

ALL ABOUT MONEY:
MARITIME TRADE IN MAKASSAR AND WEST JAVA,
AROUND 1775

BY

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Abstract

In the last few decades the debate about the characteristics of early modern maritime trade in Southeast Asia has received extra impetus through the provision of new empirical substance. Amongst others the use of eighteenth-century shipping lists from the archives of the Dutch East India Company has brought the analysis to a higher level. For Makassar, Batavia, Banten and Cirebon this article connects the statistics on ships' volume and commodities exchanged to scattered information about prices of products in order to establish the total value of trade for these ports. By doing so, more light is shed on the leading commodities and the dominant participants in the commerce. Finally, this study addresses whether the eighteenth century in insular Southeast Asia was either a 'Chinese century' or already a 'European century.'

Ces dernières décennies, la disponibilité de nouvelles données empiriques a fortement stimulé le débat sur les traits caractéristiques du commerce maritime prémoderne. C'est entre autres en utilisant des inventaires maritimes de la Compagnie hollandaise des Indes orientales du dix-huitième siècle que l'on a pu porter l'analyse à un niveau plus élevé. Pour les villes de Makassar, Batavia, Banten et Cirebon, les statistiques du volume de navigation et des produits échangés seront dans cet article mis en rapport avec des informations éparses sur les prix des produits afin de pouvoir déterminer la valeur totale du commerce dans ces ports. Cette approche nous permet de mieux comprendre quels étaient les principaux produits échangés et qui étaient les principaux participants au commerce maritime. Finalement, nous nous poserons la question de savoir si en Asie du Sud-Est insulaire le dix-huitième siècle doit être considéré comme un 'siècle chinois' ou bien déjà comme un 'siècle européen.'

Keywords: Indonesia, shipping, trade, colonialism, Chinese

During the course of the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company, the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), emerged as the most powerful political entity in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago. At home, in the

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Netherlands, the VOC was a privileged trading company, granted a concession for trading exclusively to Asia. In Asia, almost immediately after its arrival on the scene, it became a sort of colonial state. Its first 'possession' was Amboina, taken over in 1605, to be followed by many other 'provinces,' such as the Moluccas in 1607, Banda in 1609 and, most importantly, Batavia, the headquarters or capital, in 1619. The directors of the VOC at home saw the use of political and military means as a permissible aberration fitting into the general set of activities of a trading company as long as they served the overall objective of acquiring profitable commodities for other markets (Knaap 2004, 42-43, 55-56).

By resorting to such tactics, the Dutch battled their way in, replacing other Europeans as well as competitors indigenous to the area. The onslaught by the Dutch was part of the termination of 'The Age of Commerce,' Southeast Asia's presumed pre-colonial golden age as postulated by Anthony Reid. The latter argues that because of this onslaught the Southeast Asians themselves lost touch with 'modernity.' Finding an inviting vacuum Europeans and Chinese took the lead. The Chinese tightened their grip on navigation, establishing diaspora communities in European-controlled centres. Considered to be the final blows to the Southeast Asians at the hands of the Dutch were the fall of Makassar on Sulawesi in the years 1666 to 1669, the intervention in the affairs of Java's most important state, Mataram, from 1677 until 1680, and the reduction of Banten, also in Java, in the years 1682 to 1684. The downfall of Makassar and Banten spelled the end of two important international emporia; the intervention in Mataram was the beginning of a process of colonial penetration into the agrarian economies of Central and East Java (Reid 1992, 488, 492-497; Reid 1997, 58-60).

It is believed, and what just has been said is no exception to this rule, that the Dutch ascendancy in political and military affairs had its parallel in the field of economics. Dutch interference in international trade and in the production of certain cash crops in order to reserve valuable commodities for themselves curbed the indigenous economies. Turning to the field of international trade, it is obvious that once the Dutch were in command they immediately set strict regulations on the trade in certain commodities as well as on the routes sailed by everybody else. Having been founded as a trading company, the VOC itself, whether it had assumed the role of a colonial state or not in a certain area, remained an active trader and navigator. Consequently, one might say that trade and shipping in the Archipelago gradually assumed the form of two spheres, namely of the VOC and of the others or, to put it another way, the state and the private sector. The former was usually portrayed as the flourishing success and the latter as the short commons. However, until recently there have been hardly any

studies which have lent empirical credence to this image of dominant foreign actors and powerless indigenes taking the back seat. This has begun to change in the last decade (Knaap 1996, 175-178; Reid 1997, 6-9; Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 171).

This study is building on earlier work on the shipping and trade in Makassar and in Java. By making use of computer technology, analyses have been produced which detail the structure of private shipping and trade in these areas. In Makassar, the fortunes of this one important harbor was followed throughout the course of the eighteenth century, while in Java analysis was limited to only a short span of time, namely the mid-1770s. Incontrovertibly, what the analysis for Java lacked in time span was compensated for in another field, namely in wider geographical coverage concerning not just one port but fourteen to fifteen. Among these fourteen was Banten as well as a great number, indeed the majority, of ports, formerly belonging to Mataram. The key sources for the analyses were the registers of the VOC harbormasters in the ports concerned (Knaap 1996, 2-3, 181-82; Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 5-6).

This study will summarize the results of both studies. Crucially there is more than one difference between the two. For instance, whereas the analysis for Makassar included the element of value for the exchange of commodities, for Java this aspect was scarcely touched upon. Adding a focus on value in Makassar, namely by attempting to transpose the volume of trade as registered in kind into monetary standards, has revealed interesting views about the role of certain trade routes and of ethnic groups of traders, in particular the Chinese. One could say that by broadening the analysis for Makassar, the discussion which has been delineating a 'Chinese century' for Southeast Asia has strengthened in color. The question is whether the attempt to monetize the data on trade in Java would lead to equivalent conclusions? To make a start, a first step on this road was set by looking at the three ports located in West Java: Batavia, Banten and Cirebon.

MAKASSAR SHIPPING AND TRADE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

According to the stipulations set out after the defeat of Makassar in 1667, the VOC had the right to control private overseas shipping and trade in and around Makassar. The main attempt made to effectuate this was by way of a pass system, by which the local VOC harbormaster could confine the navigation to areas where there was no threat to the Company's monopoly on trade in spices and imported Indian textiles. Over time, local VOC officials were sometimes more lenient in applying these strictly formulated regulations, as they were

afraid of the negative consequences for the economy in which they themselves might have had a finger in the pie. Consequently, a complete implementation of the pass system proved almost impossible. The VOC always lost money on Makassar as the area lacked any export product of global significance. Apart from its revenue from taxes, the VOC earned a relatively insignificant sum of money on its own trade, mainly through the sale of imported Indian cloth. The weakness of VOC trade was, however, not reflected in its volume of shipping, which was still considerable as the huge square-stern ships called *spiegelschepen* carried vital supplies for the local garrison. Besides being essential to the maintenance of the defenses, Makassar was also a port of call for such vessels on the routes to other 'provinces' (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 67-70).

