



Batavia-Jakarta Castle

The siege of the Dutch fortress at Jayakatra in 1619

Dirk Teeuwen MSc

<<< Jan Pietersz. Coen 1587-
1629

Eva Coen-Ment 1606-1652 >>>



¹"Don't despair, don't spare your enemies, for God is with us"

Account of sources, see last page

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Photo Dirk Teeuwen, Holland
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Looking into JI Cengkeh (Clove Street in English), Prinsenstraat in the Dutch Period. Seen from the old Dutch City Hall, which goes back to the 17th century.
Long ago JI Cengkeh was leading to the Dutch Batavia VOC Castle.
Jakarta 2002

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¹ Quoting Jan Pietersz. Coen 1618



Prinsenstraat, now JI Cengkeh; Batavia-Jakarta 1936
Visible at the end of the road: some remains of the southern gate of the
Batavia-Jakarta V.O.C.-Castle.



Detail of the old, 17th century, city wall of Batavia-Jakarta, 2006
The building behind the wall is an 18th century Dutch V.O.C. Warehouse, one of
the so-called "Westzijdse Pakhuizen" (West Bank VOC Warehouses). Now part
of Museum Bahari (Jakarta Maritime Museum).

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"De Uitkijk" (Harbour Watch Tower), now called Menara Syahbandar (Tower of the Harbour Master), Jakarta 2006

This office of the Dutch Harbour Master was built in 1839 on the southern end of the "Oude Havenkanaal", name of the Old Harbour Canal of Batavia. In the Dutch Period the Harbour Canal was called Sunda Kelapa, which means Coconut Harbour along the Sunda Coast.

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1. Introduction, the Dutch and their enemies in the Indonesian Archipelago, 1600-1615

Fortress Victoria, near the beach of ²Ambon Town, was built by the Spaniards in 1575. Later the Portuguese took over. In 1605 the Dutch, commanded by their Admiral Steven van der Hagen assaulted Fortress Victoria in the Island of Ambon. The Dutch threw the Portuguese out and got a firm foothold in - what was called - East-India (Indonesia). In 1607 the Dutch Admiral Cornelis Matelieff conquered ³Ternate. After making an end to the Spanish-Portuguese government there, one could conclude that between 1610 and 1619 the Governors-General of the Dutch East-India Company realized Dutch supremacy in the Archipelago of the Moluccas, the "Spice Islands". Nevertheless the struggle for the Moluccas and the struggle for Java had steadily grown more acute, because the English began to stir more and more and became more and more dangerous to the Dutch. The English owned a trading agency in Makassar, a seaport on the Celebes Coast⁴; an ownership which made the Dutch hungry. The English succeeded in setting up trade agencies in Banten and in ⁵Jayakatra, both on Java. In Jayakatra they had established a post on the left bank near the mouth of River Ciliwung in 1612 and at the Moluccas. From 1616 the English possessed the Moluccan Isle of ⁶Pulu Ay rather firmly. In general the English bought spices for a higher price than the Dutch did; much to the content of the natives of course.

The Portuguese had their main seat in ⁷Malacca. The Spaniards had strongholds in the Philippines and did not remain idle. In 1616 they, Spaniards and Portuguese, equipped a fleet and attacked the Dutch near Banten in Java. The Spaniards did so together with the Portuguese, but both fleets were destroyed by the Dutchman Steven van der Hage. The V.O.C. owned a trading agency in Banten since 1609. Very soon, already in 1610, they started a trading post in Jayakatra. The post was a wooden godown with some houses near the mouth of River Ciliwung, on the east bank, and located opposite to the Pangeran's settlement on the west bank. As the Dutch grew increasingly powerful, the ruler of Jayakatra allowed the English to erect houses on the west bank of the river as well as a small fort on the same bank near the mouth of the Ciliwung close to the ruler's customs office. The idea was to realize a balance of power.

