

KEEP THEM OUT!

**EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH/DUTCH
RIVALRY IN EASTERN INDONESIA AND AUSTRALIA, AND
THE FOUNDING OF MERKUS-OORD**

The Indies government [...] must have been highly conscient of the urgency: because of the gravity of the situation in Central Java it was in a worse position than ever to involve itself in the ‘Outer Possessions’, but despite all this, it was of the opinion that the laying of a claim to New Guinea could not be allowed to wait.

E.B. Kielstra, 1917¹

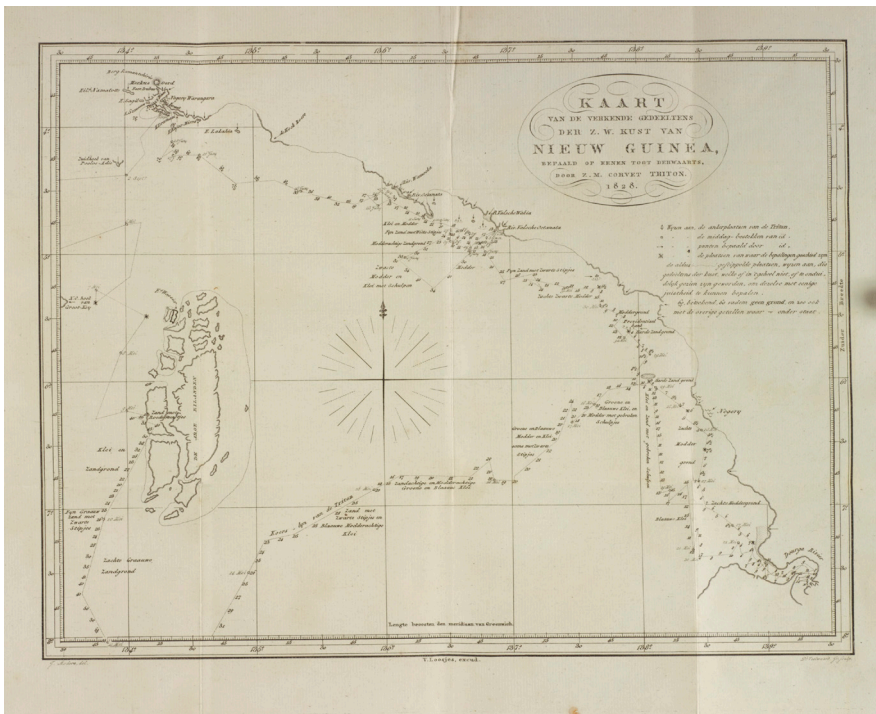


Image 1: Map showing the itinerary of *Triton* and *Iris* to New Guinea in 1828. Engraving by D. Veelwaard after J. Modera. National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv. no. S0187: MM-0605.

Introduction

Kielstra's observation concerns the year 1828, when, for the first time, the Dutch Government created a foothold on the island of New Guinea, in Triton Bay on the south-west coast. Merkus-oord, as it was baptized, was named after the then governor of the Moluccan Islands. Its small wooden fortress was named after the commissioner-general Du Bus. The ships that carried the builders of the new establishment also carried 'The Commissioner for the possession-taking of the west coast of New Guinea' A.J. van Delden. On August 24 he did what his commission called for and, in the name of the sovereign king of the Netherlands, William I, took possession of the coast of New Guinea from 141 degrees longitude east on the south coast going around in western direction to the Cape of Good Hope on the north coast.²

Considering the circumstances, this was a rather peculiar event. Since 1825 the colonial government had its hands full with trying to win the Java War³, which had already cost a large amount of money. Even without a war, keeping the budget in balance was a continuous worry for the East-Indies government. The mother-country was impoverished after years of French occupation and its Continental System. The System made shipping with the colonies impossible, almost all of them having been under British control during the Napoleonic Wars. Recovery was slow, and the trading nation Holland soon found out how difficult it was to compete with English trade which, thanks to the wars, was stronger than it had ever been.

So why would an impoverished government waste money on establishing a post in an area where in the centuries before the Dutch East India Company never had any interest in? Where there were no expectations of economic gain whatsoever? Historically, some rights on the island could be exerted via the possessions in the extreme western part of New Guinea claimed by the sultan of Tidore - who was under Dutch rule - to have. These rights however had little to do with the possession-taking. On the contrary, in the proclamation by commissioner Van Delden, these rights were explicitly mentioned and exempted from this new acquisition of territory.⁴

The main reason for this expansionist move can be found already in the old (1884) standard-work on the history of Dutch contacts with New Guinea by A. Haga.⁵ In the Treaty of London of 1824, the old

Dutch spice-monopoly in the Moluccan Islands remained in force, in spite of the much avowed principles of liberalism and free trade in those days. Although the extirpation by government of illegal spice-trees was abolished in the same year, the area had to be kept free from smuggling. This would become very difficult if another nation - especially if that nation were England – were to establish itself in New Guinea.⁶

There is, however, more to say in connection with Van Delden's proclamation. The act of possession-taking in the name of a king was new, because William's position (being a king) did not exist in the days of the East India Company. The archives reveal that the same king got a taste for it: in 1829 he wanted to take possession of the west coast of Australia. Probably because those in power in the colony did not see the need, the idea never materialized. William's plan is not a well known fact in Dutch colonial historiography.

Exploring the ideas and the decision-making processes behind these initiatives may shed new light on Dutch expansionism in the early nineteenth century. What was the influence of British activities in Australia on Dutch policies? Was there a basic difference between the expansionism of the two countries in the region under discussion? What was the role of king William in the process? Was he the initiator, or was the expansionism caused by early forms of sub-imperialism, as happened later in the mid nineteenth century? This article seeks to answer these questions.



Image 2: Fort Du Bus being built in 1828. Engraving by A. Veelwaard after a drawing by J. Modera. National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv. no. S.0187: MM-0605.

British free trade

While at the end of the eighteenth century continental Europe was in a state of revolutionary turmoil, Britain was energetically expanding its wealth by riding the waves of the other revolution, the industrial one, which became evident around 1765. This expansion received a further boost as a result of the failure of Napoleon's Continental System. The British obtained a near monopoly over the shipment of overseas commodities. Mechanically produced goods, which were made most cheaply in England, made their way to markets overseas. It is estimated that in the time of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1792-1814), British income more than doubled. After 1814 Britain became the workshop of the world, not seriously challenged until 1870.⁷

England's economic success was accompanied by the development of new economic theories. Starting with Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, the new science of 'political economy' emerged, producing such pioneers in economic theory as Malthus, Ricardo and Mill. They criticized the old mercantilist practices of regulation and monopoly, and replaced it with the new adage of 'laissez faire', thereby providing the economic, and later political, ideology of the new industrial age.

