Alicia Schrikker

Dutch and British colonial intervention in Sri Lanka, 1780-1815: Expansion and Reform

BRILL

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1780 - 1815

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EDITED BY

LEONARD BLUSSÉ (GENERAL EDITOR)

AND

HENDRIK E. NIEMEIJER (PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR)

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Expansion and Reform

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SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Probably nowhere in the world have such profound changes in historiography been occurring as in the nation states of Monsoon Asia that gained independence after the conclusion of the Pacific War in 1945. These traditionally outward-looking countries on the rims of the Indian Ocean and the Eastern Seas have been interacting with each other through maritime transport and trade for more than two millennia, but the exigencies of modern nation-building have tended to produce state-centred historical narratives that emphasize a distinctive heritage and foster cultural pride and identity on the basis of such heroic themes as anti-colonial resistance. No one will deny the need for and utility of such "nation-building" agendas, but an inward-directed national historiography does not necessarily prepare one's citizens for our present age of regional co-operation and globalization.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the coastal societies of Monsoon Asia witnessed the entry of European traders, the emergence of global maritime trading networks, and the laying of the foundations of colonial empires that reached their apogees in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The difficulties of studying this pre-colonial and early colonial past should not be underestimated. Local sources are often rare because of wars and the frequent changes of both indigenous and colonial regimes. The hot and humid tropical climate is also unkind to the preservation of manuscripts. The mass of western-language data preserved in the archives of the former East India companies and those of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in Asia often have an undeniably Europe-centred character and bias. Thus we face not only a highly imbalanced supply of source material, but also the very complex problem of how to decode the hidden agendas that often colour these primary materials.

Over the past fifty years there has been a pronounced effort in academic circles in North America, Australia and the former European colonial nations to "decolonize" historical writing on Asian-European interaction, albeit for reasons totally different from those in their Asian counterparts. Increasingly doubt has been cast on such longstanding paradigms as the superiority of the dynamic West over static Asian societies. Historians of international trade such as the late Holden Furber, whose description of this period as "The Age of Partnership" inspired the name of the TANAP programme, have taken an interest in the various ways and means by which Asian-European interaction began in various kinds of competition, rivalry, collaboration, diplomacy, and military confrontation. This

approach has forced historians to return to the archival sources and the places where these events unfolded with the result that new frontiers of research have opened in which close partnerships between Asian and European historians, with their specific cultural tool kits and linguistic backgrounds, is now starting to reap fruit.

In anticipation of the four hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Dutch East India Company in 1602, members of the history department of Leiden University proposed the establishment of an international research programme aimed at training a new generation of Asian historians of Asian-European interaction in the early modern period. It was taken for granted that any such drive towards international educational co-operation should be carried out in carefully planned collaboration with the National Archives in the Hague, the Arsip Nasional of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta and the archives of Cape Town (South Africa), Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Chennai (India), which together hold several kilometres of archival data from the former *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*. The TANAP – Towards a New Age of Partnership – educational and archival preservation programme was started in 2000 thanks to generous grants from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO), the Netherlands UNESCO commission, and Leiden University. Twelve universities in Asia sent some thirty young lecturers to Leiden during 2001-2003. Under the auspices of the Research Institute for Asian-African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS), these historians participated in an advanced master's programme that included intensive courses on historiography, palaeography and the old Dutch written language.

With additional funding from several Asian foundations, in 2002 seventeen of the TANAP graduates from Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Japan, South Africa, and the Netherlands began working towards a PhD degree at Leiden. Three others went on to pursue their doctorates at universities elsewhere in the world. The *TANAP Monographs on Asian-European Interaction*, which include two studies on early modern South African society, are the offspring of their doctoral theses defended at Leiden.

Leonard Blussé, University of Leiden

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

They say that writing a PhD thesis is a lonely affair, but that is only part of the story. In the last four years I have been fortunate enough to work with a great variety of people, through the TANAP project and the CNWS (School of Asian, African and Amerindian studies). Although I wrote the thesis entirely by myself, some people have helped me greatly by giving me their feedback on my writing. First and foremost I should mention my supervisors Prof. Dr Leonard Blussé and Dr Lodewijk Wagenaar, who not only introduced me to the study of Sri Lankan history at an early stage, but also encouraged me to pursue PhD research in this field. Without their support and enthusiasm for my work I could never have completed the thesis. The comments I received from Prof. Dr Nira Wickramasinghe and Dr Hugo s'Jacob at the TANAP conferences in Yogyakarta and Xiamen respectively were certainly useful. The TANAP seminars in which all TANAP students participated were a great platform to discuss new ideas and compare our findings. The same goes for the cohort-meetings at the CNWS, where fellow PhD students, but from very different fields, commented on each other's chapters.

Although I was already well acquainted with University life as an undergraduate, I got to know the University in a very different way as a PhD student. The well-organized CNWS, with Ilona Beumer and Wilma Trommelen as its backbone, provided a good working environment. Through the CNWS I met new people from all over the world and made new friends like Rivke Jaffe, Anna Beerens, Willemijn Waal, Daan Kok. I would also like to thank the "South Asian Club", led by Dr Jos Gommans, for introducing me in the broader study of South Asia, and the good company when I just started my research.

TANAP had its own base in the persons of Prof. Dr Leonard Blussé, Dr Henk Niemeijer, and Marijke van Wissen-van Staden. It was a unique experience to work together with fellow TANAP students, who I have come to regard more as friends than mere colleagues, Kwee Hui Kian, Liu Yong, Bhawan Ruangsilp, Ricky Goedeman, Ota Atsushi, Ryuto Shimada, Muridan Widjojo, Sri Margana, Hoang Anh Tuan, Chris Nierstrasz, C'hui Hsin-hui, Nirmal Devasiri, Binu John, Ghulam Nadri. I will never forget Anjana Singh's energy and spirit when travelling together through China and South India. – I am sad that this era is approaching its end.

The research for this thesis was executed at various institutes in London, The Hague, Jakarta, and Colombo. I am grateful for the good

working atmosphere offered by all these institutes and the generally very helpful staff. I have special memories of the Sri Lanka National Archives, where the help I received was most personal, thanks to the friendly staff at the reading room and the personal interest of the director, Ms. Dr Saroja Wettasinghe. I would like to thank Nirmal, Shirani, and Hiranyada for making my life in Colombo so agreeable and Nirmal in particular for always keeping me updated on Sri Lankan politics and Sinhalese culture. Furthermore, I would like to thank Amice and Mahendra Dissanayake for their friendship and Sepa and Sunitra Ilangakoon for their hospitality during my stay in their fantastic house. My long-term research in London was made possible through the kind intervention of Dr Felipe Fernadez Armesto, who arranged an exchange between Leiden University and Queen Mary's college, University of London. I thank the LUF for subsidizing this stay in London. For my short-stay visits to London I could always rely on Gillian, Susannah, and Michael for a bed and a warm welcome.

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Closer to home, I am grateful to my Leiden base: de *Damesclub* in its broadest sense, for reminding me that leisure and fun are as essential ingredients to a good thesis as are books and archives. Of course I would like to thank my family, my brother Simon and his wife Renie who worked so hard on their own breakthroughs in the last years. And, of course, my mother, An, for stimulating my interest in history in general and that of the East in particular from an early age onwards. I thank my father André for supporting me in this "soft" project, despite his absolute preference for "real" science; Job's parents Rina en Thijs for creating Job and finally, I thank Job just for being there – always.

GLOSSARY

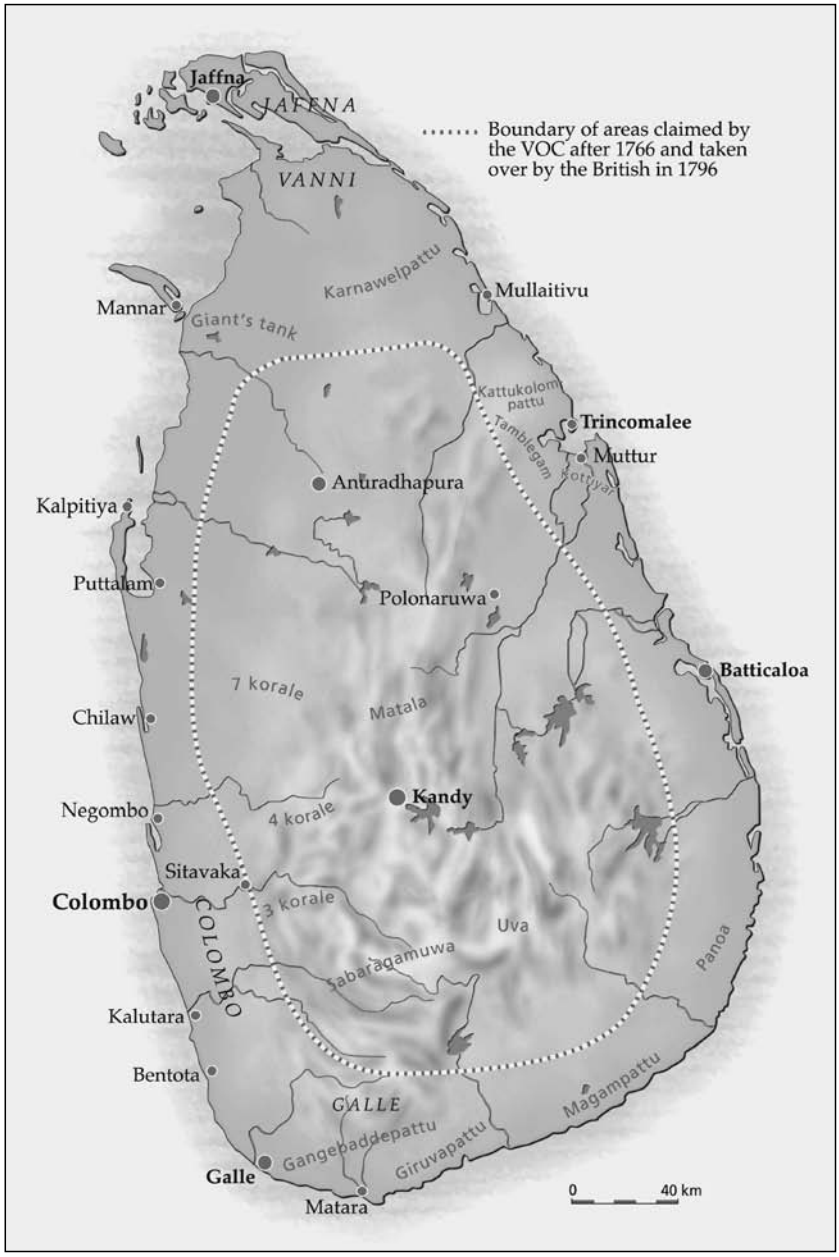
accodomodessan	Land granted in return for duties or services or offices held.
adigār	One of the two principle ministers in the Kandyan kingdom; title for headmen in Jaffna.
ande	Type of landholding, based on a share of one half.
attepattu mudaliyār	Headmen serving the *disāva (dessava)*.
aumildar	Native agent in British India.
badda	A group of people belonging to one particular caste organized for service or bound to supply certain provisions to the state.
basnāyaka nilamē	Lay head of a *dēvalē* (shrine).
broodkamer	Breadbasket – referring to the ideal to produce rise in one part of the Island to furnish the rest.
cangany	Native official of low rank, for example head of a caste.
canicopoly	Native official of low rank, usually writer or bookkeeper.
Chalia (Salāgama)	Sinhalese Caste, responsible for peeling the cinnamon.
chank	Mother of pearl.
chēna	Forest burnt and cultivated at intervals; mostly sown with fine grains and vegetables
commandeur	Dutch official, heading a *commandement*.
commandement	Dutch administrative division.
coir (kayer)	Coconut fibre.
däkum	Tribute, paid to the king by officers of the Kandyan kingdom.
dēvalē	Hindu/Buddhist Shrine.
devalagam	Land belonging to a shrine.
dessava	Administrative head of a province, *dessavony*, in the regions administered by the Dutch.
dessavony	Province in the regions administered by the Dutch.
disāva	Administrative head of a province, *disāvany*, in Kandy.
disāvany	Province in Kandy.
dispensdorp	Villages leased out as payment for offices.
dubash	Native agent or middleman, working for the British in South India.
fiscaal	Public prosecutor.
gabadāgama	A royal village.
Goyigama	Caste of farmers, highest caste in the Sinhalese caste hierarchy
gravetten	Borders.
Heren Zeventien	"Gentlemen Seventeen", board of directors of the VOC in the Netherlands.
Hoge Regering	Highest VOC authority in Asia, government seated in Batavia.
hoofdtombo	Register of people.
hoofd pedie (headpedie)	Headman in Batticaloa.
Inlandsch departement	Department for the interior (Dutch period).
kafirs	African slaves and soldiers.
Karāva	Caste of fishermen.
kiate	Teakwood.
koopman	Merchant, high ranking VOC official.
kōrāla	Chief of a administrative subdivision called *kōralē*.
kōralē (corle)	Administrative subdivision of a *dessavony* / *disāvany*.
landraad	Landcourt, dealing with all sorts of civil cases in the interior.
landdrost	Bailiff.
land tombo	Land register.
lascorin	Indigenous soldiers, but also employed as messengers and guards

Mahabadda	The cinnamon department.
mahāmudaliyār	Highest native official in the service of the colonial government, advisor of the governor.
maha nayaka	Chief priest of a Buddhist establishment.
maha nilame	The first *adigār*, highest official in the Kandyan Kingdom.
majoral	Village head.
mallepalle	Service land that is returned to the crown.
Memorie van Overgave	Memorandum submitted by Dutch governors and *commandeurs* for their successors.
mudaliyār	Native headman, district head in service of the colonial government. Originally: military officer heading the *lascorins*.
muhandiram	Native officer below the *mudaliyār* in rank.
nainde	Lowest member of the farmers caste, obliged to perform manual labour.
negotieoverdrager	Commercial bookkeeper.
nielepalle	Service land that is returned to the Crown.
nilame	High official, chief.
oeliam	In Tamil regions: a service of one day a month on the public works. In the Southwest: service labour performed by Moors, Chetties and other "foreigners" in return for the permission to stay on the island, usually three months a year.
oelias	One of the lower castes, performing service as dancers and carriers of timber.
ola	Palm leaf, used to write on.
onderkoopman	Submerchant.
Oosterling	Soldier from the Indonesian archipelago, in service of the VOC.
opperhoofd	Chief.
opperkoopman	Headmerchant.
opziender	Overseer.
otte (ottoe)	Type of land (usually the less fertile lands) for which the owner pays one tenth of tax in kind.
parra	Measure of grain, 1 *parra* equals 24 pounds.
paresse	Official meeting, where the inhabitants pay homage to their lord (governor, *dessava* or headman) usually by giving presents.
pattu	Subdivision of a *kōralē*.
plakkaatboek	Compilation of all *plakkaten*.
plakkaten	Proclamations issued by the Dutch government.
poligar	Native officers, chiefs in South India.
radala	Class of chiefs or nobles in the Kandyan Kingdom.
rājakāriya	Duty to the king, any service to the king, a chief or a *vihāra.*
Rājarata	The ancient civilizations in the Northern dry zone of the island.
rata	District or province in the Kandyan kingdom.
ratāmahatmayā	Chief of a rata or district in the Kandyan kingdom.
ryotwar, ryotwari	Peasant in South India, here in connection to the distinctive system of taxation developed by the British.
recibedor	Tax collector in the Jaffna region.
Salāgama (chalia)	Caste of cinnamon peelers.
Sangha	Buddhist monastic order.
schaggerij	Pub.
thunval	Land leased on a tax of one-third.
tombo	Register.
vanniyār	Semi-independent ruler of the Vanni province.
vidānē	Village official.
vihāra	Buddhist temple.
viharagama	Land belonging to a Buddhist temple.
visitateur	Auditor.
zamindar, zamindari	Tax collectors of the Mughal court, landholders with judicial duties.

Map of South and Southeast Asia

Armand Haye, Amsterdam

Map of Sri Lanka (1780-1815)



Armand Haye, Amsterdam

INTRODUCTION

Regime change is a much-discussed topic nowadays. It may even have become a tainted one because of the one-sided nature of western intervention in the political process of such countries as Iraq and Afghanistan. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the process of regime change remains an intangible and rather unpredictable one: the final outcome usually does not concur with the initial aims of the new regime. Indeed, contemporary examples show how the intended reform of former institutions is often hampered by unexpected ideological clashes and the lack of local support for the new regime. Regime change may be the result of internal developments or it may occur as a result of external intervention like in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such intervention is not a recent phenomenon. In the past, Western intervention played an important role in (colonial) state formation processes outside Europe. One of the more interesting examples is the change of regime that occurred in Sri Lanka, where in 1796, at the juncture of the early modern and modern eras, the EIC (East India Company) took over the colonial regime of the coastal regions of the island from the VOC (the *Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie*, or Dutch East India Company).

This study examines colonial intervention in Sri Lanka, or Ceylon[1] as the European powers named it, between 1780 and 1815, a period of worldwide revolutions and imperial change. It tries to explain and analyse the emergence of the modern colonial state on the island, against the background of an increasingly modernizing world. The point of departure is the decennium prior to the British take-over of the Dutch possessions on the island in 1796, when local reforms were carried out by the Dutch administration. These led to a new interplay in the interior between native institutions and Dutch power holders.

Strange enough, while the study of most other regions in Asia in the eighteenth century recently experienced a revival, this particular period has been somewhat neglected in the study of Sri Lanka's history.[2] In the later colonial period, starting at the end of the nineteenth century, interest in the Dutch presence on the island and the *faits et gestes* of the early British governors led to a series of source publications and articles in journals like *The Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, the *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union* and the *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*. Also, various archivists of the government archives in Ceylon published Dutch source material, in particular the *memories van overgave* (memoranda

written as manuals for successors, upon the transfer of office).[3] Most attention for the Dutch period focused on the early phase, probably due to the fact that these memoranda were published chronologically, starting with the oldest ones of the seventeenth century.

At the same time, increased attention for the early British period resulted in the perception of a strong divide between the British and their Dutch predecessors. The Dutch were pictured as representatives of the *ancien régime*, and the British governors as enlightened and sensible statesmen. Naturally, the British presented their history on the island as one of progress and development. In this era, early Sri Lankan nationalist historians turned to the history of the kingdom of Kandy and treated it with pride, turning the kings and nobles in to heroes and emphasizing the ruthlessness of British imperialism. The last battle between the kingdom and the British was depicted as a battle for independence, foreshadowing the independence struggle of the twentieth century.[4]

Interest in the administrative history under the British increased in the 1920s and 1930s, when the island's administration underwent major changes and was opened up to native politicians.[5] Native and British historians became interested in the origins of the British institutions and political traditions on the island. Father Perera published the Douglas Papers, an important set of documents on which the colonial policy in the early stage of British rule was based.[6] Colvin R. de Silva wrote a solid two-volume account of the British administration in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. After independence in 1949, Kannangara and G.C. Mendis still strongly represented the British tradition by studying administrative developments in the Ceylon civil service and the Commissioners of Enquiry respectively. The first pioneering Sri Lankan studies of the early Dutch period by K. Goonawardena and S. Arasaratnam, both impressive products of work in the VOC archives, also still focused on administrative and political developments. The Kandyan Kingdom continued to gain much attention by nationalist scholars.[7]

This tradition of colonial history writing was soon replaced by a nationalist one that blamed the colonizers for under-developing the island. This swing took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It became commonplace to regard the first decades of British rule as equally static and detrimental to the island's development as Dutch governance had been. Doing away with the colonial perception that the British instantly brought prosperity to the island, historians like V. Kanapathypillai and U. Wickremeratne argued that both the late Dutch and the early British governments lacked innovative rule.[8] In other words, because neither managed to fundamentally transform or modernize society, both colonial administrations were criticized for their lack of vision and enterprise in the pre-1830 period. Kanapathypillai and Wickremeratne actually

marked the years 1780-1830 as an uninteresting and intermediate period, owing to the declining state of the Dutch East India Company and British unwillingness to take initiatives towards development. In the view of these historians serious attempts in that direction were made only after the arrival of the Commissioners of Enquiry in 1828.[9] As a result, since the 1960s the period has been overlooked by most historians working on Sri Lanka, for the presumed lack of change made further research seem unnecessary.

Java as inspiration

This study investigates this transitional phase and draws its inspiration partly from recent studies that stress the importance of the eighteenth-century foundations of the modern colonial states of Java and India. A connection between Sri Lankan and Javanese history may seem far-fetched now, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Dutch Company servants often compared the two. From a colonial perspective the comparison certainly makes sense: on both islands tensions with the native kingdoms in the interior led to intrigues and alliance making, to extensive open warfare and eventually to the expansion of Dutch territorial power. In contrast to most of the other VOC strongholds in Asia, colonial administrations were set up on these two islands to rule the expanding territorial possessions. In addition, both built up a considerable population of European settlers in the port cities, maintained large garrisons and were regarded the centre of Dutch power within their Southeast Asian and South Asian contexts respectively.

As the historian Jurrien van Goor recently showed, the colonial parallels run even further into the nineteenth century: both experienced a transition from Company-run to state-run colony during approximately the same years. Ceylon was taken over by the British in 1796, and after a short period of EIC rule it was placed under the responsibility of the Crown in 1798. At about the same time the VOC went bankrupt and the responsibility for Java was taken over by the state. In 1811 Java seemed headed for the same colonial fate as Ceylon, when the British occupied Java during the Napoleonic wars. But Java returned into Dutch hands within five years, while the British continued to hold on to Ceylon. The political unification of Ceylon and Java through the conquests of the interior kingdoms Kandy in 1815 and Mataram in 1830 respectively, is yet another parallel that complements the story of the emergence of the colonial state on these islands.[10]

In the case of Java, the bankruptcy of the VOC in 1799 is traditionally

considered a watershed between the old, declining and corrupt Company's regime and the modern, profitable, state-run colony it was to become in the nineteenth century. The same thing happened in Sri Lanka. Because the British take-over took place almost simultaneously with the fall of the VOC, Sri Lankan historians conveniently hold on to a similar chronology, equating the emergence of the modern colonial state with the arrival of the British. In contrast to Sri Lankan historiography, modern studies of the colonial intervention in Java transgress the traditional divide and depict the late eighteenth century as a crucial stage in the colonial state formation process and the formulation of new modes of exploitation. Historians revealed much continuity in colonial practices between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, by showing the role that native agents like commercial and political elites played in the creation of the colonial state. The origin of the cooperation of these groups with the Dutch lay in the eighteenth rather than in the nineteenth century.