Table 1: Average annual number of ship movements and volume of shipping of the VOC and the private sector in Makassar²

	VOC		Private		Total	
	mov. last		mov. last		mov. last	
1720s	10	1,135	522	3,755	533	4,890
1760s	15	2,134	555	3,232	570	5,366
1770s	8	2,614	432	3,275	440	5,889
1780s	11	1,318	589	5,450	600	6,768

Table 1 shows the development of the number of ship movements and of the volume of shipping throughout the eighteenth century. The share of the VOC grew from almost 25% in the 1720s to almost 45% in the 1770s, which is quite impressive. After about 1780, hampered by the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the VOC share fell to less than 20%. Turning to the private sector, the registers of the harbor masters show some clear tendencies. First, the ship types underwent a process of 'localization' in the sense that locally produced *paduwakang* grew in importance, while non-Sulawesian vessels, such as the European-style *chialoup*, or shallop, disappeared. Second, in the course of the century there was a significant decline in contacts with the Moluccas to the east, while those with the south, the area of the Flores Sea, increased substantially. The annual average number of private vessels calling at Makassar throughout the century was about 500, with downward and upward peaks in the 1770s and 1780s,

² Each decade in this table stands for a four-year or a three-year block. A *last* in the columns for volume is a Dutch unit of measure for ships, equal to 2 tons.

respectively. Such levels were probably equal to numbers in pre-conquest Makassar. Unfortunately, before the VOC took over nothing could be concluded about tonnages concerned. During the eighteenth century trends in annual average shipping volume varied according to period. Between about 1725 and 1770 there was a decline from approximately 3,750 to 3,250 *last* and then, from 1770 to circa 1790, an upward movement to 5,500 *last*. The entire period showed an annual compound growth rate of 0.6%. In the period up to 1770 the decline was about -0.3% annually, and afterwards the increase reached a neat 2.6%. (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 45-50, 67-74).

The just-mentioned re-direction of routes had a parallel in changes in the body of skippers. In the 1720s about 75% of skippers were of local Sulawesi origin. In sharp contrast to this, the 25% of non-Sulawesians had at least 60% of the volume of traffic in their hands, namely about 2,250 of an annual total of 3,750 *last*. Burghers, that is Europeans or Eurasians outside VOC service, were the dominant minority, with more than 1,300 *last* or 35% of the total volume. Later on in the century, the Burghers were dislodged by Chinese skippers. The latter also captured a share from Sulawesi seafarers, the number of whom had declined to less than 50% by the 1770s. The ascendancy of the non-Sulawesians did not end there, for in terms of ship movements in the 1780s they even accounted for more than 60%. Measured in volume, the non-Sulawesians had passed the 70% mark already by the 1770s. Among the non-Sulawesians, the Burghers were in a continuous state of retreat, receiving a final blow in the aftermath of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. The Chinese skippers had become the most prominent group, followed at a distance by the 'Malays,' a reference inclusive of a variety of archipelago sojourners centered in the Straits of Melaka region rather than the eastern Indonesia archipelago. In the 1780s the Chinese, with just over 30% of the movements, controlled almost 50% of the volume. It appears that in this period shipping in Makassar had been subject to a gradual process of 'Sinification.' This process of sinification, actually the third important tendency in the eighteenth century, was closely linked to the emergence of the direct trading link with Amoy in 1746 (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 57-61, 72).

The broad structure of maritime private trade in Makassar developed as follows. In the 1720s large quantities of Indian cloth were imported from Batavia as was Javanese tobacco from Semarang. The most important export product was that of locally grown rice to Ambon and Banda, which constituted the dominant bulk trade. In terms of value Indian cloth took the lead in imports, while Sulawesi rice led exports. However, under-utilization of space on board, i.e. sailing with entirely or almost empty holds, was widespread. In terms of value, Batavia was Makassar's most important trading partner. A totally different pic-

ture of private trade emerged in the 1760s and 1770s. Batavia supplied large volumes of arrack, while rice and raw cotton were coming in from Sumbawa and trepang (i.e., sea slugs) from other shores of the Flores Sea. Trepang was re-exported to China, either by the junk bound directly for Amoy, or indirectly, through Batavia. In value trepang was most important, both incoming and outgoing. In fact, Makassar had witnessed a gradual shift from the export of local produce to a transit trade exchanging marine products for China-made commodities. The Amoy connection was central to this transformation, creating new opportunities, in particular around the Flores Sea, from where most sea products originated. Sailing with empty holds was increasingly rare. Shortly after 1770, in terms of value, Amoy surpassed Batavia as Makassar's main trading partner. The 1780s, especially the later years, marked a real boom. In terms of value, trepang and slaves were most important, both inward and outward bound. The 'Sinification' referred to above was also evident in the commerce, as about 50% of the commodities were turned over by Chinese merchants from different places. The export of slaves to Batavia proved to be the last stronghold of the Burghers (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 89-90, 92-96, 109-110, 113-120, 123-126).

Table 2: Estimated annual average value of principal private sector commodities in Makassar in the second part of the eighteenth century, in rixdollars

	1760s	1770s	1780s
<i>Imports</i>			
Rixdollars	7,500	8,500	5,000
Tobacco, Chinese	30,000	30,000	32,500
Trepang	42,000	44,000	67,500
Cloth, Indian	8,000	13,000	34,500
Silk	5,100	10,500	17,800
Slaves	20,000	26,500	48,500
<i>Exports</i>			
Rixdollars	13,000	24,000	45,500
Tobacco, Chinese	1,500	3,000	5,000
Trepang	78,000	103,000	173,000
Cloth, Indian	7,000	5,500	13,500
Silk	9,900	16,500	11,200
Slaves	30,000	40,000	70,000

The total value of private trade, as shown in Table 3 below, almost doubled from an estimated 250,000 rixdollars in about 1725 to circa 550,000 around 1770, to reach an almost incredible level of 1,000,000 towards 1790. Over the entire period maritime commerce increased by 2.7% per annum. Before about 1770 growth rates were lower, namely 2.1%. The contradictory trends for the period 1725 to 1770, which reflect a declining merchant fleet and a growing commercial turnover, are indications of the seriousness of the overcapacity of the fleet in the first decades of the century. After 1770 the growth of trade achieved a compound rate of 4.0%. Towards 1790 the total value of commerce, 1,000,000 rixdollars, might have been bigger than that of the period before the conquest of Makassar by the VOC (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 126-127).