The eighteenth century also saw a development towards centralization of government power. In India, in 1773 the political activities of the East India Company were brought under the control of London. In Britain, the trend was to bring all British territories under the supervision of Parliament. The American War of Independence was thus mainly a rebellion against Parliament; increased centralization was countered by a people no longer accepting colonial status.

American independence raised the question in English politics whether colonies were necessary in the first place. After independence the economic relations between the countries continued to prosper. It showed that political control was not a prerequisite for business. This realization was the basis of the movement of economic liberalization and free trade.⁸

For a long time it was thus assumed that this period was anti-imperialistic, especially when compared to the scramble for empire later in the nineteenth century. This was until Robinson and Gallagher came forward with their concept of 'imperialism of free trade'.⁹ They showed that the whole century had seen British expansion. Initially, however,

it was without much competition from other European powers, thereby paradoxically making it less visible.¹⁰

The Netherlands: trying to restore past glory

Holland's heyday of innovation, and its subsequent status of being the most powerful seafaring nation, were already history at the end of the eighteenth century. Its flagship, the United East India Company (VOC¹¹), sank, laden with debts, in 1796. The territorial possessions were taken over by the state, another example of the centralizing eighteenth century trend. These possessions were considerable, by far the most important of which were those in the Indonesian archipelago.¹² Holland was now a small European nation with extensive colonial possessions, only exceeded by those of the British. During Napoleon's Continental System it became clear how vulnerable this situation was. The British captured the Dutch East Indies, with the consent by the way of the Dutch stadtholder who had fled to England.¹³ The incoming British governor of the East Indies, T.S. Raffles, in the spirit of booming British enterprise, dreamt of all the economic development he would initiate in the archipelago.

This was not to happen. After Napoleon's defeat, the great European powers wanted a strong state at France's northern border. The loss of its main colonial possessions would weaken this new United Kingdom of the low countries too much, and would not make it a reliable ally.¹⁴ Moreover, London was preoccupied with the safety of its possessions in India and the protection of the China trade. It didn't want any governing responsibilities, and their costs, beyond the Straits of Malacca.¹⁵ The East Indies possessions were given back to the Dutch, regulated by the 1814 Convention of London, in which both nations also granted each other most favoured nation status.¹⁶

Decision-making in colonial matters was, by exclusion of parliament, in the hands of king William I. Until the parliamentary reforms of 1848, the minister for colonial affairs was accountable to him. In spite of his many other tasks, the king was very interested in colonial affairs and subsequently influenced colonial policy considerably.¹⁷ Therefore, something more has to be said about his role and attitude towards the British.

Stadtholder William V had fled to England after the Patriots, revolutionaries from own Dutch soil, had taken over power in The

Netherlands in 1795. Part of the time his son, William VI, joined his father in Britain, who continued to stay there during the subsequent French occupation of Holland. After Waterloo, the British were instrumental in the unification of the Northern and Southern Netherlands into one kingdom.¹⁸ Thus instead of stadtholder¹⁹, William VI now became The Netherlands' first king, William I. British interests in the creation of a strong state at the northern border of France, allowed William to carve out an independent position on the European mainland through the new kingdom's special relationship with Britain.²⁰

The acquisition of Belgium did not fit with the Dutch tendency of aloofness in European power politics.²¹ The enlargement of The Netherlands was related to an important aspect of William's thinking: promoting national recovery after the steady decline of Dutch (economic) power in the 18th century, with the fourth Dutch-Anglo War of 1780-1784 as the all-time low. In Dutch society a 'decline-discourse'²² had been active since 1760, and national recovery was also an important element of the political programme of the Dutch revolutionary movement at the end of the century.²³ William was thus clearly a child of his time.

Once the Dutch united kingdom was established, and after it had retrieved its main colonies, William set out on a more independent course. His idea was that the unification process of the two parts of the kingdom had to be supported by a conscious policy of economic development, integrating the Dutch and Belgian economies, with the colonies as the main linking element.²⁴ For Holland, the Indies were important for what they could produce. The aim was to revive Amsterdam as a market for colonial staple goods. For the emerging industry in Belgium the colonies could become important markets.

In the course of time, the unified kingdom proved its viability and William became more self-confident in pursuing his independent policy.²⁵ As a result, the Dutch policy towards British trading activities in the colonies began to change. Because of the initial British 'tutelage' of William, and the latter's own liberal ideas, he agreed upon a system of mutual preference in colonial trade. Soon, because of the strength of British competition, this proved to be very disadvantageous for Dutch commerce.²⁶ Slowly, the Dutch policy-makers started to crawl back to a more protectionist policy in the colonies, with differential duties levied

upon Dutch and foreign trade respectively.²⁷

Mutual irritation between the British and the Dutch had already started during the return of the colonies. British officials made no haste with the transfer, with Raffles the most notable example. Before he had to leave Bencoolen²⁸ as a result of a Dutch-British territorial swap, he had already founded Singapore, provoking angry Dutch reactions.²⁹ At the time, the Dutch did their best to restore their influence in the archipelago. They were active on Borneo particularly, to the chagrin of the British, who in general feared that the Dutch were busy restoring the monopoly practices of the time of the trading companies. The Dutch activities were seen as acts of aggression, especially their occupation of Banjarmasin. After that event, the British drew a line in their policy regarding the Dutch: they would not tolerate the ‘exclusion [...] of British commerce throughout the immense extent of the Eastern Archipelago’, and they would not accept complete Dutch control of the Straits of Malacca.³⁰

When in 1824 both sides decided to put an end to the quarrels resulting in the Treaty of London³¹, the same Straits became the dividing line between English and Dutch spheres of influence. In the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of March 17 of that year some territories were swapped and some promises were made. Two of the latter are important for our subject. First, in the treaty it was agreed upon that officials of both countries were ‘not to form any new settlement on any of the islands in the Eastern Seas without previous authority from their respective governments in Europe’.³² The second was about granting each other most-favoured nation treatment. However, the British acquiesced in the continuation of the Dutch spice monopoly in the Moluccan islands. The protection of this monopoly would eventually lead to Van Delden’s mission to New Guinea, ‘with the authority from his government’.

