan and America now imbued imperialism with a global character. In this new global imperialism, the European concept of power began to fade. This obliged the Netherlands to strengthen its position in the Dutch East Indies. By the bye, it is not surprising that, just as the Netherlands, Japan and America are missing from the current imperialism debate, it doesn't make them any less imperialistic.

Up to the present-day, the emphasis has continued to be placed on the first phase of imperialism (1880-1895), and the second phase, that of consolidation

1895-1914, has had to take a back seat. Imperialism began its career as a European phenomenon in Africa in the 1880s. At the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s, it reached Asia where it consolidated itself as a global phenomenon until 1914. In the first phase, that of emergent imperialism, The Netherlands was the odd man out because of its already existing claims. Nevertheless, it was still propelled by the same motivations as the others. In this phase it was successful in maintaining the pretext that the Dutch East Indies could be protected from the “malevolent” outside world by the exercise of sagacious perceptiveness. Pertinently, the fact that the Dutch cultural element in South Africa was imbued with a permanent character can also be traced back to private initiative.

When the consolidation phase of imperialism dawned at the end of the nineteenth century, the Netherlands could stand its ground. Its indignation about the imperialism of others, England in particular, did not stop it from swooping in on *all of* Indonesia. “From Sabang to Merauke” would perhaps never resound with quite the same allure as “From Cairo to Cape Town” but, taking into account the recent results landed by the new pacification policy, it is certainly productive to speak about a Dutch imperialism, even though it is disqualified from this status by a Europe-centric approach which means that in Europe the Netherlands is considered a non-imperialistic country. Despite this European outlook, a quite different view prevails in Asia.

In his evocative book, Kuitenbrouwer has given the first impulse towards building a new theory about the place of the Netherlands in modern imperialism. However, he has not managed to escape the grasp of the “Leiden School” and hence has not succeeded in formulating a new hypothesis.

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From Colonial Lobby to Colonial Hobby: The Royal Dutch Geographical Society and the Dutch East Indies, 1873-1914

With the exception of one article about the history of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society which was written on the occasion of its centennial in 1973, nothing has been written about the society from a historical point of view (Schrader 1974). In my research into Dutch colonial policy during the age of modern imperialism (1870-1914), the Geographical Society has been an important agent. In this article I will try to clarify the attitude of the society towards Dutch colonial policy and also assess its influence on that policy against the background of modern imperialism. First, however, I will evaluate the present-day historical debate about modern imperialism and the place Dutch imperialism occupies within it. I will then discuss the nature of the society and finally provide a brief description of two scientific expeditions which it equipped: the first to Sumatra in the years 1877-79 and the second to New Guinea in the years 1904-05.

Original source: Velde, Paul van der. 1995. "The Royal Dutch Geographical Society and the Dutch East Indies, 1873-1914: from colonial lobby to colonial hobby", *Geography and Imperialism*, edited by Bell, Morag, Butlin, Robin and Heffernan, Michael. 80-92. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Imperialism Series X.

The Netherlands and Modern Imperialism

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the appearance of the world changed dramatically under the influence of the industrial and technological revolutions which were fast gaining momentum. Territories which had little or no contact with the world system were indiscriminately incorporated into that system (Wallerstein 1974). In most cases these territories were appended to the metropolitan cores as colonies. The imperialist process was initiated by several European countries in the 1870s, and Japan and the United States joined their ranks in the 1890s. Modern imperialism reached its zenith in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. For some European nations such as Great Britain and France this entailed the extension of already existing colonial possessions. For other countries such as Germany, Belgium, Japan and the United States, which did not yet have colonial possessions, it marked their emergence as imperial powers.

Notwithstanding the decline in its political power since the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Netherlands still possessed the major part of its seventeenth-century possessions overseas. It can be defined as an emporial empire, in contrast with the British empire, which from the mid-eighteenth century was based on territorial power over vast stretches of land. In 1820, effective Dutch control of the Dutch East Indies was limited to a minor part of Java. The rest of the Dutch East

Indies, referred to as the Outer Territories, was only nominally under Dutch control. In fact, the Dutch East Indies were at this stage an ambitious territorial claim which did not mirror global political realities. The Dutch government was perceptive enough not to join in the race for new territories in the 1870s. Nevertheless, from 1830 onwards it had marginally increased Dutch control in the Indies. According to the current historical debate, two periods can be distinguished in this process of the extension of territorial control.

During the first or informal period, from 1830 to 1894, the marginal tightening of control may be attributed to the resident colonial officials, while the government officially observed a policy of non-intervention in the Outer Territories – the so-called “abstention policy” (*onthoudingspolitiek*). The second or formal period, from 1894 to 1914, was initiated by a successful military expedition to Lombok in 1894, which touched a responsive nationalistic chord in the Netherlands (Kuitenbrouwer 1991). In 1896, the formulation of the pacification policy put an end to the abstentionism to which the government had tenaciously adhered for so long. From now on it was the central government which took the initiative in extending its control over the Outer Territories. The pacification policy was made palpable for all in 1901, when ethical arguments were adduced in support of a colonial policy or “mission civilisatrice”, which cured the Dutch of their phobia of colonialism which they had nurtured for three-quarters of a century. In 1904 the Aceh war, which had lasted thirty years, was ended and at the close of the age of modern imperialism in 1914, the *Pax Neerlandica* prevailed across the whole archipelago.

This sweeping change in the relationship between mother country and colony was in part effected by the abolition in 1870 of the so-called “*Cultuurstelsel*” of forced crop deliveries which paved the way for a liberalisation of this relationship. Private initiative, no longer hindered by official restrictions, was then free to take root in the archipelago, especially in Java. By contrast, the government was limited in its freedom of action by the Aceh War, which devoured a large part of the Dutch Indies budget. Furthermore, it was impeded from extending its control over the Outer Territories by an international economic crisis, which lasted until 1895.

In spite of, or maybe because of this economic crisis, a strong growth trend can be traced in the number of private enterprises which founded subsidiaries in the Dutch East Indies. The increasing inter-meshing of the economies of the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies and the increasing nationalistic involvement between them – “Indies lost disastrous cost” –brought about the collapse of the abstention policy in the mid-1890s. In short, national and economic motives were the cause of its collapse. At the same time, imperialism was globalised when Japan and the United States started to compete in the imperialist race at the beginning of the 1890s.

It was imperative that the Dutch government strengthen its position in the Dutch East Indies in order to remain a credible coloniser. In the current debate about

modern imperialism, the Netherlands are conspicuously absent (Wesseling 1986). On the face of it, this seems to be a paradox. Did the Dutch not possess an empire whose territorial extent was exceeded only by Britain, Russia and France? The fact that the concept of modern imperialism is strongly related to the expansion of the European powers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century especially in Africa, perhaps helps to explain the absence of the Netherlands from the historical debate. In the Second Sumatra Treaty signed with Great Britain in 1871, it exchanged its last possession in Africa – Elmina on the coast of Ghana – for freedom of action in Sumatra. This was to plunge both countries into costly colonial wars: namely, the Ashanti war and the Aceh war.

As a basis of a reassessment of the Netherlands within the framework of modern imperialism, I propose to divide modern imperialism into two phases: the appropriation phase, 1870-95, during which the great powers occupied vast territories; and the perpetuation phase, 1895-1914, during which the grip on these newly acquired territories was strengthened. The Dutch Geographical Society, which was founded in 1873, has a role in such a reassessment, and it is certainly possible to view the foundation of the society within the framework of the increase of private initiative in the Dutch East Indies.