Table 3: Estimated annual average total value of private sector trade in Makassar, in rixdollars

	Import	Export	Total
1720s	117,500	64,500	182,000
1760s	225,500	216,500	442,000
1770s	255,500	302,000	557,500
1780s	447,000	512,500	959,500

What did the VOC itself actually do in the roadstead and in the market of Makassar? A very substantial part of its shipping was devoted to patrol duties in the vast waters surrounding the port, using locally stationed vessels. Consequently, these ships did not serve the VOC's own trade. For the century as a whole, it appears that more than two-thirds of its ships' volume was realized by *spiegelschepen*, which kept contact between the different provinces of the VOC empire. The pattern of ports of departure and destination did not change much over time, in contrast to that of the private sector. Measured in ship movements, about 33% was with Batavia, mostly incoming. Most of these incoming vessels continued on to the Moluccas, or had orders to return by way of Bima to the south, in order to take on sappanwood. The last-mentioned movement only applied to the first part of the century, as later on Bimanese sappanwood was in rather short supply. One *spiegelschip* per annum was actually enough to provide for Makassar alone, in the sense of supplying the province with personnel, most of them soldiers for the garrison, with money and other necessities for the internal service as well as some trade goods. In the 1720s, on arrival one such vessel carried a load worth about 40,000 rixdollars. Around 1770 the value had dropped to about 30,000 rixdollars. The value of the outgoing ships was prob-

ably no more than about 20,000. The data on the value on board VOC ships in the 1780s are rather confused.³ On the basis of these tentative calculations, it seems that in the early part of the century VOC trade was about 20% of all foreign trade in Makassar. In about 1770 it had fallen to less than 10%. Around the 1770s the imports of Indian cloth of the VOC was about 7,500 rixdollar, a little over one-half the private sector imports (Jacobs 2000, 232; Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 37, 40-41).

THE CHINESE IN MAKASSAR

The percentage of Chinese skippers in the total number of ship movements in Makassar increased from 6 in the 1720s to 31 in the 1780s. In the same period the Chinese share in the volume of shipping increased from 22 to 46%. As said previously, the take-off and the subsequent growth of the trade in trepang was the main motor of this process of 'Sinification.' An important step in this process was the emergence of a junk from Amoy. The first of these, the 'Toakaytsjeu' under the command of Tanhoetko, a former resident of the town, arrived out of the blue in 1746. Official policy of the VOC High Government in Batavia was to concentrate all private trade between China and the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago in Batavia. Hence, a direct Amoy-Makassar link seemed unacceptable. Considerable pressure from Makassar's multi-ethnic private business community, the prince of Bone and the local VOC government gradually opened the way for an exception to the rule. From 1746 until 1768 Amoy junks visited Makassar, sometimes at intervals of several years. From 1769 onwards, however, every year one junk called at the port (Sutherland 2000, 78-79; Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 145-147).

The junk entering Makassar in 1769 was 166 *last* in volume and carried a crew of 78. From 1774 to 1777 the junk was always the same one, having a volume of 170 *last*, but a much larger crew, of between 125 and 135 hands. On arrival in Makassar, in addition to the crew the vessel usually carried 10 to 30 passengers. The capacity of the junk of the late 1780s was more than double that of the 1770s. This was achieved in two steps: 300 *last* in 1780, and 400 in 1784, with the crews varying between 161 and 215 hands and the

³ Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 37-38. For the 1720s Knaap and Sutherland were not yet applying the most recent findings of Elisabeth Maria Jacobs (2000, 225-27), about the monetary policy of the VOC concerning the guilder. For the early-1770s Jacobs (232), gives a total figure of about 60,000 rixdollars, including more than 10,000 for the export of slaves. Many of these slaves were actually carried on board private sector ships (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 117-119).

number of passengers between 10 to 15. The junks were well loaded with commodities. The 1769 junk imported, amongst other goods, tea, Chinese tobacco, bowls, plates and pans. On departure only two commodities were carried, trepang and wax. The success of the Amoy link was in part realized by encroaching on Batavia's share in the trade of Makassar. In the 1770s, for example, with shipments of almost 3,200 *pikul* of trepang annually, Amoy claimed two-thirds of turnover. In the 1780s, the growth in the size of the junk naturally influenced the cargo. While imports of Chinese tobacco, almost 800 *pikul*, remained relatively constant and the number of sets of bowls and plates declined, there was a great expansion of imports of single bowls, single plates, pans, Chinese linen, Chinese cloth and umbrellas. In most of these products Amoy had either a complete monopoly or a near-monopoly on imports. The principal export items were trepang, seaweed and rattan. Compared to the 1770s, trepang exports had doubled, reaching the tremendous level of 6,000 *pikul* (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 147-149).

Table 4: Estimated average annual value of selected commodities in the cargo of the Amoy junk in Makassar, in rixdollars, percentage between brackets

	1770s		1780s	
<i>Imports</i>				
Linen, Chinese	7,500	(9)	11,000	(9)
Pans	4,000	(5)	15,000	(12)
Silk, raw	10,000	(11)	18,000	(15)
Tea	13,500	(15)	8,000	(7)
Tobacco, Chinese	28,500	(33)	29,000	(24)
Total	87,500	(100)	122,000	(100)
<i>Exports</i>				
Birds' nests	–	–	8,000	(4)
Trepang	71,000	(74)	147,000	(72)
Wax	3,500	(4)	–	–
Total	95,000	(100)	204,000	(100)

Table 4 illustrates the importance of the Amoy trade. The 1769 junk already had an estimated value of 117,000 rixdollars for import and export combined. This amount far exceeded that of the junk of 1755, which had shown a value of no more than 46,500 rixdollars. The annual average value of the merchan-

dise of the junks of the 1770s and late-1780s, import and export combined, was even bigger than that of 1769, namely 182,500 and 326,000 rixdollars, respectively. In a period of 33 years the trade had grown almost six-fold, reaching an annual compound growth rate of some 10%. Amoy's share in Makassar's total value of trade appeared to be 33% in the 1770s and 34% in the 1780s, thus outstripping that of Batavia in importance, the latter having to make do with less than 25%. In terms of value Amoy's dominant import item was Chinese tobacco with some 30%. It will be no surprise that on departure trepang towered above all the other commodities, claiming 70 to 75% of the value (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 148-149).

