

an act of open hostility between the Dutch and the Portuguese at the river mouth in the beginning of his journal, Heeck then describes the actual relations between the Dutch and the Portuguese living in Ayutthaya as a “Machiavellian friendship”. (p. 61)

This translation of Gijsbert Heeck’s journal has been executed with great care and accuracy. Baas Terwiel has done terrific work in interpreting and identifying Dutch corruption of Thai words. The VOC maps and illustrations reproduced here are of good quality and very useful. This book and the above-mentioned recent publications on this topic will help broaden new horizons in the study of Ayutthayan history. It is also valuable for those who are interested in historical European perceptions of the East, *inter alia*. We look forward to reading the next book in this series, the account of another VOC employee, Cornelis van Nijenrode, from the year 1621.

Bhawan Ruangsilp

Anthony Farrington and Dhiravat na Pombejra, eds, *The English Factory in Siam 1612–1685*, 2 vols. London, British Library, 2007, 1,439 pp.

Almost a century ago, as part of Prince Damrong’s project to give Siam a western-style national history based on source materials, five volumes of selected seventeenth-century records copied from western archives were printed by the Wachirayan Library in both English and Thai. For some reason, the selection was rather over-weighted with documents on the English East India Company (EIC), and the collection has since been a major source for studies on early relations between England and Siam. In this new publication, Anthony Farrington, scholar and archivist, has taken the EIC documents from the Wachirayan collection and added another two hundred sources. Some of the additions are complete documents, while many others are extracts which refer to Siam and the EIC. Most of these additions come from the India Office Records. A few are from other collections in the British Library, from the Records of Fort St George (Madras), from published anthologies such as Purchas and Hakluyt, and from the British Public Record Office. The editors state, ‘The aim of the present collection has been to trace all surviving material on the English factory in Siam and to present it, as far as possible, in its original form.’ The 759 documents, running to 1,300 pages, must be an exhaustive compilation of seventeenth-

century records on Siam and the EIC. Dhiravat na Pombejra has contributed an introduction which elegantly summarizes the story told in these sources. The two editors have added many useful footnotes, biographical notes on over fifty of the main characters involved, a glossary of places and obscure terms, a bibliography, and an index.

In truth, the EIC played a rather minor part in the story of Siam in the age of commerce, and Siam played rather a minor part in the story of the EIC. In terms of trade at Ayutthaya, the English trailed some way behind the Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese, Moors and (for a short time) the French. The EIC probably trailed somewhat behind the English 'interlopers' or private traders. The EIC had a factory in Ayutthaya only for the two short periods of 1612–27 and 1674–85. On both occasions, the factory had hardly opened before the head office in London wanted to close it. The venture never turned in a profit. Most of the documents in this collection are about efforts to clear up some mess or disaster – debts, personal squabbles, political crises, shipwrecks, deaths, arson, and corruption. When the men-on-the-spot contemplated returning to Ayutthaya after the cataclysm of 1688, London snapped at them, 'Syam never did nor never will bring the Company twopence advantage, but many thousands of pounds loss... and therefore spend none of our money about it.'

D. K. Bassett has written a series of scholarly studies on the EIC and Siam which probably amount to all the atten-

tion that the subject deserves. The enormous benefit from this comprehensive and convenient collection will probably accrue to studies of other topics, including Siam, Pattani, and Asian trade in general.

The documents fall into three main clusters.

In the first cluster of records from the 1610s, there is a fragmentary view of the importance and unique character of Pattani. We see the queen as an active merchant, buying up languishing stocks of cloth from English merchants at knockdown prices, lending them money at very profitable rates, and gouging them with port taxes. We also see her entertaining the foreigners: on one occasion, 'all the gentilitie were commanded to dance, from the greatest to the smallest, or att leaste to make a shewe or demonstration thereof, which caused no small laughter;' and at another 'there was played a commedye all by women.' There is also a description of a slave revolt, which ended with much of the town burnt to the ground. Such regal trade, jolly entertainment, and rebelliousness were probably all much more common than most of the sources and historical writings convey.

The second cluster of records concerns the Company's first sojourn at the Siamese capital. By 1618, the Englishmen on the spot had concluded that Ayutthaya had more potential than Pattani or any other port on the mainland. But for European traders, Siam had very little produce they wanted to buy, and very few people to whom they

could sell. The port was primarily an entrepôt, a point of exchange between east and west. For Siam, European traders were useful if they came with goods that added something to the market. For the kings, they were a bonus if they had soldiers and weapons which the kings could use against rivals and rebels. But the English brought little to this party. They imported some Indian cottons which had many rival suppliers. They did a little gun-running, but never offered the kings any troops. They were too late to muscle into the Siam-Japan trade, which gave the Dutch their profits. They were really only petty hustlers on the fringes of Southeast Asian commerce.