At the same time, historians started to recognize that although from the Company perspective the late eighteenth century might have been a period of decline, the policymakers on the spot were increasingly involved in the exploitation of the interior and expanding further to the peripheral regions which lay a basis for the colonial exploitation systems of the nineteenth century. Although this monograph deals exclusively with the history of Sri Lanka, it was inspired by these new approaches, especially those regarding the history of Java. Recent work by Robert Van Niel and Hui Kian Kwee on Java's North East Coast and Atsushi Ota on Banten emphasize the dynamic character of the period, in contrast to the traditional image of a declining and rusty Company administration on Java.[11]

Early nineteenth-century state builders like Daendels depended heavily on the legacy of Dutch-Javanese interaction in the eighteenth century. Perhaps they modernized it in some ways and made it more efficient, but ultimately they did not fundamentally change it. This did not even happen after the Dutch incorporated the remaining autonomous indigenous state of Mataram in Central Java in 1830. In fact, Johannes van den Bosch managed to turn the eighteenth-century practice of exploitation into full profit for the colonial state when he developed his *Cultuurstelsel* in 1830, a cultivation system based on forced cultivation. The period of British rule in Java under Governor Thomas Stamford Raffles (1811-1816) seems to have been an exception, as these were years with an air of more radical modernization based on what we now consider superior moral precepts like free labour. However, Raffles' failed efforts to change the modes of exploitation and administrative institutions on the island are often used to show how strong the indigenous institutions had grown from the eighteenth century onward. This has led some historians to sug-

gest that the impact of colonial policies as such was truly limited and that Dutch and British rule on Java were interchangeable.[12]

It is the complex interplay between the native response to economic and political challenges that the European presence in Asia brought along on the one hand and the actual European colonial aims on the other that has caught my interest. The new insights in Javanese history made me question the traditional periodization of Sri Lanka's colonial history, but at the same time I wondered whether the Sri Lankan case might help us understand the process of colonial state formation in Java and elsewhere, especially because it was ruled by two different European colonial governments. What did the last decades of Dutch rule on the island look like, and what picture emerges if we connect developments in Sri Lanka of the late eighteenth century with those in early British times?

It is worth noting that in any case the British Imperial context was very different: in contrast to the declining Dutch empire, that of the British was on the rise. For a long time historians viewed the period as one of uncontrolled and radical British expansion, in which colonial policy-making was absent or at least not structurally implemented. Yet recently Chris Bayly, in his all-encompassing *Imperial Meridian*, pictured a new image of the British Empire in this period when he argued that besides the expansion and consolidation of British power through superior methods of warfare, it was most certainly a period of conscious colonial state formation. He showed how this expansion and the discussions among British officials about the best way to exploit the new colonies, fostered the development of a British imperial ideology that in turn reinforced the rise of nationalism in Britain. At the same time, Bayly emphasized that the British colonial governments set up in the various regions around the world in this period were in practice as much based on native collaboration and local institutional traditions as on British colonial principles.[13]

Bayly's conclusion is written in the same vein as the research on Java discussed above. If the eighteenth-century foundations of the Dutch encounter in Java counted so much for the later shaping of the colonial state, one may wonder whether this was also the case in Sri Lanka. It legitimizes questions about how the Dutch presence affected Sri Lanka in the eighteenth century and how the British dealt with the Dutch legacy. Bayly actually touches on the case of Ceylon and surmises that on the island the British built not only on native structures but also on the Dutch legacy. It was of course beyond the scope of his book to deal with this subject in depth. He does not explain how the British colonial input and principles related to those of the Dutch predecessors or what exactly were the native responses to Dutch and British policies.[14]

Points of analysis

In this monograph I intend to unravel the complex triangular relationship between Dutch and British colonial precepts and indigenous response in Ceylon by relating intentions of policy-making to decision-making processes and practices on the spot. By viewing the period 1780-1815 as a transitional stage in the island's colonial history, I hope to bring to the surface the dynamism that seems so typical for this period elsewhere in Asia. This should lead not only to a new synthesis of this period in Sri Lanka's political history, but also to a new characterization of transitions of colonial regimes in Asia during this revolutionary era.

Inspired by the literature discussed above, I will focus on three major subjects. First, I will investigate the political formation in the coastal region, by analysing the colonial administrational organization and systems of inland exploitation. Due attention is given to native agency in the colonial state-formation process through the analysis of the relationship of both European powers with the local elites and Eurasian communities. Second, I will analyse the views the Dutch and the British held on their own presence and territorial power on the island and see how these influenced their attitudes and political intentions on the island. Third, I will study the relationship between the kings of Kandy and the Dutch and the British respectively. The subjugation of the kingdom and the consequent formal political unification of the island in 1815 is placed in the long-term perspective of the island's political history and connected to the interior policies of both European powers.

Unfortunately very few indigenous sources for the period under study exist. The only indigenous sources I was able to use were letters written by Kandyan nobles to their relations in South India, translated and published from Tamil and Sinhalese in the 1930s.[15] The *Cūlavamsa*, the chronicle of the Kandyan Kingdom basically ends in 1782.[16] Therefore, the study is based on the primary source material, official and private, written by the servants of both colonial governments.

The Dutch sources relating to the period have by-and-large remained untouched by historians. So far, historians who have studied the Dutch period of Sri Lankan history, like Arasaratnam, Goonawardene, Kotelawele and Wagenaar, have focused mostly on the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century.[17] Kanapathypillai is an exception; his unpublished PhD thesis covers the last thirty years of Dutch rule. His work is of a rather descriptive nature and he situates his research in the context of a Company in decay and not in that of a changing world. Consequently he does not contest the traditional image of stagnation presented above.[18] Others have mostly relied on his work and on the published and translated sources like the already mentioned *memories van*

overgave. However, these published sources do not cover the last decades of Dutch rule.

British sources, government papers, private correspondences and contemporary publications sometimes provide an extra perspective on the Dutch period, but I have used them primarily to examine various aspects of British governance. Although much more has been published on the early years of British rule in comparison to the Dutch period, it still remains a poorly understood period because of the various shifts in policy and changes of institutions. These have been described by able historians like Colvin R. de Silva, but they have not been interpreted or placed in the context of either changes in the Dutch period or contemporary developments elsewhere in the British empire. Of course the research presented in this monograph owes a lot to the existing literature and in my conclusion I will point out how the research contributes to contemporary debates.[19]

Reflections on the sources

The Dutch and British source material is found in archival institutions in London, The Hague, Jakarta, Chennai and Colombo. This global distribution of sources on Sri Lanka is directly related to the administrative organization of the Dutch and British colonial empires. Before 1800 the Dutch establishments in Asia were all part of the VOC, which had as its highest authority a board of directors in the Netherlands, *De Heren Zeventien*. The board was composed of representatives of the Company's six chambers.[20] The records of the Company's central administration in the Netherlands are now found in the National Archives in The Hague.[21] In Asia, the Ceylon government fell under the authority of the *Hoge Regering* (High Government) of Batavia (now Jakarta) the VOC's headquarters in Asia. The Dutch government in Colombo had to report on all commercial and political affairs to both the *Heren Zeventien* and Batavia.

The material in Jakarta and The Hague consists of extensive letters and reports with appendices that were sent from Colombo as well as the instructions sent back to Colombo. The correspondence was very extensive: the *Nationaal Archief* in The Hague holds more than fifty bundles of papers sent home from Colombo during the last fifteen years of Dutch rule, under the header of *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*. The papers in Colombo give a direct reflection of the local government. That is why, although much information can be found in despatches preserved in The Hague, the material in Colombo such as the minutes of the political council, the central governing body on the island, and its correspondence

with the outposts give the best insight into the functioning of the local administration and the decision-making processes involved.

In the early years, the British administration in Sri Lanka was controlled by the government of the EIC headquarters in Madras (Chennai). From 1798 onwards, the government grew apart from Madras and when the government of Ceylon was placed directly under the Crown in 1802, there was only a commercial relationship left between the two administrations.[22] Therefore, most of the source material outside Sri Lanka for the period after 1798 is found in the Colonial Office archives at the National Archives in Kew – no less than seventy-five bundles with despatches from Ceylon covering the first twenty-five years of British rule. In addition to this "regular" set of papers, the National Archives hold thirty-two bundles containing materials collected by the Commission of Inquiry between 1829 and 1831. This commission was installed in order to investigate certain general aspects of the government of the colony since 1795, like the colony's revenue, agricultural policies, the organization of the civil service and the department of justice, and in particular the issue of slavery and unfree labour.[23]

As is true of the Dutch papers, the materials in Colombo give a more direct impression of the functioning of the local government and administration. There are also differences that are directly related to the administrative organization of the colonial governments. For example, the British governors ruled without a political council and therefore we do not get much insight in the decision-making process on the island. In fact, the organization of the sources of the two colonial governments gives some insight into their respective administrative histories. We find that Governor Willem Jacob van de Graaff (1785-1794) installed a department for inland affairs in 1786, which suggests that he displayed a greater interest in the inland affairs than did his predecessors.[24] The lack of regular correspondences with the outposts until 1806 in the British case suggests that up until then the central government in Colombo did not have a firm grip on the affairs in the outposts.

In addition to official administrative sources, archives in the Netherlands, Sri Lanka and London also possess private correspondence of government officials. These sources provide additional information and perspectives on current affairs, sometimes countering the official information in the sources. One example is the private correspondence of the advocate fiscal (later chief judge) Alexander Johnstone in the National Archives in Sri Lanka, which consists of all sorts of letters ranging from dinner invitations to secret reports for the government. The correspondence with Governor Thomas Maitland (1805-1811) is especially interesting because it shows the strong ties between the two men. Another case in point are the letters by Pieter Sluijsken to various high officials of the

VOC, which are kept in the private collections of The Hague.[25] Sluijsken left an enormous stack of papers, owing to his ongoing feud with Governor Van de Graaff.[26] These papers offer information found nowhere else, but they need to be treated with care. Just because they were written privately does not mean they inherently hold more significance or 'truth' than official papers.

The abundance of source material for the period under research is problematic. The Dutch and British sources form a *mer à boire*. Selections were made on the basis of the very useful catalogues and indexes available in the various archival institutions.[27] In the case of the British sources, the existing literature and published sources, like the Douglas papers[28] and Bertolacci's description of Ceylon,[29] helped focus the research.

Chapter outline

The monograph is in three parts. The first gives an introduction to Sri Lanka's early history and briefly discusses the Portuguese political infiltration and the Dutch arrival on the island. It deals more extensively with the emergence of the Kandyan Kingdom as the major indigenous political power on the island and analyses its political organization. The purpose is to give a long-term perspective on the European intervention on the island. At the same time it serves as a reference point for the later chapters that deal with the Dutch and British administrations and the Kandyan relations.

The second and largest part of the monograph discusses the colonial transition under Dutch rule at large. The three major research questions of the monograph are considered here. Chapters Two to Four deal with the changes in the practice of colonial rule in Dutch Ceylon over the eighteenth century, with an emphasis on the last fifteen years. Chapter Five discusses the Dutch colonial outlook in the last decades prior to the British take over and Chapter Six deals with the Dutch relationship with Kandy.

In the third part of the monograph, Chapters Seven to Eleven, the British experience is discussed and placed in the context of the findings for the Dutch period. The three research questions are dealt with in the same order as in Part Two: Chapters Seven to Nine discuss colonial practice under subsequent British regimes; Chapter Ten relates the colonial ideals expressed by the British rulers to developments and discussions on colonial rule elsewhere in the British empire and Chapter Eleven discusses the final subjugation of the Kandyan Kingdom. In the final analysis of Chapter Twelve the research as a whole is brought together to discuss how these findings contribute to the existing literature on Sri Lanka and colonial regimes of the period in general.

Part One
Temptation island

CHAPTER ONE

LOCAL POLITICS AND FOREIGN INTRUSION

> *"Ceylon, from whatever direction it is approached, unfolds a scene of loveliness and grandeur unsurpassed, if it be rivalled, by any land in the universe. The traveller […] is entranced by the vision of beauty which expands before him as the island rises from the sea, its lofty mountains covered by luxuriant forests, and its shores, till they meet the ripple of the waves, bright with the foliage of perpetual spring."*[30]

Travellers have always praised Sri Lanka for its physical beauty and its agreeable climate, but this is not what attracted the Portuguese merchants in the beginning of the sixteenth century. They were tempted by the island's exclusive resources of cinnamon, one of those exotic spices that were increasingly in demand in Europe. They settled on the shore to set up commercial strongholds, but soon got involved in local political conflicts and were drawn inland. As a result, the Portuguese merchants willy nilly acquired governmental responsibilities in the coastal regions of the island. This introductory chapter deals with those early political developments and the political constellation at the time of the Dutch arrival about one hundred fifty years later. Furthermore, it discusses the political organization of the Kandyan Kingdom, the last indigenous Kingdom to survive the Portuguese confrontation and which remained a political factor of great importance on the island until 1815.

1.1 *Sri Lanka prior to European arrival: the ancient civilizations*

With a surface of 65,610 square kilometres, Sri Lanka covers an area about the size of the present states of the Netherlands and Belgium together. Located in the Indian Ocean off the southern end of the Indian subcontinent, the island is connected with the Indian mainland by a string of islands called Adam's Bridge. Geographically, Sri Lanka can be divided into three regions: a lowland dry zone in the north and east, a mountainous region in the central part of the island and a lowland wet zone in the south and west. Plenty of rivers run down from the mountains into this region. The climate of the island is regulated by two monsoons: the southwest monsoon from April to September and the northeast monsoon from October to March.[31]

Rubies and other precious stones are found in the mountainous part of the island, and this has always attracted the attention of travellers and merchants. In addition, the various pearl banks on the northwest coast, around Mannar and Aripo, produced fine pearls of a type very popular in Europe.[32] This undoubtedly added to Sri Lanka's reputation of being "the finest island of its size in the world".[33] At the time the famous Venetian thirteenth century traveller Marco Polo gave Sri Lanka this epithet, the island was in a transitional phase, ancient civilizations were disintegrating and large groups of people were migrating from north to the south.

The ancient civilizations (c. 500 - c. 1250 A.D.) were found in the northern dry zone of the island, around the present-day towns of Anurādhapura and Pollonaruwa. This region is often referred to as *Rājarata,* or the hydraulic civilizations of the *Rājarata Kingdoms,* because of the extensive irrigation systems and a corresponding social and political organization that characterized these civilizations. Large ruins of ancient monasteries, palaces, temples and water tanks can still be admired. This era of Sri Lankan history was of a high cultural level: witness its beautiful sculptures and the important Pali texts that have passed down through the ages.[34]

The kingdoms were part of the large Theravada Buddhist tradition which spread from Sri Lanka to the Southeast Asian mainland after the third century. The *Sangha*, the Theravada monastic order, formed a crucial element in the religious and political organization of the region. The Pali records and Sinhalese chronicles like the *Mahāvamsa* all bear witness to the vivid political, cultural and economic exchange between the Sri Lankan and Southeast Asian kingdoms. At the same time, the proximity of Sri Lanka to the Indian subcontinent and the frequent invasions from there from the tenth century onwards resulted in local cultural and religious fusion with South Indian Hindu traditions.[35] Agricultural production was substantial, thanks to the massive irrigation works. The maintenance of the large tanks and other waterworks called for a complex level of social organization because it demanded intensive labour activities and large-scale co-operation. It is therefore assumed that government was highly centralized and that the monasteries played an important part in its organization.[36]

The remains of the old civilizations seized the imagination of both Dutch and British rulers on the island. In late eighteenth-century reports, a picture emerges of an ancient Sri Lanka at once rich and productive, but inexplicably degenerated prior to the Portuguese arrival. In fact, as shall be seen in the next chapters, this image of Sri Lanka's rich past developed into a guiding force for the new agricultural endeavours of the Dutch and the British rulers.[37] The idea that Sri Lanka was once the granary of the Indian Ocean was still widely supported in the 1970s, but is nowadays

under debate, since historians like W.I. Siriweera began questioning whether the irrigation works could ever have sustained such large surpluses.[38]

In the course of the thirteenth century, the northern civilizations collapsed and the inhabitants of the island migrated southwards. The cause for the collapse remained an enigma for the Dutch and British policy makers in the period under study, but in the course of the nineteenth century hypotheses were developed by British archaeologists and orientalists who concluded from the indigenous chronicles that the invasions of Pandyan and Colan troops from South India caused the collapse of the kingdoms. Later it was pointed out that invasions from South India were not a new phenomenon in Sri Lankan history and that earlier kingdoms had also suffered their share of them. This is one reason why some historians have argued that the abandonment of the irrigation works cannot have been caused solely by disruptive invasions. Some historians point at natural causes for the neglect of the irrigation works and the collapse of the kingdoms. An interesting theory is that the malaria-bearing anopheles mosquito migrated to Sri Lanka around the thirteenth century, with dire consequences for the health of the population. Its preference for the water tanks lasts to this date.[39]

The other Theravada kingdoms in Southeast Asia collapsed simultaneously with the fall of the *Rājarata* civilizations, which suggest a connected cause. Lieberman seriously argues for climate change as a major factor, namely the commencement of an extremely dry period from the end of the thirteenth century, but he also agrees that this could not stand alone as a cause for the collapse. In addition he points to the administrative structure of the kingdoms in mainland Southeast Asia: the monasteries functioned as strong tax-free powerbases that strengthened regional power and this may have caused the breakdown of the kingdoms in the long run. These factors, combined with the violent invasions of Mongol troops into the Southeast Asian mainland explain the collapse of the kingdoms there. It is likely that the ancient civilizations of Sri Lanka suffered from a similar combination of climate change, internal collapse of the organization of the kingdoms and invasions from outside, southern India in this case.[40]

1.2 *Political fragmentation and the drift to the south*

On the Southeast Asian mainland the kingdoms shifted to the lowland maritime regions which were free of monastic strongholds. This marked the beginning of a period of political fragmentation and increased maritime commercial activity in the Indian Ocean. Once again, this mirrors exactly what happened in Sri Lanka in the same period. The drift to the

south after the disintegration of the centralized civilizations resulted in the growth of smaller political entities in the north and the southwest of the island. Jaffna in the north and Kotte in the south were two major kingdoms that emerged in the fourteenth century, Kotte being the strongest because of its extensive involvement in maritime trade. Later, Sitavaka and Kandy became principalities of the Kotte kingdom. The Jaffna kingdom, established by the Pandyan invaders, was essentially Tamil and Hindu. The others were Sinhalese and Buddhist and more or less regarded themselves as successors of the *Rājarata* kingdoms, which is clear from the continuation of the *Mahāvamsa*, the Great Chronicle. At the same time, the South Indian influences increased: the many Hindu temples in the southwest dating from this period bear witness to this. These developments were undoubtedly related to the maritime activities of the Kotte Kingdom.[41]

As in the Southeast Asian mainland, these smaller kingdoms and principalities were oriented towards trade rather than agriculture. Politically, the kingdoms were much less centralized than the *Rājarata* kingdoms. There were no large irrigation works to require a strict and firm organization of society and some groups managed to gain strong regional power. In the scarcely populated areas of the Vanni in the north and around Trincomalee in the east practical power was entirely with the local chiefs, or *vanniyārs*.[42] The island's central location made it a popular venue within the trading network of both the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal.[43] The export products ranged from areca nuts and coconuts, to cinnamon, gems, pearls and elephants. Imports included basic commodities like rice and textiles. Perhaps most important for this period's economic history was the growth of coconut production after the thirteenth century and the increased export market. This expanding trade should however not be exaggerated. It remained largely restricted to the Jaffna peninsula and the small ports along the southwest coast, and although the circulation of money was increasing, trade was carried out on a small scale.[44]

1.3 *Island society around 1500*

At the time of the Portuguese arrival in 1505 most people on Ceylon relied on subsistence agriculture and the village formed their main frame of reference. In the dry north, some of the smaller water tanks were still in use and were vital to the livelihood of villagers. In the south, paddy was cultivated on terraces, with an abundant water supply from the hills. Over-flooding was a regular problem in the lowland villages, but this did not result in the creation of large-scale irrigation projects to drain the water. Garden culture played a major role in this small scale economy, where fruit and nut trees were grown both for personal consumption and

for trade. Waste land and jungle adjacent to the village was used for shifting cultivation (*chēna*) of small grains and for the collection of various forest products like timber, honey and wax.[45]

In the course of time, various systems of land tenancy developed, which varied greatly in commitments due to the lord of the land. In the Sinhalese kingdoms this meant that some lands were held against a tax of fifty per cent of the produce, while others were held against a tax of only ten per cent. Moreover, most of the land was held in service tenure, meaning that the occupants had to perform labour for their lord for a certain number of days each year. In the Jaffna kingdom the tenures were a little simpler. Produce was usually taxed at ten per cent, but poll-taxes were added and bonded labour was just as much part of the system as in the Sinhalese kingdoms.[46]

Perhaps the most general feature of the social stratification among all societies on the island was the importance of caste hierarchy. Interestingly, the highest in the hierarchy, namely the farmer caste – *Goyigama* in the Sinhalese part and *Vellale* in the Tamil part – formed by far the largest caste. With reference to this, some historians point out that Sri Lanka was blessed with a relatively egalitarian society in comparison to India. However, it should not be overlooked that these castes were divided into various sub-castes which were again subject to a strict hierarchy. The castes were organized by occupation, hence there were fishermen, washermen, barber, and silversmith castes, to give only a few examples. This did not mean that all members of the castes actually performed this labour, as most people on the island were involved in subsistence agriculture. Among the Sinhalese, the highest subgroup of each caste comprised the headmen, below which were the *lascorins* or guards. The lower echelons, called *naindes*, usually formed the largest group and performed manual labour. They had to undertake specialized or coolie-labour for their headmen and the king depending on their caste. This labour was used for a variety of projects including road repair, irrigation and general building activities for the benefit of the community, but it was also used for private activities of the headmen.[47]

The island's relative wealth and central position in the Indian Ocean attracted groups of settlers and traders, and between c. 1300 and 1600 there was a high level of immigration from South India. The immigration of the *Salāgamas* to the southwest is probably the most important example, but other groups like the *Mukuvas* in the east and the *Karāva* fishermen in the south should be mentioned too. All found new positions as a group in the caste-based societies of either the Tamil kingdom of Jaffna or the other Sinhalese kingdoms. A cultural division between the Tamil north and Sinhalese south remained, despite these waves of immigration: the immigrants adapted themselves at least in language and religion to

their respective host society. These assimilative features of the Sri Lankan kingdoms are often noted in the current discussions on the development of ethnic consciousness.[48] Some Muslim traders from the Arabian Sea and Hindu *Chetties* from Coromandel settled either temporarily or permanently on the Jaffna peninsula or in the many small ports along the southwest coast; nonetheless they kept their distinctive cultural identity. Later, after the European arrival, many Muslims moved to the east coast.

1.4 *Portuguese political infiltration and the origin of the Kandyan Kingdom*

On a macro level, the political history of Sri Lanka up to the sixteenth century had much in common with that of mainland Southeast Asia. The simultaneous political fragmentation of the late thirteenth century is remarkable. The maritime focus and commercialization of the small political entities in the lowlands of the island from the late thirteenth century onwards again show great resemblance to the fragmented political organization that developed simultaneously in the maritime regions of Burma, Thailand and Vietnam. Despite the similarities with the Southeast Asian pattern, the distinctive South Indian influences on the island's political and religious life, in the form of the caste system and Hindu cults, should not be disregarded.[49] In the sixteenth century a new power arrived on the island. This time it was not an invader from South India, but from Europe. What was the effect of the Portuguese arrival on the political constellation on the island, and how does it compare to developments on mainland Southeast Asia?