Moving to the category of Chinese skippers and traders living permanently as migrants in Southeast Asia, people in diaspora so to speak, the conclusion has already been drawn that their role in Makassar grew much more important over time. In the 1720s they were strongly entrenched in rice exports from Makassar to Ambon and Banda to the east. Besides this, they played a major role in imports of arrack and in China-made crockery from Batavia. Measured in value their trade was worth about 36,000 rixdollars, or 20% of Makassar's estimated total for the private sector. The disappearance of rice exports to the east in the middle of the century, caused by the decline of the economies of the Spice Islands, was a major blow. As a substitute they took part in the increasing imports of arrack from Batavia. As the Amoy junk did not yet sail regularly to Makassar before 1769, they also brought Chinese tobacco and earthenware obtained in Batavia. The local Chinese also did quite well with trepang and raw cotton incoming into Makassar. In the field of exports seaweed and trepang going to Batavia were important. After 1769 the migrant Chinese skippers' performance was heavily influenced by the reliable annual appearance of the one junk from Amoy. The Amoy junk took over the imports of Chinese tobacco and Chinese earthenware as well as the trepang exports from the Chinese diaspora communities living in Makassar and Batavia. The local Chinese of Makassar, however, remained important in the expanding markets of collecting trepang and seaweed as well as in the distribution of Chinese earthenware, bought from the junk, to areas beyond Makassar. By 1780 the re-orientation in migrant Chinese circles in Makassar was complete. In the decade thereafter a tremendous upsurge in the activities of local Chinese skippers was visible. Trepang remained their major import, but arrack, rice, raw cotton, Javanese tobacco, salt and Indian cloth were also brought in great quantities. In the field of exports to the areas surrounding the Flores Sea earthenware from the junk and textiles, such as Chinese linen and Sulawesian cloth, also did quite well (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 150-155).

Table 5: Estimated annual average value of trade of selected groups of private sector skippers in Makassar, in rixdollars, percent between brackets

	1770s		1780s	
Chinese, Amoy excluded	136,500	(24)	232,000	(24)
Chinese to/from Amoy	182,500	(33)	326,000	(34)
Chinese Peranakan	23,000	(4)	62,000	(7)
Total, Amoy included	557,500	(100)	959,500	(100)

Table 5 shows the performance of Chinese merchants with respect to the value of private trade after the trade link with Amoy had been firmly established. Whereas at the beginning of the century, in the 1720s, migrant Chinese traders had held some 20% of the trade, after about 1750 their share had doubled, because of Amoy, no matter the irregularity of the connection. When the junk sailed regularly, in the 1770s and 1780s, the Amoy traders and the local migrant Chinese more or less divided the Chinese share in a ratio of 3 to 2. The Chinese share in the value as such had grown to a level of between 55 and 60%, a very remarkable outcome indeed. One could say that in the course of the century the Chinese were the principal winners in an expanding market. In their wake, the Chinese Peranakan, the descendants of Chinese migrant men and local women, also picked a part of the grain (Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 156).

BATAVIA'S SHIPPING AND TRADE AROUND 1775

Batavia had been established as the VOC's headquarters on the ruins of Jayakarta in 1619. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, VOC authorities were very concerned about the welfare of this town. 'Batavia' should be understood in the first place as the VOC's own central organization and second as the rest of the capital's urban society. For its military capabilities, the VOC in Batavia depended for most of its requirements on the Netherlands. Food and building materials were a different matter. These had to be found in Asia, particularly in neighboring Central and East Java, the province of Java's Northeast Coast as it was known at that time. One could easily argue that the VOC's involvement in the affairs of the realm of Mataram from about 1680 onwards was not the result of its desire to obtain rich cargoes for Europe, but was prompted rather by its need to obtain supplies for Batavia. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Central and East Java were known as the VOC's

'granary' and 'timber-yard.' Supplies of rice and timber were obtained cheaply by making use of the political chain of command. The VOC also kept a close look on the private market for rice in order to ensure that Batavia's population was always well stocked with this essential commodity. To that end, interventions in the markets of the ports of Central and East Java regularly occurred. Moreover, the inhabitants of Batavia enjoyed a certain degree of protection on the part of the VOC for their most important industries, notably cane sugar and arrack. Besides these particular product-oriented approaches, the situation was also boosted by the overriding policy designed to turn the port into a trade emporium, in the interests of both the VOC and of the town's population. The VOC used its political and naval power to further this function, most importantly, by forcing certain categories of traders to re-direct their voyages by way of Batavia, for instance through implementing its pass policy (Knaap 1996, 13-16).

An example of such a re-directed category of traffic were the junks from and to China. Leonard Blussé has dealt extensively with the role of Batavia in Southeast Asia's junk trade. It appears that this trade fell into decline after 1740, the year when the Chinese residents of Batavia were massacred by the thousand. In the 1770s there were only five junks on average calling at Batavia each year, most of them from Amoy. In the 1730s almost four times as many junks had been calling. The main reason for the decline was the restructuring of the trading networks in Southeast Asia described above. In this respect, the establishment of a direct trade link between Europe and Guangzhou was important, as well as the expansion of the English country trade between India on the one hand and China on the other by way of the Straits of Melaka. In the latter, Riau assumed the function of a new emporium. Furthermore, it should be noted that neither Batavia nor Java played a substantial role in providing some of the most sought-after new commodities for the China market: birds' nests and trepang. After 1750, the VOC High Government in Batavia again tried to direct all the Southeast Asia-bound junk trade to Batavia, but these efforts were largely in vain. The junk trade to Banten and to Mataram's ports had already been eradicated by the VOC well before 1680. After 1740, there were no Chinese junks anchoring there either as Batavia was designated the ultimate emporium. Whereas some other ports in Java, notably Cirebon, Semarang, Gresik and Surabaya, were only allowed to receive ships to and from other nearby islands of the surrounding the Java Sea as well as those sailing along the coast of Java, in the roadstead of Batavia one could find ships active in all sorts of sub-continental connections, such as those between China and India. In the 1770s the High Government nevertheless complained that Batavia's role as

a 'main port' was declining owing to the fact that junks from China were sailing to various other places in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, such as Banjarmasin, Makassar, Riau, the Straits of Melaka, Trengganu and so forth. This enabled ships from Central and East Java to obtain valuable Chinese commodities through by-passing Batavia. Although the VOC tried to reverse this trend by temporarily issuing tighter rules, not much could be done about the situation (Blussé 1986, 121, 139-150; Knaap 1996, 16-18; Nagtegaal 1996, 98-101, 107-111).