The Nature of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society

In February 1873 four geography teachers from grammar schools founded a geographical society based on principles in line with the broad-geographical movement in Europe at that time. In their view, the foundation of such a society could stimulate and channel the nascent interest in geography. This awakening interest in geography was not surprising in an age in which “*La géographie est devenue la philosophie de la terre*” [“geography had become the philosophy of the earth”] (Brunschwig 1960). The increase in geographical knowledge resulting from these explorations would benefit trade, industry, shipping and plans for colonisation. The founders informed like-minded people of their intentions and this resulted in a meeting in the rooms of the Diligentia club in Amsterdam on 2 March 1873.

The meeting was presided over by Professor P. J. Veth who, with the first secretary of the society, C.M. Kan, can be considered the founders of modern scientific geography in the Netherlands. Veth was already well known for his standard works in the field of colonial geography, which at that time included anthropology and ethnography of the Dutch East Indies (Van der Velde 1993). The discussions about the goals of the society during that first meeting centred on the question of whether the society should restrict itself to increasing geographical knowledge or whether it should also engage in disseminating that knowledge. In other words: should

the organisation be of a practical or of a scientific nature? The practical path was chosen unanimously: "Even the semblance of a learned society should be avoided" (TAG 1876: 5). In this manner the society followed the pragmatic tendency which had manifested itself from 1870 onwards in other European geographical societies.

The meeting also decided that education should be a goal of the society but this should not be explicitly stressed. Nevertheless, a lobby launched by the Geographical Society for the founding of the first chair of geography in the Netherlands bore fruit in 1877 when this was established at the University of Amsterdam, which was founded the same year. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Kan, the first professor of geography, devoted his courses to colonial geography (Van Beurden 1988). Examination of a collection of eighty letters written by Kan to Veth, reveals that all attempts by Kan to theorise were stifled by Veth, who stressed the practical nature which he believed geography should have (BPL 1756). This is why there was not much theorising about geography in the Netherlands until the beginning of the twentieth century. Dutch geographers leaned heavily on theories developed in France and Germany. It may be interesting to note that ten years later, in 1887, the Royal Geographical Society succeeded after much lobbying in establishing a readership in geography at the University of Oxford. In a report of the society drawn up in 1886 it came to the conclusion that: "There is no country that can less afford to dispense with geographical knowledge than England... [yet] there are few countries in which a high order of geographical teaching is so little encouraged. The interests of England are as wide as the world. Her colonies, her commerce, her emigrations, her wars, her missionaries, and her scientific explorers bring her into contact with all parts of the globe, and it is therefore a matter of imperial importance that no reasonable means should be neglected of training her youth in sound geographical knowledge" (Stoddart 1986: 87)

The same strictures could have been applied to the Dutch situation. One of the other questions addressed by the Dutch Society concerned the encouragement of emigration. Only a slight majority was in favour of this policy. The opponents argued that by encouraging emigration the society would be considered one of colonisers. As will be seen, this strong anti-colonisation lobby would decline in less than a year. The foundation meeting of the Geographical Society on 3 June 1873 was attended by forty-four people. In his inaugural address the president, Veth, reviewed the two main goals of the society, which followed naturally from each other: the nationalistic goal of striving for and maintaining ancestral pride; and the dual scientific-economic goal of increasing and propagating geographical knowledge. Drawing his inspiration from Darwinism, Veth rejected the idea that the Netherlands would not be able to survive competition with the big powers. He focused the attention of his audience on the vast colonial heritage of the Netherlands, which, according to him, was respected by every civilised nation.

This colonial heritage – the Dutch East Indies, in particular – offered excellent opportunities for adding to the sum of geographical knowledge. The geographical knowledge thus acquired should then be disseminated in order to increase the possibilities for opening up new trade routes (TAG 1876: 6).

After the inaugural address the board members were chosen. In a commemorative lecture on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, Veth commented on the composition of the board: “That representatives of trade, industry, the army and navy were represented on the board together with teachers of geography ... guarantees the interest of science and pragmatism” (TAG 1885: 144). The closing address at the foundation meeting, again given by Veth, dealt with the Aceh war, which had broken out at the end of March 1873. His talk was based on his booklet “Acehnese-Dutch relations” which had been published in May. In this booklet Veth spoke his mind: “It is my conviction that in our struggle with the Acehnese, we represent civilisation and humanity and humanity in the face of barbarism and cruelty ... let there be no doubt that we must pursue this just war” (Veth 1873: 132).

During the first months of its existence the society concentrated on Aceh as a future field for research. It petitioned the colonial secretary very energetically and after the first expedition had turned out to be a complete failure, it pressed strongly for a second military expedition to Aceh. The society blamed the failure of the expedition, and previous expeditions to other territories, on a lack of geographical knowledge: “If only we had possessed geographical knowledge of these territories blood and treasures could have been spared” (TAG 1876: 11-12). In this very argument lay a basis for the growing popularity of geographical science, because in coming to terms with their defeat at Sedan at the hands of the Germans, for example, France had also blamed its defeat on the lack of geographical knowledge of its officers.

The interests of the society were by no means limited to the Dutch East Indies but extended to other parts of the world (Van der Velde 1986). The Polar region, the Congo River and southern Africa also enjoyed the attention of the society. A predominantly nationalist motive accounted for its interest in the North Pole. The society was under the impression that Spitsbergen (Svalbard) was still a Dutch possession. This is understandable in view of the fact that before the Berlin Conference of 1885, actual occupation of territory was not a precondition of ownership. An acknowledged claim sufficed. The economic motive concentrated on reviving the once flourishing whaling industry. The society's interest in the Congo River was also governed by an economic motive. The Rotterdam-based *Afrikaanse Handelsvereeniging* (African Trade Society) had a large network of trading posts along the Congo River which comprised a sort of informal empire. The society's interest can also be explained from a strategic point of view, since the territory bordered colonial possessions of other countries in southern Africa.

The society's special interest in southern Africa was dictated by national sentiments due to kinship with the southern African Boers. The society viewed the Boers as the torchbearers of national Dutch vitality, in which their brethren in the Netherlands were completely deficient. In the view of the society, southern Africa with its enormous economic potential was the ideal region for Dutch emigration. Would this be the opportunity to create a Dutch-speaking cultural and economic empire, an opportunity which it had missed in the seventeenth century?

Leaving aside the pan-Dutch dream which continued to linger in the background, it transpired that the society's other ideas met with wide response in upper-class bourgeois circles, which is borne out by the number of such persons who became members of the society. Prince Hendrik, nicknamed "the Seafarer", gave his support by becoming patron of the society. He expected good results for trade and industry from the society. This royal support was made evident when in 1888 the society was granted the right to call itself the Royal Dutch Geographical Society. In the space of three years the Geographical Society had become an effective colonial lobby, which bore overt witness to its imperialist nature. Equipping a scientific expedition to the land of economic promise, Sumatra, was a concrete expression of this nature.

The Sumatra Expedition (1877-79)

The economic goal of this expedition – the discovery of a transportation route for the coal of the Ombilin Field, which had been discovered in the 1860s – was inextricably interwoven with the underlying political goal: expansion of effective control in that part of Sumatra through which the society expected to find a transportation route. This area was controlled by Sultan Taha, who had been driven out of Palembang in 1858 and had sworn to kill every Dutchman who tried to set foot on his territory. Anyone with knowledge of the political conditions prevailing in Sumatra should have been aware of the risks the expedition members were running. Furthermore, in the past it had frequently been the case that the murder of a Dutchman by indigenes had given impetus for military expeditions which had sometimes led to expansion of effective control.