Meanwhile, the style of governing in the colonies had changed. More attention was paid to the indigenous population. It resulted, for instance, in a critique of the Moluccan spice monopoly.³³ P. Merkus, governor of the Moluccan Islands (who, in this capacity, played a pivotal role in the New Guinea adventure), was against the system and his views were an example of the change of what might be called the ideology of colonial government. According to Merkus, the profits were too small to justify the methods of coercion, ‘which are so little in step

with the enlightenment of these times and with the mild principles which the present government of the Netherlands Indies has espoused with such fine results'.³⁴

These 'mild principles' meant that The Netherlands government somehow felt responsible for the welfare of all its subjects in the colonies, not only the European population. It had been the French Revolution inspired government of the *Bataafsche Republiek*³⁵ that had to decide about the possessions of the defunct VOC and its relationship with the inhabitants of the colonies. 'From now on the authority of the state will have to seek



Image 3: Pieter Merkus LL.M. (1787-1844) was Governor of the Moluccas 1822-1826. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. A 3801.

its legitimation in the welfare of those ruled' and 'all that is here accounted fair and just, must there also be fair and just'.³⁶

That things had changed is also proven by the controversy and rivalry between the old hands of the VOC who were still at their posts, and the newcomers who in Holland had acquired principles of liberalism, centralizing government and civil rights.³⁷

In the colonies these ideas often turned into paternalism, similar to the practice of the 'ethical policy' a century later.

To illustrate this, Merkus can be quoted again. He is afraid that the abolishment of all coercion in the spice production will lead to inertia among the 'natives'. Some regulation is good, 'for it is the urging of a father, who wishes to promote the happiness of his children, which resigns them to the work'.³⁸

Thus, a rudimentary form of what 75 years later was termed the 'ethical policy', a colonial ideology of benign superiority, played its role in the Moluccas at the beginning of the 19th century.³⁹ This earlier form, attached to the name of governor-general G.A.G.P. van der Capellen, did not survive the depletion of the colonial coffers after the start of the Java War in 1825.⁴⁰

Merkus-oord

On May 12 1826, Merkus writes to Batavia that there are rumours that the British may have established a post on the coast of New Guinea, east of Aru island. Merkus believes that this has no other purpose than ‘to enter into trade relations with the peoples of the Moluccan Islands’.⁴¹ This is regarded as contrary to the agreements of the Treaty of London of 1824.

Merkus despatches the brig of war *Dourga* under the command of first lieutenant D.H. Kolff to investigate. He returns on June 24, reporting that there is no sign of British activity. Nevertheless, Merkus proposes to, ‘in order to forge ahead of our competitors [...], lay claim to the whole of New Guinea’. This can be done by making use of the rights of the sultan of Tidore in the region, or, in case these are unclear, ‘by the actual deed of taking possession of one site, while issuing a declaration that the whole of the Island is now under the government of that site; the English themselves have more than once set the example of this very sort of taking possession’.⁴²

In later correspondence it becomes clear which examples he meant. Both were found in New Holland (as Australia was called then): the taking of New South Wales with the settlement at Botany Bay in 1787 and the taking of the Australian north coast between 129 and 135 degrees East longitude accompanied by the establishment of Fort Dundas on Melville Island.⁴³ I will return to the latter event below.

What follows is an interesting story of decision-making. The Netherlands-Indies government does not want to support the proposal for a settlement in New Guinea for financial reasons. However, Merkus is authorized to contact the sultan of Tidore to ask him whether he has enough authority in New Guinea to protect a small post there. Merkus may also start making a plan with a budget. The lieutenant governor-general informs the commissioner-general L.P.J. du Bus de Gisignies, who at the time was the highest authority in the Dutch East Indies.⁴⁴ Merkus had already informed Du Bus directly, who in his turn had requested instructions from The Hague.⁴⁵

The next year, on March 31 1827, the minister for colonial affairs C.T. Elout writes a letter to the king about Merkus’ proposal. The story about the British threat to Dutch trade in general, and the Moluccan spice monopoly in particular, is reiterated. The fear is that an English

establishment in New Guinea is just a matter of time as British trade is growing. According to the minister, the circumstances of their settlement in northern Australia seem to be unfavourable, so that the attention of the British will be directed automatically to New Guinea. Similar to British settlement in northern Australia, the Dutch fear what the British hope: the successful creation of a second Singapore in New Guinea.⁴⁶

Still, the minister repeats that the advantages of a Dutch establishment are unclear. First, it will cost money (always a good Dutch argument) and income is not to be expected, as the people in New Guinea are ‘uncivilized and insolvent’.⁴⁷ The second reason is an interesting issue that anticipates the 1885 Berlin Conference. If there is not a garrison stationed, the annexation will only be in name. However, a garrison would not prevent the British from establishing themselves elsewhere in New Guinea. Thirdly, according to the 1824 Treaty, the British will always have the right to trade in New Guinea, and a Dutch post will only attract their attention. Arguments in favour of a trading post is that it will not cost much, that British trade can be taxed and that at least the British will have less influence. If everything is done more or less in secrecy, then it will not attract too much British attention. After weighing the pros and cons, Elout proposes to the king annexation without a settlement. Respect for the Dutch flag should be enough. But as if the minister was not really sure about this, the expedition should have a scientific character to conceal its real purpose.⁴⁸

The king, however, replies that commissioner-general Du Bus is free to decide for himself to establish a post in New Guinea, on condition that it will be in the interest of the Southsea fisheries.⁴⁹ This had the special interest of the king, as he had also been thinking about the development of Dutch whaling in the region.⁵⁰ Stress is laid on the trade character of the post, and it should be cheap. This is relayed to the commissioner-general via the minister and the lieutenant governor-general.⁵¹ In their turn, the two Batavia based colonial officials leave the decision for the establishment of a post to the governor of the Moluccas. Meanwhile, 20,000 guilders will be reserved in the budget.⁵²

Merkus does not hesitate and despatches gun-schooner *Triton* and corvette *Iris* to New Guinea to found a place that will bear his name. He also stations a garrison there. As the decision was left to him, Merkus has to defend the establishment of Merkus-oord. He does so by again pointing at the British example in Australia.

That he, as governor, had decided to send a Military detachment to be permanently garrisoned in New Guinea, is in imitation of that which the English Government had perpetrated in its taking possession of the northern part of New Holland in the year 1824, as he believes that taking possession of New Guinea in this fashion is more binding for any other nation whatsoever which may eventually contemplate settling in that land [and] should in every case be regarded as legitimate by the English, who acted precisely thus in staking their claim to New Holland.⁵³

Contrary to the opinion of his minister in The Hague, Merkus finds it important that the event is announced in the press, again using the British Australian example. He quotes an article in *The Asiatic Journal* of July 1825 which contains the information that

an official communication has been issued by the Governor in Council of Bombay dated 21 January 1825 [...] stating that in obedience to the command of his Majesty's Government, he [Capt. G. Bremer, JO] had taken formal possession of the North Coast of New Holland...⁵⁴

Later, however, the Dutch government decides in favour of secrecy.