Table 6 below shows the general statistics on shipping for Batavia around 1775. The share of the VOC itself in these activities was impressive: only 11% of the ship movements accounted for 62% of the volume. If there was one place in Asia where a European colonial power seemed to be dominating almost the entire economy, it was in the roadstead and the harbor canal of Batavia. Batavia was the hub of the VOC networks in Asia. However, it seems that it was not the only port in Java to display VOC dominance, for the figures on volume for Batavia plus the fourteen most important ports along the north coast of Java showed that the VOC controlled 52% of all activity. Batavia's non-VOC shipping could be divided into two categories: foreign European ships, which were not allowed to anchor anywhere else in Java, and private ships of Dutch Burghers and a whole range of Asian skippers, such as Chinese, Javanese, Malays, and an assortment of Archipelago sojourners. Foreign European ships, about 80% of which were English, were closely watched to prevent any smuggling of the many products the VOC reserved for itself. 'Ordinary' private shipping included all other vessels coming in from and sailing to places everywhere in Asia. The only category not present in the registration underlying Table 6 below seems to be the group of tiny ships connecting the capital to places nearby, such as Krawang, Banten and the islands lying to the north of Batavia. Looking at the direction of shipping, the VOC's own most important connections were those with other ports in Java, which accounted for almost 40%, and those with Europe, more particularly the Netherlands at over 20%. The former was the 'granary' and 'timber-yard,' the latter the 'lifeline' to the directors and investors at home. Most of the foreign European connections were to and from India, in particular the English settlements there. 'Ordinary' private shipping mainly concerned other ports in Java totaling about 60%. Among the latter, Semarang and Rembang, symbolizing rice and timber, respectively, proved to be the busiest connections (Knaap 1996, 45-50, 198-204).

Table 6: Average annual number of ship movements and volume of shipping of the VOC and the private sector in Batavia 1774-1777

VOC		Foreign Europ.		Private		Total	
mov.	last	mov.	last	mov.	last	mov.	last
186	78,321	44	7,858	>1,487	>40,552	>1,717	>126,731

Unfortunately, the sources for private shipping in Batavia do not allow a breakdown to be made according to ethnicity. However, a count of the Chinese among the skippers in the registers of the fourteen other ports in Java involved in connections to and from Batavia showed a score of about 50% of all movements. Once again, this is an impressive number. It is important to be aware that although the junk trade in Batavia was on the decline, the influx of Chinese migrants had been greater than ever since about 1750. It was mainly a migration of Chinese laborers bound for work on the agricultural establishments surrounding the capital. Some of these laborers might have succeeded in escaping agriculture and turned to shipping and trade. Naturally this also applied to the survivors of earlier generations of the Chinese diaspora (Knaap 1996, 64-65; Raben 1996, 133-134, 138-139).

VOC trade in Batavia was primarily transit trade, only a small portion of the turnover being intended to remain in the capital. Easy-to-handle commodities such as bullion and coinage played a significant role in VOC trade relations, although through its monopoly policies the VOC nevertheless expropriated a considerable share of the flow of goods. This was the case, for instance, with opium imported from Bengal, a VOC monopoly. Around 1775 VOC imports hovered about 600 *pikul* annually, which were marketed in Batavia to the private sector by a special company called the *Amphioen Sociëteit*. Incoming rice on board VOC ships was mainly tribute from the Company's dependencies on Java, serving as provisions for VOC personnel in Batavia as well as in other provinces. The VOC shipments of rice were even more voluminous than those of the private sector, 143,000 against 122,000 *pikul*. On the VOC's export side, Batavia's own products, such as fine-grain sugar, along with coffee from the West Java hinterland figured prominently. Coffee was destined for the Netherlands, about 43,000 *pikul*, and fine-grain sugar, about 45,000 *pikul*, mainly for India and Japan. Finer spices from the eastern part of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago and pepper from nearby Banten and other places were also transit products destined for the Netherlands. In the category of manufactured products, one item loomed large, namely the many varieties of Indian cloth, of which the statistics mention 58,000 pieces imported. Once in Batavia

the VOC sold a large part of it, which thereby entered the circuit of private traders. In the category of other products the most important import, with a turnover of about 18,000 *pikul*, seems to have been tin, mainly brought from Palembang on boats chartered by the local Sultan's court. The vast bulk of it was mined in Bangka. In Batavia a small part of this supply of tin was sold to Chinese junks from Amoy. More importantly, however, approximately one-half of the turnover was carried away on the VOC's own vessels bound for Guangzhou (Knaap 1996, 91-94).

Turning to Batavia's private sector, it is obvious that the other ports in Java were playing major roles as suppliers of the VOC capital. On the export side, Batavia itself also added products to the trading networks. Part of this process of adding merchandise involved commodities introduced into the private circuit by the VOC itself, for instance products from the Netherlands or from India. There was also the China junk trade that was mainly carried by ships from Amoy. These imports that were labeled 'Chinese commodities' were comprise of a range of unspecified products that were mostly intended to be re-distributed to other places. The use of such an inclusive label does not allow us any insight into the specific commodities which entered Batavia. In the case of exports, by contrast, each of the goods on board was specifically mentioned (Blussé 1986, 146; Knaap 1996, 87).

Among the articles for human consumption it appears that Batavia was a great importer of fish, gambier, rice and Javanese tobacco. The rice, more than 122,000 *pikul*, as well as the more than 4,000 *pikul* of tobacco, came mainly from Central Java's coastal areas and mountainous hinterland, respectively. Gambier came from the Straits of Melaka. The thousands of *pikul* of fish were imported from a whole range of places. On the export side, we see arrack and fine-grain sugar from Batavia itself, amounting to more than half a million jugs and 11,500 *pikul*, respectively. A considerable part of these exports were India-bound, their transportation taken care of by foreign European traders, mainly English country traders. Batavia's roadstead also saw a great deal of transit trade in seaweed, trepang, salt and rice, mostly for the markets of China and the Straits of Melaka. In the category of manufactured goods only one item was imported on a substantial scale, namely straw bags from East Java. In this category Batavia's main domestic export item was tiles destined for use in Java, in part probably to be displayed in the rooflines of the elite's homes as statements of personal status. The other manufactured items on the export side, namely sets of bowls and plates, single plates, porcelain and cloth, were transit articles. With the exception of cloth, they originated from China, in particular from Amoy. The ceramics from China were dispersed into many a different

direction. The main suppliers of unspecified cloth to Batavia, some 30,000 pieces, were Bali and Bengal. In the case of imports from Bengal, it should be noted that in 1771, the VOC had decided to limit its monopoly on the trade in Indian textiles to the most profitable sorts, leaving the lesser Indian qualities free for VOC employees to trade on their own account and for the other inhabitants of Batavia. The re-export of cloth, amounting to some 40,000 pieces, consisted mainly of Indian textiles. Again, it went to a whole range of destinations. Among the category of other products, imports of timber in different sorts and sizes from Central Java played an important part. Another important import item was slaves, brought in from Sulawesi and Bali. The statistics mention 1,500 slaves, but because of under-registration actual numbers must have been much higher. The main export in the category of other products was Kalimantan rattan, most of which was carried away by Amoy junks (Knaap 1996, 87-89).