It has been estimated that at the time of the Portuguese arrival in 1505, about six hundred thousand people inhabited the island.[50] Of these, about one hundred fifty thousand were ruled by the king of Jaffna and about four hundred thousand lived in the kingdoms of Kotte and Sitavaka. The rest were spread across the various *vanniyār* chieftaincies in the north and east and the central highland area, or the principality of Kandy, which was later to grow into a kingdom. The Portuguese sailed in the wake of the Muslim traders. They tried to take over their networks and attempted to ban all Muslim competition anywhere in Asian waters.[51] Within a few years they had taken over the larger part of Sri Lanka's commerce. As stated in the beginning, they were not after pearls, rubies, elephants or coconuts, but cinnamon. This spice had always been a minor product of interest to the inhabitants of the island, but had grown in importance not long before the Portuguese arrival, due to increased European demand. It grew wild in the forests in the southwest and by the time the Portuguese arrived it was a royal monopoly of the maritime kingdom of Kotte and had to be bought from the king.[52]

There is no need to discuss the Portuguese infiltration on the island here *in extenso*; for that I refer to the work of T. Abeyasinghe and C.R. de Silva, among others.[53] Still, a few things need to be pointed out to understand how the Portuguese traders came to govern part of the island. First of all, they arrived at a period of political instability. There was a succession dispute going on between the king of Kotte and his brother who ruled at Sitavaka, and these two power-blocks sought for external allies in their struggle. While Kotte found its ally in the Portuguese merchants, Sitavaka relied on support from the Muslim traders. This situation led to a classic history of "reluctant imperialism": the Portuguese promised their support in exchange for concessions in the cinnamon trade and the possession of coastal forts. The conflict lasted nearly a century, but finally in 1593 the Portuguese helped Kotte to defeat Sitavaka. By that time the Kotte kingdom itself had come entirely under Portuguese influence, a change that was not approved of by all its subjects.[54]

At about the time of Sitavaka's fall, the Jaffna kingdom also came under Portuguese sway. Though commercial opportunities had attracted the Portuguese to the Jaffna peninsula, the Portuguese and the king of Jaffna were in conflict over religious matters. In 1544 Portuguese missionaries had arrived from South India and were successful in the conversion of fishermen in Mannar and Jaffna. The Hindu ruler of Jaffna reacted violently against these conversions and killed a large number of the new Catholics. This led to a protracted war between the Portuguese and Jaffna, and the Portuguese managed to place their influence over the kingdom by the 1560s. In 1590, the Portuguese placed their own puppet on the throne, and in the second decade of the seventeenth century the Estado da India confiscated the kingdom and placed it directly under its government.[55]

At the end of the sixteenth century, disaffection over Portuguese control of the kingdom led some powerful nobles to flee to the principality of Kandy in the mountainous interior where they established a new successor kingdom to Kotte. The almost unpopulated interior became inhabited by refugees from the wars in the lowlands and by those who followed the noblemen to their new kingdom. After the defeat of the maritime governments of Kotte and Jaffna, the young Kingdom of Kandy was the last indigenous power left on the island.

The early seventeenth century formed the heyday of Portuguese rule, which more or less integrated once more the fragmented political entities in the lowland area. The Portuguese government thereby mainly followed the local administrative organization and made no attempt to unify the island or to impose a distinctively Portuguese administration except in the colonial towns of Colombo, Galle and Jaffna. Apart from the courts in these towns, justice was left in the hands of the native powerholders; in

the southwest these were the *mudaliyārs* of the *Goyigama* castes who enjoyed the same power in the former kingdoms.[56] The focus of the Portuguese continued to be on the maritime trade, with cinnamon their most important export. Intercourse between the Portuguese rulers and native society on the coast was stimulated by the Portuguese government and created mixed communities on the coast, which resulted in strong cultural influences and the adaptation of the Portuguese language. The Portuguese names held by so many of the coastal inhabitants point at the local intermarriages, but also at the large scale of indigenous Catholic baptisms. Catholicism gained a strong foothold and resulted in a substantial Portuguese religious and cultural influence that was to outlive Lusitanian presence on the island.[57]

Meanwhile the Kandyan Kingdom strengthened its local power and shook off the Hindu Saivite and Portuguese Catholic local influences and made a definite shift to Theravada Buddhism, organizing the state accordingly. As a result the island was now divided in two states, each contesting the power of the other and constantly at war from the beginning of the seventeenth century.

A thorough comparison between mainland Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka goes beyond the scope of this monograph. Victor Lieberman argues that in Southeast Asia, the sixteenth century marked a new phase of political, economic and cultural integration. Marginal ethnic groups merged with the dominant ones, which resulted in the emergence of unified identities that were associated with the central state but at the same time distinguished themselves from outsiders through religion and language. While Burma and Thailand stuck to the Indic Theravada tradition, northern Vietnam remained part of the Sinic Confucianist tradition. Also in political and economic terms, each region became more centralized, with strong revenue systems that benefited from the increased maritime trade. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a general population growth as a result of increased wealth and agricultural extension and intensification strengthened the power of these states. The provincial elites gained interest in the central states, through tax-farming and labour coercion, and as a result access to office became more regularized. Another crisis in the middle of the eighteenth century led to the last and most intense phase in this long-term state formation process.[58]

The Kingdom of Kandy and the Portuguese coastal possessions are good objects for comparison. Like most of the mainland kingdoms Kandy opted for Therevada Buddhism as its centralizing ideology and it was trying to expand to the maritime regions. The Kandyan kings certainly saw themselves as the only real power on the island, as can be read from the *Cūlavamsa,* the final part of the *Mahāvamsa*. The integration of the

maritime regions under the Portuguese was not yet complete, but it is easy to draw parallels with the Southeast Asian port polities thanks to the maritime focus and religious and cultural binding in the form of Catholicism brought in by the missionaries. The power relation between the Kandyan Kingdom and the Portuguese was not yet balanced out, when the Dutch offered their help to the Kandyans in 1638. After twenty years of warfare and negotiation, the allies managed to expel the Portuguese from the island.[59] The subsequent wars with the Dutch over the coastal region reveal the Kandyans' persistent interest in the maritime corridor.

1.5 *Dutch Ceylon: the formative years*

The high quality of cinnamon that had first tempted the Portuguese to involve themselves in Sri Lankan politics attracted the Dutch when they expanded their trading network in Asia during the first decades of the seventeenth century. When the king of Kandy asked the Dutch East India Company for help in expelling the Portuguese, they responded positively. In 1638, the Dutch admiral Westerwolt concluded a treaty with the Kandyans that, according to the Dutch interpretation, assured payment by the king of Kandy, Rajasinha II (1635-1687), of all Dutch war expenses and at the same time stipulated a Dutch right to take over the Portuguese strongholds on the island. After the Dutch expelled the Portuguese from the island, Rajasinha II did not pay for all the expenses made by the VOC. In fact, he managed to foil the Dutch plans to take over all the Portuguese coastal possessions by effective warfare. It was only in the 1680s that the Dutch and Rajasinha II concluded a truce and the Dutch had to give up much of their inland territories but retained most of the coastal forts and adjacent districts. They valued especially the southwestern districts and the Jaffna peninsula – indeed, the regions that had developed as centres of power in the island since the thirteenth century.[60]

This development needs to be placed in the general context of seventeenth-century Dutch expansion in Asia. In 1602 the Dutch East India Company was established. It grew out of several smaller trading companies that had sponsored exploratory voyages to the east in the previous decade. An important motive of Dutch expansion in those days was the expulsion of the Portuguese from the Asian trade. In so doing, the Dutch hoped to gain the monopoly on the lucrative spice trade with Europe and control the intra-Asian trade network. Obtaining a monopoly of trade in Asian spices gave the VOC the power of price-fixing on the European markets and therefore guaranteed a high profit. The possession of territo-

ry was not a primary objective of the Company's activities in the east, but was a by-product of its pursuit of monopolies. This commitment led to various wars in Asia during the seventeenth century, between the Dutch and the Portuguese and between the Dutch and indigenous rulers.

The protracted warfare was expensive and by the 1680s there was a total change in mentality in the *Heren Zeventien* of the VOC. The costly wars had to be put to an end and a further cut in expenses in the east was required. At the same time, the existing monopolies of trade in spices and other products had to be kept firmly in Dutch hands. That is why the VOC persisted as a territorial power on Sri Lanka and why after all, the coastal regions on the island remained under Dutch control. As a result Ceylon developed as one of the major stations of the VOC in Asia, next to Batavia and the Moluccas.[61]

It was in those early years that Dutch policy for the island was formulated, and although it was not unanimously agreed upon at the time, it was this policy that determined the further path of the Dutch on the island. It had been the original aim of the directors of the VOC that the cinnamon of Ceylon should be delivered to them absolutely without cost. This turned out to be a vain desire, because competition from other European traders had to be prevented. The preservation of coastal forts prevented any competitors from getting a hand on the trade or any influence on the island, and the possession of the adjacent territories for the collection of the cinnamon required additional governmental infrastructure. These contradictions in Dutch policy placed a heavy burden on the local governors.[62]

The demands from the Netherlands led to the paradoxical situation in which the High Government of Batavia had to look for other means to pay for Ceylon's administration. More direct local involvement inevitably cost more. Rijckloff van Goens the Elder, governor of Ceylon between 1660-1663 and 1664-1675, had already warned the directors about this problem in the 1670s. He proposed to either conquer the whole of Ceylon and attract European settlers to fully develop the island's potential, or to restrict the territorial possessions on the island solely to the cinnamon producing areas in the southwest. His appeal fell on deaf ears, and despite his critique, the *Heren Zeventien* in the Netherlands refused to adopt a clear policy and left it to the governors on the island to meet their targets. Van Goens was however not entirely incorrect in his predictions.

From the 1680s until 1796, the Dutch on Ceylon found themselves in a kind of vicious circle. Their financial situation asked for increasing exploitation of local society, but this in turn required further involvement and responsibility, which brought about new costs. Good relationships had to be maintained with the Kingdom of Kandy, which again triggered extra expenses. This development, which turned the Dutch East India

Company on Ceylon from a trade operation into a territorial power with full-time administrators, would shape Dutch colonial rule in the late eighteenth century.

1.6 *Political organization of the Kandyan Kingdom*

Before moving on to the actual analysis of the political developments in Dutch Ceylon and the Dutch-Kandyan relationship, the Kandyan political constellation needs some further explanation. As noted, the Kandyan Kingdom inherited a state ideology in the form of the Theravada tradition, but unlike other Therevada kingdoms of the time, it did not manage to secure enduring stability and growth. As we shall see, this was to have major consequences for the relationship of the young Kingdom with the colonial rulers on the coast.

The political and social structure of the Kandyan Kingdom has been analysed by Ralph Pieris in his monumental book *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period* and by Lorna Dewamannar in *The Kandyan Kingdom of Sri Lanka*. Both these authors depend heavily on the seventeenth-century description of the Kingdom by the English captive Robert Knox and the descriptions of the Kandyan institutions by D'Oyly and John Davy, colonial officials who wrote their respective accounts soon after the fall of the Kingdom.[63] In addition, Pieris and Dewaraja use a list of questions and answers on the Kingdom and the Buddhist religion apparently posed by Governor Willem Iman Falck (1766-1785) around 1769 to the chief monk of the maritime districts.[64] In general Dewaraja and Pieris concur in their descriptions, though they do place different emphasis on certain aspects of the Kandyan institutions. That is why the following account is largely derived from these two authors.

The Kandyan Kingdom was an economically weak polity, with a low population density (the total population probably never surpassed 250,000 people), a negative trade balance and a poor agricultural base due to its mountainous topography. Only the lowland provinces bordering the "European" maritime possessions were relatively fertile and more extensively cultivated.[65]

The king's power was considered absolute, though in practice it was limited in certain ways. The Kandyan king was seen as the successor of the great ancient kings of the Anurādhapura and Pollonaruwa kingdoms and most information on the manner of good rule was gathered from the examples given in the *Mahāvamsa.* He was to rule within the tradition and to follow examples of the good princes; he had to observe customary laws and written rules, governing in the interest of his subjects and fol-

lowing Buddhist precepts. Ralph Pieris points out that various rebellions against the king were the practical outcome of these limitations. If the king was not ruling "justly", his subjects could revolt.[66]

The absence of strict hereditary rules of succession was typical for Theravada kingdoms of the time. Though the king was considered almost godly, this divine characteristic was not necessarily transferred through direct bloodlines. He did have to be of *chastrya* origin, meaning that he belonged to the "caste of kings". The coronation ceremony was decisive in the transfer of the legitimacy of power and elevated the human king to a godly status. Over time, this divine element in Kandyan kingship became more central to the ideology of the Kingdom. A new king, if he was not already appointed during the lifetime of the former king, was chosen by the highest nobles at the court.[67] In practice this meant that princesses of *chastrya* origin were brought to the island from South India to marry the present king and to produce a future king. It is not difficult to interpret this as a means to prevent competition for the crown among the Sinhalese nobles at the court.

This was the case in 1739, when king Narendrasingha (1707-1739) had not produced a heir to the throne and a prince was brought from South India to be king. From then onwards, we see various attempts of Kandyan nobles to have new kings from outside the island placed on the throne. This important element of Kandyan kingship reminds us of the stranger-king concept. The enthronement of a king from outside the circle of nobility functioned as a means to channel or avoid political tension among powerful noble families. In a way it served as a compromise between rival nobles and prevented outbreaks of violent succession-disputes: instead of claiming the throne themselves they placed on the throne an outsider with no political or family ties within the Kingdom. The stranger-king concept is popular with scholars of Southeast Asian history and helps to explain how, in many cases, European power expanded over the Indonesian archipelago in early modern times without much violence, but rather at the invitation of native power groups.[68]

The retinue of the king existed of a variety of palace officials responsible for his protection, his kitchen, his baths and so on. In total there were about thirty-one departments. Ralph Pieris points out that the composition of the king's retinue was not always the same and that in the late period of the Kingdom there was an abnormal growth in these offices, the holders of which received land in lease for their often marginal duties.[69] According to him the purpose was to strengthen the position of the monarch. The officials of the palace service stood apart from the public or district service and even the chief ministers, the *adigārs*, did not have any jurisdiction over them.[70]

The king's power was delegated through his two ministers, *adigārs*.

These men held considerable power, both in the central government and in the provincial government. In the central government they functioned as advisors to the king, chief justices and military chiefs. Advice was given in cases of new appointments of chiefs, the election of the principal ecclesiastical offices and in the transfer of land grants and service rewards. A land grant or any other official ordinance of the king needed to be countersigned by either one of the *adigārs*. As an emolument each held five villages the inhabitants of which performed particular services for them and the king.[71] If the *adigārs* were present at the capital, all communications with the king went through them. Consequently they had a powerful influence on the external affairs of the Kingdom, since they could manipulate the foreigners to suit their interest. This is reflected in the reports of Dutch and British embassies to the court. The ambassadors never got to meet the king, he remained behind the curtain in the audience hall, and all dealings were discussed with the *adigār*s.[72] The *adigār*s were also responsible for the town of Kandy. They organized the ferry to the palace and kept order in the city. This implied mostly that they had to secure safety during the big festivals and kept temples and public buildings in repair. Each *adigār* held jurisdiction over half the Kingdom, the first *adigār* over roughly the north and east and the second over the south and west. Appeals from these regions could be made to them.

Like all officials, the *adigārs* had to pay *dākum,* tribute, to the king for their office: at their appointment and subsequently each year in April before the commencement of the New Year.[73] The *adigār*s in turn received money from the headmen in their five villages and kept the fines resulting from court cases. Other income they acquired through their position in the provincial government, since they often held the position of *disāva* in one of the *disāvanies* simultaneously. As we shall see, some of them managed to collect many offices at the same time. The status of the *adigārs* was second to that of the king; hence many rituals to enhance their status were performed when they moved around the Kingdom.[74] The two *adigār*s often came from opposing factions, which was done intentionally to prevent them from working together against the king.

The provincial government was split in twenty-one sections. In the mountainous area surrounding the capital there were nine small provinces called *ratas* and governed by *rata mahattayos*. The twelve other provinces were called *disāvanies* and were headed by *disāvas*; the four most important were called *maha disāvanies*. The *rata mahattayos* had less power than the *disāvas*, because the servants of the palace held lands in the *ratas* and the authority of the palace officers penetrated their area. Also the proximity of the palace in Kandy made the *rata mahattayos* less independent in the execution of their office. In comparison to the *disāvas* they had fewer privileges.[75]

The *disāva* resided in the capital or left his family there when on tour. His tasks were to administer justice, collect revenue and extract labour service, to execute the king's orders and to propagate good government. The *disāvas* and *ratas* paid a *däkum* to the king each year, and the king could continue or eliminate the office at will. The *disāva* had a deputy in his *disāvany*, called the *rata mohottala,* and an administrative staff composed of the local aristocracy. The possibility of the *disāva* becoming too popular in his own province was undermined by the fact that the *disāvas* usually came from the aristocratic families in the *ratas* of central Kandy. These people were of most noble birth and they held no blood-ties with the provincial aristocracy. Since the *disāva* often held various offices at the same time and often had to be present in Kandy, the *rata mohottala* had almost arbitrary power in the province. The *disāvany* was split up in *kōralēs* and the *kōralēs* into *pattus*. The *rata mohottala* had in turn deputies in these districts. All these offices had to be paid for and the appointments were always temporary; the threat of removal from office served as a means to extract more money from these officers.[76]

There were certain checks to the seemingly unlimited power of the *disāva* and his deputy. Temple lands or *viharagam* and *devalagam*, were given respectively to the monks and the *basnāyaka nilamēs*, lay caretakers of the *dēvalēs,* who were appointed by the king. These lands were free from the authority of the *disāva*, and they served as an independent source of information about developments in the province. The lands held by the officials of the royal households formed a second check on the power of the *disāva*, because these lands were also beyond the *disāva*'s authority. The king was free to give his *gabadāgama*, royal villages, to his chiefs in which case these villages turned into a *nindagama*. According to Lorna Dewaraja, "This was a necessary precaution at a time when palace intrigues were common. A palace official, even a minor one, could be a useful tool in the hands of an ambitious chief. For the former had access to the person of the king. The king did not wish to see those on whose loyalty his life depended having any dependence upon his nobles."[77]

The *disāva* profited from the *rājakāriya*, or the services due to the king. This was necessary, because it gave him status in the province and it ensured his dignity. If the income of the *disāva* in cash was rather limited, his income in terms of land and labour was more considerable. He gained cash from his appointees (usually the offices were given to the highest bidder) and some castes paid money as a substitute for their services. The *disāva* also kept the fines that were imposed in criminal cases. Next to this hierarchical system of administration there was the *badda*, which cut vertically across this system. The *badda* can best be translated as a functional system of "caste groups organized as a unit for purposes of revenue and services to the state – a mechanism by which the labour

resources of the Kingdom could be mobilized for public service". Although originally the *badda* system functioned as another check on the powers of the *disāva*, in the course of the eighteenth century the *disāvas* gained control over the *baddas*, which can be seen as a sign of decentralization of power in the Kingdom.[78]

1.7 *Eighteenth-century Kandyan kingship and Buddhism*

Sinhalese kingship was strongly connected with Buddhism, and Buddhist monks always had political connections in Sinhalese society. During the time of the Kandyan Kingdom Buddhist influence waxed and waned. The early Kandyan kings were greatly influenced by both Catholicism and Hinduism. It was only by the end of the seventeenth century, under Vimaladharma Suriya II (1687-1707) that Buddhism was given a new boost.[79]

Kitsiri Malalgoda has written an excellent study on the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the eighteenth century onwards. In the late seventeenth century, the influence of Buddhist monks upon Kandyan politics was on the rise. Some monks even held administrative positions: for instance the chief monk of the Poyamalu *vihāra* in Kandy served also as *disāva*. According to Malalgoda "the growing political influence of the monks indicated a general trend to worldliness". In the management of the temple lands, similar developments were detected. Some monks held private property and rights to land, which conflicted with the Buddhist purity laws. Moreover noble families held interests in temple properties and even in the pupil-teacher relationship.[80] The Buddhist revival included new interest in the other Theravada states, and in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, various missions to Arakan, Pegu and Ayutthaya were conducted to bring monks who could reinforce the Buddhist order on the island. The contacts and exchanges between Kandy and mainland kingdoms were purely religious, and in no way commercial.[81]

Although the stimulus of Buddhist revival was given during the reign of Vimaladharma Suriya II and was more or less followed by his successors, it was not until the reign of Kirti Sri Rajasinha that this revival reached its peak. It has generally been accepted that the Buddhist revival under Kirti Sri was inspired at least as much by political strategy as by religious piety. With the reign of his predecessor a new dynasty had come to the throne; this dynasty had its roots in the South Indian Nāyak chieftaincies, hence the name Nāyakkar. Though there had always been a South Indian connection with the Kandyan kingship, the accession of Sri Vijaya Rajasinha in 1739 is generally seen as a breach with the former dynasty.

Being an outsider, and facing opposition of certain nobles and monks, Kirti Sri Rajasinha openly converted to Buddhism and became its patron. During his reign the *sangha*, the order of monks, was revived. The festivals were intensified and temples renovated and rebuilt. This king's affiliation with the *sangha* may well have served a political purpose because it created a power block against the Sinhalese nobles.

Dewaraja points out however that if this was the king's goal, he greatly failed. In the 1760s the main priests and monks were all of noble, *radala*, background and consequently had strong family ties with the Sinhalese aristocracy. These families monopolized the high positions in the temples and made sure that no one of lower caste than *radala* could enter the higher orders. At the same time, the reorganization of the Buddhist institutions served as another factor in the factional battles among the aristocracy. For example the members of the two main temples in Kandy, Malvatta and Asgiriya, were constant rivals for the privileges of the king. Kirti Sri centralized the order of the *sangha* by making the chief priests, or *maha nayakas,* of the Malvatta and Asgiriya temples heads of all the minor temples in the country. As noted above, the temple lands were free of the *disāvas*' and *adigārs*' jurisdiction; instead jurisdiction was held by these *maha nayakas*. During Kirti Sri's reign, many of the king's lands were transformed into temple lands, which gave the monks a strong landed base and paradoxically connected them once more with the internal politics in the country.

The revival of the festivals served as an instrument to display the social order in the country, stressing the subordination of the aristocracy to the king.[82] Thus strangely enough, a Buddhist revival that had started out in the seventeenth century to free the *sangha* from its worldly attitude, eventually led to an even stronger tie between government and religion. It must be mentioned though that the revival also led to a renaissance in literature and an increase of knowledge and education. Writings of priests like Samarananka in the mid-eighteenth century and his successor Moratota in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries bear witness to this. The Buddhist revival was not limited to the Kandyan highlands of the country, but also spread to the maritime districts. This led to the bloom of the Mulkirigala monastery near Tangalle, whose head had been appointed as chief monk of the maritime provinces.[83]

To conclude then, the Kandyan Kingdom was characterized by a fragile stability, with a king with foreign roots constantly engaged in keeping his power centralized. His main tool was to play his nobles against each other through three officially independent institutions: his palace, his provincial administration and his temple organization. Despite the system of checks and balances, the king was in practice highly dependent on the

nobles, and effective power appears to have been in their hands. There are certainly good examples of nobles who collected various offices simultaneously, which implies a concentration of local power with some individuals. Furthermore, there were other means to undermine the system of checks and balances. People running the *vihāres* were often related to the noble families, and many of these family members in turn entered the palace service. Dewaraja formulates the paradoxical situation as follows: "Although in theory there was a strict division of administrative functions, in the practical working of the Kandyan administration a few families dominated the entire structure. These families often at loggerheads with one another, were again connected by marriage."[84]

Considering the vague and unfeasible goals of the Company on the island and the vulnerable political organization of the Kandyan Kingdom, it is not surprising that the relationship between the two remained tense after the initial wars between 1638 and 1678. As shall be seen, while the Nāyakkars were brought in as stranger-kings as a means to keep the Kingdom together and at first were successful in resisting the Company's infiltration, they later became a bone of contention among the nobles, who started to search for other options.