Since the majority of the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies were opposed to this kind of provocation, they also opposed the scientific expedition of the society because they viewed it as a veiled attempt to extend control over Sumatra in an amoral way. "It is evident that this private expedition ... will have to be backed up by a military expedition ... but in extending our control moral means should prevail over military violence" (*Java Bode* 1877: 16 August). Although under pressure from Governor-General J.W. van Lansberge, the Council of the Dutch East Indies

had decided to fund the expedition, but it was opposed to the extension of effective control in the Outer Territories, as were the government of the interior and the army. Their fear of creating a second Aceh was deep rooted because of its possible military and financial consequences.

Notwithstanding the support of the Governor-General, the provincial government and the navy, their room for manoeuvre was limited by the non-cooperation of the aforementioned branches of government. Van Lansberge was quite clear about what was at stake: "The expedition will not only enhance our scientific knowledge but will also increase our political influence in the heartland of Sumatra. In the course of time it can eliminate the distrust of the natives for the Europeans and give them the correct view" (Colonies 1876: Letter of Van Lansberge to Van Goltstein, 24 June).

In the Netherlands the expedition received much support from influential members of the society. Also, by partly funding the expedition the Dutch parliament backed the society's initiative. More significant still was the support of the two colonial secretaries involved in the planning and execution stages of the expedition. Nevertheless, both secretaries, W. van Goltstein and F. Alting Mees, continued to reiterate in a somewhat hypocritical way that the private character of the expedition should be maintained at all times. However, they were fully aware that the so-called private character of the expedition meant little in an environment in which every white man was looked upon as a representative of Dutch authority. Therefore one can draw the conclusion that Dutch colonial secretaries were prepared to run the risk of a military expedition.

Disregarding staunch opposition in the Dutch East Indies, Van Lansberge planned to create an incident on the basis of a tried and tested recipe. After the first attempt by the expedition members to penetrate into Jambi had failed because one of the vessels of Sultan Taha, the Roja of Singuntur, had blocked the way, the Governor-General gratefully accepted the "proposal" of the Governor of Palembang, A. Pruys van der Hoeven. The latter proposed sending a gunboat up the Batang Hari River to a rendez-vous where he would await the arrival of the expedition members. Citing one of the provincial officials, Van Canne: "If Pruys van der Hoeven succeeds in steaming up river, I think the malevolent Roja of Siguntur will back down" (KNAG 1878: Letter of Van Canne to Van Hasselt, 2 March). This hope remained unfulfilled because the Roja managed to stop the expedition members for a second time. They failed to reach the rendez-vous and the Governor of Palembang was forced to return to Palembang due to a fall in the water level of the river. Neither did the showing of the flag have the desired intimidating effect, since the gunboat was spotted by only a few indigenes. In the absence of a direct confrontation between the Governor and the Sultan, no incident occurred which would have warranted the launching of a military expedition. An attempt later that year by expedition members to penetrate the Limun territory was doomed to

failure due to a lack of military support which, it turned out, was a precondition to any successful attempt to penetrate the heartland of Sumatra. The telegram from the leader of the expedition to the president of the organising committee in the Netherlands, Veth, bears testimony to the failure of the expedition. “Armed people-stop-forced us-stop-leave Limoen-stop-travel Djambi impossible-stop-ask instructions-stop” (KNAG 1878: Telegram of Van Haseelt to Veth, 22 July).

The unrest created by the expedition in Sumatra (and Java) inspired the third colonial secretary involved – Van Bosse (a wealthy sugar plantation owner) – to let the expedition die a natural death. In his opinion the extension of effective control should be accomplished gradually by provincial officials. “I think it would be an advantage if our provincial officials are able to act when they think the time is ripe and that their actions should no longer be complicated by the peregrinations of the scientific expedition of the Geographical Society” (Colonies: Letter of Van Bosse to Van Lansberge, 2 November 1878). If Van Bosse had lived longer – he died at the beginning of 1879 – the political aim and its concomitant economic goal might eventually have been realised, albeit in a roundabout way.

But Van Bosse’s successor, O. van Rees, a repatriated member of the Council of Dutch East Indies, was a staunch supporter of the abstention policy. Van Lansberge, whose tenure was drawing to a close, could not but concede to the point of view of the new colonial secretary. The same was true for the society, whose president attributed the failure of the expedition to the fact that the political conditions in Sumatra had been completely misrepresented by the colonial government. According to him the most important outcome of the expedition was that it had disclosed the true nature of the prevailing political conditions in Sumatra, which he and the society would like to have imagined otherwise (Veth 1881: 8).

The Society in the 1880s and 1890s

The attempts by the society to organise similar expeditions to other parts of the Outer Territories at the beginning of the 1880s, for example to New Guinea at the height of the Berlin Conference, failed due to a lack of support from parliament and the Colonial Ministry. Nevertheless the society funded a one-man expedition by the son of its president to Benguela in southern Africa. It was a complete failure and resulted in the death of Veth’s son. In contrast to government circles, the trade and industry sector continued to support the society’s expedition plans. At the end of the 1880s, the society succeeded in obtaining support from the government for a one-man expedition to Flores.

A. Wichmann, a geologist, was sent to Flores by the society to verify the rumors about rich tin deposits on that island. The expedition did not bear fruit but

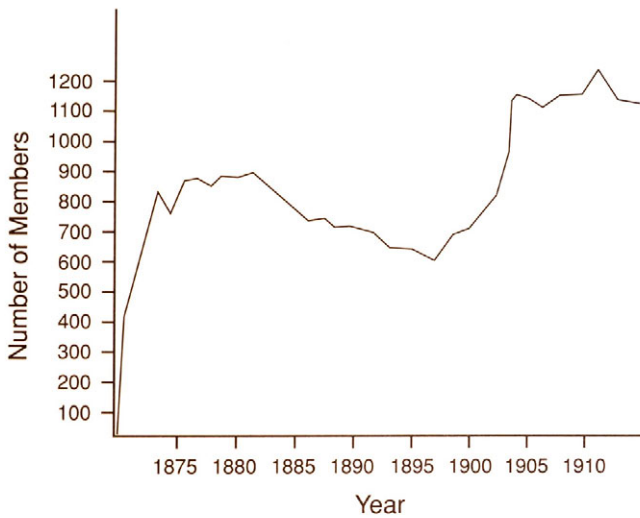


Figure 5. Table Membership Royal Dutch Geographical Society, 1873-1914. Photo Cindy Bakker.

Wichmann's remark that the Kokka tribe had shown itself very friendly towards the Dutch nation began to take on a life of its own. On the basis of Wichmann's remarks, both the Resident of Timor, G. G. de Villeneuve, and the director of the Department of Education and Religion, W. P. Groeneveldt, a future president of the society, were in favour of sending a government expedition to the tribal area of the Kokkas. The mining engineer, R. van Schelle, who was sent to Flores at the end of 1889, barely escaped with his life after his expedition was attacked by the "Dutch-loving" Kokka tribe. This incident provoked a military expedition, which was sent to Flores in May 1890 and resulted in the pacification of the Kokkas. Again, the aspirations of the society had been served in a roundabout manner (Jobse 1980).

The society's pioneering role in promoting an imperialist policy was taken over by the Society for the Advancement of Scientific Research in the Dutch Colonies, founded in 1890. It operated from the Netherlands as well as from the Dutch East Indies, which had obvious advantages. Its many expeditions to the sensitive Borneo region played a crucial role in extending effective control there (Pulle 1940: 22). Meanwhile, the decline in membership of the society which had set in in the middle of the 1880s continued. In these years the society gradually embraced a more scientific course, thus narrowing its support base. At the end of the century the membership had dropped by 30 per cent in comparison to the 1885 figure of nearly one thousand members (see Figure 5).

