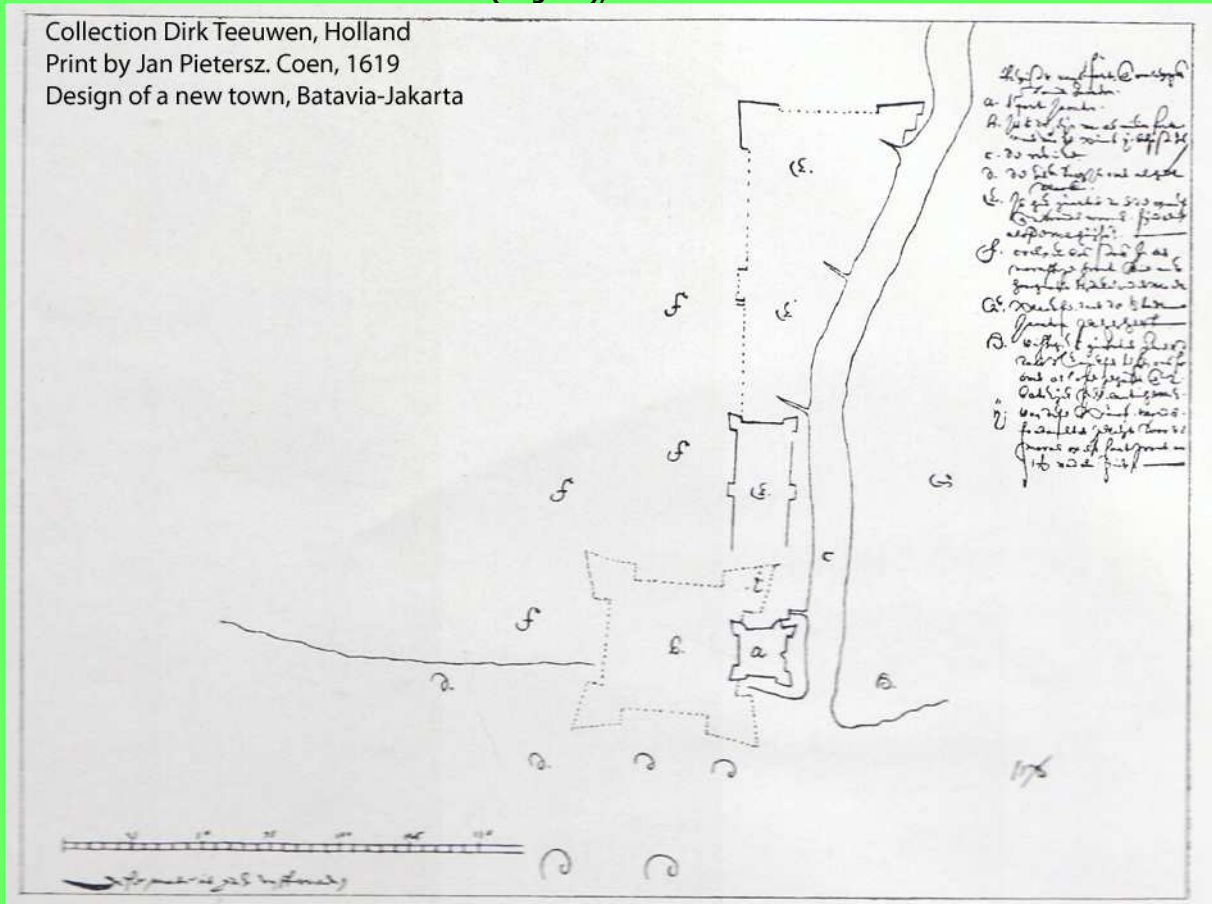


Jakarta-Batavia, designed by Jan Pietersz Coen, 1619

Dirk Teeuwen MSc

***J.P. Coen!** JP's family name "Coen", is short for Coenraad. Coenraad, Coen, Koen, Kunz, are old Dutch-Germanic names. Coen means "the brave (=coen) one". Compare: kunnen (Dutch) is, can (English), is "coen".