Part Two
The first colonial transition: local growth of colonial interests

CHAPTER TWO

COLONIAL POLITICS IN DUTCH CEYLON TILL 1780

This chapter discusses in greater depth the early encounters between the Dutch merchants and the inhabitants of Sri Lanka. The aim is first of all to understand how the Dutch government came into being and took shape and what inland policies were implemented. Second, the chapter focuses on the question of the actual impact of the Dutch government on local politics and society and discusses the relation between the Kandyan Kingdom and the Dutch. The comparison between the organization of the Dutch and the Kandyan administration in the last part of this chapter sheds light on possible Dutch deviations from local traditions, and gives us an understanding of the functioning of the system of indirect rule and the colonial political culture that developed in the maritime districts. The chapter serves as the point of departure for the analysis of developments on the island after 1780 presented in the following chapters.

2.1 *Early developments*

After the 1680s the emphasis in Dutch rule was on the southwestern districts of Galle and Colombo because of the cinnamon production, and on the Jaffna peninsula because of its fortunate location in the Indian Ocean trading networks. From the thirteenth century onwards these regions had developed as the maritime mercantile centres on the island, and this continued under the Dutch. The two regions formed the core areas of Dutch rule, while the rest of the possessions on the island were really peripheral. Financial and practical considerations were the basis for the organization of the Dutch government on the island. The Portuguese system of indirect rule, in turn based on the indigenous form of government the Portuguese found there, was largely taken over by the Dutch. The degree of interference with local society varied, however, depending on the economic importance of a given district to the Dutch East India Company.

The Southwest was where the Dutch obtained the cinnamon, their key product. The cinnamon collection required a certain level of organization and relatively intensive involvement from the VOC administration. Cinnamon was taken from the inner bark of the cinnamon tree, and this had to be peeled off and processed through the existing indigenous caste-based labour-system. The *Salāgamas* (or *Chalias*) formed the cinnamon-peeling caste, hence they collected and prepared the cinnamon for the

Dutch as part of their corvée labor. Their department, called *mahabadda*, was put under control of a Dutch officer, the captain of cinnamon (*kapitein der kaneel*). Because cinnamon grew wild throughout these districts, it was important to keep a check on lands that were cleared for cultivation. In fact, though *chēna* (shifting cultivation) had always been an important element of indigenous subsistence agriculture, the Dutch tried to restrict this to the forestlands where not one cinnamon tree was to be found. This was one bone of contention between the Dutch and the native population, and led more than once to wide-scale rebellions.[85]

The strong emphasis on cinnamon collection and the mobilization of one particular social group in its collection and production led to irreversible social changes. Over time, the *Salāgamas* gained in status, not because of their peeling activities for the Dutch as such, but because of the privileges they received for these activities. Therefore, by the end of the eighteenth century they had risen from one of the lesser to one of the higher castes. This example of social change is often referred to by historians who attempt to assess the influence of Dutch rule on society in the southwestern districts.[86] There were however more aspects of Dutch inland policies that really affected local society.

As mentioned above, money had to be raised from sources other than the cinnamon collection, to pay for the government's expenses on the island. The main source was regular commerce, which was best developed in Jaffna. The profits of Jaffna were mostly derived from the trade in the island's export products such as elephants, areca nuts and chanks. Moreover, the Company issued heavy import duties on products which competed with their own stock, such as textiles. Arasaratnam has pointed out how the jealous trade policies of the VOC in Jaffna led to a decrease in indigenous long-distance trade. Between 1680 and 1740 the Company's attitude towards local commerce shifted a few times between a purely monopolistic and a more regulative one. In the latter case, import duties and market taxes proved a good base of income for the Dutch. This attitude finally prevailed, but the shifting policies seriously harmed the position of Sri Lanka in the trading networks of the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the taxes were farmed out against high profits, and this created a new opportunity for native entrepreneurs to invest and increase their capital.[87]

Trade activities in the south were mainly conducted by Muslims and *Chetties* from South India. In this area coconut and areca nut were the main export products, while the Indian traders brought cloth and rice to the island. As in Jaffna, the Dutch taxed their imports, and demanded an *oeliam* tax of fourteen days' service labour in return for being allowed to stay on the island. This tax could also be paid in money, but their labour came in handy in the docks of Galle, where there was always a lot of work

to do. Galle was the main port of the island for the large East-Indiamen travelling between Europe and Batavia.[88]

Additional revenue was gained from the taxation on the produce of the land, of which the paddy culture was the most important. However this tax never yielded enough to sustain the requirements for the garrisons and the VOC officials. Therefore, from the beginning of the Dutch presence rice was imported from Batavia, Bengal and Coromandel.[89] In general, the type and level of the duties, in the case of both produce and labour, were based on old customs. This gave the Company the legitimacy to levy these taxes. For the collection of the taxes, the VOC administration depended much on the local knowledge and co-operation of the headmen. It was already pointed out above that the systems of land-possession and bonded labour were quite complex. As a result, the Dutch decided to continue the old practice of registration of land and people, called land- and head-*tombos*.[90] Even when from the mid-eighteenth century on most taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder, the Company still needed the headmen for advice. This relationship with native headmen is an important aspect of the colonial administration and will be further elaborated upon in the section on the organization of inland government.

2.2 *Contradicting policies and subordination to Batavia*

With trading activities decreasing and expenses growing, the island did not yield enough income. Therefore, from the 1730s Gusstaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff started to actively stimulate agricultural production, first in his capacity as governor of Ceylon (1736-39) and later as governor-general in Batavia (1743-1750). He reasoned that local economic improvement would lead to better sales of the Company's products on the island and thereby increase the revenue. He focused both on cash crops like coffee and pepper, and on subsistence agriculture. During his four years in office in Ceylon he energetically endeavoured in the development of the infrastructure and irrigation in the southwest and he made plans to restore the ancient Giant's tank near Mannar. Van Imhoff did his utmost to stimulate people to grow the cashcrops in their gardens. His successors, Van Gollenesse and Loten at first continued this line of approach.[91]

The coffee and pepper production took off well, but Batavia ordered a stop to their cultivation because they were competing with Javanese coffee and pepper. The historians D.A. Kotelawele and K. Goonewardena have pointed out how this led to disappointment on the island because many inhabitants had started to grow these crops in their gardens and set up plantations, stimulated by the advantageous price they were to get for it. While coffee and pepper production was hampered by the Company's

superiors, the coconut plantations, which had also expanded, were stopped in the 1750s because they took up land where cinnamon trees used to grow. At that time the cinnamon production was declining and had to be more protected than ever.[92]

An interesting case in this context is the quarrel of *opperkoopman* Casparus de Jongh with Governor Schreuder, because it shows that the natives were not the only ones engaged in growing coffee and coconut; these had also become important crops for some of the Company's personnel. One of these, Casparus de Jongh, commander of Galle, lost a lot of money because of Batavia's sudden check on Ceylonese pepper and coffee. The investments he had made in a plantation near Galle were lost because the property could not be sold at a profit. After his return to the Netherlands he wrote a furious pamphlet which was published in 1767. In this he also criticized Schreuder's protective measures in favour of the cinnamon tree and against the cultivation of wastelands. He pointed out that this was useless and that all the wild cinnamon trees could be spared while the rest of the land was brought into cultivation. In fact, if cinnamon trees were surrounded by pepper-gardens, it would be easier for the cinnamon peelers to reach them. Casparus de Jongh even added a poetic "Ode to the pepper gardens" (*lof der pepertuinen*) to this pamphlet. Finally he proposed that cinnamon should be cultivated on plantations rather than collected in the wild, for this would solve many of the problems on the island.[93]

The attempts to improve subsistence agriculture were in the end not much more effective. Van Imhoff tried to stimulate people to occupy new lands and to clear new forests for cultivation, for example by arranging that people could till the soil for five years without taxation. But as with the coconut-gardens, when his successors realized that this could hamper cinnamon production, they lost interest.[94] Even though the effects of these policies were minimal, it was really a turning point in Company's policy on the island. Earlier on, the Company had only interfered with the practice of commerce on the island; now it revealed an interest in agriculture. For the first time the idea that improvements in the island's economy and living standard could be advantageous to the Company took hold. However, cinnamon, the Company's key-product, continued to stand in the way of structural development of the land. Moreover, the emphasis was still on the core areas – Jaffna, Colombo, and Galle; the other districts remained virtually untouched by these developments.

Even though the outcome of his policy was limited, Van Imhoff's reputation as a reformer lasted until British times: early in the nineteenth century Jacob Burnand, who served the VOC in the 1780s and 1790s and remained on the island after the British take-over, praised Van Imhoff while denouncing many of his predecessors and successors:

> The particular interests of men in office, egotism, folly, and something beyond a want of energy in the general government, have formed almost continual obstacles to a stable plan for a general amelioration of the condition of the island; and with the exception of the Gov. gen. van Goens and Van Imhoff, there are scarcely any to be found who, in the early history of the colony, appear to have had its welfare in view.[95]

The whole episode also reveals how much the government of Ceylon was subordinated to the over-all interest of the VOC. Basically, the monopolist and mercantilist attitude of the Company drove the Ceylon government into a corner. Batavian policymakers saw Ceylon as the periphery of their empire and Java as the centre; therefore the island had to serve the interests of Batavia and was not to compete with Javanese products. At the same time, the government of Ceylon had to sell the Company's products on the local market, which undermined the local trading networks and had a negative effect on the local economy. The experiments of the 1730s show that Colombo could not easily embark on an independent line of policy to improve the local situation. This was a continuous problem in the eighteenth century and lay at the root of much political tension between Colombo and Batavia.

2.3 *A policy for Kandy*

During his struggles with the Portuguese and the later tug of war with the Dutch the position of the king of Kandy was strong and his government centralized and geared to the job. Yet, by the last quarter of the seventeenth century, when the king and the Dutch settled for a peaceful coexistence on the island, the king had to reconsider his position in the island. After the wars were over diplomatic relations between the two powers had to be retained through exchanges of official embassies. The historian Tikiri Abeyasinghe stresses that it was only in the early eighteenth century that these embassies became a regular feature of Dutch-Kandyan relationship. Analysing this relationship during the long peace between 1688 and 1740, he concluded that in this period the embassies became more and more institutionalized. This was connected with a growing sense of identity on the part of the Kandyan king on the one hand, and a relative decline of Dutch power in the region on the other. He argues that because these embassies were now performed regularly and the Dutch travelled to the palace to pay honour and bestow gifts, the king perceived them as vassals of his state. The Dutch envoy usually arrived in Kandy in the beginning of April, just before the Buddhist New Year, when all the king's subjects paid their *däkum*.[96] The subordination of the Dutch to the Kandyan Kingdom was reinforced by the kneeling and bowing rituals that the

Dutch ambassadors were expected to perform during their visits. The growing sense of Kandyan identity was certainly reinforced by the revival of Buddhism in the Kingdom in the 1690s, a development that reached its height in the 1740s and 1750s.[97] In contrast, S. Arasaratnam has convincingly argued that although the Kandyan kings were politically dominant, in their own domain the Dutch kept a firm grip on the island by isolating the Kandyans from the outer world.[98] They basically controlled the external trade of the Kingdom and its communications with South India and other Buddhist kingdoms like Arakan, Pegu and Ayuthaya. As a result the court of Kandy remained heavily dependent on the Dutch.

Until the 1750s, the situation on the island was as follows: the VOC was dependent on the Kandyan king for the legitimacy of its power on the island, and was therefore formally considered his vassal. In practice, the Kingdom of Kandy largely depended on the Dutch for all communication and trade with South India. The only way for the Kandyans to put pressure on the Dutch was by denying them permission to peel cinnamon in their territory. This obliged the Dutch to continue sending embassies, even though they perceived the rituals they were forced to perform as increasingly degrading.[99] The so-called cohabitation lasted for almost seventy years, but from the 1740s onwards, tensions between the two powers increased. The Kandyans became more and more determined to have their ports back and not to be hindered in their South Asian trade and overseas contacts. At the same time the Dutch realistically began to consider their position on the island as more significant than that of mere vassals and felt that they ought not to be forced to perform the submissive rituals at the yearly embassies.

The developments that followed were complex and characterized by vague intrigues among the nobles of the Kandyan court, the Dutch government and headmen of the maritime districts. L. Dewaraja and D.A. Kotelawele have described how internal developments in the Kingdom, the establishment of a new royal dynasty and the rise of Buddhism, changed the attitude of the Kandyan king towards the Dutch. They also explain how the Dutch in turn attempted to make use of internal strife and intrigued with certain court officials.[100] In the end, two events triggered the outbreak of a war between the two parties in late 1760, which would last until February 1766. Hostilities began with Kandyan support for a rebellion in the southwestern district of Matara, in reaction to the implementation of Governor Jan Schreuder's rigid agricultural policies against *chēna* cultivation and the coconut plantations. Second, there was a plot by certain monks and nobles to depose the king, with possible aid from the Dutch. Thus, both governments were trying to extend their own power and undermine the authority of the other through alliances with disaffected chiefs. Clearly a new crisis was at hand.

The Kandyans first managed to overthrow some of the VOC forts, but after the arrival of reinforcements from Batavia, the Netherlands and the Indian factories, the Dutch managed to get a grip on the situation. After taking back the old possessions, Governor Lubbert Jan van Eck (1762-1765) decided to march on the Kandyan capital. For some months in 1765, the Dutch troops managed to keep hold of Kandy, but lack of food and supplies and constant guerrilla-like provocation by the Kandyans, led them to withdraw. About half a year later, on 14 February 1766, both parties signed a peace treaty. This was in all respects advantageous for the Dutch and underlined their military superiority on the island. The Dutch access to the coasts and ports gave them a logistical advantage and they could readily import supplies of men, weapons and foodstuffs. This also meant that the Dutch had access to better weapons and a relatively better quality of troops of European, Malays and Sepoys from India.[101]

This war marked the last violent attempt on the part of Kandy to extend its authority on the island and to gain access to the maritime corridor. The VOC now decided the terms of the relationship and could no longer be seen as a vassal of the king. The new power balance was fixed in a treaty: the Dutch would never again be forced to perform the degrading rituals before the king and the Company would not be hampered in the collection of cinnamon in the king's forest. Dutch possession of the entire coast was also fixed in the treaty and ensured for ever the isolation of the Kandyan Kingdom. The balance of power had shifted to the VOC and heralded a new phase in Dutch policy on the island.

2.4 *Prelude to change*

The open warfare between Kandy and the Dutch and the eventual recognition of Dutch dominance on the island generated a new dynamism in colonial policymaking on the island. The treaty of 1766 with Kandy secured the Company's right to peel cinnamon freely in the king's territories and its territorial possessions were expanded. From then on, the areas east of Matara and south of Batticaloa were in Dutch hands, as were the western ports Putalam and Chilaw and their hinterlands. Although the collection of cinnamon was secured, it was decided in Batavia that it would be better if the Dutch started with the cultivation of the cinnamon tree in plantations around Colombo. Governor Van Eck had worked out such a plan during the war, but it had not been put into practice. The idea was that this would make the Dutch even less dependent on the Kandyans and the collection of cinnamon would become a much easier job. Governor Falck (1765-1785) was asked to experiment with these plantations already in 1767, and after a hesitating start these really took of from the late 1770s.[102]

Falck occupied the office of governor for twenty years and he has been portrayed as someone who wanted to prevent any disturbances in the country whatsoever and who was therefore wary of major changes. With the exception of the cinnamon production, which was actually decided upon by his superiors, this seems to be an accurate picture. In these twenty years, Falck took no initiative to begin new projects. He basically sought to maintain peace and order and did not interfere much with the inland government of his *dessavas* and *commandeurs*. However, his subordinates did take some initiatives and the "cinnamon solution" implied some relief from the strict policies towards agriculture.[103]

For example, two large agricultural projects were started in the districts of Colombo and Galle in the 1770s. Initiated by the *dessava* of the district De Coste, the one near Colombo involved reclamation of the marsh land north of Colombo stretching halfway to Negombo called Muturajawela. This large enterprise was to make about 6,000 acres of land ready for paddy cultivation by draining the salt water and ensuring the provision of fresh water in the dry season. The Company paid for the operation and attracted people to move to the marshes and expected to recoup its investment easily by the tithe on the crops.[104] The plan was drawn out on a nice map showing the plots of land to be created by the drainage.[105] In the case of Diviture, an estate north of Galle, irrigation canals were constructed to regulate drainage of the superfluous water in the wet seasons. This was a joint venture of a group of Company officials. While Muturajawela was to produce only paddy, Diviture was also considered suitable for garden culture and the production of cinnamon in particular.[106]

Both projects failed at this stage, but they do reveal a basic change of policy. Private investment in land was again considered profitable after the discouraging measures of Schreuder, and the government invested actively in the development of subsistence agriculture. It was however under Falck's successor Willem Jacob van de Graaff that the enterprising inhabitants of the island were actively stimulated to develop the country and that the officials in the outer regions were stimulated to improve and increase the paddy production. How these increased agricultural activities relate to the decline of the Company that took place from the 1780s, is the subject of Chapter Three.

2.5.1 *Administrative organization of Dutch Ceylon – Company superstructure*

The second part of the eighteenth century witnessed a changing balance of power to the advantage of the Company. It also experienced an

increased interest in agriculture as a private and public source of wealth. It gives the impression that VOC power over the interior was rising, but what remains rather vague, is how this power was distributed. To fully understand the impact of the encounter with native society, it has to be established how Dutch rule trickled down society and in what way the colonial administration deviated from local traditions in the execution of its power. It seems likely that the system of indirect rule was becoming less indirect, due to the Company's growing interests in the interior. Therefore, I will argue, in line with Colin Newbury's recent study on indirect rule, that such a system was never static and much depended on the respective bargaining positions of the colonial and native powers. Newbury stresses the dynamic features of indirect rule by pointing out how real power and initiative usually lay first with native collaborators. In fact the colonial overlords did not have a choice in collaborators, but had to rely on those who put themselves forward. The real power over the inhabitants developed gradually as the colonial centre grew in strength over time.[107]

The government of the coastal provinces of Ceylon comprised two parts. First there was the VOC superstructure, which consisted solely of European officials in the service of the Company. The second was made up of native officials or headmen who were recruited from the highest castes. The government was supported by the garrisons distributed among the various forts along the coasts, and in times of tension along the borders with Kandy as well. Their presence enhanced the Dutch power vis-à-vis local society. Though officially there was a strict distinction between the civil and military establishments on the island, in practice there was some overlap between the two.

The highest authority in the organization of the Dutch East India Company lay with the *Heren Zeventien* ("gentlemen seventeen") in the Netherlands. These men were representatives of the six chambers, situated in six port cities in Holland and Zeeland, and of which Amsterdam had the largest share. In Asia, they were represented by the governor-general and the council of India, also commonly referred to as the High Government of Batavia. Orders for Ceylon usually went through the High Government.[108] The governor of Ceylon had to give account of all government affairs to both Batavia and the *Heren Zeventien*. Not only was the governor in charge of commercial matters, civil government and the military establishment, he also had the highest authority in the local judicial system. He was assisted by a political council, which normally consisted of eight to ten members, all Europeans who held the highest positions in local government. Officially the governor could not decide anything without the approval of the council, but in practice he was the most

powerful and influential man on the island. Decisions regarding the island community made by the governor and his council were communicated through official decrees or *plakkaten*. These decrees were composed in Dutch and, when necessary, in Tamil and Sinhalese as well.[109]

The political council was set up in a strict hierarchical manner, which is illustrated by the fixed rules for the following order of seats around the conference table. This structure of government was quite similar to that of the other of the Company's possessions, although Ceylon ranked among the most important. The governor of Ceylon was an *ex officio* member of the council of the Indies. The higher officials in the political council of Ceylon held Company ranks of *opperkoopman* (head merchant), *koopman* (merchant), *onderkoopman* (submerchant) and were paid accordingly. The names of these ranks point at the mercantile origin of the government, although in many cases the functions they performed had more to do with civil government than with purely commercial affairs. In the council, officials from all sectors of government – commerce, justice, inland administration and the army – were represented.[110] At the start of our period, the political council consisted of the following persons: Willem Iman Falck, governor; Bartholomeus Raket, commander of Jaffna; Arnoldus de Lij, commander of Galle; Daniel de Bock, head administrator; Jan Jacob Coquart, Major; Jacobus de Bordes, trade bookkeeper (*negotieboekhouder*); Martinus Mekern, secretary; Cornelis Dionisius Kraaijenhoff, first master of the warehouses; Cornelis de Cock, *dessava* (bailiff) of Colombo; Jan Hendrik Borwater, fiscal and payments accountant.[111]

After the governor, the commanders of Jaffna and Galle respectively were the highest-ranking officials, but they only attended the meetings of the council if they happened to be in Colombo. At the local level their government took the same shape as that in Colombo, therefore they headed their own political councils in their *commandementen*. The commanders of Galle and Jaffna also issued their own decrees that concerned specific local circumstances. At the smaller places of extraordinary strategic or economic importance, but far away from the three main centres, an *opperhoofd* (chief) was appointed. This office was often held by military commanders, as in Trincomalee or Kalpitiya.[112] At Tuticorin, on the Madura coast of India, which also fell under the authority of the Ceylon government, a civil servant held the post of chief.

In total there were about sixty basic administrative functions ranging from governor to commercial bookkeeper (*negotieoverdrager*) in Galle.[113] Apart from these so-called qualitative ranks, many more people were employed as clerks to support the administrators. These were not necessary Europeans, but often the offspring from mixed marriages between Europeans and natives. In other cases these jobs were filled by military

servants who desired a change of career when their contract ran out. Though this was discouraged by the Company, it was not checked locally. Company employees received fixed salaries following Company guidelines, but the highest office-holders also received the revenue from villages that were assigned to them as long as they stayed in their posts, the so-called *dispens dorpen*. It was also common for these officials to receive a share of the revenue from the various taxes, and they had the right to make use of the corveé system for their private affairs. Often they gained additional income through the appointment of the native officials, who, following local tradition, paid them a sum on appointment. This tradition was called the giving of *paresses*.[114]

The Company servants did not specialize in one sector and during their career servants could move from the position of *fiscaal*, dealing with juridical matters, via the position of trade bookkeeper, to the function of *dessava* where he had to deal with inland administration. We do know, however, that there were regional preferences. Although there was no general rule in this respect, people often moved from function to function either around Jaffna and Tuticorin, or they stayed in the southwest. Acquaintance with language and culture played a part in these choices – Jaffna and Tuticorin were Tamil-speaking regions, while Colombo and Galle were Sinhalese – but local connections counted probably just as much. Of course those with high ambitions did not stay on Ceylon for the whole period of their Company career, but moved up the ladder via the various factories in South Asia to return to the island as commander or governor.