As mentioned earlier, economic and social interrelations between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies were multiplying. Thus, pressure on the government to abolish the abstention policy continued to mount: this internal pressure was stepped up by external pressure arising from the participation of Japan and the United States in the imperial race, which forced the Dutch to strengthen their position in the Dutch East Indies: an archipelago that bordered the spheres of influence of both newcomers. Therefore the abstention policy was definitively replaced by the pacification policy. Aceh served as a guinea pig for the implementation of this policy which was vigorously pursued by General J. B. van Heutsz. The strong nationalist upsurge resulting from the outcry of indignation about the imperialism of Great Britain at the outbreak of the Boer War paradoxically cleared the way for an active imperialist policy, which, in 1901, was given the misleading label “ethical”.

The South-west New Guinea Expedition (1904-05)

The Society thrived on the surge of nationalism. The new president, J. W. Ijzerman, and the new secretary, A. L. van Hasselt, capitalised on this trend and the membership surpassed the 1885 level, reaching 1,200 members. Due to a financial reorganisation by the Amsterdam banker, A.W. van Eeghen, the Society re-emerged ready for the fray. Its attention now was directed both to east and west. Between 1900 and 1914 it co-sponsored seven expeditions to Surinam. Furthermore it was a ready tool in the hands of the Colonial Secretary, A. F. W. Idenburg, who within the framework of the “ethical” policy, strove to fill the many blank spots on the map of New Guinea (Van der Velde 1983). In choosing between the expedition plans of the Society for the Advancement of Scientific Research in the Colonies and the Geographical Society, the colonial secretary opted for the plan of the latter because it was aimed at a topographical survey of the island. Idenburg gave the expedition military support. Only one socialist protested about the expedition plans when these were brought before parliament, but, apart from this, there was no opposition whatsoever. This was symptomatic of the change in attitude which had taken place in Dutch and Dutch East Indies societies in the space of thirty years.

The expedition was a failure. There were conflicts between the representative of the society and the commander of the troops and the accessibility of the terrain had been over-estimated. Furthermore, the protracted digestion of the meagre results lasted until 1908 when a book about the expedition was published (Rouffaer 1908). This made it clear that the society could not be used as an instrument of policy. On the advice of H. Colijn, a future prime minister, a government team was established which, by the time it was disbanded in 1915, had mapped 80 per cent of New Guinea.

Conclusion

Due to the emphasis in the debate on modern imperialism in its first appropriation phase, historians are still of the opinion that Dutch imperialism did not exist. However, when we take the perpetuation phase into consideration, it becomes clear that the Dutch with their active imperial policy were second to no other imperial power. The pinnacle of Dutch imperialism can be located in the period 1900-1914. The subjugation of the whole archipelago, "From Sabang to Merauke", the Dutch equivalent of the British influence from "the Cape to Cairo", meant that the Dutch had become the fourth largest imperial power. The foundation of the society in 1873 occurred in the initial years of the appropriation period. Within a few years the society became the rallying place for pro-imperialist forces in Dutch society which were nationalistically, culturally and economically motivated. Thus the society metamorphosed into a colonial lobby which denounced the conservative colonial policy of the government. Under the veil of a scientific expedition to Sumatra, it tried to torpedo the government's policy. The conservatives held the upper hand until 1895, when under external and internal pressure which had been building up during the appropriation period, their policy was replaced by an aggressively imperialistic one.

During the latter period, the society helped to lay the foundation for the new imperial policy – the pacification policy which the society wholeheartedly supported during the perpetuation stage. However, its expedition to New Guinea proved to be a political failure. It turned out that the society could not be used as an instrument of policy. The society would resign itself during the last years of imperialism (1914-40) to purely scientific pursuits in an empire which it had helped to found.

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Jacob Haafner's Treatise on the Disastrous Effects of Missionary Activities World-wide

I consider all people, whatever their colour, nation and belief might be, to be my fellow human beings and brothers; whoever believes this just as I do will not take offence, indeed quite the opposite, will be delighted by the fact that I defend and act as spokesperson for the innocent and oppressed Indians (the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent), and seek to heap infamy on their tyrants (Haafner 1993: 164). This was the creed of Jacob Haafner, author, trader, adventurer and world traveler. After nearly twenty years spent in Asia, his ideas about European society had undergone drastic changes and had given him the opportunity to think long and hard about the behaviour of the Europeans abroad. He had reached the conclusion that their conduct was significantly at odds with the Christian values of European civilisation. Every person who ventured out into the world overseas had just one goal in mind, he wrote: to acquire a fortune, by fair means or foul; always at the expense of the indigenous people.

Original source: Moor, Jaap and Velde, Paul van der. 1994. "Jacob Haafner (1754-1809) en de zend-ing", Jacob Haafner, *Verhandeling over het nut der zendelingen en zendelings-genootschappen. Een kritiek op zending en kolonialisme*. Hilversum: Verloren. 9-28. The biographical section of this article has been removed since in another article in this edited volume (see chapter 3) his biography is highlighted. This article has been translated by Rosemary Robson-McKillop.

His own experiences with the local population during his protracted sojourn in Asia had invariably been good and he had developed an enormous respect for Asians. He admired the indigenous culture and appreciated the people's way of life. In his eyes, it was an anathema that the Asians were considered inferior to Europeans; in fact, he was more inclined to think that the opposite was true. Haafner's oeuvre, five volumes of fascinating traveller's tales and an adaptation of the Indian *Ramayana* epic, are steeped in the conviction that all people are equal, despite their mutual cultural and material differences.

Haafner combined this romantic admiration of other civilisations, and therefore implicitly of cultural pluralism, with the progressive rationalism which characterised intellectual life in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. This is very eloquently encapsulated in his *Verhandeling over de nut van de Zending en Zendelings-genootschappen* (Treatise on the Benefits of the Protestant Mission and Missionary Societies). [Biographical details of his life can be found in the article "The World According to Jacob Haafner" (see chapter 3) and in the biography *Life under the Palms. The Sublime World of the Anti-colonialist Jacob Haafner* (Van der Velde 2021).