In his account, Merkus adds that the British have never taken possession of a territory without establishing a settlement. Although the main reason is still to keep the British out, it is conspicuous that in Merkus' account the trading character of the post has virtually disappeared. Merkus stresses its military character, which he had given to it himself. To make sure that the British acknowledge the Dutch move, the Dutch should follow the example the British have given themselves. This means a proclamation *and* a settlement with a garrison.⁵⁵

After searching for a suitable spot, initially at the northern end of the Marianne Straits,⁵⁶ on July 4 1828 a well protected bay is discovered, further to the west. The bay is named after the *Triton*. Commander J.J. Steenboom and his party feel themselves welcome. 'The natives [...] have been most helpful to the expedition, intimating that the permanent settlement of the Dutch on shore would be most welcome to them.'⁵⁷ The next day the expedition commences to build the foundation of the stronghold.

Soon after the establishment of Merkus-oord, reports come in about the unhealthy situation there and the hostile attitude of the Papuans and the indigenous traders from the Moluccas and Celebes. The death toll among the garrison was high. After years without signs of improvement, finally in 1835 the decision was taken to give up the post.⁵⁸ Merkus-oord



Image 4: 'Shooting the sun' at noon on board HNIMS Triton en route to New Guinea, 1828'. Watercolor by P. van Oort (1804-1834). Royal Netherlands Navy Museum, inv. no. A/003/075.

had become redundant anyway, because in the meantime the danger of a British settlement in New Guinea had subsided. Temporarily, they had even withdrawn from northern Australia. It was not before 1898 that the Dutch established the first lasting settlements in New Guinea: Manokwari and Fakfak.⁵⁹

British activities in northern Australia and Dutch reactions

A few months before the establishment of Merkus-oord, Elout writes to the king that he might have the explanation for the false rumour that the British had established themselves in New Guinea. Again, the source was in Australia. On December 4 1827 the *Courier des Pays Bas* quoted the British government: 'A new Colony has been established at Port Raffles on the north coast of New Holland, in latitude 11° 42' South - longitude 132° 40' East by captain Sterling on H.M. Ship *Success*'.⁶⁰ The minister writes that it is probably an alternative to Fort Dundas, which fell short of expectations. Port Raffles (Fort Wellington) is more eastward and thus closer to New Guinea.

The communications about Fort Wellington are an example of the slowness and imperfection of information exchange in those days. The

letter from Smyth, commander of the Fort, to the governor of Makassar announcing the establishment of Fort Wellington, was forwarded to The Hague in 1830 in the same batch as the later letter informing that the settlement would be abandoned. This does not mean that in the meantime no action was taken in the colony itself. In 1828 the governor of Makassar sends a report about the matter to the lieutenant governor-general. The governor writes that the aim of the settlement is ‘to please the Macassarese trepang⁶¹ fishermen as much as possible’.

With a certain feeling of regret Batavia replies that within the terms of the Treaty of London nothing can be done about it. However, the governors of the Moluccas and Makassar receive the instruction

to gather as much information as possible about the establishment of this colony and to pass this on, and to do all in their power to ensure and, when necessary, make cogent suggestions to prevent that the trade in our possessions is in any way hindered by the Settlement outlined above.⁶²

Thereupon one of the actions from Makassar is to ask a trepang fisherman, Poengawa Soea Adjie (English transcription: Pungawa Sua Aji), to collect information while in Fort Wellington. This report reaches Batavia in July 1829. Apparently the fisherman had been asked specifically about any signs of contact with New Guinea, because in his report Soea Adjie’s writes: ‘None of the Papuan peoples have arrived there, nor have any of the English who live there departed for Papua’.⁶³ The general impression is that in terms of trade not much is happening in the settlement. The governor’s conclusion is that

the purpose of the establishment of Fort Wellington is to create a free trading post, thus ensuring that the people of this archipelago are provided with the opportunity, equally in both the eastern and western parts of the same, free of laws and without having to struggle against unpleasant and troublesome formalities, to provide themselves with the products of British industry.⁶⁴

As a remedy he brings forward the idea to make Makassar a free port, preventing trade from being drawn to the British ports.⁶⁵ Ultimately, the idea is realized in 1846. The then minister for colonial affairs J.C. Baud’s support for declaring Makassar a free port is based on the same arguments of free trade for the ‘natives’, in whose minds therefore ‘the name of the Netherlands is not associated with tolls and encumbrances, both of which are equally abhorred by the Native’.⁶⁶

Earlier, in 1825, the purpose of the foundation of Fort Dundas, the predecessor of Fort Wellington, was discussed by Elout and the king. In the same letter the king requests information about Fort Dundas, he also requests the minister's opinion about establishing a whaling-station in the Moluccas or New Guinea.⁶⁷ The connection between the two is not explained.

The minister is not sure about the aim of the British move, but quotes the *Asiatic Journal* of February 1825 and concludes that 'it seems that it serves the same purpose as the claiming of Singapore, to which perhaps can be added, the intention to plant nuts and cloves themselves'.⁶⁸ Not long before, the British had transferred Bencoolen, which had become a spices producing area, to the Dutch.

The cloves and nutmegs bring us back to the role of the spice monopoly. In reports of 1823, Merkus still fulminates against the monopoly system⁶⁹, while three years later he takes the initiative regarding New Guinea in order to protect the monopoly⁷⁰. The change in his opinion shows that Merkus was loyal to his government's policy. During his visit to the Moluccas in 1824, governor-general Van der Capellen gave evidence of his support for Merkus' ideas and took measures that would lead to the total abolition of the monopoly-system. In its negotiations with the English however, the Dutch home government wanted to retain the system. They succeeded and the monopoly became part of the agreements of the Treaty of London in the same year. Du Bus received the authority to reverse Van der Capellen's measures⁷¹, and Merkus followed suit.