Table 7: Estimated annual average value of the principal private sector commodities in Batavia, in rixdollars, 1774-1777

	Imports	Exports
<i>Human consumption articles</i>		
Arrack	–	51,375
Birds' nests	147,000	129,500
Fine-grain sugar	–	46,000
Fish	24,800	960
Gambier	21,000	1,920
Opium	300,000	300,000
Rice	183,450	30,195
Tea	3,500	20,000
Tobacco (Javanese)	41,000	5,100
Tobacco (Chinese)	?	12,250
Trepang	124,500	88,500
<i>Manufactured goods</i>		
Bowls and plates	?	25,200
Cloth (unspec.)	2,325	120,000
Bushknives	–	13,200
Porcelain	?	16,000
<i>Other commodities</i>		
Benzoin	15,000	12,500
Gold thread	?	10,500
Hides (unspec.)	5,770	13,000

Table 7: (*cont.*)

	Imports	Exports
Iron	1,260	18,550
Logs (unspec.)	60,000	1,440
Planks	11,200	1,088
Rattan (for binding)	23,750	25,000
Slaves	150,000	–
Tin	1,050	18,900

Table 7 presents the most important private sector trades, listed according to estimated value rather than volume. Many of the previously mentioned commodities played only a minor role in these statistics, because their value per unit of product appeared to be quite low. It is also obvious that this list of statistics is fraught with flaws and that under-registration might occur with almost every product. According to Table 7, the most important commodity among both imports and exports should have been Indian opium. However, this was not 'trade' in the true sense of the word, because the bulk of this opium arrived in chests on board foreign European ships that were delivered into the custody of the VOC on arrival and returned to their owners on departure. In this way the VOC hoped to protect its monopoly on the import of opium. The other products on the list represent real trade. The principal imports were rice, slaves, birds' nests and trepang. Leading exports were birds' nests, cloth, trepang and arrack. The exported cloth is unspecified but it is clear that it mostly concerned Indian cloth, bought from the VOC and re-sized for local consumption. The value of all products listed in Table 7, imports and exports combined, is approximately 2,000,000 rixdollars. To this should be added a certain amount to account for the five incoming junks from China, which might bring the total at some 2,300,000 rixdollars. It is hard to make an estimate for the many products not listed in Table 7, but there is no need to think that the total value of Batavia's private sector fell below an annual sum of 3,000,000 rixdollar.⁴

The value of VOC trade in Batavia was much higher than that in Makassar, owing to the fact that Batavia was the great emporium of the VOC. However, much of the trade was putative in the sense that it was in transit in the warehouses or on the ships in the roadstead. Hence, it actually did not change own-

⁴ Knaap 1996, 87-88, 225. It seems that the average junk calling in Batavia was smaller than the one calling in Makassar. The 1770s value for the incoming cargo of the latter was about 87,500 rixdollar. The average incoming cargo for Batavia is estimated to value between 50,000 and 75,000 rixdollar (Knaap 1996, 36-37; Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 146-148).

ers. The coffee, pepper and spices came in on board VOC ships and left the port again, mostly on other VOC vessels. As such Batavia was a hub of transport rather than of trade. Around 1775, the average cargo of an incoming *spiegelschip* in Batavia could probably be valued at about 26,000 rixdollars. On departure it was about 46,000. The general average was about 34,000 rixdollars, of which about one-fifth to one-quarter was bullion and money. If this general average is multiplied by the number of VOC ships entering or leaving the roadstead the value of the VOC's turnover in the port of Batavia must have been some 6,000,000 rixdollars.⁵

SUPPLYING BATAVIA: THE CASE OF BANTEN

There were many places in the vicinity of Batavia that supplied the capital with various necessities. This thriving short-distance trade kept busy many smaller craft that had originally been intended to participate in the traffic between the city and the roadstead for the loading and unloading of bigger vessels at anchor there. Unfortunately, no data on this trade have been preserved except for those of Banten, its most distant leg, located some 75 kilometers west of Batavia. Banten also maintained connections with other ports in Java, but these were of minor importance. The Batavia-Banten connection was probably the most prominent leg in Batavia's short-distance network. It provides us with a good example of a trade that might have otherwise escaped our attention. Banten might justifiably be called a 'satellite' of Batavia. It has to be borne in mind, however, that up to 1682 Banten itself had been an international emporium, a rival to VOC Batavia. In that year, because of dynastic troubles, the VOC successfully intervened into the affairs of the realm. After this intervention long-distance trade connections were forbidden. At first, inter-insular relations within the Archipelago were still allowed, but gradually these also seemed to have vanished, leaving only the connection to Lampung, the Bantenese dependency in South Sumatra, which actually might be labelled as a sort of domestic trade, and to Batavia. The only economic fact that was a reminder of the great days past was the delivery to the VOC of a vast quantity of pepper, by way of the Sultan's court, at a set monopoly price (Knaap 1996, 10; Talens 1999, 56-64).

⁵ Knaap 1996, 84. The estimate of the value of VOC trade for Batavia around 1775 is more or less in line with the calculations of Jacobs (2000, 244, 249), who has investigated the years 1771 to 1773. The outcome of Jacobs for Batavia's connections with other provinces in Asia and with the Netherlands is about 16,674,000 guilders. Depending on what rate is used to turn guilders into rixdollars this is equal to an amount of between 5,500,000 and 7,000,000 rixdollars.

500

GERRIT KNAAP

Table 8: Average annual number of ship movements and volume of shipping of the VOC and the private sector in Banten, Lampung excluded, 1774-1777

VOC mov.	<i>last</i>	Private mov.	<i>last</i>	Total mov.	<i>last</i>
13	3,983	825	5,443	838	9,426

Table 8 shows maritime traffic in Banten's roadstead around 1775. About 44% of the volume of traffic concerned the VOC, once more a considerable share. Looking at the ethnic breakdown of the skippers of the private sector's ships, it can be seen that about 30 to 35% were Javanese, 15% Chinese, and roughly 50% members of migrant communities from Southeast Asia, such as Balinese, Sulawesians, and Malays, all of whom were mostly residents of Batavia, having originally come to that city either as slaves or as mercenaries. The number of Chinese in this trade was relatively low, which might be explained by the fact that this short-distance trade might not have been attractive enough to them. The Chinese skippers on this track, representatives of the diaspora communities of Banten and Batavia, did not sail particularly big ships. Consequently, their share in the volume of traffic lay even below the level of 15% (Knaap 1996, 64-65, 209).