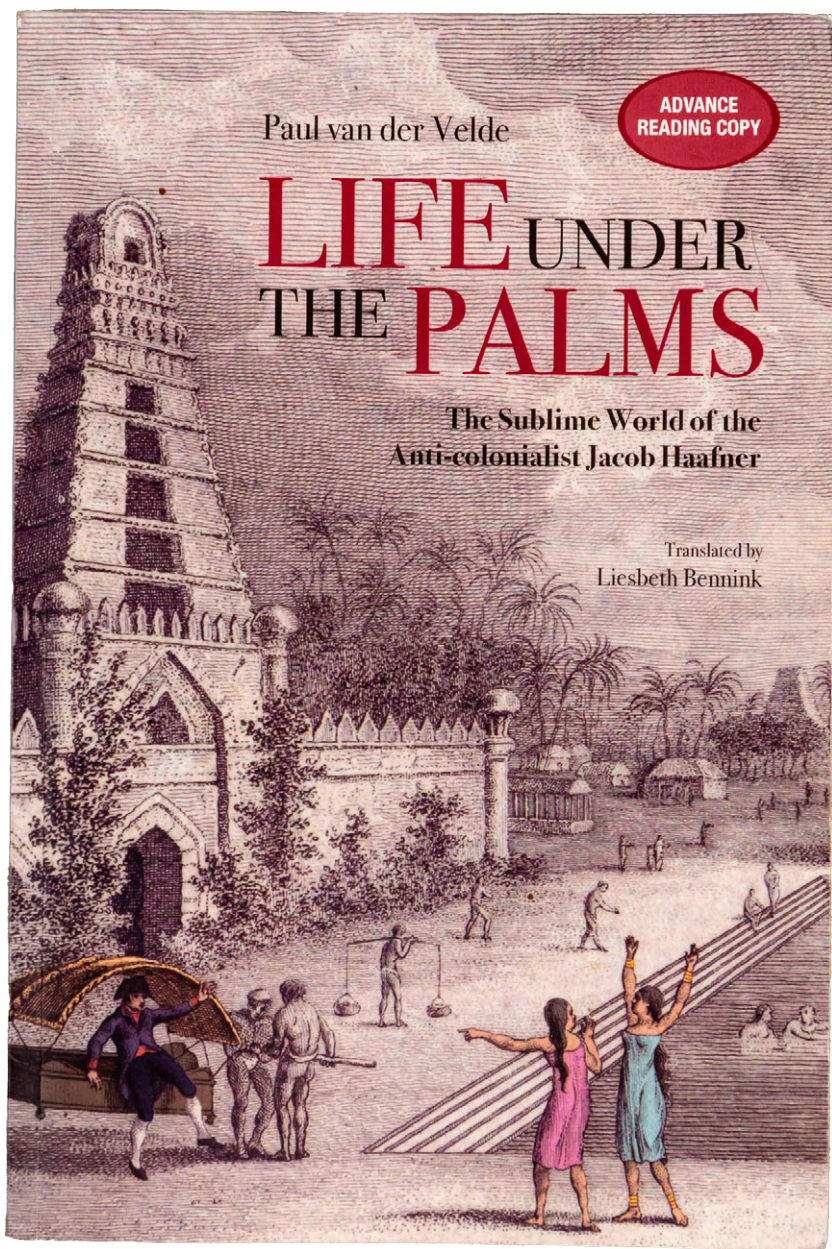


Figure 6. Cover *Life under the Palms*. *The Sublime World of the Anti-colonialist Jacob Haafner*. Photo Cindy Bakker.

The Competition Set by the Teyler's *Godgeleerd Genootschap*

As the eighteenth century progressed and the influence of the Enlightenment became more dominant, a large number of "learned societies" were founded in various European countries; a trend in which the Netherlands joined with gusto. In 1756, the Haarlem textile magnate Pieter Teyler van der Hulst decided to bequeath his fortune to the advancement of science and religion. After his death in 1778, his bequest led to the setting up of the *Teylers Stichting* (Teyler's Foundation).

The board of the society was principally composed of Mennonites, a group of Dutch dissenters who were barred from almost all the other societies. It was they who were entrusted with Teyler's artistic and scientific legacy. This was assembled as a collection in the Teyler's Museum on the banks of the Spaarne in Haarlem, which was opened in 1784. When this material task had been accomplished, they proceeded to found two learned societies. The goal of the first, the *Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap* (Teyler's Theological Society), was to encourage the study of the Christian religion through discussion and by sponsoring competitions. The second, the *Tweede Collegie*, pursued the aim of stimulating physics, history and literature. W.M. Mijnhardt claims that, especially in the early years after its foundation, the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* made a valuable contribution to the discussions then being hotly debated in enlightened Christian circles (Mijnhardt 1988: 348). Going by the motto engraved on the Society's gold medal of honor: "True knowledge of Religion flourishes in Freedom", the society was keen to underline that it stood for tolerance and was ready to take up cudgels against any government interference in religious affairs.

On November 25, 1803, *Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap* set a competition, the result to be announced on April 8, 1805, which bore the title: "What services have Protestant missionaries rendered the propagation of true Christianity in the last two centuries and what, if any, success can be expected of contemporary Missionary Societies in this respect?" (Haafner 1993: 33). The announcement of the competition was printed in all the prominent newspapers and the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* also had the text printed at the *Algemeene Bibliotheek* and in the *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* (a literary and cultural journal). Haafner was a frequent visitor to the famous coffee house "The Bird of Paradise" in Amsterdam where newspapers and journals could be read and perhaps it is there that he found out about the competition.

The subject was extremely topical. The idea of a mission was rapidly gaining ground, especially in Protestant circles. It was a movement inspired by Pietism and Halle, Jacob's birthplace, was its center. The London Missionary Society was founded in England in 1795. Missionary societies were also founded in the Netherlands: in 1787, the Evangelical Brotherhood in Zeist and the *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* (NZG/ Dutch Missionary Society) in Rotterdam in 1797. The

journals of the societies provided a platform in which missionaries could vaunt the results of their endeavours. The writings were uplifting reports, written with a view to the home front on which they were dependent for their cash flows. The sad truth is that the badly educated and poorly prepared missionaries achieved very little.

Haafner had observed missionaries at work in South Africa and India and what he had seen made him highly critical of their way of life and of the result of their mission. In view of his straightened financial circumstances and with an eye on the prize offered, consisting of a gold medal, designed by the most famous contemporary medalist, Johan George Holtzheij, or a monetary sum amounting to 400 guilders, it will not have taken him long to decide to commit his opinion of the use of the mission to paper. On 30 November, 1804, Haafner's response arrived at the society (ATS: 1120 / ATS 2: fol. 140-142).

After the three directors and the six board members of the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* had had the opportunity to read the 195-page manuscript, on April 4, 1805, they met to discuss the only submission which had been entered in the competition (ATS 2: fol. 194). The contestants who wished to enter the competition had been asked to submit their monograph using a quotation. The author of the monograph was supposed to mention his chosen quotation again submitted in a sealed envelope, which would also contain his name and address. This envelope would be opened only after a decision had been made about whether or not the prize would be awarded. This was to ensure that the judgement would be as objective as possible.

Haafner the Victor

On 9 April, 1805, the *Haarlemsche Courant* carried the announcement that Jacob Haafner of Amsterdam had won the competition. Shortly before, Haafner had received a letter from the Board of the Society saying: "It is my pleasure, Honorable Sir, to inform you by this that the Directors and Members of the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* of the Teyler's Foundation, gathered this afternoon to judge the monographs on Missionaries submitted and further that the Author of that identified by the quotation from Voltaire, has been awarded the Gold Medal by the members of the society, on condition that he agrees to make some changes in and improvements to his work. When the letter was opened your name was found within it, I therefore have the honor, Honorable Sir, to congratulate you upon it, as I have no doubt that you will comply with the aforesaid condition, to which I await your reply. Furthermore, next Tuesday the *Haarlemsche Courant* will inform the Public of your achievement. Signed Westerkappel Jr., Secretary." On the penultimate page of his manuscript, Haafner had already indicated his willingness to adapt his manuscript according to any instructions which might be given by the

Society: "Should I be so fortunate that my work should earn the approbation of the Honorable Gentlemen, and these same might wish some changes to be made, whether this be discarding some passages or a more extensive explication of some matter or any other changes, I subject myself most willingly to the desires of the Honorable Gentlemen" (ATS 1120: fol. 194).

The manuscript which Haafner submitted contained a scathing assessment of missions, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike. It is therefore understandable that the directors of the Teyler's Foundations would have had more than a few reservations. Despite these, they had decided to award him the Gold Medal of Honour and – after setting a few conditions – to undertake the publication of the manuscript. The author was requested to make the required emendations and additions and, above all, to mention his sources before Teyler's published the manuscript in its prestigious series: *Verhandelingen* (Papers). The directors will have been well aware that, even after these alterations had been made, Haafner's book would burst like a bombshell in missionary circles.