In general, the Company system of administration was highly bureaucratic. Reports had to be sent from all sections to the governor in Colombo. He and the political council would go through these and summarize them for the High Government in Batavia. When necessary they sent full copies of the local reports. All resolutions of the political council were sent to Batavia and the Netherlands and were accompanied by long letters in which each decision and happening was accounted for. A *visitateur* regularly went through the books of each place to check the finances.[115] Though it may seem so in theory, in practice it was certainly not a watertight system. Most servants found a way to make some money locally within the margins of this system, for example through local trade or by lending money at high interest rates.[116]

The military establishment of Ceylon was much larger than the civil department. In fact, with usually about two-thousand-five-hundred man in garrison spread all over the island this was a very expensive department. Consisting of Europeans, Malays and South Indian Sepoys, many of these troops stayed on the island for long periods and married locally. Some of the Europeans decided to pursue a civil career on the island or continued

living on the island after the end of their contract as a civilian, a burgher. By 1780, the larger part of the civil and military servants on Ceylon had lived on the island or the nearby factories for a long time, if they were not born there like Governor Falck himself. As a result many of the local employees of the Company had put down roots and their private interests and local connections on the island and with the nearby Indian factories must have been extensive. From the mid-eighteenth century, private agricultural enterprise was a new development. Casparus de Jongh made large investments in pepper gardens during his commandorship in Galle, and in the 1770s members of the political council like Arnoldus de Lij and Pieter Sluijsken invested their money in the Diviture project. They were both typical examples of the generation of rooted servants, having arrived on the island in the 1740s and 1750s and staying on until their death. People like them usually owned large estates on the island, but operated from one of the three large towns of the islands.[117]

By the 1760s the colonial settlements of Colombo, Jaffna and Galle had grown into real towns with military, economic and administrational functions. This urbanization was a new phenomenon and was certainly not to be found in Kandy. Colombo and Galle counted a population of about eighteen hundred men, besides the garrisons, and the inhabitants were of mixed ethnic origin. The towns were large enough to require a separate administration. Many of the typical town institutions such as orphanages, estate administration (*boedelkamer*), garbage collection, civil militia, hospitals and so on were copied from the Netherlands.[118] A survey of the *plakkaten* reveals that most of the proclamations of government dealt with the administration and legislation of the towns. At the same time, as Lodewijk Hovy notes in his recently published compilation of the *plakkaten*, there was a considerable increase in proclamations in the native languages from the second quarter of the eighteenth century. This concurs with the image of increased colonial intervention, discussed earlier on in this chapter.[119] These towns also had their specific port functions and their markets took in a central place. As we have seen, these also had to be administered to ensure the income of duties upon the imports and the sales. Other activities in the town included the reparation of government buildings for which the Company had master carpenters in service.

The town populations consisted of both Europeans and natives and the offspring of mixed marriages. It seems paradoxical, that though mixed marriages were the order of the day, there was a very strict hierarchical division in the grade of one's "European-ness". Indeed, only the full-blooded Europeans could hold the highest positions.[120] Although these towns reflected the European presence on the island, a strict division between town and countryside did not exist. For example many inhabitants of the towns, both European and natives, possessed land under cul-

tivation in the surroundings of the towns (*gravetten*). Also, labourers were brought from the countryside to perform their regular corvée labour on the docks, maintaining the fortifications or in other construction works. The administration of the countryside was however of quite a different nature and so was the European impact there.[121]

Within this context a brief discussion of the juridical establishment is necessary. The Europeans were involved in two main types of courts, the civil town court (*civiele stadsraad*), and the court of justice. These courts were present at each administrative centre. The civil town court dealt with civil cases and marriages and although it was set up in the three main towns, its jurisdiction spread also over the immediate hinterland. After 1740, the court consisted of three burghers and four Company servants. The court of justice dealt with all criminal cases and civil cases where more than 120 *rijksdaalders* were at stake. The court of justice also comprised seven members, but all had to be Company servants. In certain cases it was possible to appeal to the court of justice in Batavia. The court of justice was also concerned with semi-judicial tasks like the calibration of weights and measures. Each court of justice had a fiscal assigned to it, who functioned as prosecutor in criminal cases. The fiscal was also concerned with the daily jurisdiction over the inhabitants and their estates within the town boundaries.[122] In the eighteenth century, special *landraden* (civil courts) were established to deal with inland matters in which natives played an important role, but these will be discussed below.

2.5.2 *Administrative organization of Dutch Ceylon – Indigenous input and indirect rule*

Below the Dutch superstructure the native administrative system continued to operate. This was organized on a regional basis and there were regional differences in organization and legislation. The native administrative system originated in the old kingdoms and was taken over by the Portuguese. The Dutch had kept it intact where possible, since it was their aim "not to disturb society or to disrupt institutions, but rather derive profit that the country afforded through the existing channels".[123] This was certainly true for the peripheral regions like the Vanni and the east coast where tribute in the form of elephants or paddy sufficed and the Company did not demand anything more and did not interfere with the local rulers. In the case of the core areas of Jaffna, Colombo and Galle, one may wonder in how far this was true and how indirect rule functioned in these areas.[124]

The highest native official was the "*mahāmudaliyār* of the governor's gate". He was the main advisor of the governor in native affairs and in the

relationship with Kandy. He was even actively involved in the correspondence between the Dutch and Kandy, because he translated all letters. The commander of Galle also had a *mahāmudaliyār* as an advisor, and this person was often related to the *mahāmudaliyār* in Colombo. In a way the function of these *mahāmudaliyārs* could be compared to that of the *adigārs* in the Kandyan Kingdom because of the advisory task and the proximity to the governor of these officials. But they did not have as many responsibilities and they did not have such a status among the European officials, even though their prestige among the lowland Sinhalese may have been high.

The *dessavas* (provincial heads) were really in charge of the inland administration and they were appointed in the core areas of the Company Jaffna, Colombo and Galle. Despite its indigenous name, the *dessavas* were actually European officials and they were the second person in the district hierarchy, after the commander. Galle had a *dessava* for the Matara *dessavony* (district) and an *opziender* (overseer) for the interior of Galle, or Gale *corle*. The *dessava* was responsible for all inland affairs, from the collection of taxes to the administration of justice. Just as in Kandy there was a chain of command down from the *dessava* at the provincial level to the *majorals* and *vidānēs* at the village level. Communication from the Dutch trickled down this system via the *mudaliyārs* and *koraals*, the first native officials below the *dessava*. Originally, the *mudaliyārs* had been in charge of the inland guards, the lascorins and for the transport of timber. The *koraal* was in charge of the collection of taxes and the execution of bonded labour. But in practice these functions were often combined in one person, in which case they were still called *mudaliyārs*. The *attepattu-mudaliyār* functioned as translator and guard of the *dessava* and was the most powerful headman in the *dessavony*. In Jaffna the system was quite the same, although sometimes functionaries had different names; for example a *mudaliyār* could also be called *adigār* there. The main difference between the Sinhalese and the Tamil regions lay in the legislation and customary rules regarding taxation. The means of administration were – at least from the Company's point of view – virtually the same.

The *mudaliyārs* formed the backbone of the inland administration because they functioned as intermediaries between the colonial rulers and their subjects. As a result, they were very powerful men in their districts and they were in the position to manipulate all information. Although the *mudaliyārs* usually came from certain families of the *Goyigama* or *Vellale* caste only, the functions of the *mudaliyār* and the *mahāmudaliyār* were not hereditary and the Dutch were in the position to remove someone from office when they thought fit. This meant that the Dutch had a check on the *mudaliyārs* and that they had to perform to the satisfaction of the Dutch. In practice the situation was a bit more complex because of the

closeness of *mudaliyārs* to the people, their local knowledge and their personal power in the region. The Dutch always feared that they would instigate a rebellion and entice Kandyan support.

The *mudaliyārs* and other headmen were not paid in money but received lands in *accomodessan*. This manner of remuneration was similar to that of the Kandyan Kingdom. The people who inhabited the villages in question had to till the soil for the headman, without compensation. Again these lands were not hereditary, but it did happen that fathers were succeeded by sons and that the lands remained in the family. It was not only via these *accomodessans* that the Dutch could induce the loyalty of the *mudaliyārs*. They also made use of ceremonial occasions to enhance the status of the *mudaliyārs* when they were content with their performance. For example a lot of value was attached to the gold medals of honour that the Dutch occasionally distributed to those *mudaliyārs* whose activities encouraged others to follow suit.

The relationship between the Company's officials and the native headmen was decided not only by official policy. As in Kandy, it was common for the headmen to present their superiors with gifts (*paresses*) upon appointment. This turned into a lucrative business for the officials of Jaffna, Galle and Colombo. The accompanying rituals enhanced local power of the commander both in private and in official affairs. That is why many Company officials also benefited personally from keeping up the indigenous system. The comparison with the political culture in Kandy can be taken further.

Just as in Kandy, the work department or *badda*, ran parallel to this administrative system. This system was caste-based and each caste had its own appointed headmen. These headmen held much less political power than the *mudaliyārs*, unless it was a department that was of use to the Company, such as the cinnamon or elephant department. In the case of the cinnamon department, the native chief was in fact replaced by a European. Here yearly rituals were performed when the cinnamon peelers presented the governor with paresses to reinforce the subjection of the cinnamon peelers to the Company, and at the same time to single them out and praise them for their performance during the previous year. During these *paresses*, the whole cinnamon department gathered in Colombo, the peelers danced and drummed for the governor and the governor handed out medals to those who performed best. The rituals of these *paresses* best reveal the influence of the local political culture on the daily practices of the Dutch administrators. The governor, originally a merchant, took up the role of king: perhaps not as divine as the king of Kandy, but with just as much bravura.[125] It is not entirely clear how the other *badda*-departments functioned and how much the Dutch made use of it, nor how much the Dutch interfered with these sections prior to

1780. But as shall be seen later, from that time onwards, the Dutch grew more and more interested in it.

2.5.3 *Administrative organization of Dutch Ceylon – Managing indigenous power*

That the Company lorded over the native collaborators was not unique, but fits the general pattern of indirect rule in Asia; similar practices were found, for example, on Java. As long as the Company rule was really indirect as it was in the Vanni or along the east coast, the relationship with the native collaborators was relatively smooth. The relationship became complicated as soon as the Company started to meddle with the inland affairs as a result of growing interests in the interior. This was certainly the case in the southwest and to a lesser extent in Jaffna. There expansion of colonial interests went hand in hand with conflicts and competition with the native headmen over land and labour resources. Therefore the Company was continually trying to find ways to undermine the power of the native headmen, while at the same time it heavily depended on this group of people for the colonial administration. In that way, it did not differ very much from the situation in the Kandyan Kingdom.

The Buddhist establishments played an important part in the organization of the Kandyan Kingdom, and they functioned foremost to counterbalance the power of the aristocracy. In the Dutch area religion played a strategic role in the countries' organization, but in a slightly different manner. From the beginning the Dutch had propagated Protestantism in the areas under their control to counterbalance the Portuguese Catholic and Kandyan Buddhist influence. The strongest measures were taken against the Roman Catholics, who where encouraged to convert to Protestantism. All Catholic establishments like churches and schools were taken over by the Protestants. By 1780, the position of the Catholics was marginal and the Company continued to trouble them with onerous marriage regulations and other things. The measures against Buddhism faded over time. What remained the most important issue in that respect was that *mudaliyārs* and other headmen had to be Protestant to be qualified for the job. Often they converted to Protestantism in name only and remained practising Buddhists.[126]

The school system that was set up in the context of this religious policy was originally meant to teach Protestantism properly to the children. In the southwest they actually built on a tradition of Buddhist village schools, which had first been turned into catholic schools by the Portuguese. In the north, where Portuguese missionary activity had been most intensive, a network of village schools and churches had also come into being. The schoolmasters were appointed by the *dessava* and their

task was to instruct the children properly. In practice, the indigenous schoolmaster, who was based in the villages, often functioned more as official registrar than as religious instructor. He kept a record of births marriages and deaths in the villages under his supervision and people had to pay for these registrations. The schoolmaster remains an obscure figure in the inland administration and it is difficult to assess exactly the power of these men. Because of their administrative function as registrars the schoolmasters could have functioned as a counterbalance against the power of the *mudaliyārs*. Through their records, the Dutch could get a view of society and keep some grip on the people independently of the *mudaliyārs*.[127]

From 1740, several *landraden* were established to deal with civil disputes and minor offences in the interior and at the smaller stations. The *landraad* was installed by Governor van Imhoff as an institutional innovation to assist the *dessava*, who earlier had to deal with cases alone. The native headmen were involved in the *landraad* because they were much better acquainted with the local situation and the customary laws. Interestingly, the customary laws of some groups were much better known than others. The Hindu code of law, or *Thesalavami*, was written up by the Dutch early in the eighteenth century and was usually applied in the Tamil districts. Islamic law was applied to the Muslim traders and the Malays. No clear description of Sinhalese laws existed, therefore the advice of the *mudaliyārs* was necessary, although in many cases Dutch Roman law, which applied to the Europeans, was referred to when considered more suitable. The composition of the *landraad* varied from place to place, but in general half consisted of natives. In some places like Matara, the *landraad* functioned as a court of appeal against decisions of the *dessava*; in others like Jaffna the *dessava* made his decisions in consultation with the *landraad*. The *landraad* was also in charge of the land registration and issued title deeds.[128]

The land registration was something which was taken up by Van Imhoff in the same period, again to counter the power of the *mudaliyārs* and other headmen. So far the Dutch had relied on them to know who possessed which lands and what portion of its produce was due to the government. The same counted for the personal services which the people were supposed to perform for the government. Convinced that the headmen were manipulating the situation and that the Company was losing revenue, Van Imhoff decided to register the people and the land. The Portuguese had had a similar registration called a *tombo*, which they had probably taken over from their predecessors of the Kotte kingdom. It was a huge project, for which the *dessavas* had primary responsibility. It began in Jaffna and was later taken up in the Colombo and Galle districts. Van Imhoff's *tombos* proved practical, but even though the books were kept up

to date by the *landraad*, many mistakes were made and after about ten years the books became useless and a new registration campaign had to be undertaken. Similar registrations were undertaken in the 1770s and 1780s. The *tombos* are perhaps the most manifest examples of the growing Dutch interference with local society in the eighteenth century.[129] In contrast to the *landraden*, which were welcomed as new institutions, the land- and head-registrations were not readily accepted at the time, and the natives even rebelled against them. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that they served as references in land disputes well into the twentieth century.

Another way of limiting the Company's dependency on the headmen was to take away the function of tax collection from them and to farm it out to the highest bidder. In this way the Dutch ensured an income from the land, while competition at the auctions in August drove up the price. The Company had the right to refuse the highest bidder if they thought him unreliable. The person who "won" the privilege had to pay his bid at once or in three monthly instalments. This system had become common in all fields of taxation in the course of the eighteenth century and made it possible for men of substance to invest their capital and increase their income. Thus it opened up native administration to outsiders like the Muslim traders and the *Chetties*, who had money to invest.[130] This subject is still rather obscure and has not been touched upon much in the literature, but will receive more attention in the following chapters. The organization of bonded labour was not farmed out in this manner, but remained the responsibility of the headmen.

2.6 *Conclusion*

The commercial aims of the Dutch East India Company dictated the shape of its government and the development of its policies. Colonial administration really centred on the three major towns and regional administrative centres, while inland affairs were dealt with indirectly. However the problems in the cinnamon department and the need to finance the government with profits from local taxes and trade drew the Company further inland. It meant that the Company got more and more involved locally, which in turn required the creation of new instruments to control the native headmen.

In all, the Dutch ruled the interior of the island through a dynamic system of indirect rule. The power relations between the native headmen and the Company were under continuous development. In the southwest, the Company increasingly tried to control the affairs of the headmen in order to achieve the aims of government. In some cases it had to compete with

these headmen for local resources of agricultural products and labour. The Dutch tried to tackle the autonomous power of the headmen by bureaucratic devices like the *tombo* registers. The new agricultural policy of Governor Schreuder, to protect the cinnamon trees, made the relation between the headmen and the Company even more difficult, for the policy went entirely against their interests. There were also differences in the form of indirect rule between the core regions and the peripheral regions like the Vanni in the north, which was really governed from a distance and without interference from the Company.

After a long period of peaceful coexsistence, the relationship with Kandy deteriorated in the 1750s. This went hand in hand with the social unrest in the southwest as a result of Governor Schreuder's restrictive agricultural policies and political unrest and succession struggles in the Kingdom. The war between the Kingdom of Kandy and the Company between 1762 and 1766 resulted in a new balance of power to the benefit of the Company thanks to its logistical and material advantages. It did not result in the Kingdom's collapse, but it did lead to its further isolation.

The most important difference between the Kandyan and the Dutch administration was of course that while the Kandyans ruled the interior as a kingdom, the Dutch ruled according to the balance sheet. The governor never held the same sacred status that the king did, even though he tried to compensate for this by observing old rituals like the *paresses*. While the king tried to maintain his power by a policy of divide and rule among his nobles, the Dutch used an extensive bureaucracy as a means of checks and balance. Perhaps the most successful institutional innovation of the Dutch were the *landraden*, the authority of which in relation to small civil cases and land disputes was easily accepted by the natives and the headmen alike. However, often enough it appeared that the bureaucracy did not fulfil its aim entirely and that the Company had to fall back on the practice of divide and rule. The headmen had to be bound to the Company by gifts and rituals just as in Kandy. In fact, even among the Europeans, personal relations with the governor played an important role in their career track which relied for a large part on his good-will.

CHAPTER THREE

BEYOND CINNAMON: DUTCH INTERIOR POLICY 1780-1795

3.1 *Introduction*

During the hundred fifty years of their presence on Sri Lanka the Dutch produced a huge amount of maps and plans of the island. Recently D. Paranavitana and R.K. de Silva brought these together in one publication.[131] The atlas provides a fine visual overview of the colonial intervention that took place progressively over the years. The early maps show the whole island, with all the Dutch forts along the coast and only the interiors of the southwest and the Jaffna peninsula outlined as Dutch possessions. Often, the rest of the map is filled with bushes, rocks and exotic animals, although sometimes indigenous regional names are given. Early drawings are also found of the various forts on the coast. It is not however until the 1750s that we get a better picture of the various provinces of the interior. Balthus van Lier's detailed maps of some of the districts of Galle, Colombo and Jaffna reveal some of the increased inland activities discussed in the last chapter.[132]

In 1789, long after the war with Kandy was over, a large map of the whole island was drawn up for Governor Willem Jacob van de Graaff (1785-1794). The boundary between the Dutch and Kandyan regions was drawn by a clear red line, and the designer of the map gave the Dutch a very generous share of the island. What makes it so interesting is that the enormous map provides very detailed information on all areas under Dutch rule including the marginal areas, like the Magampattu and Panoa in the southeast and the Vanni in the north. The areas are split up into administrative sections, churches are shown, villages are named, large water tanks are indicated and even some of the outstanding ancient ruins around Anuradhapura have been given a place on the map.[133] Other maps of the interior drawn up in the same period show us the exact location of cinnamon gardens and plantations in the vicinity of Colombo, and there are detailed plans for irrigation works in the Mannar region and Matara. These maps underscore the fact that the 1780s and 1790s were a period of yet more intense colonial encroachment on the island.[134]

Governor Van de Graaff, who had commissioned these maps, is a forgotten figure in Dutch and Sri Lankan historiography. If he is mentioned at all, it is in relation to the cinnamon plantations or regarding his dramatic fate after he left Ceylon for Batavia.[135] The contemporary sources

present an ambiguous picture of the period and the governor in question. While someone like Jaques Fabrice van Senden, the head of Trincomalee, called him affectionately "the illustrious brother who […] steers the little vessel Ceylon",[136] Pieter Sluijsken, the commander of Galle repeatedly labelled him authoritarian and selfish and accused him of developing sinister plans and projects on the island.[137]

Selfish or illustrious, it is clear that Van de Graaff was an interesting character. Combined with the dynamic impression that we get from the maps made during his rule, this makes one curious about this last phase of Dutch rule on the island. The events of the 1750s and 1760s foreshadowed the global unrest and political changes of the 1780s. The disintegration of the Mughal empire, the British and French agitation in South India, the rise of strong regional power holders like the Sultan of Mysore and the general declining position of the VOC in the Indian Ocean brought the crisis close to the island, and changes in Dutch policies on interior Sri Lanka should be placed in the context of these developments.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first discusses on a more general level these changes in policy as well as the international and local impulses for change. A need for economic resources pushed the Company further inland as it searched for more efficient forms of surplus extraction and actively involved itself in the agricultural production. The last required large investments that could be easily recouped in the long run. The second part of the chapter discusses the changes in policy and the continued colonial intrusion in the core areas. How did this further encroachment affect the relationship between the native headmen and the Company, a relationship that was already tense and problematic before the 1780s, as we saw in the last chapter? Chapter Four also deals with the peripheral areas that, as seen in the map of 1789, were more or less taken over by the colonial government, and it includes a discussion of the new encounters in these underdeveloped regions and the attempts of the colonial officials to impose more direct forms of rule here.

3.2 *Changing circumstances – the cinnamon plantations*

After years of travelling in the east, the famous Swedish botanist Thunberg resided in Ceylon between 4 January 1777 and 14 March 1778. Following his return to Europe he published a two-volume account of his experiences and he devoted several chapters to his stay on Ceylon. His account includes lengthy descriptions of the island's flora, and he also gives some insight into the social life on the island. The systematic cultivation of cinnamon attracted his interest. In his description of the garden

of Governor Falck he ponders on the problematic start of the cultivation of cinnamon. He writes how the cinnamon trees were naturally spread around the forest with the help of the birds who dumped its pits after eating its fruits. The Dutch originally believed that cinnamon trees only germinated in the wild and that it could not successfully be cultivated. This lasted until Falck started growing young cinnamon trees in his garden in 1769. As Thunberg recounts:

> They planted the pits and these germinated well, but soon the young plants withered and died. They searched carefully for the cause of this destruction so premature and unexpected: it was discovered that the Sinhalese who gained considerable profit from the bark of the wild cinnamon trees, feared that their profits would diminish from its cultivation and its propagation by individuals. Therefore they decided to ruin the Dutch attempts and succeeded by pouring hot water over the young stems.[138]

After this ruse was discovered, many new trees were planted and grew up yielding successful harvests of the cinnamon bark. More plantations were started in Sitavake, Kalutara, and Matara. Thunberg expressed his enthusiasm about this project and prophesied that in the course of time the Company would draw much more profit from the cultivated trees than from those in the forest, the produce of which was decreasing.[139]

It was the *dessava* De Coste who was responsible for the spread of the cinnamon plantations when it was decided to produce cinnamon on a larger scale by involving the headmen in planting cinnamon gardens during the 1770s. In 1774, the Dutch government started handing out bonuses and medals to those headmen who involved themselves in the cultivation of cinnamon trees. In 1776, it was decided to encourage everyone in the Colombo and Galle *dessavony* to cultivate the tree by promising 1 rixdollar per 30 pounds of cinnamon.[140] Despite these incentives and Thunberg's enthusiasm, in 1780 the majority of the cinnamon still came from the "wild" trees in the Dutch and Kandyan forests. In fact it was only in 1786 that the government commenced with paying out the promised bounty.[141] Of course it took some time before the newly planted trees were ready to be peeled. Another reason for the tardiness was that, in the initial years, mistakes had been made in the type of ground on which the trees were planted and often the distance between the trees was too small, as a result of which the trees stood in each other's way and did not grow as large as they should.