The spice monopoly fossil remained in force until 1863. It had ceased to be important long before, but it had always been a rewarding object of English criticism. In the eighteenth century the British tried to develop their own spices production in territories under their control, such as Bencoolen. With that same purpose British East India Company surveyor Thomas Forrest dwelt for a while in the New Guinea Doreh Bay in 1775.⁷² Another option was to attract indigenous trade away from the Moluccas region to British territory.⁷³

In their assessment of the establishment of Fort Dundas, the Dutch government was right to make a connection with Singapore. The merchant adventurer William Barnes - who took the initiative towards British settlement in northern Australia - thought that the non-existence

of a physical British presence left the Dutch commercial advantages unchallenged.⁷⁴ After some lobbying, the Colonial Office supported the idea, 'particularly as it believed that Dutch interests were also after a base in the region'.⁷⁵ This was not true at that time, but the latter argument made the Admiralty support the plans too. An expedition was fitted out. 'Ignorance of the region was all but total, and what had been formulated as a private commercial enterprise was executed primarily as a military expedient'.⁷⁶ Fort Dundas had been too far away from the routes of the Macassarese trepang fishermen they tried to attract. The trade route from Sydney to Singapore ran hundreds of miles north of Melville Island and Raffles Bay and was not comparable to the routes passing by Penang and Singapore.⁷⁷

The similarities between the establishment of Fort Dundas and that of Merkus-oord are striking. There was an equal lack of knowledge, and governor Merkus too had turned the initial commercial goals into a military one. Both expeditions were marked by haste, which eventually led to the failure of both settlements. Both were pestered by diseases, attacked by the indigenous inhabitants, and ignored by indigenous traders.

When conditions on Melville Island grew intolerable, it was decided to form a second settlement, in order to salvage something of the efforts. In 1827 Fort Wellington in Raffles Bay, further to the east, was constructed. It was this settlement that triggered the rumours about a British settlement in New Guinea and caused the establishment of Merkus-oord. By January 1829, all personnel were moved from Melville Island to Raffles Bay. Although circumstances in Fort Wellington were better, ironically even before the move, the Colonial Office had decided to abandon the north of Australia completely, based on earlier negative reports. In August 1829 all settlers were moved to the Swan River colony, present day Fremantle in Western Australia.⁷⁸

The sequence of events was thus as follows: among other reasons the British feared Dutch settlement in northern Australia and founded Fort Dundas. Its successor Fort Wellington fed Dutch fears of British presence in New Guinea, and the Dutch founded Merkus-oord. Ironically, by that time the British had already decided to leave northern Australia. In 1835 the Dutch finally had to admit that Merkus-oord was a failure too.

In its turn, the Swan River colony may have blocked Dutch plans with Western Australia, which is the subject of the final section below.



Image 5: His M. corvette *Triton* (left) and His M. frigate *Diana*. Watercolor by J. Spin, 1837. With the *Triton* Merkus-oord was established in 1828. In 1836 *Diana* picked up the last people from Merkus-oord abandoning it. National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv. no. A.0149 (0425).

William's plans for Western Australia

In the second half of the 1820's, in this instance because they feared French plans concerning southwest Australia, the British started to colonize and annex the remainder of the continent. It began with settlements at King George's Sound in 1826, followed by the one at the mouth of the Swan River in 1829. The latter would not be peopled by convicts, but by 'gentlemen immigrants'. 'The ideal was to reproduce nineteenth-century British rural society in microcosm'.⁷⁹ It was part of the 'pastoral capitalism' that would sweep and sheep the continent and would produce the wool for the booming British textile industry at home.

As becomes clear from the Dutch colonial archives, the British should have feared not only the French, but also the Dutch. In 1829, the

newly appointed governor-general J. van den Bosch, who was about to leave Holland for the Indies to impose his (in)famous Culture System upon the Javanese, received instruction ‘in accordance with the king’s order [...] to order an investigation of the West Coast of New Holland, with the power, should it be so judged, to take possession of a part of this coast in His Majesty’s name’.⁸⁰

This instruction was the result of ideas and plans for the establishment of a convict colony somewhere in the Netherlands-Indies. A document as early as 1821 shows the king remembering that former commissioner-general Elout had formulated ideas about this.⁸¹ In 1827 the issue was taken up again. Subsequently in January 1828 Merkus received the assignment to explore the possibilities of colonization by European ‘criminals’ somewhere in the Moluccan Archipelago. Merkus reacted by putting forward New Guinea as an option, proposing that a second expedition to the island (the first one was to prepare the Merkus-oord settlement) was needed to gather more information. After the expedition, the choice should be between New Guinea, Buru and Obi Mayor.⁸² Merkus was rather slow in implementing the assignment, while in the meantime preliminary missives were not very positive. Ultimately, the second expedition did not take place in Merkus’ time as governor of the Moluccas. It was completed in 1835, under the command of lieutenant M. Langenberg Kool.⁸³

News from Merkus was not yet in when in October 1828 the king received reports about colonization in the East-Indies by C.M. Baumhauer. He was the president of the *Hoofdcommissie van Landbouw* [Chief Agricultural Commission].⁸⁴ It was Baumhauer putting forward the idea of a convict colony in western Australia. According to Baumhauer, so far the British had only surveyed the Swan River area. The king took it up and informed the minister for colonial affairs. The minister thereupon provided new information that colonization around Fremantle had already begun, and that the settlers were free colonists this time. He added that the British would not be happy with the establishment of a convict colony on the same coast by another nation. Still, ‘[...] as the English have not taken possession of the whole of the West Coast of New Holland, it may perhaps be advisable, that we make an attempt to preserve our rights to that part to which they have not yet

laid claim'.⁸⁵ Van den Bosch was asked to express his opinion, but he wanted to wait until after his arrival in the colony.⁸⁶

When the minister authorized the new governor-general, before his departure, to take possession of part of the west coast of New Holland, Merkus' report had finally arrived. It was not based on a second expedition to New Guinea, which he was still preparing. Although the government was thus better informed now, the instruction regarding New Holland was not altered.⁸⁷

It seems that the example of the annexation of New Guinea gave the king more self-confidence. This is supported by a phrase in his letter to the minister in which he authorizes him to give the New Holland instruction to Van den Bosch: 'that [...] His Majesty has raised the question of the feasibility of allowing the Indies Government to make a settlement in New Holland, *following in the footsteps of that which has taken place in New Guinea*'.⁸⁸ (my emphasis)

Another sequence can be seen here. In taking possession of part of New Guinea, the British example in Australia was followed. After this succeeded, in its turn it became an incentive to do the same again in Australia. A Dutch annexation of part of western Australia never took place. In the archives I have not found any further references to the subject after 1829.



Image 6: The Netherlands-Indies and British Northern Australia. Map created by Denise Overweel.

Conclusion

In the New Guinea-Moluccas-Australia triangle British-Dutch rivalry was as dynamic as elsewhere in the Indonesian Archipelago. What the archives tell about the backgrounds of the short-lived establishments in New Guinea and Australia fits the general pattern of British-Dutch antagonism: Britain, gaining most from free trade, met with more protectionist opposition by the economically weaker Dutch. The Dutch tried to protect the Moluccan spice monopoly, hence the post in New Guinea, and the British wanted a second Singapore in Australia to establish trade links with the eastern part of the archipelago.