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Besides their problems with the English and the Portuguese in Banten, the Dutch met increasing difficulties with the Banten Sultan-Regent Aria Ranamangala. Customs duties constantly increased, the Sultan-Regent demanded ever more costly presents. Problems came up almost continuously. Aria Ranamengala was charged with the government of the Sultanate ⁸Banten during the minority of the Crown Prince. The ⁹Pangeran of Jayakatra, Jayawikarta, was a Prince-Vassal, because Jayakatra was a fief of the Sultanate of Banten. The relationship between the Sultan-Regent en the Pangeran was very much troubled. The first one was a bastard of the grandfather of the Crown Prince of Banten. The Sultan-Regent mounted the throne after having put his nephew, the acting young Sultan, and his mother under arrest without valid

² The island of Ambon is part of the Moluccas.

³ And so are the islands of Ternate and Tidore.

⁴ Sulawesi

⁵ Later Batavia-Jakarta

Jakatra was called Jayakatra as well.

⁶ Ay Island

⁷ In Malaysia

⁸ A Sultanate Banten with a capital named Banten as well

⁹ Prince

reasons. Jayawikarta opposed and came to this nephew's help. Because of that the Sultan-Regent and the Pangeran were sworn enemies. The Sultan-Regent regarded with envy the increasing establishment of Europeans in Jayakatra: after all Jayakatra was a dependency of Banten. The Sultan feared a decrease in prosperity of Banten Town as well as himself, but he refused to arrange a monopoly position on behalf of the Dutch V.O.C.. As a consequence, in 1613, the V.O.C. Director-General ¹⁰Jan Pietersz Coen started to play off Banten and Jayakatra against each other and considered seriously the foundation of a second, fortified, trading agency in Jayakatra. Carrying out this plan led to a crisis situation in 1618-1619.

2. Banten-Jakatra and the Dutch, difficulties 1607-1618

Jan Pietersz. Coen, 1587-1629, made several trading voyages to the Far East. He did so for the first time in 1607: from Amsterdam, via Cape Verde Islands, Brazil, St Helena Island, Mozambique, India's Malabar, Moluccas, to Banten in Java. A voyage of seven/twelve months was normal. During this voyage a terrible incident happened on the seaside of the Island of Banda Neira. On this Banda Neira beach Coen's Commanding Admiral, Pieter Willemsz. Verhoeff, and fifty of his soldiers were treacherously murdered by Bandanese warriors on May 22th 1609. Verhoeff and his men kept an appointment and started trade negotiations with the Bandanese. They did so unarmed, leaving their ships behind at sea. Rather stupid, I think so. After all Verhoeff was an experienced admiral. By surprise the Dutch were slaughtered in a most horrible way. As long as Coen lived, he was bearing a deep grudge against the Bandanese.

In ¹¹1621 Coen personally led an assault of Banda Lonthor Island, the largest of the Banda Archipelago, using Dutch soldiers and sailors, Balinese slaves and Japanese mercenaries: 2.000 men totally.

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After his return in The Netherlands, 1611, Coen submitted an important report on trade possibilities to the management of the ¹²V.O.C.. In 1612 he was sent overseas for the second time holding the rank of Chief Merchant. In October 1613 he was appointed Accounting-General of all the V.O.C. activities in the Indonesian Archipelago as well as President of the important agencies in Banten and Jakatra. In 1614 he was assigned to the post of Director-General. Coen was now second in command in the Far East on behalf of the V.O.C.. In 1617 the ruling management of the V.O.C., the so-called "Seventeen Lords", appointed him their fourth Governor-General (GG). Coen was informed later, in 1618. He took up in 1619.

About 1615, in Java, matters were not all hopeful. In Banten difficulties with the English and the local aristocracy continued. Most of the troubles – riots were the order of the day - concerned the pepper trade. The Dutch could not evacuate Banten, because evacuation meant that competitors (English, Danish, French) had their hands free. Coen forced the Danish to leave Banten and simply arrested the French. The Sultan-Regent protested without any result. More and more Coen found favour with Pangeran Jayawikarta in Jayakatra. So, in 1618, Coen requested successfully the cession of a strip of land on the

¹⁰ Pieter Both 1610-14, Gerrit Reynst 1614-15, Laurens Reael 1616-19, Jan P. Coen 1619-23, Pieter de Carpenter 1623-27, Jan P. Coen 1627-29

¹¹ Coen accused the Bandanese of evading spice price arrangements by illicit trade with the English. Coen ordered to kill the males of the Bandanese leading families and to sell the rest of the population as slaves. A large part of the population fled into the mountains of Lonthor Island and died from illness and starvation.