It was under Governor Van de Graaff that the plantations really took off. With great zeal he promoted the cultivation of cinnamon. He managed to excite many more of the headmen into cultivating the tree through the rewards, and even military and civil servants of the Company began planting trees. These operations cost the Company about 33,000 guilders a year, mainly to cover the costs of rice for the labourers who

cleared and maintained the lands and planted the trees.[142] They generally worked without further payment as part of their corvée duties. By the end of the 1780s, Van de Graaff came to realize that there were not enough people to labour on the plantations of the Company and the other gardens, which after being planted, had to be constantly maintained to prevent them from being overgrown. The demand on the cinnamon peelers and the coolies had become too great.

Moreover, in 1789 Batavia wrote to Colombo that the expenses for the cinnamon gardens were growing out of hand, and instructed the governor to delay the work for the time being. In 1791, Van de Graaff came up with a new proposal, which had been suggested by his *mahāmudaliyār* Nicolaas Dias Abeysinghe. The Company's plantations were to be split up in small plots and given away to the cinnamon peelers, who had to maintain these and were responsible for peeling the bark. In his memoir to Johan Gerard van Angelbeek, written four years later, Van de Graaff reflected enthusiastically on this measure. To further stimulate the peelers, official title deeds, in Dutch and Sinhalese, were printed in September 1793 to be given away to the peelers who had received such lands. In total fifteen hundred deeds were printed.[143]

During Van de Graaff's tenure, the Company servants and local chiefs endeavoured in planting cinnamon trees, and once they had completed a garden they often sold it to the Company.[144] The chiefs were rewarded for their loyal work with golden medals and other presents. Van de Graaff also found another means to stimulate the production of the cinnamon, one that could also be put into practice for other products like pepper, coffee or areca nuts. This was to give the Company's wasteland to anyone ready to cultivate it, and to demand in return that one-third of the ground was to be cultivated with one of these products, depending on the type of soil. This type of land lease was called *thunval*.[145] Many people therefore planted cinnamon trees in their private gardens for the Company, and had these peeled by the cinnamon peelers. The *dessavas* and the *mudaliyārs* were in charge of granting of these waste lands. Altogether, Van de Graaff's measures led to the advantageous situation in the 1790s that most of the cinnamon collected for the VOC to be sold in the Dutch Republic, usually around 5,000 bales or 400,000 pounds, came from the private gardens and the Company's plantations. As the rest was still peeled from the Company's forests, Van de Graaff emphasized in 1794 that it was no longer necessary to harvest the king's forests.

Among those who opposed Van de Graaff's measures figured Pieter Sluijsken. He wrote long petitions in which he explained to the government of Ceylon and to the High Government in Batavia that Van de Graaff's measures were a disaster. He argued that the trees were not planted on the right grounds and that it was unwise to let the natives grow

cinnamon because they would not know which seeds to use. According to Burnand, Sluijsken was particularly troubled by the developments in the cinnamon production because he had been captain of the cinnamon for eight years in the 1770s, but had not been responsible for the planting of the cinnamon trees. He was still working hard on his career, and the new developments diminished the function of captain of the cinnamon, and therefore they jeopardized his career.[146] In any case, Sluijsken's writings against Van de Graaff had far-reaching results for Van de Graaff's career and for his reputation among historians.[147]

The historian Kanapathypillai has been much influenced by Sluijsken's writings in his publication on the cinnamon production in the last decades of the eighteenth century. In consequence, he argues that the planting of cinnamon was unsuccessful. He used Sluijsken's arguments concerning the quality of the cinnamon, and corroborates these by arguing that the plantations never produced more than 5,000 bales. This is a strange argument, since the yearly requirements from the Netherlands were 5,000 bales.[148] To secure the right type of cinnamon for the European taste, samples were sent of different trees from different grounds to the Netherlands, yet he forgets to mention that the *Heren Zeventien* were content with the quality of the produce.[149] Van de Graaff presented the endeavours as a great success in his *memorie van overgave* to his successor Van Angelbeek in July 1794. Moreover, and upon their arrival in Ceylon, the British found an abundance of cinnamon in the Company's stores and managed to get enough cinnamon from the plantations and gardens for the first two years.[150] This underlines Van de Graaff's success.

More interesting is Kanapathypillai's discussion of illicit private trade, which was absolutely forbidden but daily business according to some early British officials on the island.[151] Clearly the High Government in Batavia worried about this too and this was one of the reasons why it planned to write to the government of Ceylon in 1797, in case the island was to return under Dutch rule, that no further expansion of the cinnamon culture was required.[152]

Leaving the discussion on the quality and quantity aside, there were three important elements in this new policy that need to be highlighted because of their further consequence. First, self-sufficiency in cinnamon cultivation relieved the government of its dependence on Kandy. As we will see in Chapter Six, this did not imply an improvement of relations between the two, because Van de Graaff had in the mean time readjusted his ambitions and set his mind on the fertile lowland districts of Kandy. Second, now that the cinnamon was being cultivated, the inhabitants of Colombo and Galle were freed from the strict regulations regarding clearances of land, and *chēna* and coconut cultivation. Thirdly, the native headmen were cooperating enthusiastically in the cinnamon enterprise

and must have enriched themselves by it. The problematic situation as it had existed in the 1750s seems to have blown over by the 1780s and this created space for further agricultural development of the island. No doubt, the changing international circumstances drove Van de Graaff to strive hard for such development.

3.3 *Changing international conditions*

In the National Archives of Sri Lanka there is a letter book of correspondence between Governor Van Angelbeek and the Commissioners General, written during 1794 and 1795. The Commissioners General, Nederburgh and Frijkenius, had been sent to the east to research the state of finances and government in the east and to set up a plan for improvements.[153] Part of the correspondence concerned the finances of Ceylon, which they found in a disappointing state after their arrival in Batavia in 1794. They wrote a letter on 21 May 1794 to Ceylon urging Governor Van de Graaff to justify himself before he embarked for Batavia, where he was supposed to take up the position of Director General. The letter was only received in February 1795 and Van de Graaff had already left for Batavia, but his successor Van Angelbeek answered the letter and quite extensively explained and justified Van de Graaff's spending pattern. In his reply Van Angelbeek pointed at certain changing circumstances that had affected the Company's position on the island adversely.[154]

Van Angelbeek could not deny that the general expenses of the government of Ceylon had risen in the previous fifteen years. In fact, he gave an overview of the expenses between 1779 and 1792 and showed how they had increased during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1784) and remained high ever since.[155] Of course, in the first instance this rise was related to that particular war. Extra expenses were made to improve the defence works and to maintain the additional troops, namely three companies of *Oosterlingen,* that came to the island. These extra troops were sent from Batavia, and had been recruited at higher wages than the regular troops on Ceylon. In addition, in 1783 the regiment of Luxemburg arrived from the Cape, which in turn added to the increase of expenses.[156] The end of the war did not result in a decline of expenses because the extra troops stayed on until 1788/89, when they were replaced by a new mercenary regiment from Switzerland under the Count de Meuron. The preparations for the homeward voyage of the Luxemburgers and the arrival of the Meuron regiment caused the extra expenses for that year. The large expenses for the year 1791-1792 had a military cause: troops from the Würtemberg regiment arrived, as did four companies of *Oosterlingen* from Batavia and a batallion of Sipahis from Tuticorin. Thus,

according to Van Angelbeek, the military expenses accounted for the larger part of the rise in costs of the Ceylon government.[157]

However, Van Angelbeek continued, there were other reasons for the rise in expenses. First of all, a lack of bullion led to a devaluation of the copper coins and letters of credit and caused an increase in prices for basic necessities like rice and arrack. He pointed out that while earlier on a *legger* of arrack from Batavia had cost about 28 rixdollars, now it costs 50 rixdollars. At the same time, the Company had issued new regulations on the supply of arrack to the troops and thus forced the government of Ceylon to take on the extra expenses. Products from Europe had also risen in price since the war. The continuing tense situation with European competitors after the war had forced the government to invest in the repair of fortifications. In particular those of Oostenburg (Trincomalee) and Galle had needed much repair. Another point was that while during Falck's governorship Ceylon had been adequately supplied with rice from Batavia, this source of supply fell off after the war and the government of Ceylon was forced to purchase more expensive rice from Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal. Finally, the work on the cinnamon plantations and gardens had required large investments from the Company; however, Van Angelbeek quickly added, these investments were already paying off.

Van Angelbeek also compared the general income under Van de Graaff with that under Falck. By doing so, he put Van de Graaff's expenses in perspective and made them look less dramatic. Moreover, he pointed out that the merits of Van de Graaff's government really lay in his capability of increasing the income of the island.[158] The average income under Falck was *f* 557,244 and this grew to an average of *f* 845,291.125 during Van de Graaff. This was an increase of nearly fifty per cent. Basically, Van Angelbeek reasoned that the extra expenses made by Van de Graaff were to be explained by circumstantial factors, while his enterprising spirit made sure that at least the damage was limited by the increasing revenue. Therefore, Van Angelbeek argued, Van de Graaff was not to be blamed for the bad financial situation of the island's government, but rather to be praised for his endeavours![159]

3.4 *Company in crisis*

Before moving on to the actual measures taken by Van de Graaff to raise the income, it is important to explore at greater length the circumstantial factors mentioned by Van Angelbeek and place them in a wider context, in order to fully understand their implications on the government of Ceylon. They were all related in one way or another to the Company's worsening situation in Asia from about 1780 onwards. Van Angelbeek's

remarks are more or less confirmed by Els Jacobs in her study on the developments in the business of the East India Company in Asia in the eighteenth century.[160]

Perhaps the most profound change that occurred over the course of the eighteenth century was the changing pattern of trade within Asia. Jacobs pays much attention to the growing importance of the textile trade and the simultaneous growth of the British and French trading companies in the region of South Asia. Not only did the British and the French manage to obtain good contracts with local producers and to expand their authority on the Indian subcontinent, they also managed to obtain large amounts of the copper that was so necessary for this branch of trade. Instead of Japan, where the Dutch got their copper from exclusively, they turned to Sweden and China. In doing so they undermined the strong position of the Dutch in the intra-Asian trading network, and this situation was enhanced by the fact that the Dutch received less and less copper from the Japanese in the course of the eighteenth century. Consequently, by the 1780s the Company was suffering from a serious lack of copper, not only in Batavia, but also in South Asia. In contrast, the booming business of the British brought more and more copper into the Indian continent, and caused inflation of prices there. Indeed, as pointed out by Van Angelbeek, Ceylon was affected negatively by this development. All products usually derived from India, mainly rice and cloth, now increased in price, while the amount of copper available on the island to pay for it was falling.[161]

In addition, in the aftermath of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the VOC lost most of its factories on the Indian subcontinent and thereby any advantageous access to its products. The position in Bengal had been steadily deteriorating since the 1750s, and was sharply reduced after the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War when the holdings on the Coromandel coast were also abandoned. Moreover, with the growth of British power on the subcontinent, the security situation for Ceylon changed considerably. The war had exposed the Dutch weakness on the one hand and revealed the maritime and military strength and capability of the British and the French powers on the other. Hence, investments had to be made to repair the defence works and a larger garrison of European troops was installed on the island now. In 1789, a military commission was sent to Asia to examine further the military establishment and to advise the *Heren Zeventien* and the High Government of Batavia on the investments that needed to be made.[162] Van de Graaff took the recommendations of the military commission seriously and began repairing the fortifications even before the *Heren Zeventien* or the High Government approved, which added to Batavia's discontent about Van de Graaff's government.[163] Thus, Van Angelbeek was right to point this out as an important expense for the

government on Ceylon. On top of everything, the generally bad situation of the Company required a cut in expenses, and Ceylon was no longer furnished with products from elsewhere in Asia on the scale it had been, and fewer and fewer products were arriving from Europe.[164]

To conclude then, the shifting trading patterns, the international financial and political situation all affected the government of Ceylon. Van Angelbeek was correct in noting these various factors in his letter to the commissioners general. One of the major problems for the government that resulted from this situation was the lack of rice for the garrisons and the Company's labourers. Falck sought a solution for this in arranging rice contracts with Indian traders and local Dutch entrepreneurs. This once more aroused the interests of the Dutch in the elephants, because the traders from Bengal were still interested therein. The *Chetty* Waitelinge obtained such a contract and secured a regular import of rice in exchange for elephants.[165] Another trader, Blume, proposed a regular supply of rice in exchange for the monopoly in chank shells. In the 1780s, we come across many more such enterprising men, like Dormieux, Graaf van Bijland, and Tranchel from Coromandel and various Jewish and Armenian traders from Malabar.[166] Any opportunity to trade in rice was seized with both hands by the government. However, it could never provide enough and above all, it was still too expensive.[167] Van de Graaff embarked on a new plan to better the financial situation of the island's government and increase the paddy production. Two major themes recur in the following analysis of his policies on the island, namely his administrational adjustments in the core areas and the agricultural projects in the periphery.

3.5 *A testing ground in Galle*

A glance through the *Plakkaatboek*, a compilation of all proclamations made by the Company on Ceylon, and collected and published by Lodewijk Hovy in 1991, shows that Van de Graaff was an exceptionally enterprising governor. During his term of office, Van de Graaff published twice as many proclamations as his predecessor, Falck.[168] Many of these dealt with the inland business of land possessions, the tasks of headmen and rules for the tax farmers. Although these subjects were not entirely absent in the proclamations of his predecessors, their frequency is remarkable. The same is true of Van de Graaff's proclamations regarding life in the towns, where new regulations were issued to secure order and improve health and hygiene. These themes had begun to appear in the last year of Falck's governorship, but then only in the region of Galle and Matara, where Van de Graaff, not coincidentally, was commander.

Van de Graaff had arrived on Ceylon in the 1750s, as had so many others who held high office at this time. On Ceylon he had served as fiscal in Galle and as cinnamon captain, among other functions. In the 1770s, he moved from Ceylon to become head administrator in Malabar and in 1776 he was appointed director of Surat. He fled from Surat to Ceylon during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, when in 1781 that factory had been taken over by the British. In the same year, he was appointed to succeed Falck, who was to move to Batavia to take up the office of Director General.[169] Falck however refused to do so and stayed on. For that reason, Van de Graaff was appointed governor and director of Coromandel. In June 1784, he was given the commandership of Galle when that position fell vacant on the departure for Batavia of Arnoldus de Lij.[170] His predecessor's eighteen-year-long commandership had been conservative. De Lij had been concerned mainly with the renovation of the town Galle, the transhipments in Galle and the regulations of the bazaars. He was on good terms with Governor Falck, but kept to himself and the business in Galle. Some of the remaining fragments of De Lij's private correspondence show that he was trying for a better position already in 1773 and that he was much grieved to be passed over many times by the authorities in Batavia.[171]

During his short stint at Galle (June 1784 to January 1785), Van de Graaff ruled like a whirlwind. The minutes of the political council of Galle clearly reflect a change of policy: from the moment of his arrival the regular reports of the daily business on the docks and in the town, which before took in the larger part of the minutes, were interrupted by all sorts of new administrative considerations. Van de Graaff started with cleaning up and tidying the town. He decided to have a new registry made of all inhabitants, and removed all unwanted subjects like the sick beggars, "miserable and helpless people and among them many with contagious diseases, who lay begging here and there along the public roads, and often die in a pitiful manner". He decided to have a special institution erected, where they could be cured and if possible put to work.[172]

These measures were not taken out of the blue. In the previous decades, Galle must have turned into a very unhealthy place. In his memorandum written in 1784 for Van de Graaff, De Lij stated that at least a quarter of the garrison was infected with some contagious disease, which he called *De Gaalse ziekte* (the Galle sickness). Blaming the water supply, he had constructed a pipe-line from Unawatuna, the next bay to the east, to secure clean water for the inhabitants. Van de Graaff may have suspected from De Lij's description that he was dealing with a venereal disease, because he banned all prostitutes from the inner city.[173] Hygiene was clearly high on the list of Van de Graaff, and his proclamation regarding the inspection of cattle for slaughter, to prevent sick cattle from being

slaughtered for food, supports that assumption. But safety and discipline were equally important.[174] He decided to renovate the hospital in town and to have certain other company buildings repaired. He made proper regulations regarding the installation of street lights at night and picking up garbage. He limited the amount of *schaggerijen* (pubs) and forbade cockfights and other gambling games. All these measures give the impression that Van de Graaff was consciously working on a civilization programme in this Eurasian port city, but at the same time he tried to limit the costs of the administration of the town and the country as much as possible.

He decided to contract work on the buildings to private builders, who had to come with an offer of the costs beforehand, instead of taking on carpenters on regular wages. By doing so, he put the risk of extra costs with the contractor and not with the Company. In the secretary's office, he took similar measures. He reached the conclusion that the Company continuously hired too many clerks, who were neither competent nor hardworking, and he removed some from the secretary in Galle to Matara, where they could work on the *tombo* registration. He decided to stimulate work by giving the headwriters a certain sum above their salary, for which they could choose to either employ other writers to perform their assigned tasks or work harder themselves. In this way, aspiring clerks had to work hard to prove their value before they were hired for a fixed position.[175]

Van de Graaff was not merely interested in the town administration of Galle, but also looked inland at the administration of the Matara *dessavony* and Galle *corle*. His first letter to Colombo as commander of Galle, written on 23 June 1784, mentions the absence of any maps of the Galle *corle* and the Matara *dessavony*, and he wondered whether the copy, which he knew to be available in Colombo, could be send to Galle to be copied.[176] This reveals on the one hand the neglect of the inland region by his predecessor De Lij, and on the other hand Van de Graaff's eagerness to gain a thorough understanding of the whole region. Moreover, Van de Graaff made a tour through the Matara and Galle districts in July and August, and in the following months he took some far-reaching decisions about the inland administration.[177]

First, he decided to forbid in the future the pocketing of *paresses*, or gifts, by the headmen from their inferiors. Second, he issued a proclamation fixing the headmen's duties to the Company, and he had all headmen sign that they would perform the duties as ordered. They were to report yearly on paper what they had done and achieved. A famine in Matara in the months of October and November, due to mismanagement of the fields, may have convinced Van de Graaff that the headmen needed stricter job descriptions and supervision. A native *sabandar* was appoint-

ed to check whether the headmen properly fulfilled their duties.[178] Moreover, the authority of the minor headmen to decide in civil cases was reinforced, the inhabitants were to litigate before their village-head, and if this person could not reach a decision, the case was to be brought before the head of the *corle* or *pattu*. Only when no solution satisfactory to all parties could be reached could the case be brought before the *dessava*.[179]

At the same time, Van de Graaff aspired to increase in the revenue. He decided to farm out the paddy-tax since he felt that much more was produced than the share that was levied, and consequently he wrote down new conditions for the rent of the paddy-tax. He also ordered a new registry to be made of the Moorish inhabitants of Galle and Matara, in order to make them properly perform their *oeliam s*ervice, but also allowed them to pay a capitation tax of 12 rixdollars instead.[180] Finally, he noted that in Matara there were too many *naindes*, or coolies, who managed to get themselves registrated as *lascorin*, and he warned the *dessava* of Matara because it implied a decline in the labour force. Eventually, he chose to put the *lascorins* to work more efficiently and proposed to the *dessava* of Matara that, since most of them were not of much use to the Company, they could best be employed in the planting of the trees in the government plantations, whereby he actually degraded them again to the position of nainde.[181]

Altogether, these were ambitious measures, taken in the span of half a year only. Many of these adjustments to the inland and town administration, Van de Graaff later issued island-wide, like the *plakkaat* regarding the *paresses*. Others were considered applicable to the southwest only and consequently put into practice in the Colombo *dessavony*. In all, Van de Graaff's period of office in Galle seems to have functioned as a phase in which he developed and tested his political ideas, which he was to put into practice as governor of Ceylon. At Galle, Van de Graaff showed a strong sense of authority over his Company inferiors and over the native headmen, characteristics that were also found in his administration as governor of Ceylon.

3.6 *An island-wide approach*

Although during the nine years of Van de Graaff's governorship, the focus was really on the inland government, the development of agriculture and increase of revenue, his zeal to improve the order, safety and hygiene in the coastal towns was no less apparent. For the town of Colombo, he reinstalled the neighbourhood councils with explicit and lenghty regulations.[182] To fight the rampant drunkenness among the soldiers, he cut the number of pubs in and around Colombo from one hundred sixteen to

only seventeen. Perhaps most conspicuous was his proclamation which allowed anyone to kill street-robbers at the scene of the crime.[183] He started a campaign to inoculate all inhabitants against small-pox and provided for an institute where widows and orphans could live and work, in order to improve their situation.[184] Before moving to the actual inland government, it has to be mentioned that Van de Graaff also continued his policy of cutting expenses by putting out construction work and other jobs to contractors on commission instead of keeping them all in regular service of the Company.

In the core areas of the Company's possessions on the island, the *dessavony* of Colombo and the Galle *corle*, Van de Graaff more or less followed the policies he had developed during his days in Galle. Thus, *dessava* De Cock of Colombo, was ordered early in 1785 to prepare proclamations concerning the headmen of the *corles* and *pattus* after the example of those issued for the headmen of Galle and Matara.[185] These proclamations are worth examining in more detail, since they reveal in many ways Van de Graaff's approach to the inland government. They are thirty-three in total, and deal with all aspects of inland government: the promotion of the cinnamon culture, the supervision of the paddy culture, the expansion of cash-cropping on the wastelands and the organization of the labour force.[186]

To start with the first two, related to cinnamon production. The central role of the headmen in the new system of cinnamon procurement has already been pointed out above, but the proclamations show how determined Van de Graaff was to involve the headmen further. He ordered them to keep a register of all existing plantings of cinnamon trees in their *corle* or *pattu* and to keep an eye on these plantings. The headmen also had to make sure that these were well maintained, and whenever possible they were to increase the number of plantings. Van de Graaff also exhorted them to devote their energies to planting cinnamon trees on all other suitable grounds. If they observed these duties with great zeal and with good results, the proclamation assured that this would be acknowledged and that they would receive a reward in the form of a medal with a necklace or any other object that would give them distinction. Moreover, their efforts would strengthen their own position, since good work was also rewarded with honourable jobs and duties. On the other hand, the proclamation stated explicitly, those who did not perform well would be put out of office.[187]

3.7 *Beyond cinnamon*

The next five points in the proclamations for the headmen of the *corles* and *pattus* of Colombo and Galle regarded supervision of the paddy cul-

ture. The headmen had to make sure that the paddy was sowed properly and on time. These proclamations also extended their authority beyond the Company lands to include all private land. The dykes and canals had to be kept in repair to prevent flooding of the fields. Moreover the headmen had to stimulate the growth of products like areca nuts, teakwood and cash crops like cardamom, pepper, and coffee and to make sure that no arable lands remained fallow. Abandoned service lands, called *mallepalle* or *nielepalle*, were placed in charge of the headmen and were to be cultivated by them.[188]

In the proclamation the headmen were not only deemed instrumental for the organization of agriculture, but also for the regulation of the labour force in their regions. They were to register all persons inhabiting the area, and had to make sure that everyone liable for service was employed on time. They were not allowed to take bribes from the inhabitants to avoid the service, nor were they allowed to use labourers for their own purpose. The appropriation of labour had always been a source of conflict between the headmen and the Company in the southwest. Now that the headmen were involved in cinnamon production and other cash crops for the Company, this problem was at least somewhat overcome: the labourers were now supposed to work in all plantations and the work was for the benefit of both the Company and the owner of the plantation.