The only print drawn by the Dutchman Jan Pietersz Coen personally, in 1619. Coen's only print: so far as I know. The print we are looking at, is our point of interest now. Clearly top right, one can see - a stylishly gentleman's, handwriting - Coen's handwriting from 1619. Our Coen was an educated man. His university and business education took place in Holland as well as in Genua Italy. This print was drawn by Coen after he ordered to destroy the town of Jakatra! Source: Van Gent 1926, page 6

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1. Short introduction

The management of the "Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, V.O.C." / Dutch East-India Company (1602-1799) aimed to realize a trade monopoly in the Far East. The V.O.C. could act as the government of an independent state. I mean the following. The Dutch government granted the V.O.C. the right to declare wars, to conclude treaties and to administer justice in the Far East. Jan Pietersz. Coen, 1587-1629, was a V.O.C. Governor-General in the Far East: 1618-1623 and 1627-1629. He was a great Dutchman, he was the founder of the Dutch East-Indies and, because of this, the founder of modern Indonesia also.

Coen was an uncompromising man as well as a very courageous man. He was an orthodox protestant Dutch Christian. His word was law. The Dutch East-Indies owed him a lot.

This article commentates on Coen's print, see page 1.



Collection Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

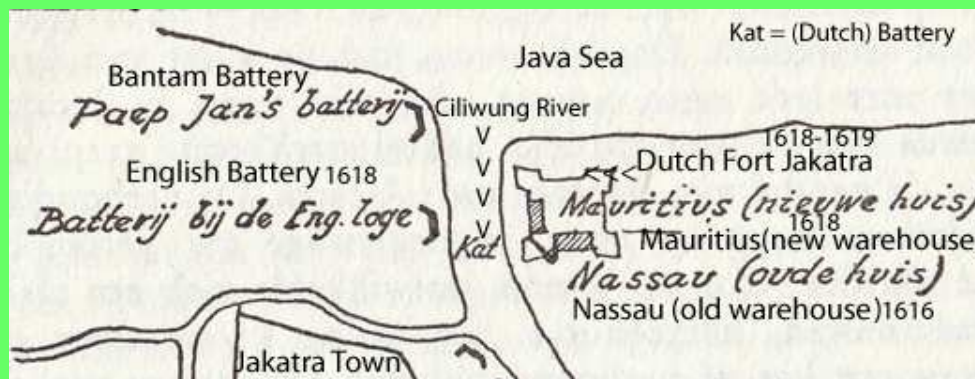
Jan Pietersz. Coen 1587-1629
Source: Stapel 1939, page 118
Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

1. Batavia 1619

Jakarta (later Batavia-Jakarta) was a small town near the mouth of the River Ciliwung on the coast of the Java Sea in North Java. In 1610 the Dutch started a trading post in Jakarta, a town subordinated to the Sultanate of Bantam. Later the Governor-General Coen tried to turn the post into a permanent settlement. In fact he wanted to found the military, as well as the commercial and political, headquarters of the V.O.C. in Jakarta. Jakarta should become the V.O.C. centre of all its V.O.C. activities in the Far East.

Also, from about 1598, the Dutch owned a trading post in the town of Bantam, the capital of the Sultanate of Bantam in West-Java. The Dutch transferred more and more goods and activities to Jakarta, because of continuing disagreements and conflicts there. Conflicts with the English, the Portuguese, the Chinese and, last but not least, with the Sultan. Dutch trade made Jakarta more and more important as a commercial centre. Though the Regent of Jakarta welcomed him, Coen had a profound distrust of the Regent of Jakarta, a vassal of the Sultan of Bantam. However, almost certainly, there was no reason for such distrust. As a matter of fact, there were always tiffs and wrangles between the Sultan and his Jakarta vassal. From time to time the Regent was arrested, and transported to Bantam Town by soldiers of the Sultan. Reason? Not so complicated: envy caused by the economic growth of Jakarta in connection with the growth of Dutch shipping trade.

Near Jakarta, since 1610, the Dutch owned a trading post and also, from 1614, a battery and warehouses. The first warehouses, built from 1615-1616 (maybe before), were called Nassau. Because of the suspicious atmosphere Coen ordered to build larger fortified (new) warehouses in 1617-1618, called Mauritius. Nassau and Mauritius were located on the coast of the Java Sea: just outside Jakarta, east from the mouth of the River Ciliwung. The new fortified warehouses Mauritius were placed vertically against Nassau. At the same time Coen took the initiative to construct a larger fortress, called "Fortress Jakarta".