¹² Dutch East-India Company

eastern bank of the Ciliwung River to transform the trading agency (erected in 1610) into a fortress.

This matter was pressing because of the problems in Banten Town. But there was more. The small Dutch trading agency in ¹³Japara was looted by soldiers of the Sultan of ¹⁴Mataram, quite unexpectedly, in 1617. Coen was told that Banten aristocrats made preparations to assault the Dutch trading agencies in Banten and Jayakatra by surprise and was clear that Coen had good reason to fear for his life. Coen's conclusion was that both Mataram and Banten desired to expel the Dutch and, as a consequence, it could be wise to fortify the Dutch position in Jayakatra. He decided also to settle and to remain there. Doing so, he had the opportunity to keep an eye on the Pangeran of Jayakatra. In Jayakatra Coen added more members to the ¹⁵Council of East-India (Indonesia) and made regulations with regard to the so-called ¹⁶vrijburgers (free citizens). Doing so Coen made clear that he had the explicit aim to stay forever.

The *vrijburgers* were allowed to establish themselves in Jayakatra and in the Moluccas and to gain their living by trading under strict restrictions. The V.O.C.-monopoly should not be endangered. However: grounds were not ceded to *vrijburgers* and trading facilities were controlled by the V.O.C. much too much.

3. More difficulties in and around Jayakatra, 1618-1619

Supported by local aristocrats the English became increasingly bolder and the Pangeran of Jayakatra supported them. An English fleet under Commander Dale anchored in the Roads of Banten and – by capturing a Dutch ship and because the Pangeran asked for his aid (¹⁷23-12-1618) – Dale declared, practically, war on the Dutch. Because, unfortunately, Coen expected the outbreak of the hostilities near Amboina and the Banda Archipelago, nine Dutch ships patrolled the Moluccan seas. Because of that he could bring into action near Java only seven ships.

There are many islands in the roads of Batavia-Jakarta. One of them is the Island of Onrust. In the days of Coen the Dutch established a dockyard as well as a fortress there. In 1618 this ¹⁸Onrust fortress was only half finished and there was lack of ammunitions. To make matters worse the English began throwing up a battery on the island supported by the local population. The Dutch conquered the battery. Now an English fleet approached from Banten. Coen sailed with some ships to meet it, but there was no decisive battle. Now, on the 3rd of January 1619, Coen sailed to the Moluccas to get reinforcements there. The Dutchman Van den Broecke was charged with the defence of the fortress in Jayakatra.

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¹³ East from Surabaya

¹⁴ Once a mighty kingdom (Yogyakarta, Surakarta) ruling the greater part of East-Java

¹⁵ The Counsel was the most important advisory board of the Dutch colonial administration (advising, controlling, keeping in check the Governors-General), from 1609 until 1942.

¹⁶ Servants of the V.O.C. whose contract had expired and people who were allowed to settle in Batavia or in Banda (nutmeg planters).

¹⁷Klerck, dr. E.S. de: History of the Netherlands East-Indies Vol. I; Rotterdam 1938, page 222

¹⁸ In Indonesian: Pulau (Island) Onrust as well as Pulau Kapal

4. Coen's Dutch victory, 1619

On January 14th the Pangeran of Jayakatra asked for negotiations. The result was a treaty, but nevertheless the Pangeran was not satisfied. He kept Van den Broecke and some of his men imprisoned in his ¹⁹Dalem. The Pangeran claimed a ransom, ammunitions and cannons, while he threatened with an attack together with the English. The Dutch military commander Van Raay refused, but an attack did not take place, because the Sultan of Banten was against it. In his opinion the English could become a menace to Banten and he considered that Jayakarta was growing too mighty. The Sultan sent 3.000 soldiers to Jayakatra to get his own way. Van Raay - doing so at the instigation of the imprisoned Van den Broecke - yielded under the circumstances. The Sultan intervened. He claimed the Dutch fortress for himself, expelled the Pangeran, incorporated Jayakatra in his territory, transferred Van den Broecke to Banten and told the English to shut up. As a result: Van Raay postponed his surrender indefinitely, courage revived, breastworks were repaired, the trenches of the enemies were destroyed without any Dutch losses and the English packed their bags.