A proclamation of 1787 underlines this once again. Everyone in Galle and Colombo was urged to cultivate cinnamon, pepper, coffee, areca nuts and other products. Anyone able to keep gardens in good order could apply to the *dessava* for rice to feed the labourers, and they could even ask for tools.[189] From the resolutions of the *Inlandsch Departement* it is clear that many such requests were actually made, and by all sorts of people: Moors, Burghers, *Karāvas*, *Chetties*, G*oyigama* headmen, and so on.[190] This new mode of production must have put a lot of pressure on the labourers of the southwest. Van de Graaff acknowledged this in his memoir, where he wrote that particularly in the Colombo *dessavony* not too much had been done to improve the paddy culture, because all workers were already involved in the gardens and plantations.[191] Thus, the headmen in Galle and Colombo were now held responsible for the production of cinnamon and other cash crops, for the paddy culture and the maintenance of the dykes and canals and lastly for the organization of the labour force.

Just as he had done in Matara in the fall of 1784, three years later Van de Graaff issued a proclamation fixing the juridical responsibilities of the headmen in Colombo from the village level upwards.[192] In June 1789 the governor of Ceylon commenced with the reformation of the *landraad* in which the headmen had always played an important part as members of the board of judges. The aim was to increase the efficiency of the courts and to prevent endless litigation, which obstructed the continuation of

work and was very expensive. At the same time, it meant that Van de Graaff more explicitly than ever integrated the native administrative hierarchy into that of the Company.[193] Apart from their involvement in the cinnamon plantings, these were not really new tasks, but by fixing their responsibilities in the proclamations the headmen could now be held responsible for it, and could be reproached and even fired if they did not perform well.[194]

The proclamations can be seen as a bureaucratic curtailment of the power of the headmen and a rationalization of the relationship between them and the Company, but it also empowered the headmen because they now acted under the aegis of the colonial administration. Governor Van de Graaff clearly strove to extend the Company's reach to the exploitation on the district level and thereby brought the countryside nearer to the Company. He used the existing administrative structure for this, thereby empowering the old elite, but at the same time establishing tighter control over it. The headmen went along with the new system, and did not protest against it. As shall be seen in the next section, one reason for their satisfaction with the stricter administrative rules was that the Dutch government's interests converged with their own. These measures correspond with those undertaken on Java from the mid-eighteenth century and examined in recent studies by Van Niel, Kwee and Ota on respectively Java's North East coast and Bantam. In that sense they are part of a larger pattern, but on Ceylon it was not until Van de Graaff that such measures were introduced.[195]

3.8 *Creating enterprising headmen*

The headmen certainly made money out of the new system. The remuneration for the cinnamon has been mentioned already. Moreover, the coconut industry was flourishing and was no longer hampered by the severe laws protecting all the cinnamon trees. In fact, the Company had turned it to its own advantage, by taxing coconut by-products, arrack and coir, and the transport of coconuts.[196] The higher Company officials in Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna received large shares of these taxes as emoluments, which was an additional reason for them to favour the coconut plantations. Michael Roberts sees in this boom in coconut production the major impetus for the rise of members of the Karāva cast as capitalist entrepreneurs.[197] It will be clear by now that this boom was not an autonomous development, but one clearly related to the new Dutch policies which coincidentally stimulated coconut production.

The headmen were stimulated to endeavour in development projects and made use of the coolie labour and the lands for free. Kotelawele has

suggested that their power and economic position increased much over the eighteenth century, a view confirmed here. According to Kotelawele, the headmen had always suffered from a lack of money to substantiate their personal power over their inferiors.[198] The introduction of money in the rural economy could explain their enthusiasm for the plantation enterprises in particular, because the Company paid them cash for the cinnamon and other trade goods they produced. In that way, the growth of their power was not an independent development or a side effect of the Company's policy, but a direct result of the Dutch government of Ceylon's efforts to monetarize the local economy. The success of the *mudaliyārs* led to a new lifestyle and they spent their money on Dutch-style houses and furniture, which gave them more prestige in the view of their subjects. This all points to an unmatched economic and (material) cultural convergence of the elite of the southwest and the Dutch Company hierarchy and helps explain the British surprise and mistrust of the native headmen in the southwest when they reached Ceylon.[199]

In fact, the governor offered not only the native headmen but anyone with sufficient interest and capital the opportunity to endeavour in agricultural undertakings on a scale unheard of before. The *mahāmudaliyār* of the governor's gate Nicolas Dias Abeysinghe and his son Balthasar certainly took the lead in this. In August 1784, the *mahāmudaliyār* signed a contract with the Company that he would attempt to clear and develop the fertile estate Diviture in the northwest of the Galle province. Some investment of the Company was required and he was given five years to make the enterprise profitable and to return the Company's investments. After these five years the Company would decide whether it considered it fruitful to keep the grounds. If not, the grounds were to be given in lease to the *mahāmudaliyār* in question, who would in return cultivate part of it for the Company. It was a large project but if successfully executed it would provide the Company with extra paddy from the lowlands and with cinnamon, pepper, coffee and timber from the highlands. In the first years all went according to plan, and not much was heard of it.[200]

In 1788, Mattheus Petrus Raket (son of Bartholomeus Raket, commander of Jaffna) and P.W. van Schuler were commissioned to investigate the development of the estate. They concluded that progress was hampered by the lack of enthusiasm for the project on the part of the commander of Galle, Dyonisius Kraaijenhoff. He replied immediately with an extensive letter to the governor in which he argued that it was not his fault, but that of the *mahāmudaliyār* Nicolas Dias Abeysinghe and his son Balthasar. He pointed out that the commissioners had been misled by the natives, who, in fear of the *mahāmudaliyār* and his son, had only spoken in ways that would show them in a good light. He pointed at mismanagement by both Abeysinghes, their intrigues against other native headmen

and their rough treatment of the inhabitants. After Kraaijenhoff's departure the same year, Pieter Sluijsken took over the position of commander of Galle and complained to the government on the same grounds. He wanted a new commission to control the affairs on the estate and Batavia finally commissioned him to do so himself in 1790, but he failed to complete this assignment before he departed for Suratte in 1792. By then, Diederich Thomas Fretz, the new commander, investigated the matter and came to the conclusion that the *mahāmudaliyār* had done his work properly, that there were certain problems in the estate concerning flooding, but these were beyond his power and needed to be managed on a larger scale.[201]

Abeysinghe had attracted a group of roaming and impoverished people from the lower castes of blacksmiths, coalburners and *oeliassen* to settle on the estate and when the contract with the Company ended, he proposed that these people should reside directly under himself for the next ten years. Apparently the *mahāmudaliyār* felt that he had a right to these people because he had given them land to live on and to till. This is difficult to prove, but such client relations between headmen and peasants must have existed on a much larger scale. Here the people had tied themselves to the Abeysinghes because they had given them a place to settle on the newly cleared estate of Diviture, but in other cases debt bondage could have played a role in such alliances.[202] This autonomous patron-client relationship with the peasants was something over which the Company had no direct control and was one of the major reasons why the Company officials could not do without the headmen, both in their official and private capacities.[203]

3.9 *Centralization of power: competition and cooperation*

Changes in the Company's inland policy had a variety of repercussions for Company servants. A good example is found in the Diviture case mentioned above. What is interesting about the complaints of Kraaijenhoff and Sluijsken is that they clearly felt that their power was threatened by the *mahāmudaliyār*. Kraaijenhoff explicitely stated that he felt humiliated by the governor because he thought he was being put on the same level as these native headmen over whom he had no power.[204] Moreover, through the *mahāmudaliyār*, the governor was extending his authority over the native department of Galle *corle* and the Matara *dessavony*, against the will of the commander in Galle because it seriously affected his personal authority.

The new agricultural policies were more directly to the advantage of the headmen than to that of the local Company officials. In addition,

while the tasks of the commanders were not particularly related to the inland policies, the *dessavas* and lieutenant *dessavas* were actually directly involved in the development of the interior. In the end, the governor's preference for direct contact with these inland administrators caused repeated problems with the commanders who felt superceded. The authority of the commanders was also affected in another way. Following his experiment in Galle, Van de Graaff issued an island-wide decree in 1785 forbidding the taking of *paresses.*[205] This time, the *plakkaat* was aimed not only at the native headmen, but also at the Company officials who traditionally received gifts from the headmen upon their appointment. This measure led to a considerable decrease in income and also negatively affected the status of the *dessavas* and the commanders, for in a symbolic way these gifts had functioned as a confirmation of their place in the existing hierarchy.[206]

Instead of the payment of *paresses* the headmen were forced to cultivate part of the grounds, in relation to their post, with such market crops as cinnamon, coffee, areca nut, teak and sappanwood. Van de Graaff expected much from this and it was his intention to expand this policy further, and to replace the labour services with such forced cultivation as he had done with the cinnamon peelers.[207] It was a way to get better in control over agricultural production and make more efficient use of labour.

On the other hand, the governor tried to stimulate Company officials to get more involved in the agricultural development of the island themselves. This was done through commissions and emoluments in the form of a share in the revenue from the government's plantations. The produce of the coconuts also became an important revenue for the Company administrators, and most of the coir fell into the hands of the commanders in this way. But Van de Graaff went even further by announcing in 1789 that the *dessavas* would receive fifty percent of the increase in revenue of the paddy tax above the 15-year average. In this way he hoped that the *dessavas* would try harder to promote the cultivation of paddy and would put more effort into its supervision. In general, many Company officials, civil and military, brought land under cultivation with the intention of selling it to the Company afterwards.[208]

Cash-crop cultivation also demanded more intense supervision to ensure that this was carried on on lands adequate for the task. This was too much work for the *dessavas* and Van de Graaff requested that Batavia appoint lieutenant *dessavas* as they had in earlier times. But the High Government refused because it was deemed too costly. In the end, Van de Graaff appointed Luitenant Mitman as overseer of the plantations against the will of Batavia. Yet it was not uncommon to invest military commanders with civil duties: in outposts like Trincomalee and Kalpitiya military and civil functions were often combined. On Ceylon Van de Graaff

reasoned that the military were stationed on the island and paid for by the VOC anyway, so why not make full use of their capabilities.[209]

The appropriation of military men for civil duties such as land surveying also occurred in the engineering department. The Company had always had a military engineer and mapmakers in service for the maintenance of the forts on the island. However, Van de Graaff decided to use their services for surveying gardens and plantations and for the maintenance and expansion of waterworks all over the island. He had new recruits specially trained in this work. In the 1780s and 1790s, men like Captain engineer Pieter Samuel Foenander and the accountant Johannes Wahlberg, and in the end the young recruit Schneider, worked hard on the development of plans for irrigation and canals. The most famous is Foenander's plan for the Giant's tank near Mannar, which brings us to yet another part of Van de Graaff's inland policy, namely the agricultural projects in the periphery; these are discussed more extensively in Chapter Five.[210]

Not all Company officials were charmed by the governor's schemes and some did not cooperate. Therefore, Van de Graaff tried to place in crucial posts officials who saw the advantage of agricultural development and who were loyal to him. In Matara, Christiaan van Angelbeek, son of Johan Gerard van Angelbeek and a cousin of Van de Graaff, was appointed *dessava* in 1786. In the spirit of Van de Graaff, he commenced with new clearances and the digging of new canals in the Magampattu, the eastern part of the Matara *dessavony*. Although as commander of Galle Sluijsken was officially superior to Christiaan van Angelbeek in the ruling hierarchy, he was passed over in the organization of this enterprise. When in 1790 a rebellion broke out in the Matara region, this gave way to another battle of words between the governor and Pieter Sluijsken.

On 18 April 1790, Christiaan van Angelbeek wrote Sluijsken that he had just learned the previous day that mobs from the Matara *dessavony* had started marching through the countryside en route for Matara. The direct cause was that their headmen were forcing them to work on the canal in the Magampattu, on orders of Van Angelbeek, while they already had to toil on the cinnamon plantations of Governor Van de Graaff, Van Angelbeek and some of the *mudaliyārs* and other headmen. They complained that they "would not even have time to enjoy in peace the blessings that had overcome them by the flourishing of their fields".[211]

Van Angelbeek wrote to Sluijsken that the headmen had asked for a committee consisting of members of the political council of Colombo to investigate the complaints. Sluijsken instead decided to send a committee directly from Galle to the mob to "discover the true origin of their dissatisfaction and promise them justice and protection from the government".[212] What followed was an intense argument between Van Angel-

beek and Sluijsken about the authority of this committee: Sluijsken was of the opinion that Matara fell under his responsibility and therefore he was competent to authorise such a committee, while a committee sent straight from Colombo undermined his authority. In the end, two committees investigated the matter and produced extensive reports on the rebellion. Van Angelbeek was temporarily replaced, but rehabilitated by the end of the year. The whole episode left an enormous amount of source material in the form of the reports of the two committees, Sluijsken's accusations and Van Angelbeek's defence.[213]

Nonetheless it is difficult to assess the exact reason for the rebellion, which was likely a combination of factors. Clearly the most important was the high pressure that the government placed on the labourers. But this could not have been the sole cause for in previous years the labourers had worked on the canals and gardens. In the first reports they emphasized that they expected a good crop which made it unnecessary for them to work for the Company. In bad years the rations of rice and small payments they earned for the corvée work compensated for the bad crops. Jealousies among the headmen with regards to their rivals' successful cinnamon plantations or their close cooperation with Van Angelbeek may also have played a role. The rebellion did not spread beyond Matara and was suppressed by the end of the month, but the arguments between Sluijsken and Van Angelbeek continued. Significantly, the pattern of the rebellion reveals some of the private patronage relations between Company officials like Van Angelbeek and Sluijsken and the native headmen.[214] It shows that interests other than the Company's were at stake. This brings us to the very complex relationships between the private and official interests of native headmen and Company officials. Such shared interests had probably always been there, but the new policies of Van de Graaff apparently caused new tension in these relationships.

3.10 *Company servants and native elites: joint ventures*

In 1809, the British Governor Thomas Maitland complained in one of his dispatches about the power of the native headmen. He saw in the private co-operation between headmen and VOC officials the major cause of their uncontrollable power: "In the Dutch government, this evil principally arose from the small pay allowed to their various servants, which, forcing them to gain their existence by indirect means, ever left them in the hands and at the mercy of the modeliars."[215] Indeed, many Dutch officials were involved in private businesses with the headmen, but the relationship was more complex than Maitland assumes here.

The official sources do not provide us with much information regard-

ing these private businesses, but one instance where they do is a list with statements of the incomes of all the Company's officials that was sent from Colombo to Batavia in 1789. In the statement of his income as *dessava* of Colombo, Fretz complained that the High Government of Batavia had disapproved of its personnel on Ceylon being involved in different plantations. A despatch of 31 July 1787, noted that "if he [the *dessava*] will execute his duties as required, this should provide him with enough work and joy, so that he does not have to occupy himself with large enterprises in addition".[216] Fretz complained that the income of a *dessava* was small, and because he could be provided with cheap labour, he had started a plantation growing cinnamon, areca nut, pepper, coffee, teak and sappanwood. He wrote that it was easily done and did not cost him much time and certainly did not hinder him in his work as *dessava*. How did Fretz find the cheap labour and the time to oversee the plantations? It is likely that he worked together with some native headmen who provided him with the labourers and overseers of the plantations and shared in the profits.

We find many examples of Dutch officials who had started plantations like Fretz. One of the bigger entrepreneurs in this respect was Count von Ranzow.[217] The plantations were usually made on Company ground, but they were seen as projects that benefited the Company, and in fact the officials were usually paid back their investments by the Company upon departure. The cheap labour was found through the headmen, and this means that because the Dutch were actually dependent on the headmen for their profits, it was in their private interest that the headmen kept their power over the people. Probably this is what Maitland meant with his remark quoted at the beginning of this section.[218]

Such relationships also existed in the trade sector. Anthony Bertolacci, who worked under Governors North and Maitland, describes how the higher echelons of the Dutch were in possession of most of the capital in the southwest, and that they had agents who took care of their trade. Dutch capital was further increased by lending money, which probably also led to client-patron relationships between them and native entrepreneurs.[219] The question of private trade remains vague: whereas we do find remarks relating to the plantations in official Company sources, remarks on private trade are few. At least one case that corroborates the suggestions of Bertolacci is that of Pieter Sluijsken. We have already seen that he quarrelled with Van de Graaff almost from the start of his govenorship. In his many private writings to the authorities in Batavia, he unintentionally gives us some insight into his private affairs. For example, it turns out that his business in Galle was headed by a native of the name Simon de Zilva with whom he had an account of not less than 40,000 rixdollars.[220]

The phenomenon of coastal inhabitants working as agents for the

Company's officials is reminiscent of the *dubashes* or native middlemen who worked for the British in Madras.[221] Working together with the Dutch merchants would have given them the opportunity to accumulate capital and eventually to conduct their own private businesses independently. Bertolacci informs us that after the British take-over the native agents of the Dutch assumed control of the coastal trade in the southwest which had previously been in Dutch hands.[222] In an excellent study on the rise of the Karāva elites as capitalist entrepreneurs in the course of the nineteenth century, Michael Roberts considers the rise in arrack production and trade as a major accelerator in this development. Perhaps their rise should also be related to the increasing private trade of the Dutch during the eighteenth century and their role as agents for the Dutch.[223]

The Karāvas and other coastal inhabitants worked not only with the Dutch but apparently also with the very wealthy native headmen of the interior. After the death of Nicolas Dias Abeysinghe, his will was executed by five men: two were his sons, one was a *mudaliyār*, one a free merchant of the name Philip Simon de Waas, and the fifth a fisherman (Karāva) named Renaldus de Andrado.[224] It is tempting to see in this a development like that described by Bertolacci. Could it be that the Dutch were already loosing ground to the natives in their private trade prior to the British take-over? It is difficult to say whether such scanty evidence points at such a development. If it does, this helps explain the increased tension among the Company's officials themselves. As long as the Dutch were the only ones with the capital, they were the key figures in the trading networks. Now that Van de Graaff was prodding the headmen to establish plantations and remunerating them for it at the expense of the Dutch, they could strengthen their own economic power base. They excelled the Dutch as attractive business partners, because of their autonomous power over the people and their access to labour. This was perhaps what caused Sluijsken's frustration. Of course such conclusions must remain rather tentative; they require more research, even though the scarce documentation of the private affairs of the Dutch may prevent it. How far the succes of the headmen should be seen as an intended or unintended side effect of Van de Graaff's policies is also unclear. If anything, the evidence at least shows that his policies caused an expansion of trading activities among various groups of the island's inhabitants when formerly these had been limited to the *Chetty* and Moor communities.

3.11 *Increased efficiency, land and capitation tax*

The development of agriculture could only be of use to the Company if the produce was properly taxed. As commander of Galle, Van de Graaff

attempted to increase the income by attending to the mode of taxation. It has been pointed out already that in most regions taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder. In the southwest the taxes on the produce of the coconut – arrack and coir in particular – yielded much for the Company though mostly as emoluments for the officials, while traditionally the custom duties accounted for a large income in Jaffna. However, the collection of the taxes on the land was still left to the headmen, except in Jaffna, where the government appointed *recebidors*, native collectors, to perform this task. Van de Graaff decided to change the situation in the southwest, and expected much from farming the land tax. He had new conditions drawn up for farming the paddy tax, and it is clear that he hoped the tax farmers would see an interest in promoting paddy production.[225]

It is not entirely clear what the effect was, because in practice many headmen became tax farmers. However, some of the coastal inhabitants, burghers, Moors, and *Chetties*, also got involved in the paddy collection. This was a new development because they had so far limited themselves to trade and only taken tax farms related to trade. The practice of tax farming is closely related to the growth of entrepreneurship and the increase in capital among native groups discussed above. Despatches from Colombo provide us with yearly lists of renters and research into the origin of these renters over a longer period could perhaps give better insight into the social mobility and growth of capital of certain groups of people. Although it has always to be kept in mind that Company officials also made investments in the tax farms through middlemen (for officially they were not allowed to do this), how widespread this practice was is unclear.[226]

Searching for extra resources, in 1784 Van de Graaff also turned to the Moors in the Galle *corle* and had a new registry made of them to make sure that they were properly taxed either through service or through a yearly payment of 12 rixdollars.[227] Later he did the same in Putulam and Negombo, and in 1787 he had a general registry made of all foreigners living in Colombo, who were liable to perform similar duties or pay tax.[228] In this regard, Van de Graaff did not exactly create new resources, but he did increase the efficiency of the existing systems. In some areas like Batticaloa, the Company tried to tax people who had so far not been liable to perform services nor payed taxes.[229] Everybody living in the Dutch part of the island had to be made useful to the Company. Of course, the *tombos* or head- and land-registrations that were begun in the 1740s also formed part of this striving for increased efficiency, and they were continuously brought up to date, particularly in Galle and Jaffna. A new land registration campaign started in Jaffna in 1780 and between 1787 and 1790 a head *tombo* was written up.[230] As always, the *tombo* registrations were liable to mistakes and frauds through bribery and eva-

sion. This counted in particular for the last head *tombo* drawn up in Jaffna which showed numerous faults. Further complaints relating to the bad management of the commander and the *dessava* added to this and resulted in a committee being sent to Jaffna to investigate the matter in 1794.[231]

3.12 *Troubles in Jaffna*

Van de Graaff encountered a lot of difficulties in Jaffna in his campaign to increase the efficiency in taxation. Revenues there had traditionally been high due to the many trading activities and farming out the taxes formed a lucrative business for the Company and the commander personally. This gave rise to some rich tax farmers and traders like the *mudaliyār* Ritna Singa and the *Chetty* Waitelinge. In 1785, the rents of Ritna Singa were as high as 50,000 rixdollars, which was more than half of the total of the rents.[232] Even before Van de Graaff came to power, Bartholomeus Raket had been in charge of the district, and Van de Graaff did not interfere much with his administration. He did however infringe on Raket's power in two cases.

First, he decided to auction the tax farms of Jaffna simultaneously in Colombo, and the highest bid would get the farm. In the previous year he had been disappointed by the low bids from Jaffna, and hoped to secure a higher income from the lucrative tax farms in this way.[233] Second, he took away the commander of Jaffna's authority over the affairs in the Vanni. He had done the same thing in Matara, but in Jaffna he was more direct.[234] Still, it was felt in Colombo that Jaffna was not yielding as much revenue as it could and that in general Jaffna was a neglected region. Van de Graaff and Bartolomeus Raket did not get along very well, as is clear from a few of Raket's private letters that have survived. Like Sluijsken, Raket felt threatened by Van de Graaff's centralizing efforts which he saw as an interference in his business as commander of Jaffna and as a limitation of his local authority.[235]

In the early nineties, more and more complaints were reaching Colombo about the behaviour of the members of the Council of Jaffna, and Raket in particular. Early in 1794, a committee led by Nagel, Ebell, and Mooijaart was sent to Jaffna to look into the complaints of the inhabitants regarding the *tombo* registry, which had been written up to the preference of certain headmen. The committee also inquired into the tax practices and especially whether the taxes could best be farmed out separately or in groups. The committee's inquiry brought many frauds to light.[236]

Raket was supposed to have taken large bribes for the appointments of headmen, which went contrary to the governor's policy. Moreover, he was

supposed to have committed frauds with the bazaar taxes.[237] Raket had already retired, but defended himself in writing. In his private letters to his cousin Moens in Coromandel, he expressed his frustrations about Van de Graaff's government and his new policies. Moens and Raket agreed that it was best if Jaffna was governed "by simple souls in the old manner".[238] His departure gave space to a more thorough investigation into the local affairs in Jaffna, and Jacob Burnand and Martinus Mekern were sent there in the fall of 1794, not only to investigate but also to give advice on how to improve finances. They were still occupied with their investigation when the British arrived in Trincomalee in July 1795 and their work was seriously hampered by the subsequent British advance to Jaffna, as villagers fled for the British army. Despite this, their research resulted in an extensive report concerning the frauds of Raket and his inferiors. In addition, Mekern wrote some recommendations for the proper future management of the town of Jaffnapatnam and the *dessavony*. The recommendations were critically read by Johan Gerard van Angelbeek, the new governor, who was anxious to increase the income from this neglected district.