Because the minutes of the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* of this period are no longer extant, we shall never be able to determine precisely what the objections of the directors were but the Foreword which Teyler's Foundation appended to Haafner's monograph does give us some idea of what they might have been: "Despite the many refinements and corrections to the first manuscript he submitted in response to the wishes of the members, a few audacious suppositions and questionable suggestions still remain scattered through it" (Haafner 1994: 32).

What they had really wanted to see was that Haafner: "(...) had thought about the topic with a view to the future rather than from the past, therefore both rationally and historically" (Haafner 1994: 29). That the missions had accomplished nothing in the past did not mean that they would have not been successful in the future. They thought that Haafner's book would be an instructive work for future missionaries, who could learn from the mistakes of the past. They also noted that the monograph had been published after repeated and extensive negotiations and correspondence with the author.

The book was printed in May 1807 and probably published in June or July as Volume XXII of the Papers of the *Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap*. The print run was 290 copies and the printer was Joh. Enschede and Sons in Haarlem. Although we no longer have the correspondence between the directors and Haafner, we do have a copy of Haafner's original manuscript which has been preserved in the archive of the Teyler's Foundation. This gives us the chance to form an impression of what Haafner discarded and what he added, as well as an insight into which authors he had relied on when writing his work (ATS 1120).

In 1823 an unamended second edition, edited by Haafner's son, Christiaan Mathias, was published by the Amsterdam publisher Johannes van der Heij. In

a letter dated 4 June, 1823, he had asked the permission of the directors of the Teyler's Foundation to republish his father's book. "The exceptional scarcity of this Monograph", he wrote, "which means that it is virtually impossible to purchase a copy, as well as the desire to see the various works of my father in the same format, has emboldened me to request the Honorable Gentlemen to grant me Permission to reprint this Treatise" (ATS 2 C.M. Haafner to the directors 4 June, 1823). The directors granted his request (ATS 3. Minutes of the meeting of the directors, 6 June, 1823).

Investigation into the Usefulness of Missionaries and Missionary Societies

The objections vented by the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* in the foreword to the treatise have been alluded to above. The quotation borrowed from Voltaire under which Haafner submitted his book, *Il est difficile de server un Dieu qu'on ne connaît pas, plus difficile encore d'aimer le Dieu de ses Tirans*, sums up the critical content of the work perfectly. In his introduction, he states that his work is principally based on the personal observations he had made during the many years of residence overseas as well as on his reading, by which he meant the works of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau plus other authors, including Vaillant, Stedman, Frossard, Gage and De Las Casas. Undeniably, the first three mentioned Enlightenment philosophers had exerted an enormous influence on Haafner. One and all, they were critical of European Christian civilisation and strove to draw the attention of the Europeans to the example set by so-called "uncivilised" peoples or "Heathens".

In contrast to the Enlightenment philosophers, Haafner and the other authors wrote on the basis of their own personal experiences of the world beyond Europe. Without exception, they were extremely critical of the behavior of Europeans in the colonial world and championed the cause of the people they oppressed. De Las Casas (1474-1566) was the pioneer of this critical, anti-colonial intellectual tradition. His *Brevisima relación de las destrucción de las Indias* (Brief History of the Destruction of the Indians), drawn from his twenty-five-year residence in Central America, is an emotional indictment of the crimes committed by the conquistadores (De Las Casas 1552). Haafner's feelings of kinship with De Las Casas' ideas are unequivocally revealed when he writes at the end of his monograph: "With Bishop De Las Casas, I declare before God and the whole world that what I have said about the Europeans in the colonies is less than one-thousandth part of what might have been said" (Haafner 1994: 140-141).

Thomas Gage, the author of the book *Reize door de Spaansch West-Indiëen* (Travels through the Spanish West Indies), was also a missionary in the Spanish colonies and, in his book, he was just as scathing about the missionary work of

the various religious orders. Haafner also borrowed heavily from J.G. Stedman who devoted a great deal of attention in his book, *Reize naar Suriname* (Journey to Surinam), to the tortures inflicted on their slaves by the planters and other colonists. The French Protestant theologian Frossard also attacked the cruelty of the Europeans towards the slaves in his book *Zaak der Neger-slaven en inwoners van Guinee* (The Question of the Black Slaves and the Inhabitants of Guinea). In his work F. le Vaillant reveals himself as the champion of the Khoi Khoi, the erroneous blanket name for the original inhabitants of South Africa, and was fiercely critical of the inhuman treatment of those people by the Boers. Haafner has certainly earned his place in this line-up of anti-colonial authors.

Getting down to brass tacks, Haafner viewed the whole work of conversion as nothing less than an instrument to force the world open to European ideas and political domination. He was merciless in his criticism of the image touted by the missionaries which misrepresented the Heathens as some sort of monsters. Their sole reason for doing this libel, he argued, was to make upright, God-fearing people dig deeper into their pockets. In fact, the missionaries had no hope of converting people, handicapped as they were by their lack of money, training and knowledge. As far as he was concerned, they would do better to remain in Europe because there was still plenty of work to be done in this area there.

The very special feature of Haafner's book is that, for the first time, it offered a comparative study of the mission worldwide (De Lange 1989: 16-19). He does not confine himself to just one area, but describes the methods employed by the missionaries, and the reactions to their attempts, in such far-flung regions as China, Japan, Tahiti and the Caribbean. The first chapter contains a description of the futile attempts to introduce the Khoi Khoi to the Gospels. Unless accompanied by regular hand-outs of tobacco, very little progress could be made. *Point de tabac, point de Hottentots*, so ran the adage. The reasons that the Khoi Khoi disdained the Christian message were clear: on the one hand, it was tied up with these people's way of life and language and, on the other, it was attributable to the behavior of the missionaries themselves and of the European Christian population of the Cape. The Hottentots are happy with what they have, Haafner stated, and are very attached to their own way of life and traditions. They have no need for another religion. Moreover, their language is so idiosyncratic and difficult that no missionary has ever succeeded in mastering it. This failure would make any successful preaching of the Gospels a virtually impossible feat. Furthermore, Haafner continues, the missionaries themselves are completely inept and unsuited to the task in hand and the Boers, Christian they might claim to be and thus should set a good example, were rotten to the core. In this invective we again see the line of Haafner's reasoning; two points which he would return to time and again: the people have no need for Christendom and the missionaries and the other Europeans in the colony

were so incredibly vicious that they themselves formed the greatest obstacle to the preaching of the Christian doctrine.

The principal theme of the second chapter is the Protestant mission to the African slaves on plantations in the Caribbean area and Surinam. Haafner draws a dismal picture of the plantation owners who mercilessly exploited the slave population and mistreated them. Moreover, they knew little or wished to know less about mission work; and of the indifference of the missionaries to the fate of the slaves which was nothing short of criminal. They never lifted a finger to do anything which might improve the lot of the slaves; on the contrary, they were far more likely to legitimate the cruel regime on the plantations. Haafner draws the same harrowing picture of the Roman Catholic mission to the Indians in South America. The latter were being exterminated on a large scale, he says following De Las Casas, by greedy Europeans with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other.

Haafner then turned his attention to Asia, where the situation was very different. The missionaries there, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, were confronted with great empires and self-confident civilisations, in which the Europeans initially could not play master, but instead had to come cap in hand to ask if they might also participate. China and Japan were areas in which European missionaries might potentially achieve something, but this would be a taxing, uphill battle. India was a different matter. Haafner thought that this presented an impossible task. Indian civilisation was older than its European counterpart, he rated Hinduism far higher than he did Christianity and the devotion of the Indians to their traditions and ways of thinking was so strong that missions did not stand a chance. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the European missionaries who were sent there were, without exception, incompetent, untrained and the majority of them completely unsavory types. Thus spoke Haafner!