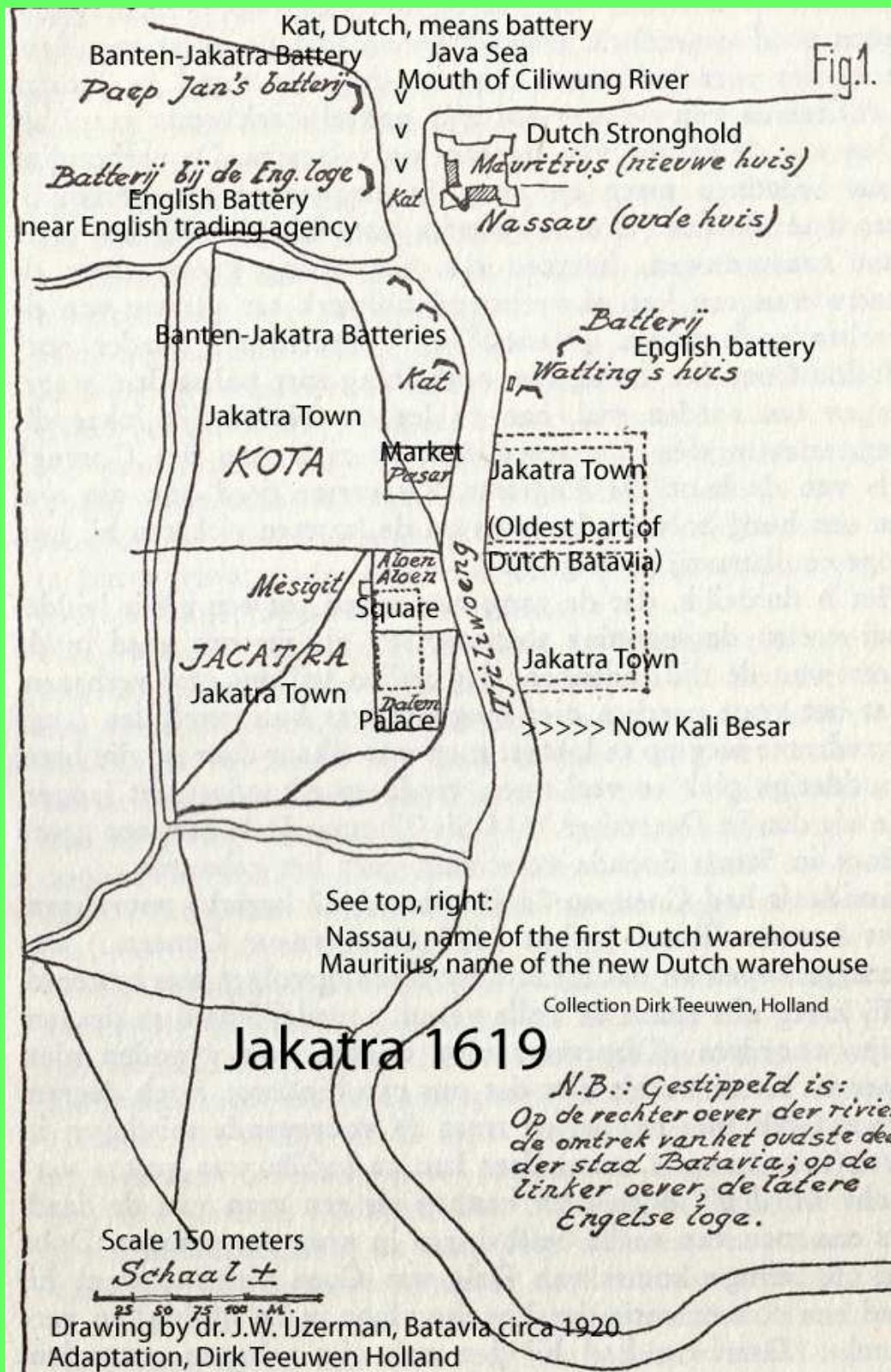
Map of Jayakarta (detail) during the siege of the Dutch settlement in 1619

On the 10th of May 1619 the first ships under command of De Carpenter returned from the Moluccas. Coen himself appeared on May 28th after he had punished Japara for the looting of the Dutch trading agency; he had now 16 vessels and 1.300 men at his disposal. Coen disembarked his force on the 30th of May and passed over to an offensive immediately, the same day, on May 30th 1619. He lost no time at all. The fortress was relieved, the Jayakatra area was occupied, a ²⁰"V.O.C. generaal rendez-vous" (a general rendezvous) was established. In a few hours the offensive was over. At Dutch side at the cost of three dead and two wounded.