Table 9: Approximate annual import and export (non-VOC) of the most important commodities in Banten on the route to and from Batavia, in rixdollars, 1774-1777

	Import	Export
<i>Human consumption articles</i>		
Rice	7,088	–
Tobacco (Javanese)	14,820	–
<i>Manufactured goods and other commodities</i>		
Bowls and plates	7,000	–
Cloth (Indian)	69,750	12,150
Kapok	–	12,025
Pots	–	9,360

As far as the private trade was concerned, it appears that Banten was an important outlet for Batavia's re-exports of certain manufactured goods, such as Chinese bowls and plates and Indian cloth, as well as a great deal of Javanese

tobacco. For these items Banten took at least one-quarter of Batavia's own total maritime imports. The most important of Banten's exports to Batavia were found in the category of articles for human consumption, such as coconuts and various other fruits, which were exported by the hundreds of thousands per individual item. Pottery and rattan were also prominent exports, with 78,000 pieces and 8,000 *pikul*, respectively. The rattan was probably not from Banten itself, but imported from Lampung. Batavia was in sore need of this rattan to keep its high levels of re-export going. As made clear in Table 9, in which goods are measured in value, the imports of Indian cloth and, to a lesser extent, Javanese tobacco were the cork which kept private trade with Batavia buoyant. In the case of Indian cloth, it appears that the VOC left this business almost entirely to the private sector, which is a surprising deviation from general policy. It may be assumed that many of the imports from Batavia must, in turn, have found their way to Banten's dependencies in South Sumatra as well, for Lampung was the main supplier of the pepper that the VOC shipped from Banten. The mid-1770s were very good pepper years with the VOC exporting 23,225 *pikul* annually, for which it paid about 140,000 rixdollars. Many of these rixdollars were ploughed back into Batavia via the imports of the private sector. At least, this is what might explain the rather high level of imports in Table 9 (Knaap 1996, 94-96, 136; Jacobs 2000, 73-74). The total value of all VOC cargoes to and from Banten was between 250,000 and 300,000 rixdollars. The value of the leading commodities in the private sector, imports and exports combined, as listed in Table 9, was approximately 130,000 rixdollars.⁶ At this time it is still difficult to estimate the total value of all Batavia-connected private trade in Banten. It might well be that it reached a level of over 200,000 rixdollars.⁷

THE FIRST PRINCIPAL PORT TO THE EAST: CIREBON

The third important port on the north coast of West Java was Cirebon, located some 200 kilometers east of Batavia. It was an old port that had come under the suzerainty of Mataram at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Following the subsequent crises in Mataram in the late seventeenth century, it

⁶ The estimate for the VOC is in line with the findings of Jacobs (2000, 235), for the early 1770s.

⁷ Knaap (1996, 84) estimated the average value of private sector cargoes along the entire coast of Java at about 350 rixdollars. Given the short distance between Banten and Batavia this figure is too high for such a connection. In the case the average value was about 250 rixdollar per cargo, the score would have been about 206,000 rixdollars.

had finally been incorporated into the VOC empire as a small province in 1705. Its ruling dynasty was riven by dissension, which led to a situation in which the area was governed by several courts, each representing a branch of the royal family, under the general overlordship of the VOC. Unlike Banten, Cirebon did not build on a tradition of being an emporium and did not launch itself with an export commodity of international reputation. However, all of this changed shortly after the VOC introduced coffee cultivation in Cirebon, especially in its upland districts in Priangan (Knaap 1986, 37-38; Nagtegaal 1996, 41, 82; Hoadley 2004, 143-144). Whereas in the case of Banten the VOC allowed the port to have contacts only with its own dependency in Lampung and, apart from this, coastal shipping along the coast of Java, Cirebon still maintained its inter-insular contacts across the Java Sea, especially with the Straits of Melaka region (Knaap 1996, 17, 49).

Table 10: Average annual number of ship movements and volume of shipping of the VOC and the private sector in Cirebon, 1774-1777

VOC mov.	<i>last</i>	Private mov.	<i>last</i>	Total mov.	<i>last</i>
9	2,757	671	7,310	680	10,067

From the viewpoint of shipping, the performance of Cirebon was of about the same magnitude as that of Banten, the difference being the less prominent local role of the VOC, with only 30% of the trade volume. In contrast to this, the number of Chinese to be identified among the private skippers' ship movements was quite high, namely about 55%, almost twice as many as elsewhere in Java. These skippers were responsible for about 50% of the total volume of private traffic. As the number of ship movements of Javanese counted in Cirebon was some 40%, it is obvious that the role played by the third important category, namely Southeast Asian migrant ethnicities, such as the Malays, was negligible. The most important connections for private skippers were Tegal, Pekalongan and Batavia, all of them nearby ports (Knaap 1996, 46-48, 50, 201-202).

Table 11: Approximate annual import and export (non-VOC) of the most important commodities in Cirebon, in rixdollars, 1774-1777

	Import	Export
<i>Human consumption articles</i>		
Fine-grain sugar	140	8,240
Gambier	11,280	9,420
Oil (unspec.)	260	5,564
Rice	5,720	10,445
Shallots and garlic	8	5,328
Tobacco (Javanese)	28,250	3,650
<i>Manufactured goods and other commodities</i>		
Cloth (Javanese)	665	6,780
Cotton	6,375	300

Glancing at the private trade, it appears that Cirebon was an important transit-port for gambier, which came in from Melaka and was then distributed to other neighboring ports. To some extent this transit function also applied to rice, but in the opposite direction. In sheer number of volume, salt was the principal product, with about 12,000 *pikul* being exported, mainly to the Straits. Fairly substantial quantities of fine-grain sugar, palm sugar, shallots and garlic as well as Javanese cloth were also borne away from Cirebon. On the incoming side, it was Javanese tobacco, mainly from Tegal and Pekalongan, which was a reasonably voluminous commodity (Knaap 1996, 97-101, 109-110, 121-122, 127-129, 131-132, 218-219). Looking at value in Table 11, it is obvious that the Javanese tobacco on the import side was intended to be retailed in the coffee-producing hinterland as the leading commodity. On the export side, transit items such as rice and gambier were most prominent. The VOC itself carried a fair amount of money as well as straw bags to Cirebon, mainly in order to pay for and pack the coffee. The mid-1770s saw an annual supply of 14,400 *pikul* being delivered to the VOC for a sum of some 65,000 rixdollars. Besides coffee, the VOC carried away rice and fine-grain sugar, about 2,000 *pikul* each, as well as timber, in particular staves and powder-kegs (Knaap 1996, 102).