The frisson in reading the 1620s documents comes from watching the Company merchants gaily cheating one another. A ship is dispatched from Ayutthaya to the Company trader in another Asian port. Months later a letter is received lamenting that on arrival the hides had all been eaten by worms and the spices damaged by sea water or rats. As a result the sales proceeds are regrettably much less than expected.... Not very surprisingly, when two or three of these merchants chanced to meet in the same port, the dinner inevitably turned into a brawl with sword fights, gun play, and challenges to duelling.

Most of the documents (900 of the 1,300 pages) fall into the third cluster, about the fifteen years from the Company's return to Ayutthaya in 1674 to the aftermath of King Narai's death and Phetracha's coup in 1688.

In this period, the Company did at least have a strategy. First, it refocused on Pattani and other peninsular ports as the first stages of the events which would eventually create British Malaya. Second, it hoped to profit more from the Bay of Bengal trade and hence took special interest in the port of Mergui.

But the Company did not put the resources behind these ambitions. Both plans exploded in their faces. The Company was outplayed at Mergui by the Moors and the locals, resulting in the massacre of 1687. Siam and the Company declared war on one another and indulged in competitive piracy. When Ayutthaya discovered that the Company was probably gun-running to Pattani and other truculent tributaries on the peninsula, the Company introduced a smart Greek to cover this up by schmoozing the Ayutthayan court and officialdom. Through language skill and native cunning – two qualities which the Company bosses in Siam seem to have totally lacked – Phaulkon was soon lording it over his former employer. Through these documents, we watch Phaulkon's rise and fall from the jaundiced but intimate standpoint of the Company's men in Ayutthaya.

Phaulkon spirited goods away from the Company warehouse while having the Company's books doctored to show the goods were lost at sea, sold to phantom buyers, or greatly depreciated because of damage. When challenged, Phaulkon brazenly accused the Company of 'endeavouring to staine my credit & reputation with scurrilous and

scandalous reports,' while casually mentioning 'the great trade I managed for His Imperiall Majestie my Great Master' in case the Company should dream of seeking any official redress. Two months later the Company's godown was gutted by fire, but it is impossible to tell whether this was Phaulkon's intimidation, an inside job, or sheer drunken carelessness. A Company man who called Phaulkon 'a Greek powder monkey' finished up in the stocks, subject to public ridicule. By 1687, there were fifty Englishmen employed by Phaulkon in the service of Siam – far more than ever worked for the Company in Siam. The King of England ordered them all to resign, without any apparent effect.

The final sections of this publication reprint several pamphlets issued in London on the backwash of the Mergui massacre and the events of 1688. Some of these have appeared elsewhere, but others are less accessible, and read together they nicely present the sequence from charge through counter-charge to character assassination, legal threat, and philosophical lament – 'we live in a profligate age which doth produce new prodigies of vilany.'

One measure of the English lack of interest in Siam is that these 1,300 pages of documents contain no significant description of Siam, Ayutthaya, or the Siamese, except a short one filched from the Dutch. This contrasts to the many writings by the Dutch, French, Portuguese, Japanese, and Persians on Siam, and to the voluminous writings by the British on India. There is also very little

narrative of political events in Siam, and only of a superficial nature, except in some of the 1688 pamphlets.

One clarification. On pp. 1371–2, there is a table labelled 'Ship arrivals and departures Madras/Siam 1689–1750,' with no explanation of the source of the data or its significance. The editors tell me that the information was compiled from shipping movements at Madras recorded in the Diaries and Consultations of the Madras Council (India Office Records, series G/19), and that the table shows that English country trade ships continued to visit Siam after 1688 until the final years of Ayutthaya.

The East India Company is the focus of this collection because the Company had an institutional presence much more important than its Siam operation, and because it had a system for record-keeping. But, as Dhiravat points out in his Introduction, the non-Company 'country traders' or 'interlopers' were probably much more important but are much more difficult to study. These two volumes contain glimpses of these figures. They also contain a huge amount of data, including several very detailed trade accounts, and some fascinating material on currencies and exchange rates, which will help a broader understanding of Southeast Asian trade in this era.

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