He does concede some admiration for the Roman Catholic mission in China and Japan. By directing their attention to the upper echelons of society, by permitting some of the elements of the older religions to survive and because the majority of them were well-educated men, who set about learning the local languages, thereby garnering prestige among the local elites, the Jesuits had succeeded in converting quite a few people. This achievement would be beyond the capabilities of most of the Protestant missionaries, Haafner observed. To make matters worse, they were far more rigorous in demonising the local religions.

Haafner devotes a short chapter to the extremely unsuccessful mission to Tahiti. The Protestant missionaries just could not gain a foothold there. The final chapter of the book took another look at the way Europeans live in Asia. In it Haafner is recounting his own empirical observations and experiences. Christianity did not stand a hope in Hades of succeeding there purely and simply because of the scandalous behaviour of most Europeans, including the missionaries. The acme of

misbehaviour was the way Europeans set to work in India. In view of the fact that they can achieve nothing there without violence, they had resorted to the most debased methods to get what they wanted. Haafner's conclusion was inescapable. What benefit have the missionaries had for the propagation of Christianity? Haafner's answer is unequivocal: none whatsoever! What could be expected in the future? Haafner's answer is again unambiguous: nothing, not as long as colonialism continues to exist and the behaviour of the Europeans did not alter drastically. It was, he says echoing Voltaire, impossible to love the god of his tyrants.

A Shot Across the Bows of the Mission

In a nutshell, Haafner's judgement on the mission was annihilating. Naturally, reactions were not slow to come and in missionary circles his Treatise was not exactly seen as a useful publication, brimming with hints for aspiring missionaries, the consummation perhaps what the *Godgeleerd Genootschap* had devoutly wished. The Treatise, which was published in June or July 1807, was naturally a hot topic of conversation in the Extraordinary Meeting of the Dutch Missionary Society, held from August 11 to 14, 1807, in Rotterdam. The burning question was what could the Society do to mitigate the deeply negative impression it had made or, indeed, if it were possible, to dispose of it once and for all (ANZG 1807: Extraordinary Meeting August 11, 1807, 12-13).

The directors of the NZG decided to empanel an advisory commission to investigate the potential negative effects of Haafner's Treatise on the mission and to refute his allegations. The report, which was submitted on August 14, has not been preserved. Nevertheless, the directors did decide not to react publicly to Haafner's Treatise. The meeting was very pleased with the speech given by G.J. Schacht, a minister from Dordrecht, on August 13. He did not mention Haafner by name but, his speech, published the same year, puts a heavy emphasis on the social benefits of the mission to the Heathen as well as considering the mission the fulfilment of God's promise, and can be taken as one initial reaction to and refutation of Haafner's Treatise (Schacht 1807).

During the closing session on Friday 14 August, J.A. Lotze, a Theology professor from Franeker, advocated setting up a mission in Malabar (Western India) and Coromandel. In an extensive exposition, he extols the social and geographical conditions in Hindustan which, in his opinion, would ensure that a mission to these regions would be a promising enterprise. Strikingly, this was precisely the area in which Haafner had lived and about which he had said so adamantly that the mission would not stand a chance. Lotze's advocacy can be seen as a second reaction to Haafner's Treatise. Whereas Haafner had pointed out the steadfast

devotion of the Hindus to their ancient and deeply rooted religious convictions, Lotze dismissed this out of hand, declaring that Haafner himself had “no really satisfactory knowledge of the Religious System of the Hindustanis” (ANZG 1807: *Handelingen* 14 August). Probably on his return journey to Franeker, on 16 August, 1807, this same Lotze visited the Teyler’s Museum. He must have used this opportunity to discuss Haafner’s Treatise with the Teyler’s Foundation. This was probably an informal meeting as there is no mention of it in the minutes of the Teyler’s Foundation (ATS 149).

The directors of the NZG concluded that Haafner had relied too much on his personal experience, without having consulted the most appropriate literature, and consequently they decided that the defense against Haafner’s Treatise should be directed principally towards his assertion that the mission to the people to be converted would be a complete waste of time because of the nature and customs of the population whose purpose was to preserve those traditional norms and values (Boneschansker 1987: 165). In the Extraordinary Meeting convened in 1808, Haafner’s work once again took centre stage. M. Tydeman presented a list of articles and books compiled by his brother, H.W. Tydeman, containing material which could be used as ammunition to refute Haafner’s claims, despite the fact that publications which supported what Haafner had to say had also appeared (Boneschansker 1987: 163).

The Voice of Calvinist Holland

In 1809 at least three publications appeared which can be seen as attempts to repudiate Haafner’s Treatise. The first is an anonymous publication entitled: *Verhandeling over het nut, hetwelk de reeds aangaande pogingen, ter voortplanting van he Ware Christendom, onder de onbeschaafde volken, te wege gebragt hebben* (Treatise about the benefits attained by the attempts already made to propagate True Christianity among the uncivilised people: Anonymous 1809). In the introduction the author writes: “It is by no means the purpose of this [pamphlet] to be a refutation of or a diatribe attacking Mr Haafner’s prize-winning book; a work, which no matter how easy this might be, is so tedious for this writer as reading would be for the Reader, the which is, moreover, a futile exercise” (Anonymous 1809: 5Q).

Despite his apparent aversion to repudiating Haafner’s Treatise, the author could not restrain himself from adding a fourteen-page appendix pointing out Haafner’s mistakes (Anonymous 1809: 114-127). He begins by saying that Haafner’s contention is based on a mistaken assumption. Haafner’s point of departure is to point out the nature, way of thinking and customs of the indigenous people before proceeding to show that attempts to convert them would be futile. His approach,

from the point of view of the other civilisation, is unacceptable because, by so doing, he was putting the non-European civilisation on a par with that of Christian Europe. The anonymous author considers this erroneous. One should begin with the Gospels, in which everything is clearly formulated. Who can be bothered about the customs and ways of thinking of Heathen people who, when all is said and done, will only see the true light after the light of the Gospels has been shed upon them?

Haafner's failure to grasp this vision was seen as a flaw by the author: "A defect which should leave us astounded that such a piece of work could have ever carried off the prize" (Anonymous 1809: 117). Having said this, the author moves on to Haafner's very scant knowledge of the history of the mission and concludes: "And that such a man who is so deplorably ill-informed about the history of the missions, so much the concern of his own country, and who displays the most appalling ignorance, will act as advisor to the Missionary societies" (Anonymous 1809: 118-119). The author also hones in on Haafner's use of what was already a very limited amount of literature. As an example, he mentions Crantz' book *De Historie van Groenland* (The History of Greenland), which Haafner cites carelessly. The anonymous author delivers an even more venomous sneer when he writes: "Surely, it is utter nonsense that a person who boasts of his twenty-three years of residence in India, should pronounce so patronizingly about Greenland" (Anonymous 1809: 121).