It is difficult to estimate the total value of VOC trade in the mid-1770s. On the basis of the just-mentioned exports of coffee and other products one would expect that it amounted to approximately 80,000 to 90,000 rixdollars.⁸ The

⁸ Jacobs (2000, 245), has an amount for the early 1770s of about 60,000 rixdollars. For the mid-1770s, Knaap (1996, 85) reaches an estimate of about 7,000 rixdollar per ship movement. This amounts to a total of about 65,000 rixdollars.

value of the private sector trade in Cirebon is even more problematic. The combined value of imports and exports listed in Table 11 shows a total of about 100,000 rixdollars. It may well be that this was less than half the total value, which thus might total between 200,000 and 300,000 rixdollars.⁹

CONCLUSION

Around 1775 the roadstead of the East Indonesian port of Makassar in Sulawesi annually experienced almost 450 ship movements and almost 6,000 *last* of ship's volume. In far-away West Java the capital of the VOC, Batavia, saw a total of some 1,725 ship movements annually, excluding those carrying the short-distance trade. Because of the great number of large vessels, mainly those of the VOC itself but also those belonging to English country traders stationed in India, the volume of shipping was more than 127,000 *last*. The two other important ports of West Java, Banten to the west and Cirebon to the east respectively, saw about 840 and 680 ship movements in their roadsteads. Banten was a typical center of short-distance shipping connections, most of them geared to Batavia. Cirebon was a port with slightly more extended networks including inter-insular contacts. The volume of shipping through Banten was almost 9,500 *last* and that through Cirebon some 10,100. Taking the volume of shipping as a measure, it is obvious that Batavia dwarfed the three other ports under discussion. Batavia was a true main port connecting Europe with Asia. Within the confines of Asia its networks stretched as far as the Middle East and Japan. Makassar, in volume only one-twentieth of Batavia, was an emporium with a pretty vast network stretching from the south of China to the north of Australia and from Batavia to the Moluccas. Cirebon and Banten, although with volumes one-and-one-half times that of Makassar, were simply knots in relatively limited networks, each a sort of gateway for traffic rather than centers in and of themselves. Looking at the value of trade, it seems reasonable to estimate the total turnover of Batavia at 9,000,000 to 10,000,000 rixdollars annually and that of its 'satellite' Banten at 500,000 rixdollars, Lampung excluded. Cirebon's total trade was probably 350,000 and Makassar's 600,000 rixdollars.

⁹ Estimates of the value of a private sector cargo were set by Knaap (1996, 84) at 350 rixdollar for the connection along the coast of Java and 1,500 for inter-insular contacts. When these estimates are applied to Cirebon's breakdown of shipping according to route (Knaap 1996, 49), the port easily reaches a level of 300,000 rixdollars.

Table 12: Approximate percentage of the VOC in the volume of shipping and the value of trade, 1774-1777

	Shipping	Trade
Batavia	62	60
Banten	44	55
Cirebon	30	23
Makassar	44	8

Table 12 makes it clear that the VOC share of the shipping through the ports under discussion did not generally lag far behind the 50% level. However, this did not necessarily mean that in terms of trade, the flow of commodities as it were, it was the VOC that called the tune. Much of the VOC volume was used for military purposes. The space still left for private traders varied greatly according to port, hence the opportunity for Chinese living in diaspora to play a role of significance. In the case of Makassar, the Chinese share in private trade around 1775 was between 55 and 60%. With trade in its entirety, meaning the VOC turnover included, it was between 50 and 55%. At the other end of the comparison stands Batavia, where the VOC already commanded 60% of the entire maritime exchange of commodities. At first sight it might be said that opportunities here for the Chinese trader were limited. On closer consideration, the sheer magnitude of trade as such, at least compared with that of the other ports, nevertheless must have left ample opportunity for Chinese and other independent traders. Unfortunately, given the nature of the sources, prospects for detailed analysis for Batavia will always be slender. This is different for the other ports, Banten and Cirebon, for which sources of information are richer. For the moment, it is obvious that the role of the Chinese trader in Banten was quite limited. On the basis of the figures presented above, in particular those on the volume of shipping, we should not be surprised if the Chinese share was as little as 10% or less for the entire trade in the port. Cirebon, however, seems to show another picture. Here we should not be surprised if the Chinese share in the total turnover of commodities was about 40%, not an absolute majority, but still more than the VOC.

On an abstract level, the question of who was dominant at this stage in the historical process remains difficult to answer. Had the 'colonial age' already begun or could the word 'autonomy' still be used in connection with Southeast Asia? Or does the situation warrant the appellation 'Chinese century'? J.C. van Leur already dealt with this sort of discussion in his essay 'On the Eighteenth Century

as a Category in Indonesian History,' originally written in Dutch in the 1930s. He rejected the idea, proposed by his older colleague F.W. Stapel, that since the end of the seventeenth century the indigenous world of Southeast Asia had been 'economically undermined' and was 'politically second-rate,' because of VOC monopolies, blockades and unequal treaties (Van Leur 1955, 270, 276, 279-280, 283).

The case of eighteenth-century Makassar is an example of a vital economy, largely fuelled by demand from China. As such it is a perfect illustration of Van Leur's idea that the eighteenth-century history of the Archipelago is much more than the history of the VOC. Conditions in Makassar very much resembled those in Sulu, as portrayed by James Warren. Sulu preceded Makassar as an entrepot for trading vessels heading for China with forest and marine produce. These China connections offered Chinese skippers and traders in diaspora the opportunity to play a strong role in the internal economy of Southeast Asia. Both Makassar and Sulu were also slave exporters, a form of commerce which came to an end only after 1800 (Warren 1981, 6-12, 40-44, 67, 126; Knaap and Sutherland 2004, 116-120). It seems that in the light of these cases the 'Chinese century' was a real phenomenon and that, apparently, it did not matter whether the political authority was in the hands of an indigenous ruler or a European colonial power.

Mid-1770s shipping and trade in the western part of Java bore a different character. The fact that Batavia, the VOC's Asian headquarters, was located here meant that the area was potentially not only a supplier of goods for China but also performed that same service for Europe. Batavia itself, where the European element in shipping and trade was strongest, should be considered an exception to the rule in Southeast Asia. Whether the European element really was the dominant factor in the maritime economy outside the colonial capital largely depended on local circumstances, such as geographic location and the importance of the exports for the colonial overlord. As a result of such factors Banten was much more under the colonial spell than Cirebon. In the latter, Chinese navigators and merchants in diaspora stepped into the space left unoccupied by the VOC. Hence, for maritime Cirebon the eighteenth century seemed much more like a 'Chinese century' than like a 'European century.' Further research, statistical as well as non-statistical, has to substantiate this proposition, not only for West Java, but also for Central and East Java. The results of this research will be useful in assessing the concept of the 'Chinese century' postulated recently by others. It will also clarify our understanding of the degree of 'economic stagnation' of Southeast Asians or, to put it in other words, of their supposed falling-out with 'modern' developments and whether

settlements, societies and economies were forced to undergo a situation which has been described as 'dualism' (Reid 1992, 493-494; Reid 1997, 11-14; Trocki 1997, 84-86, 89, 96-97, 99; Blussé 1999, 114, 121, 128-129).

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