Notwithstanding the economic reasons given, the creation of the footholds in the new territories were set up as military ventures. In all cases it was believed that the stationing of a garrison was enough to attract indigenous trade. However, indigenous traders generally ignored the new settlements. The expeditions were characterized by haste, based on insufficient knowledge of the areas and henceforth ended in failure. None of the settlements lasted longer than eight years.

The haste was caused by mutual fear embedded in the general trade rivalry. This fear set in motion a sequence of action and reaction, while the contenders had limited knowledge of what was really going on. The British were first with their founding of Fort Dundas, its successor Fort Wellington provoking Dutch action in New Guinea, resulting in Merkus-oord. By that time the British already had decided to abandon northern Australia.

British activities fit into Robinson and Gallagher's concept of the imperialism of free trade, but where do Dutch activities fit? Imperialism or protectionism? The literature on Dutch expansionism concentrates on the official Dutch policy of abstinence in territorial acquisitions at least until 1870. Despite this, around the mid-century there was territorial expansion in the archipelago, induced by over-active local Dutch authorities.⁸⁹ In general, historians describe the events after the return of the colonies by the British in 1816 in terms of re-instating authority. However, the taking of New Guinea and King William's plans for western Australia are more than that. The act of formal annexation outside the former VOC realm, in order to exclude the British, is without precedent. It is probably the reason why in defending the act, the Dutch decision-makers always pointed to what the British had done

themselves in Australia. In 1824 the Treaty of London made a sort of demarcation line of the Malacca Straits, but that did not mean that south and east of the Straits the possibilities for expansion had dried up. William's interest in Australia, prior to which the Dutch had done little more than giving it the name New Holland, is one of the examples.

Merkus-oord was established and plans for Australia were made, in spite of the Java War and when it was already clear that the colony was in dire financial straits. Further ideas of expansion did not survive the financial problems in the colony and the financial strain of the 1830 Belgian uprising and subsequent war. Apparently, it took a while for budgetary constraints to curb territorial adventures.

The drive behind much active Dutch policy comes from the industrious king William. Self-confident, full of ideas for economic development, he was not afraid of territorial acquisition if this would bring benefits for, or protection of, his new kingdom's trade and industry. On the contrary, the establishment of Merkus-oord and the Western Australian proposal show that the government in Batavia was more aloof than the sovereign king. Striking in William's plans for Australia is the casualness with which it is discussed with his civil servants.

The important role of William is obvious because he could make colonial policy without being accountable to parliament. When the Dutch East India Company possessions were taken over by the state, the colonies became linked to politics at home, the more so in William's United Kingdom of The Netherlands. The tendency was centralism, not only in the European state itself, but also in connection with the colonies. William was now making single-handed decisions about European and colonial matters, whereas the VOC had been a predominantly trading body governed by several independent chapters. William worked to give The Netherlands greater autonomy, steering free from British influence. The colonies were important for the economic integration of his new state, and the Moluccan spices, he thought, were important for the revival of Amsterdam as market for colonial staple goods.

On the basis of the findings above, further study on Dutch expansionism in the early nineteenth century and king William's role therein is justified. It may well lead to a redefinition of Dutch expansionism because of the similarities to 'classic' imperialism. The story told here displays the importance of 'pre-emption' as a driving

force, something historians generally place much later in the nineteenth century. Wesseling writes that English imperialism in the beginning of the nineteenth century was so invisible, because there were no competitors.⁹⁰ The rivalry in the 'Eastern Seas' and the pre-emptive actions in New Guinea and Australia are at least exceptions to the rule. If British expansionism in this period answers to the definition of imperialism, then why wouldn't the actions of the Dutch be called the same?

Soon after Fort Wellington was abandoned in 1829, British interest in the region was revived. Once more the Colonial Office believed in the viability of a new settlement on the Australian north coast. Port Essington was established in 1838. Again it failed, and again it provoked Dutch reactions concerning New Guinea. Thus, further research about British/Dutch rivalry in this region lies ahead.

Jeroen Overweel⁹¹

Endnotes

- 1 Kielstra, E.B., 1917, *De Indische Archipel; Geschiedkundige schetsen*. Haarlem: F. Bohn, p. 302.
- 2 Veur, Paul W. van der, 1966, *Search for New Guinea's Boundaries. From Torres Strait to the Pacific*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, p. 3.
- 3 The Java War lasted from 1825 to 1830 and left about a 200.000 dead. The financial cost led to far-reaching reforms in the colony, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java_War. See also Bossenbroek, Martin, 2020, *De wraak van Diponegoro. Begin en einde van Nederlands-Indië*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Ploak & Van Genneep.
- 4 Veur, Paul W. van der, *New Guinea's Boundaries*, p. 3.
- 5 Haga, A., 1884, *Nederlandsch Nieuw Guinea en de Papoesche Eilanden c. 1500-1883*, Batavia: Bruining; 's-Hage: Nijhoff.
- 6 Haga, A., *Nederlandsch Nieuw Guinea*, p. 13. A very curious offer to take possession of New Guinea for the Netherlands is documented in Kemp, P.H. van der, 1911, *Oost-Indië's herstel in 1816 naar oorspronkelijke stukken*, 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 389 and Deventer, M.L. van (ed.), 1891, *Het Nederlandsch gezag over Java en onderhoorigheden sedert 1811. Verzameling van onuitgegeven stukken uit de koloniale en andere archieven*, Eerste deel, 1811-1820, 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 236-40. In 1818 S. van de Wahl, former district officer in Banjarmasin under the British, requests the commissioners-general to be allowed to establish himself in New Guinea. He will take care of the costs, on condition that he will be appointed resident and will have a trade monopoly for the first five years. His argument is also the protection of the spice-trade, but this time the danger comes from the newly independent states Peru, Chile and Mexico! The commissioners-general are alarmed and very worried about the possible consequences for the 'honour of the Dutch flag'. They order an investigation and make sure that any initiatives of Van de Wahl regarding New Guinea are contained.
- 7 Palmer, R.R. and Joel Colton, 1978, *A History of the Modern World*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 397-9, 427.
- 8 Palmer, *History*, pp. 329-39.
- 9 Gallagher, John and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, vol 6 (1953), pp. 1-15.
- 10 Wesseling, H.L., 1992, *Verdeel en heers; de deling van Afrika 1880-1914*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, pp. 52-3.
- 11 Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie
- 12 On the history of the VOC see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_East_India_Company. See also Gaastra, Femme, 2003, *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers.
- 13 He did so by circulating the 'Kew Letters', see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kew_Letters.
- 14 Wels, Cornelis Boudewijn, 1982, *Aloofness & neutrality; Studies on Dutch foreign relations and policy-making institutions*, Utrecht: H&S, p. 29.
- 15 Hall, D.G.E., 1981, *A History of South-East Asia*, London etc.: Macmillan, pp. 553, 565. The guiding principle was 'trade, not territory'.
- 16 This process is extensively documented by Kemp, P.H. van der, 1901, *Brieven van en aan Mr. H.J. van de Graaff 1816-1826. Eene bijdrage tot de kennis der Oost-Indische*