Source: De Haan 1922, page 36

Now I am going to summarize a very long story! On May 30th 1619 Coen ordered to assault Jakarta and the Jakarta-Kraton (Palace) of the Regent. The people of Jakarta were completely surprised. The assault came out of nowhere, so to say. The Dutch did not leave a stone standing. The Regent survived, because again he was under the Sultan's arrest in Bantam Town at the moment. So, a new town, Batavia, could be born. Nevertheless, from 1950 Batavia became Jakarta-Jakarta again. I have to admit: sometimes Indonesians show a sense of humor.

Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

In 1618 the English built fortified warehouses just opposite Dutch Mauritius, west from the mouth of the River Ciliwung in Jakarta's fishermen's quarter. Also in 1619 the English warehouses on the Ciliwung were stormed and demolished by the Dutch.

There is much more to tell about the situation in and around Jakarta in 1618-1619, but I don't want to be long now.

2. The origin of the name Batavia ***Batavia and Batavi***

The Batavi were an ancient Germanic tribe living in the Dutch Delta in from 100 B.C. until 400 A.C. After 400 A.C. they mixed with local Frisians and Saxons. The Romans called their Batavi territory "Batavia". Batavia was located between two branches of the River Rhine. The Batavi were excellent soldiers, superb cavalymen and they were allies of the Romans. But later in 69-70 A.C., the Batavi, under their leader Civilis, revolted against the Romans. The tribe operated successfully in the first place.

Causes of their uprisings: tax burdens and, what the Batavi saw as, Roman sodomy (widespread homosexuality among them, Romans). Not only the Batavi, but also Canninefati, as well as other tribes, took up arms. "Canninefati" meant, verbally, "Rabbit Hunters". Their name was not so amazing, because once they lived in the Dutch coastal area, a dune landscape, on the North Sea. The Canninefati leader was a certain Brinno, called then "one eye Brinno" for obvious reasons.

After some time the Batavi were a thread for the north of Italy and Gallia (France). In 70 A.C. the Batavi were forced back to the Dutch Delta by the Romans and Civilis started peace negotiations with them.

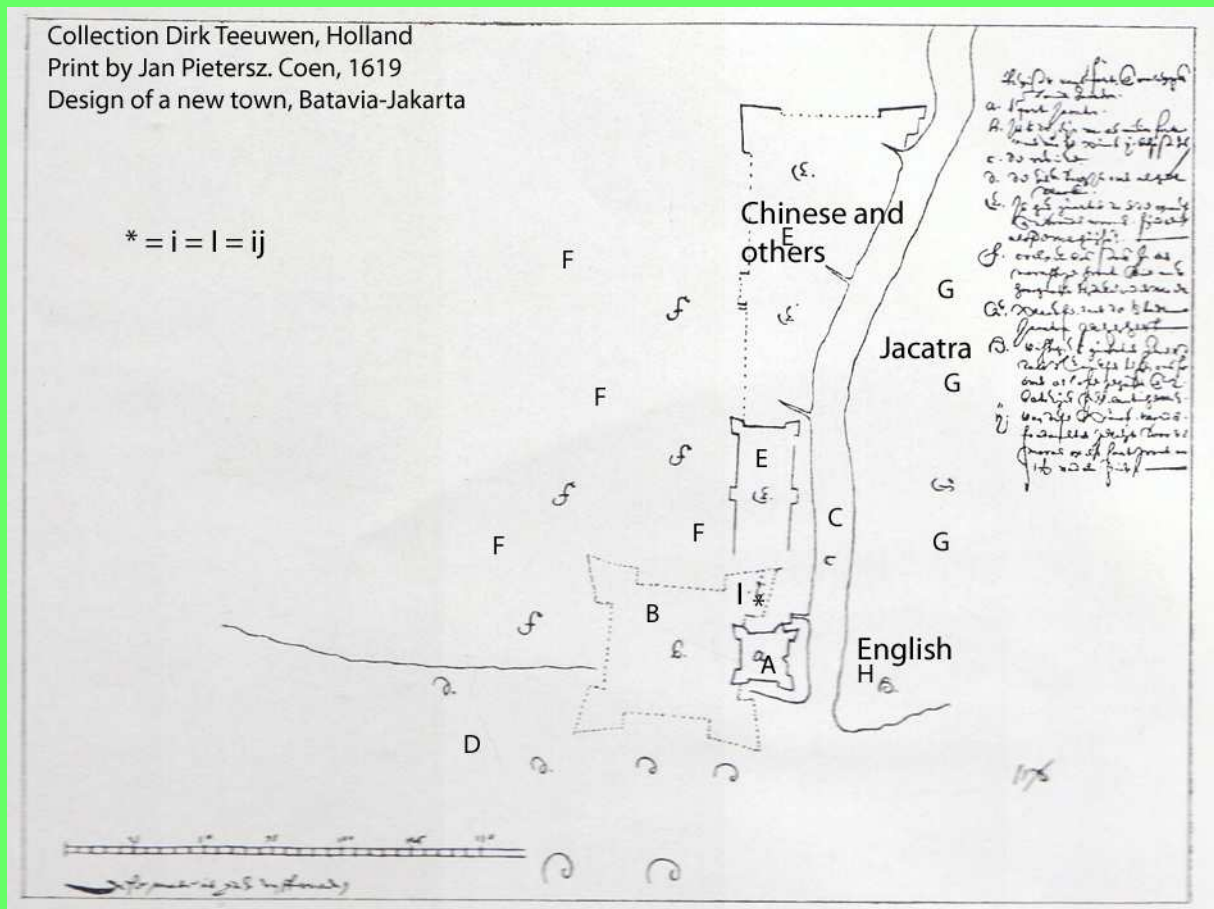
Needless to say that the old Batavi incited (and still incite) the more modern Dutch to be brave from time to time. Now the name Batavia needs no explanation no more, I suppose.



Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
Bantam Town, Old Mosque (from 1550)

Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

3. Coen's print



Source: Van Gent 1926, page 6

Coen drew this print in 1619 after the Dutch stormed Jakatra. Under his command Jakatra's quarters (G) east from the River Ciliwung - Kali Besar (C) were destroyed.

It is, anno 2015, hardly possible (to me) to read Coen's handwriting and to understand it without the use of a magnifying glass. So I used such a glass and the results were the following. I can not guarantee that I copied Coen's handwriting - his old Dutch linguistic usage - orthographically right. Below you find Coen's Dutch text as well as its translation into English.

a. 't Fort Jacatra

Fortress Jakatra

b. Is desein van een nieuw Fort waer de punct ij begon is

Design of a new fortress (see "i." below, dt)

(The construction of the new fort progressed while Coen was drawing his print. dt)

c. De reviere

River Ciliwung - Kali Besar, North Java

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d. De Zee toch is over al heel vlack

(Java Sea) The Sea is very quiet everywhere

e. Is het quartier daer de Chinesen ende "getrouden" wonen, sijnde alrede vol huijsen

Quarter with Chinese households and other families (other "married couples") (Coen did not use quotation marks.)

f. Creupel bos, staande in moerassige gront die met hoogwater tendele onder vloet

Jungle, mangrove, flooded during high tide

g. Plaetse daer de stadt Jacatra gelegen heft

Once the town of Jacatra was here

h. Visschers quartier geweest daer de Engelsen tegen ons fort over een loge gehadt ende 2 batterijen geplant hebben

Once fishermen's quarter; here the English own a fortified trading post as well as two batteries

i. (Coen: ij) Van dese punt worden de fondamenten geleijd, door de moeras op een santgront omtrent 1,5 vadem diep

The construction of a bastion has started; sand had been dumped on the mud, depth three meters

Account of sources

All books, in Dutch, are part of the author's library.

1. Gent, L.F. van, Penard, W.A., Rinkes, dr. D.: Indië in woord en beeld (Dutch East-India, text and pictures); Batavia-Jakarta / Weltevreden-Menteng 1924

2. Haan, dr. F. de: Oud Batavia; Batavia-Jakarta 1922

3. Colenbrander, dr. H.T.: Jan Pietersz. Coen, Bescheiden omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indië (Jan Pieterz. Coen, Personal documents regarding his activities in Dutch East-India), volume I; The Hague Holland 1919

Page 182! Coen tells us that Bantam and Jakarta were continually at each other's throats.

4. Stapel, dr. F.W.: Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië (History of Dutch East-India), volume III; Amsterdam 1939



Bantam Town, circa 1600 Source: Van Gent 1926, page 5

Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

Ending