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¹⁹ Indonesian palace

²⁰ Naval base as well as meeting place, rendezvous, of merchantmen



**Jakatra is short for Jayakarta.
Map of Jayakarta during the siege of the Dutch settlement in 1619.**

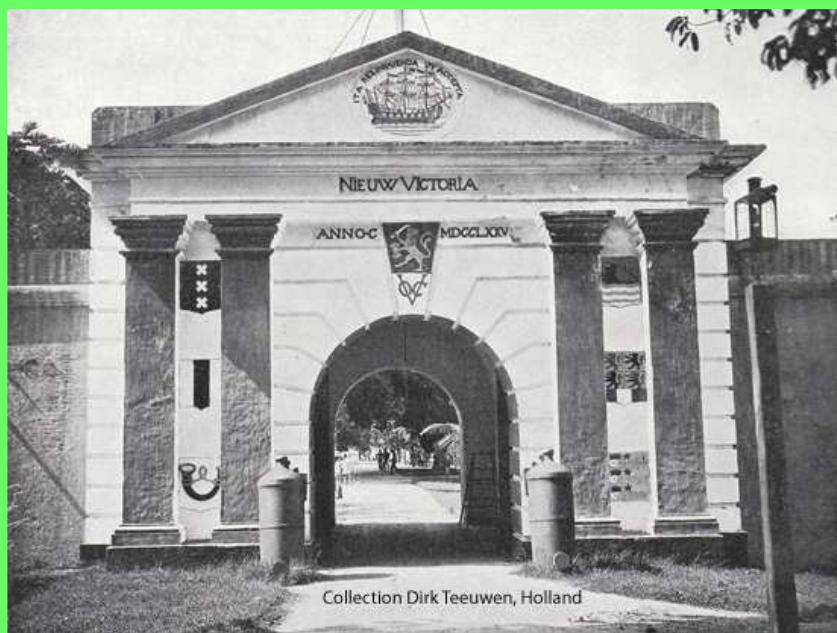
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5. Picture gallery



Collection Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

Amboina in 1621, where the Dutch obtained a firm hold already before 1600. It was an important centre on account of the valuable nutmeg cultivations.



Collection Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

The still existing fortress "New Victoria" at Amboina, 1924. It was reconstructed out of a small Portuguese stronghold built in 1580, which was surrendered in 1605 to the Dutchman Steven van der Hagen. Especially between 1775 and 1785 the construction has been considerably altered.

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A view of Jayakatra circa 1615

Collection Dirk Teeuwen, Holland

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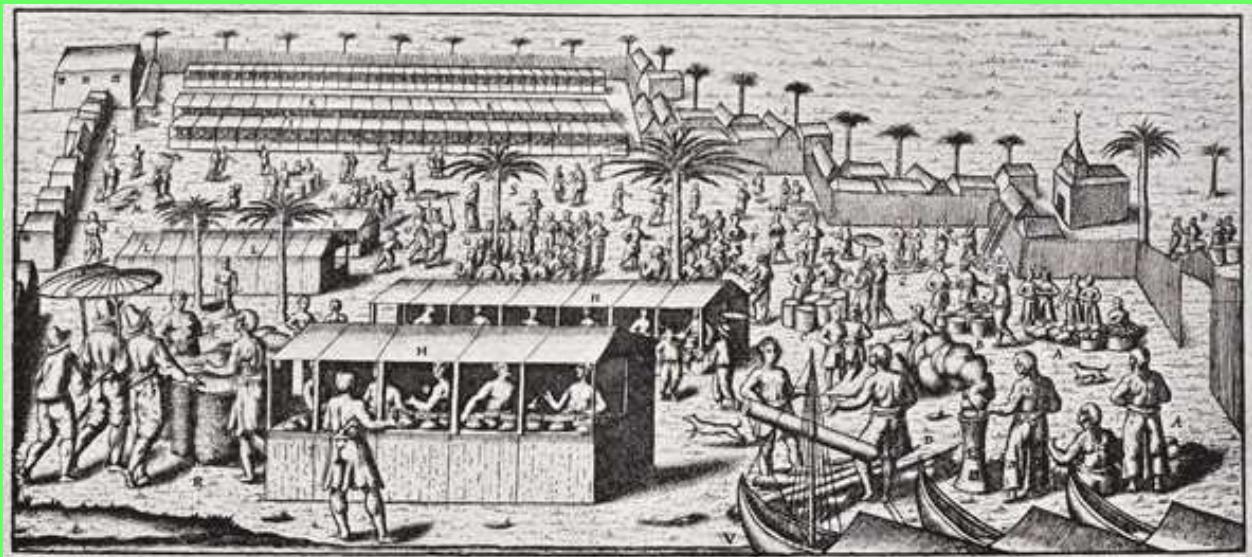
Java, Banten Town circa 1600