- bestuurstoestanden onder de regering van G.A.G.P. baron van der Capellen*, Batavia: Albrecht & Co.; 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff. [Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen Deel LII, 1e stuk] and Kemp, *Oost-Indië's herstel*. Van der Kemp is the author of long series of publications on the retrocession of the Dutch colonies by the British around 1816. On mutual trade rights see also Stevens, Th., 1982, *Van der Capellen's koloniale ambitie op Java; Economisch beleid in een stagnerende conjunctuur, 1816-1826*. Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, p. 60.
- 17 Wels, *Aloofness & neutrality*, p. 120. In fact William I delegated very little to his ministers.
- 18 Tamse, C.A., and E. Witte (eds.), 1992, *Staats- en natievorming in Willem I's koninkrijk (1815-1830)*, Brussel: VUBPRESS, p. 29. Wels, *Aloofness & neutrality*, p. 118.
- 19 Although they gave themselves a royal outlook, the Dutch stadtholders were civil servants accountable to the States-General of the Dutch Republic.
- 20 Geyl, Pieter, 1949, 'Een Oranje in ballingschap', in P. van Hees (ed.), *Verzamelde opstellen Pieter Geyl*, part 2, pp. 164-191, Utrecht/Antwerpen: Het Spectrum. Tamse, *Staats- en natievorming*, pp. 27-9.
- 21 Wels, *Aloofness & neutrality*, p. 15.
- 22 In The Netherlands, the 17th century was and is regarded as the 'golden age'. While fighting for its independence, the republic replaced Spain and Portugal as the most powerful seafaring nation, symbolised by the fast growing East India Company, the VOC. The 18th saw a steady decline in power, resulting into discussions among the public on how to reverse this. Sas, N.C.F. van, 1992, 'Het Grote Nederland van Willem I: een schone slaapster die niet wakker wilde worden', in Tamse, C.A., and E. Witte (eds.), 1992, *Staats- en natievorming in Willem I's koninkrijk (1815-1830)*, pp. 171-85, Brussel: VUBPRESS, p. 172.
- 23 Sas, *Het Grote Nederland*, pp. 174-6, Tamse, *Staats- en natievorming*, p. 27.
- 24 Sas, *Het Grote Nederland*, p. 178. Wels, *Aloofness & neutrality*, p. 122.
- 25 Tamse, , *Staats- en natievorming*, p. 29. Wels, *Aloofness & neutrality*, pp. 31-3, 118.
- 26 Stevens, *Van der Capellen's koloniale ambitie*, pp. 59, 161, 191.
- 27 *Ibid.*, pp. 192-3.
- 28 Present day Bengkulu at the Sumatra southwest coast.
- 29 Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, p. 548.
- 30 Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, p. 567.
- 31 However, irritations about Dutch protectionism did not disappear and were widespread. For example Sweatman, a clerk with a British survey party along the North Australian coast, writes in the mid-forties: 'At Timor, as in all the Dutch East Indian Colonies, their Government is detested by the natives: they charge excessive duties on all native produce and somehow contrive to keep all the money in the place in their own hands' (In: Allen, Jim, and Peter Corris, 1977, *The journal of John Sweatman; A nineteenth century surveying voyage in North Australia and Torres Strait*. St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, p. 167).
- 32 Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, p. 550.
- 33 Stevens, *Van der Capellen's koloniale ambitie*, pp. 40-1, Hall, *History of South-East Asia*, p. 584.
- 34 National Archives of The Netherlands (NA), Ministry of Colonial Affairs (MvK),

- Openbaar verbaalarchief, 1818-1849, Verbaal (V.) 6 December 1825 no. 84, inv. no. 474. A verbaal is a folder as archival record.
- 35 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batavian_Republic
- 36 Fasseur, C., 1980, 'De 'geest' van het gouvernement', in C. Fasseur (ed.), *Geld en geweten; een bundel opstellen over anderhalve eeuw Nederlands bestuur in de Indonesische archipel*, Vol. 1, *De negentiende eeuw*, pp. 32-50, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 34.
- 37 Stevens, *Van der Capellen's koloniale ambitie*, pp. 74-77.
- 38 NA, MvK, V. 6 December 1825, no. 84, inv. no. 474. About the changes in the colonial civil service see Kommers, J.M.H., 1979, *Besturen in een onbekende wereld. Het Europese binnenlands bestuur in Nederlands-Indië: 1800-1830*, Meppel: Krips.
- 39 Stevens, *Van der Capellen's koloniale ambitie*, p. viii, 3, 31
- 40 About finances under Van der Capellen's rule see Stevens, *Van der Capellen's koloniale ambitie*, p. 227. Van der Capellen's alleged financial mismanagement was officially investigated. In his defence he argued that throughout the archipelago he had to subject quite a number of indigenous rulers to Dutch authority. On Van der Capellen's proto ethical policy see Goor, Jurrien van, 1982, *Kooplieden, predikanten en bestuurders overzee: Beeldvorming en plaatsbepaling in een andere wereld*. Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, pp. 172-8, 205-7. See also Kemp 1901, *Brieven and Kemp, Oost-Indië's herstel*, about Van der Capellen's administration.
- 41 NA, MvK, Geheime besluiten van de Gouverneur-Generaal in rade, 1819-1834 (GG in rade geh., Classified decisions of the Governor-General in council), 4 July 1826, let. P, inv. no. 4530.
- 42 NA, MvK, GG in rade geh., 29 September 1826 let. Z, inv. no. 4530. See also Kolff's journal of the trip: Kolff, D.H., 1828, *Reize door den weinig bekenden Molukschen archipel en langs de geheel onbekende Zuidwestkust van Nieuw-Guinea; gedaan in de jaren 1825 en 1826*, Amsterdam: Beijerink.
- 43 NA, MvK, Geheim verbaalarchief 1814-1849, V. 21 October 1828 geh. (classified), inv. no. 4207: Secret letter of the governor of the Moluccan Islands to the lieutenant governor-general 22 April 1828. Henceforth 'geh.' indicates that the record is from the Geheim verbaalarchief.
- 44 He was appointed in 1825 and went to the colonies in 1826, with the task of straightening out the colonial finances. He had more powers than a governor-general and left the daily affairs to the lieutenant governor-general. Du Bus' successor J. van den Bosch was appointed governor-general in October 1828, but started his work in the colony in 1830. See Rhede van der Kloot, M.A. van, 1891, *De Gouverneurs-Generaal en Commissarissen-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indië 1610-1888, historisch-genealogisch beschreven*, 's-Gravenhage: van Stockum. See also the recently published biography on Van den Bosch: Sens, Angelie, 2019, *De koloniemann, Johannes van den Bosch (1780-1844), volksverheffer in naam van de koning*. Amsterdam: Balans.
- 45 NA, MvK, GG in rade geh., 29 September 1826 let. Z, inv. no. 4530: Letter from the lieutenant governor-general to the commissioner-general 15 September 1826 no. 3. The Hague is the seat of government in The Netherlands.
- 46 NA, MvK, V. 23 April 1827 no. 102 geh., inv. no. 4195.
- 47 NA, MvK, V. 31 March 1827 no. 61 geh., inv. no. 4195: The minister for colonial affairs to the king.