A little further on, he accuses Haafner of bad faith; Haafner is accused of having adopted an inimical stance against the expansion of Christianity, as betrayed by his assertion: "They (the missionaries) think it is enough for them to baptize and [thus] Christianize; it matters not what denomination of Christian they happen to be" (Anonymous 1809: 120-121). The anonymous author says that this might indeed be true of the Roman Catholic mission but absolutely incorrect when applied to the Protestant, Dutch mission: "This [assertion] flies in the face of history and irrefutable examples" (Anonymous 1809: 125). He goes on to give a few other examples then sighs, "This is all a waste of breath! Would these same convince Mr Haafner? Would they be enough to convince those to make do with this flawed work and stop, [saying] they have done what they could?" (Anonymous 1809: 124) As far as Anonymous is concerned, the reverse was just as valid: "Luckily, in the view of the friends of Jesus Christ and His Gospel, Mr Haafner's efforts are completely ineffectual" (Anonymous 1809: 126). Their reason is that they see the Gospel as God's power of salvation and refuse to be diverted from the path of righteousness by: "The Philosophical arguments of worldly wisdom and the mocking of the wicked and the presumptuous" (Anonymous 1809: 127).

The second publication which levels criticism at Haafner was written by Rhijnvis Feith (Rhijnvis Feith 1809). In the appendix to his book entitled: *Verhandeling over de verbreiding der Evangelieleer over den aardbodem* (Monograph about the Propagation of the Preaching of the Gospel throughout the Globe), published by

Joh. Allart in Amsterdam, he explores the criticism of the mission voiced by various writers and includes Haafner's Treatise among them (Rheinvis Feith: 1809: 233-239). His chief criticisms of Haafner are that the latter blames the missionaries for the degenerate and un-Christian actions of governments and for his assertion that the Hindus could not be converted. To illustrate his point, Feith cites the Greeks with their impressive civilisation who were eventually converted by the apostles. "I think that this is the great fault in the otherwise in many ways remarkable book by Mr Haafner" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 255).

In other words, Feith has a more sympathetic opinion of Haafner's work than the above-mentioned anonymous author, because Feith judges that Haafner to be a very talented author, "Whose elegant and entertaining style of writing is more readily recognizable to me than that of anybody else" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 271). Feith is willing to acknowledge that there is plenty of room for improvement in the conduct of Europeans in colonies, but is also convinced that God would consummate His work. After the appendix, there is also a letter which Feith had received only after he had finished his book, but which he still wanted to share with the reader (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 294-307). Feith gives an extract which concentrates mainly on Haafner's ideas about the very slim chances of converting the Hindus. The writer of the letter remarks: "In my estimation, this man's work contains a great deal of truth, brings many a mistake to light and is astute enough to instil caution in the Directors of the Missionary Society in their selection of missionaries and making plans for apposite regulations to be able to achieve the principal goal of their activities" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 294).

The writer of the letter utterly dismisses Haafner's conclusion that the mission is a worthless undertaking. He then passes on to Haafner's ideas about the religion of the Hindus. He sees Hinduism as a degenerate form of Christianity and cites Haafner himself who had expressed the opinion that the worship of both the cobra and the lingam (phallus) were ridiculous. Haafner would not enthusiastically declare: "Good, artless, gentle Indian ladies! Pray do continue to worship the Lingam for the wellbeing of your husbands! May He, who knows the innermost secrets of all hearts, accept and answer your prayers to the Lingam, as if they were directed to Himself" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 297).

Having written this, he quotes Voltaire, who had praised the Vedas so highly "at the expense of our Bible". The letter writer rejects the idea that the book was an original Hindu work, which proclaims the oneness of the Supreme Being. This is yet another divergence from Haafner's attitude of mind. The letter writer was unable to conceive of the fact that the Heathens could have come up with such a pure idea unless they had borrowed it from Europe. After all: "The sciences were taken to India by the Greeks" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 302). He was convinced that it was patently obvious that many concepts and expressions in the Hindu religious

system had been adopted from the Christians. The problem lay in the fact that the Christian axioms had been corrupted and supplanted by fables. Therefore, it was now high time to propagate the Gospels to the Hindus in their original form. They would be absolutely delighted to be able to imbibe from the "lofty wisdom of the Gospels, which are the source of enlightenment and civilized behaviour" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 304-305).

"Would not Haafner's praise for the religious system of the Hindus evaporate, or at the very least be, bereft of most of its value?" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 301). "His Hindu religion has no truck with charity, nor does it teach him altruism or to act humanely" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 306). It is also obvious according to the letter writer that: "In his endeavours to understand the true condition of the Hindus, Mr Haafner has ignored History. Empirical experience is not a substitute for historical knowledge" (Rheinvis Feith 1809: 303). The fundamental idea presented by Haafner, namely: that of approaching the mission from the perspective of another system of thought, from the point of view of the "Other", was beyond the comprehension of the letter writer and other convinced Christians. The French critic is not very wide of the mark when he says that Haafner was "*un penseur original et profond*".

The third publication in which Haafner is mentioned, albeit briefly, was written by the Reverend Mr J. Weldijk from Gouda. It is in the text of a speech delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the NZG in Rotterdam on 17 August, 1809, entitled "The Readiness to Help Preachers of the Gospel among the Heathen etc.", and was published in Gouda by Wouter Verblauw. It is not an academic publication but a form of a profession of faith. The missionaries do not venture overseas to despoil the people but "to lead them to the glorious freedom of God's children". Haafner had predicted that the colonised people would rebel and fight for their freedom under a great leader. However, this would happen, according to the gentleman, only after they have accepted the Gospel which "Leads the people into realms of civilization" (Weldijk 1809).

Justified Criticism

The board of the Missionary Society never gave a public reaction to Haafner's criticism. In his study, Boneschansker says: "His (Haafner's) criticism was directed at the way of life adopted by Christians abroad and the quality of missionary work" (Boneschansker 1987: 167). Nevertheless, it seems that this criticism was taken on board behind closed doors by the NZG, because it is an unlikely coincidence that, in the Extraordinary Meeting of 1809, it was decided, as Lotze had proposed, to instigate an internal evaluation into all the missionary work which had been carried out up to that period" (Boneschansker 1987: 170). He adds that the NZG did not dare openly

acknowledge that Haafner might have been right about these points, because this could jeopardise support for missionary work. Moreover, he thinks that the NZG accusation levelled at Haafner claiming that he had not consulted enough literature was ill-founded and only partially correct because Haafner had, in fact, cited many sources and quoted from the books he used (Boneschansker 1987: 167).

The first part of the internal enquiry, a historical overview of what the NZG had achieved so far, appeared in 1810; the second part, an attempt to present an as impartial as possible assessment of overseas missionary work, came out in 1812. The third part, which was planned to formulate future missionary endeavours on the basis of the information provided in Parts One and Two, never saw the light of day. The commission was disbanded in 1815. The second part of the report reached the conclusion that, with a few exceptions, missionary work had been pretty much a fiasco. The blame should be sought from the fact that the work had been too fragmented, leading to a superfluity of missionary areas. This had been compounded by insufficient knowledge about these areas, the deplorable state of the recruitment and training of the missionaries, plus the obfuscation of instructions given to missionaries which meant that all too often they went their own way (Boneschansker 1987: 170).

Boneschansker's correct conclusion is that: "Those parts of the report which did appear confirm that J. Haafner's criticism was not unwarranted. The commission, which had studiously avoided an open discussion with Haafner, had certainly taken on board that things had to change" (Boneschansker 1987: 171). The numerous reactions which Haafner's Treatise elicited show that Haafner had confronted the NZG and its supporters with a bleak view of the futility of the mission. Or, as Boneschansker says: "Haafner's criticism hit hardest because his study exposed all too glaringly the weak points in local missionary endeavour" (Boneschansker 1987: 179). It is obvious that Haafner's Treatise has lost none of its topicality. When the word mission is substituted for development aid, it is as perfectly obvious that the wolf is still stalking around in sheep's clothing.

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