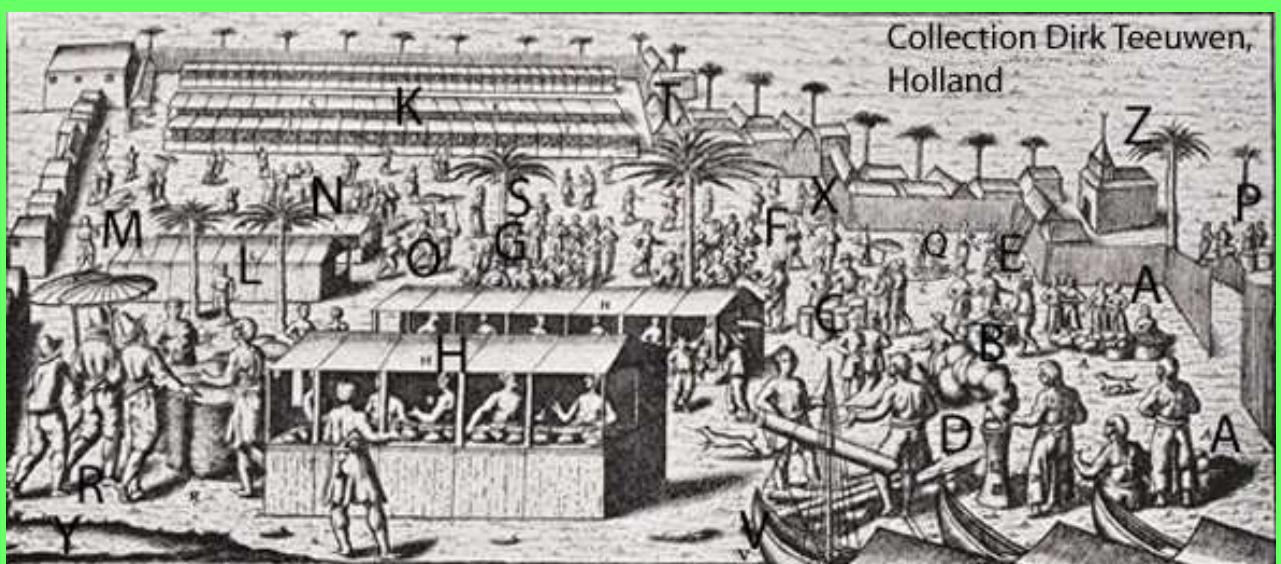
Java, Banten Town circa 1600

- A. Dalem, Sultan's Court B. Ulun Alun, town square covered with grasses
- C. Town Gate D. Western Town Gate E. Water (harbour) Gate F. Customs
- H. Mosque I. Chinese Quarter (around Z) M. River N. Sabandar's Court (Court of the Harbour Master) O. Admiral's Court (admiral of Banten of course) RR.
- Quarter of the Nobles, Aristocrats Q. English Quarter X. Dutch Quarter
- Y. One more mosque Z. Pasar Pagi, Morning Market (see next page)