- 48 NA, MvK, V. 31 March 1827 no. 61 geh., inv. no. 4195: minister to the king.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 NA, MvK, V. 7 November 1825 no. 1, agenda, inv. no. 469.
- 51 NA, MvK, V. 23 April 1827 no. 102 geh., inv. no. 4195.
- 52 NA, MvK, V. 24 September 1828 no. 198 geh., inv. no. 4206: correspondence between the lieutenant governor-general and the commissioner-general.
- 53 NA, MvK, V. 21 October 1828 no. 219 geh., inv. no. 4207.
- 54 NA, MvK, V. 21 October 1828 no. 219 geh., inv. no. 4207.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Then it was still thought to be the mouth of a river that was given the name 'Dourga'. See Overweel, Jeroen, 1994, *Archival sources relating to Netherlands New Guinea history; The archives of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs 19th century*, Leiden/Jakarta: DSALCUL/IRIS. [Irian Jaya Source Materials no. 8.], p. 20.
- 57 NA, MvK, V. 17 December 1828 no. 31, inv. no. 651. See also the journal by Modera, J., 1830, *Verhaal van eene reize naar en langs de Zuid-westkust van Nieuw-Guinea, gedaan in 1828*. Haarlem: Loosjes.
- 58 Overweel, *Archival sources*, pp. 19-20.
- 59 See for background and sources on these settlements: Overweel, Jeroen (ed.), 1995, *Topics relating to Netherlands New Guinea in Ternate Residency Memoranda of Transfer and other assorted documents*. Leiden/Jakarta: DSALCUL/IRIS. [Irian Jaya Source Materials no. 13]
- 60 NA, MvK, V. 13 February 1828 no. 35 geh., inv. no. 4200.
- 61 Trepang or tripang is also called 'sea cucumber'. Also found around New Guinea, it is highly valued in Chinese cuisine and therefore makes good profits.
- 62 NA, MvK, V. 5 April 1830 no. 51.
- 63 Ibid
- 64 Ibid
- 65 Ibid
- 66 Fasseur, C., 1979, 'Een koloniale paradox. De Nederlandse expansie in de Indonesische archipel in het midden van de negentiende eeuw (1830-1870)', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 92:162-186, pp. 167-8.
- 67 NA, MvK, V. 7 November 1825 no. 1 agenda.
- 68 NA, MvK, V. 6 December 1825 no. 86, inv. no. 474.
- 69 NA, MvK, V. 6 December 1825 no. 84, inv. no. 474.
- 70 NA, MvK, V. 21 October 1828 no. 219 geh., inv. no. 4207.
- 71 Wijck, H. van der, 1866, *De Nederlandsche Oost-Indische bezittingen onder het bestuur van den Kommissaris Generaal Du Bus de Gisignies. (1826-1830.)*, 's Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 63-4.
- 72 Forrest, Thomas, and D.K. Bassett (introduction), 1969, *A voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas 1774-1776*, Kuala Lumpur etc.: Oxford University Press. [Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints]
- 73 Wright, H.R.C., 1958, 'The Moluccan spice monopoly, 1770-1824', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Asiatic Society* 31:1-116, pp. 13, 24.
- 74 Donovan, P.F., 1981, *A land full of possibilities; A history of South Australia's Northern Territory.*, St. Lucia etc.: University of Queensland Press, p. 14.
- 75 Donovan, *A land*, pp. 13-4. Fear of the French was always present too, see Powell,

- Allan, 1988, *Far country. A short history of the Northern Territory*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, p. 46. This was understandable: 'In the Far East, the French navy, suffering from a condition of Anglophobia that had been intensified by the Battle of Trafalgar, trafficked about in search of ports and esteem' (Betts, Raymond, 1978, *Tricouleur. The French overseas empire*, London: Gordon & Cremonesi., pp. 21-2).
- 76 Donovan. *A land*, p. 140.
- 77 Powell, *Far country*, p.48.
- 78 Donovan. *A land*, pp. 15-6, Powell, *Far country*, pp. 51-2.
- 79 Quote and section: Kociumbas, Jan, 1992, *The Oxford History of Australia*, vol. 2, *1770-1860: Possessions*, Melbourne etc.: Oxford University Press, pp. 120-1.
- 80 NA, MvK, V. 12 November 1829 no. 72, inv. no. 714.
- 81 NA, MvK, V. 7 January 1821 no. 23, inv. no. 272. Elout was one of the three who had managed the return of the East Indian colonies from the hands of the British to the Dutch.
- 82 NA, MvK, Handelingen en besluiten van de Gouverneur-Generaal in rade, 1819-1836 (GG in rade, Decisions of the Governor-General in council), 13 February 1829 no. 24, inv. no. 2822.
- 83 Overweel, *Archival sources*, pp. 18-20.
- 84 Baumhauer, C.M. (ed.), 1829, *Algemeen verslag wegens den staat van den landbouw over het jaar 1828*, Batavia: Landsdrukkerij.
- 85 NA, MvK, V. 28 April 1829 no. 79, inv. no. 672.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 NA, MvK, V. 12 November 1829 no. 72, inv. no. 714.
- 88 NA, MvK, V. 2 September 1829 no. 55, inv. no. 699.
- 89 As described in Fasseur, *koloniale paradox*.
- 90 Wesseling, *Verdeel en heers*, p. 53.
- 91 I wish to thank Dr Herman Stapelkamp, Dr John Richens and Jacqueline Kodden MA for their critical comments. The final responsibility for the writing is, of course, my own.