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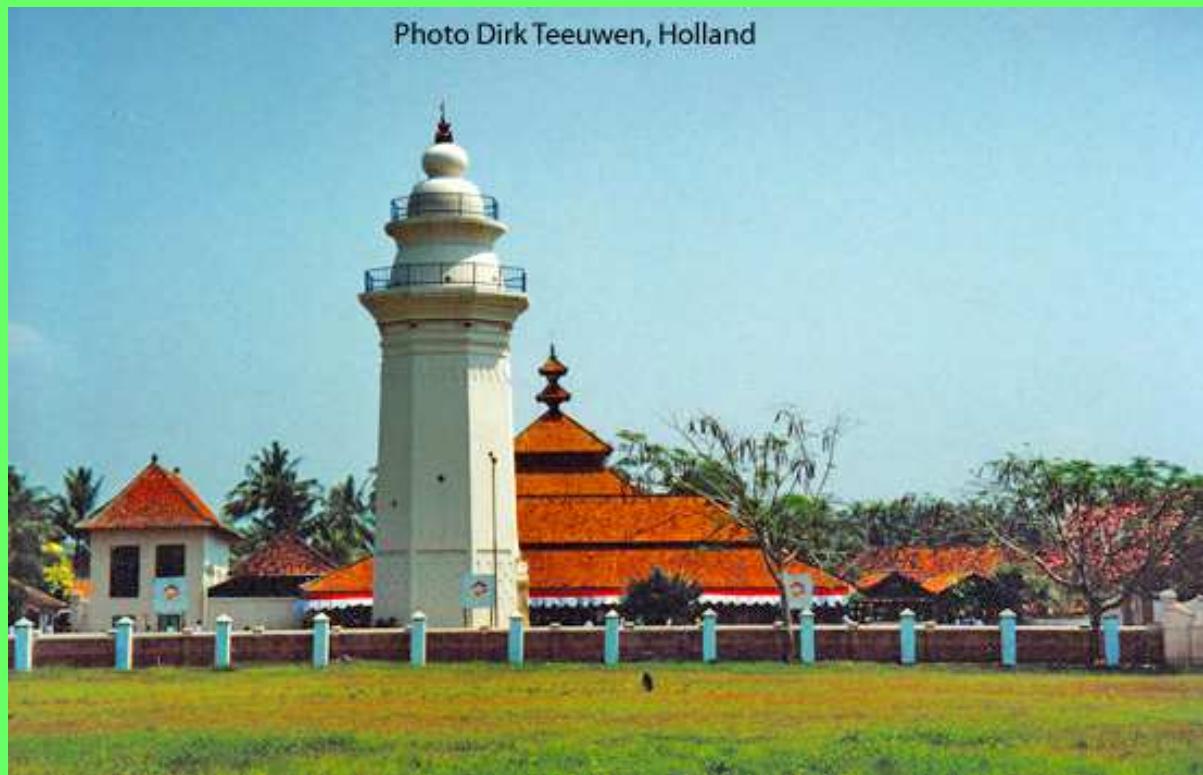
Java, Morning Market in Banten Town about 1600



Java, Morning Market in Banten Town about 1600

- A. Female fruit sellers (some males also)
- B. Sellers of sugar and honey
- C. Sellers of beans
- D. Sellers of bamboo
- E. Sellers of weapons
- F. and G. Sellers of textiles
- H. Sellers of spices and right from them iron as well as glass
- K. Chinese sellers, mainly meat
- L. Halal meat (Javanese Mohammedans)
- M. Fish market
- N. Fruit sellers
- O. Vegetables
- P. Chinese selling pepper (at the right side)
- Q. Onions and garlic
- R. Rice sellers
- S. Walkers' area
- T. Jewels
- X. Chickens

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The great mosque of Banten, 2006

**The building shows us a sort of Dutch colonial style: see building, annex, left.
The mosque – not the annex of course – dates from before 1500.**



Remains of V.O.C. Fortress Speelwijck (1685), Banten 2006

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A Banten aristocrat goes out for a walk, Banten about 1620



Jakarta 2006, Kali Besar (River Ciliwung) West. Hotel Omnia Batavia (now Hotel Batavia, Rivier Hotel) was built on the location of the Dalem (Palace in 1618-1619) of the Pangeran (Prince) of Jakatra. See my map on page 15.

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**Jakatra is short for Jayakarta.
Map of Jayakarta during the siege of the Dutch settlement in 1619.**

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Map of Jayakarta (detail) during the siege of the Dutch settlement in 1619.

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Ending
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