Van Angelbeek and his advisors did not agree on all points recommended for change and improvement.[239] Two points are of particular interest. Mekern wished to free from the capitation tax the lowest order of people, the *Nalluas* and *Palluas*, who formed the slave caste and were bound as serfs to a master. Secondly, Mekern thought that a tax on coconut trees, which then applied to two particular villages, could be extended all over the *dessavony*, to replace the tax on coconut oil. Van Angelbeek strongly opposed these two plans on the grounds that the only way to tax the *Nalluas* and *Palluas* was through capitation taxes, since they did not own anything taxable, but lived on the grounds of their master. Van Angelbeek declined to tax coconut trees because it was such a basic crop and he anticipated a lot of resistance from the populace. Mekern and Van Angelbeek did agree that the paddy taxes should not be farmed out, but left to the native administrative functionaries, the *recebidors*, as had always been the case. The discussion was still going on when Jaffna was conquered by the British.[240]

3.13 *Conclusion*

As was pointed out in the historiographic introduction of the monograph, the real transition to colonial rule in Sri Lanka is usually taken to have occurred only after the transition of power from Dutch to British hands. I argue that the transition on Sri Lanka took place gradually and found its origin in the first half of the eighteenth century.[241] Moreover,

I find that from the 1780s onwards this development was accelerated by two factors. The first one was the cultivation of cinnamon in the plantations of the Company and private gardens. This was an important new development, for cinnamon had always been collected in the wild and after a period of experimentation from about 1767 its production was now brought under Company's control. The second factor were the increased government expenses for rice. At the time, the VOC was in decline and supplies of basic foodstuffs like rice for its garrisons arrived less regularly on the island than they had before. Exacerbating this problem, the labour force on the new cinnamon plantations required additional supplies of rice. One way to deal with the mounting expenses was to increase the efficiency of the revenue departments and Van de Graaff managed to improve the revenue of the colony by fifty per cent.

In addition Van de Graaff also decided that Ceylon should be self sufficient in its rice production. To meet this end he shifted his attention to the peripheral regions of the island, like the east coast, the Vanni and Mannar regions, brought them under tight control and invested in the irrigation and the clearance of new grounds.[242] It was his plan to turn these regions into a *broodkamer* or breadbasket for the rest of the island. In the traditional centre of Dutch power, the southwest, waste land was given out on contracts forcing the tenants to cultivate part of their lands for the Company with cinnamon or other commercial crops. As a result the private interests of Dutch officials and native headmen converged in the establishment of cinnamon plantations, the growth of other commercial crops and mercantile enterprises. It seems that in these business relations the native headmen gained the upper hand over lesser Dutch officials because of their capital accumulation and their access to the labour force.

In this period, the government of the island became more centralized and the relationship of the VOC with the native headmen, who acted as middlemen between colonial authorities and native society, became tighter and better defined. In the southwest the original systems of indirect rule was transformed into a more direct type of government, in which the native headmen had well defined assignments and were held accountable for their performance. This entailed the development of a new political culture in which the traditional means of confirming the administrative hierarchy in the form of *paresses* (gift giving) were abandoned. At the same time the native headmen were further empowered by their new tasks and their commercial engagements. Paradoxically, while the bargaining position of the headmen was strengthened, the colonial administration became more hands-on because of growing Dutch interference and control.

CHAPTER FOUR

INLAND EXPLOITATION: THE DISCOVERY OF THE PERIPHERY

4.1 "Broodkamer" *ideology*

So far, the focus has been on the administrational adjustments made by the governor to improve the agriculture and revenue in the core areas, Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna. The emphasis in these regions lay on the production of cash crops, with cinnamon being the first and foremost. However, the demand for rice to feed the troops and the coolies remained a pressing subject and paddy cultivation was high on Van de Graaff's agenda.[243] The rice was meant not only for the garrison, but also for the cinnamon department and coolies in general: the more work to be done, the more rice was needed. Around four thousand *lasten* of rice a year were needed to sustain the labour force, but the Dutch could not even get half of that from their possessions on the island. In 1784/85, the Dutch regions of Ceylon yielded 1,798 *lasten* of rice for government, the year after it was about 1,500 *lasten* and most of it came from Matara and Jaffna. For example, Batticaloa did not produce more than eighty-seven *lasten* for the Company.[244] Batavia could not furnish Ceylon with as much rice as it had, but still yearly requests were made to Batavia for supplies of at least eight hundred *lasten* of rice, and the expensive contracts with the South Indian traders accounted for the rest.

The high expenses involved in the acquisition of rice convinced Van de Graaff that the island should really become self-sufficient in its food crop production. This idea had been proposed earlier by Van Goens and Van Imhoff, but it was Van de Graaff who made a concerted effort in this direction. With the cinnamon plantations blooming in the southwest, he moved his attention to the peripheral Dutch possessions on the island. It was his intention to turn these regions into a *broodkamer* or breadbasket, for the rest of the island. The areas to the east of Matara, which had become Dutch after 1766, and to the interior of Batticaloa, were now actively reclaimed. The same was true of the Vanni district where the local chiefs, the *vanniyārs*, who had governed their lands in relative independence, were removed and the Dutch Lieutenant Thomas Nagel took up the task of improving agriculture. Here and there, in the Magampattu bordering Matara *dessavony* and the Panoa in Batticaloa, Van de Graaff even extended Dutch authority into Kandyan lands.

The measures taken by Van de Graaff varied greatly. For example he made the headmen promote the technique of transplanting paddy instead of seeding, because in this way the plants yielded more grain and less was wasted for the seeds.[245] Another plan of Van de Graaff related to the planting of manioc or cassava. He thought that if inhabitants grew manioc for their basic food consumption, this would not only prevent famines, but they would also consume less paddy allowing them to sell the surplus to the Company. He enthusiastically sent the manioc plants around to all stations, with instructions on how to grow it, but the inhabitants were not easily converted to this new foodstuff and the plan was a failure.[246] He also intended to colonize the sparsely inhabited regions of the island with migrants from South India, Indonesia, or China. With the exception of a group of *sipahis* settling in the Panoa, these operations did not succeed either.[247]

Other plans regarded irrigation and waterworks on the island. Great expectations were set on the Giant's tank close to Mannar. However financing its repair was difficult to arrange because Batavia refused to invest in such a large and expensive project. Van de Graaff hoped that he could get around this with private investment, but did not succeed in raising enough money. Similar plans were made for the Kantelai tank near Trincomalee, but never put into effect despite all the preliminary work put into the investigations by the engineers and the officials of Mannar and Trincomalee.[248] We have already seen that in the Matara *dessavony* some undertakings were started with great zeal by the *dessava* Christiaan van Angelbeek. There the problem was not so much the preservation of water, but rather the drainage of surplus water that caused flooding in the rainy season. Several canals were dug for this purpose in the Gangebaddepattu and the Magampattu, but not all were finished by the arrival of the British. Moreover the work in Matara was hampered by the rebellion of 1790, which made Van de Graaff and his successor more prudent in undertaking these large projects.

The rebellion in Matara has been discussed briefly in the context of the private power struggles among Company officials. It was pointed out that the headmen played a role in this as well; those who were losing out on the new projects were especially against it. But from the first reports about the rebellion it is clear that the inhabitants themselves objected to working on the canal as coolies (as they had done in the previous years) because they expected a good crop and did not want to spend their time working for the Company or the headmen. They were afraid to be pressed into their work by the headmen on the order of the *dessava* Christiaan van Angelbeek. Although the work on the canal was heavy and they were most likely not well-treated, they had not rebelled against it previously, and it is probable that in times of bad harvest work on the canal at least

provided them with basic provisions of rice and a little money that enabled them to feed their families.

What is of interest here is that in good times the inhabitants could not see any advantage in working on the canal even though it could in the end also be of advantage to them, because it aimed to prevent floods in the rainy season.[249] The rebellion in Matara is an example of how colonial intervention led to a clash of mentality between the Dutch and the native population that was not easily overcome. This was even more the case in regions where contact between the natives and the Company had been rare, like in the Vanni, Trincomalee, and Batticaloa. This chapter discusses these new encounters and colonial interventions in the periphery, through an analysis of the reports and memoranda written by Jacques Fabrice van Senden, Thomas Nagel, and Jacob Burnand on their operations in these districts.

4.2 *New encounters: a journey around Trincomalee*[250]

The "discovery" of the periphery led to new encounters between the native population and the Dutch officials. These did not always go smoothly and it was not an easy task to implement the same energetic policies in these regions as had been done in the core. The diary of the exploratory journey that Van Senden, head of Trincomalee, undertook in the spring of 1786, gives insight into this interaction and how both the Dutch and the natives experienced this new encounter.[251] It also reveals the utilitarian attitude of the Dutch regarding the nature and people of Ceylon, and it went hand in hand with the discovery of the island's rich past in this northeastern dry zone. Moreover it very clearly reveals the clash of interests between the natives and the Dutch and their different perceptions of their environment.

Van Senden's journal consists of four parts. The first part, about his journey through Kottiyar, is the most extensive. This is followed by an account of the possible measures to be taken to improve the agriculture there. The third and fourth part, about Tamblegam and Kattukolom, are much shorter. In those sections, Van Senden refers often to earlier remarks he made about Kottiyar, which was connected to Kattukolom by the bay of Trincomalee; Tamblegam was located more inland, and bordered the territories of the Kingdom of Kandy. The land on the coast is by and large flat, but in the interior the landscape is more diverse with plains and hilly areas. Salt production on the coast of Kattukolom formed an important industry for the region. The salt was mainly purchased by traders from Kandy and by the VOC in Trincomalee. The hinterland of

Trincomalee was densely populated and had an impressive past. Van Senden describes with great interest the remains of temples, bridges and irrigation works of the ancient kingdoms that he saw on his travels. The most impressive ruin of all was that of the water tank of Kantelai in Tamblegam.

Van Senden travelled by boat, horse and palanquin and had himself accompanied by the most prominent native headmen of the area. In Kottiyar he was assisted by the *vanniyār* Irroemarooewentoega Ideewirasinga Nallemapane, in Tamblegam by the *mudaliyār* Don Fransisco Kannegerandge Kannegeritna and in Kattukolompattu by the *vanniyār* Don Joan Sandere Seegere Mapane Wangenaar.[252] The local population took care of provisioning the group. The first thing Van Senden did when arriving in the villages was to make up a register of all male inhabitants. The villages on the coast numbered up to a hundred men, but the other settlements were much smaller, with only seven or eight adult men. In some places, in particular in Tamblegam and Kattukolom, it was impossible to count the inhabitants, because they fled.

Van Senden's visit to Moedoer, the first village he called at, may serve as an example of his encounters.[253] The village was relatively large, with one hundred fourteen adult males, and was located on the coast at the mouth of the river Kinge. The first thing Van Senden noticed was that there was a lot of waste land. The paddy fields that were in use looked fine, but the water tank that had to supply the land in the dry season was not well placed. It lay too low and as a consequence the water could not reach the fields. He therefore showed the people how they could water the fields using dam and pipe-constructions, so they could also exploit the waste lands. He inspected the river and wondered whether a water mill could be placed there to saw timber. Next he checked whether the river could be diked to prevent floods in the wet season. He explained the inhabitant that the higher grounds, which were not used at all, were perfectly suited to growing fruit bearing trees. He thought of plantations of between three thousand and twenty-two thousand coconut palms. Van Senden did not understand why the inhabitants did not put effort into producing more; they could barter the surplus and the population would increase and this in turn would lead to higher production.

The unsown paddyfields, water regulation and the poor fruit tree plantations are subjects that recur again and again in the text. Many times Van Senden pointed this out to the *vanniyār* who travelled with him, and encouraged him "to make better use of that which nature had given him and his people so generously".[254] He saw everything in terms of exploitation: the rivers were waterways or energy providers, the land was meant to be used as paddyfield or plantation, and the river clay waited to be used

for the production of bricks and tiles. Wild buffalo were suitable draught animals for tilling the soil, wild elephants could be caught and traded with India. Van Senden even tried to transmit his own technological knowledge to the inhabitants, in the case of the dam-and-pipe construction in Moedoer.[255]

Van Senden's utilitarian attitude towards nature emerges frequently, and he is almost as often disappointed with the state of the agriculture and the commitment of the inhabitants. Sometimes he was pleasantly surprised though, for example when he visited the village Pattianoette, with only thirteen inhabitants, on Saturday 10 June: "There is a little pagoda here which has nothing special, except for the brahmin priest, who loves planting and has planted part of the empty space that usually adjoins the pagodas, with lime trees and other fruit-bearing trees."[256] Van Senden liked this so much, that he promised the man seeds and pits of other fruit trees to extend his orchard.

Van Senden did not pay attention only to agriculture. He was also interested in the roads and rivers. Here he was confronted with the limitations that nature forced upon people and he complained much about it. Because of the heat, he could only travel early in the morning or late in the afternoon, and sometimes he even travelled at night. The rivers turned out to be unnavigable because the riverbeds had run dry, or had grown thick with mangrove forest. Paths to specific destinations often turned out to be impassable and "made for no one but forest people".[257] Elephants occasionally formed an obstacle when he travelled through Tamblegam: in large numbers they obstructed the road and terrified his retinue.[258] The elephants could only be scared away by gun shots. Above all this, Van Senden was feeling ill during his whole journey. He could sometimes barely feel his fingers and sometimes his nerves troubled him so much that he could not continue the journey.[259] In Kottiyar and Tamblegam in particular he suffered much from mosquitoes at night.

Despite everything, Van Senden often expressed his admiration for the natural environment. On the plain close to the village of Kooijkoederipie settlements were built on small hills and the plain was used for paddy culture:

> all these islands or raisings are covered with coconut palms like feathers and the pattern of light green of the fields that have not been reaped yet, and the hayish-yellow of those that have already completed the reaping, and the dark green of the trees, shows us one of those spectacles which convinces us, like with everything, of the supremacy of nature above art.[260]

It is typical of Van Senden's attitude that he uses the word nature when he is talking not about a wild jungle, but about a landscape that has been brought into cultivation.

4.3 *Clash of cultures: useful versus threatening nature*

The interesting thing about the travel journal is that Van Senden wrote down not only his own observations, but also the inhabitants' responses to his suggestions. When Van Senden proposed in the village of Moedoer that everyone should produce more than they needed for themselves, he was told that "Through the outbreak of diarrhoea and children's diseases for some years now, the country had become depopulated [...] and each of the few remaining people do not cultivate more than what they need in one year."[261] From the villagers' answers to his suggestions, it becomes clear that their existence was very insecure because of certain natural factors. Therefore they could not see the point of expanding agricultural output. The region was plagued by wild animals, and hordes of wild elephants in particular who damaged the fields, and panters and bears who prowled about the district. The climate often worked against them: in the rainy season floods could ruin the crop, but long periods of drought also had damaging effects. Finally, in the previous period many people had died from disease. Remarkably enough, Van Senden did not recognize this problem; apparently the people must have looked healthy at the moment he travelled there.[262]

Apart from all this, Van Senden met a lot of distrust from the inhabitants with regard to himself as a white representative of the Dutch government. Sometimes the inhabitants fled when they were informed of his approach. They feared to be taken as slaves, or being eaten by his Malay soldiers. Van Senden thought this nonsense and tried to convince them of his good intentions by explaining the purpose of his trip and by offering useful instruction, giving them extra sowing seed and promising them postponement of taxes. Still, it did not always work, as the example of his meeting with the men of Elendetorre shows. There, Van Senden explained how fruit-bearing trees were best planted. He subsequently asked the inhabitants whether they would start planting trees straight away, if he would provide them with seeds or offshoot:

> After murmuring for some time, an ancient man, who could not have much hope of enjoying those fruits, came forward, and said with a smiling face: "why would we go into all this trouble, our grandfathers and fathers never did it." This was agreed upon by all the attendants.[263]

According to Van Senden this inertia was the inhabitants' most evil quality and had to change.

Van Senden portrayed the native inhabitants not only as inert, but also as simple and angst-ridden. These characteristics came to the fore most strongly in the folk tales he collected. Van Senden was mainly interested in stories related to the prominent ruins he encountered. In Tamblegam for example he passed a river with a few standing pillars in the middle.

The local people believed that these had been placed there by a mythical washerwoman. This woman appears again and again in the local accounts explaining the origin of the large ruins.[264] Van Senden concluded however that the pillars would have been part of a bridge, of which the upper part was gone.

Although Van Senden was sometimes a little scornful of the folk stories, his interest in them was sincere. Most attention was paid to the stories that related to the ancient watertank of Kantelai. The people turned out very fearful for the water tank.

> […] in the morning at four forty I left Kooij Koederieppoe for the infamous, and never mentioned without fright by the Mallabars, Kantelai tank. They tried everything to prevent me from going; warnings, admonitions and the worst: citing the many examples, which I knew were true, of curious people, who died shortly after the visit or never recovered from lingering diseases, but nothing helped; the usefulness of the Kantalai tank, for the agriculture of the province Tamblegammo was too important for me not to see it with my own eyes – for the notorious devil Poedem, who had made the facing of the tank in six days as servant of the King Kollekooten and still guards it, I had no fear, but I dreaded the poultice and cooked mess of the superstitious […].[265]

In deference to the strong aversion of the people, he decided to ask the "heathen priest" for permission beforehand. He explained to the inhabitants that he took their warnings seriously, but that he wished to behold himself the structure "that I thought was made by humans, though they attributed it to spirits". He would however behave respectfully and hoped that the inhabitants would join him in seeing it.[266]

Despite all warnings Van Senden visited the tank and was clearly much impressed by the enormous construction. Moreover, he showed his companions that the irrigation tank could be made ready for use through a few minor operations like taking away the mud in the pipes. He ordered the headmen who had joined him that in future the tank had to be cleaned in the dry season by all the inhabitants together. Those who did not cooperate would not be allowed to make use of the water for the irrigation of their fields.[267]

The section on the Kantelai tank is essential to understanding the differences in outlook between Van Senden and the inhabitants. Van Senden depicts himself as the all-knowing, rational European, in sharp contrast with the primitive and superstitious indigenous population. The fact that the inhabitants attributed a structure like the watertank of Kantelai to devils revealed their fearful and primitive nature and their incapacity to control nature and adapt it to their needs. The remains of temples, bridges and, water tanks did however point at a higher civilization and more intensive use of the land in the past, and a higher population density. This rich past appealed to Van Senden's imagination and strength-

ened his belief that the region could turn prosperous once more. It is no coincidence that in his scheme for improvement, he laid great emphasis on the ancient civilization of the inhabitants.

4.4 *Civilization as universal remedy*

Apart from the suggestions for improvement of agriculture made on the spot, Van Senden also formulated a more general plan for the exploitation of the land. He was of the opinion that three factors could contribute to its improvement. In the first place, the region had to become more densely populated again. He thought that under certain conditions the Company might attract South Indians, Malay soldiers after they resigned service or even Chinese to settle in the region. But basically, he was of the opinion that the inhabitants had to produce more children, for this would give them more economic security.

This point relates to the second and third factors. Van Senden felt on the one hand that people had to make an effort to become more active and enterprising. On the other hand he believed that the Company had to invest in tools and seeds for every village and that the Company should not raise taxes for a few years in order to give the people a chance to substantially increase the agricultural output. Finally he thought it would be best if every province had a European superintendent. This was impossible to arrange from one day to the other, not only because the Company did not have the funds for it, but also because of the people's fear of white men. Moreover in the case of Kattukolom, the inhabitants were strongly attached to their own headmen and would probably not accept the authority of a European resident. Van Senden realized that the Company would not be prepared to invest on a large scale and that the chances of successful colonization by outsiders was small.

Therefore, Van Senden expected most from the change in the attitude of the people and his text is full of references to this. It was not for nothing that he cited with pleasure the story of the washerman who gave his life when attempting to remedy the blockage of the Tamblegam tank by a large fish. "For the honour of mankind I wish to record this case as true, to have it carved on a stone in various languages and to write underneath in Golden letters: What a man! what a father! but most of all what a fellow citizen!"[268] Van Senden considered this story an elevating example for the inhabitants.

This elaboration on Van Senden's journey reveals many of the practical issues at stake in the late eighteenth century Sri Lanka. It shows Europeans' growing self-confidence in relation to the management of nature, the sense that all natural obstacles could be overcome by human knowl-

edge and power. It also reveals an obsession with the island's ancient and rich past that strengthened his conviction that the region could and had to be more intensely cultivated. Van Senden strongly contrasted himself with the native population, who are clearly in need of European guidance to improve their lives and that of their children. The natives' fear of Europeans shows how little the Dutch had intruded into this region so far, although their fear could also be explained by their recent experience with French and the English troops behaving ruthlessly while they occupied the harbour of Trincomalee between 1782 and 1784.

Van Senden was not very sensitive to the actual problems of the inhabitants, in particular the diseases which afflicted them repeatedly. We now know that it was a malaria-prone area, and the debilitating influence of structural malaria on a population is a well known fact. Van Senden did not notice it because he did not know about it, he could not connect the stories about the devil *poedem* with the anopheles mosquito that probably bred in the tanks. His energetic and progressive attitude is typical of the period of Van de Graaff's governorship, and not surprisingly Van Senden was strongly attached to Van de Graaff. The outcomes of Van Senden's schemes for improvement were limited. Residents were appointed on his advice and the income from the paddy tithe increased fivefold, which points at significant improvements. But although the engineer Fornbauer made a precise plan for its repair in 1792, the Kantelai tank was never fully repaired. Van Senden died within three years after the journey.[269]

4.5 *Colonial intervention in the Vanni*

In his own memoir Van de Graaff dealt in great length with the progress of the paddy cultivation in all regions of the island. He stated that much progress had been made in this field in the previous years, with the exception of the Colombo *dessavony* where most workers were involved in cinnamon culture and could therefore not be involved in the improvement of the paddy culture.[270] However, a lot had been achieved in other regions, notably, the outer parts of Matara, Batticaloa, the Vanni, and even a little in Trincomalee.

The achievements are difficult to assess, but if we are to believe Van de Graaff they were great and promising. We have seen already that Van Senden's plans for Trincomalee resulted in some expansion of agricultural output. The most structural approach had been in Batticaloa and the Vanni, where administrative reforms were more extensive and intensely supervised by two enterprising officials. In Batticaloa it was Jacob Burnand, a young man from Switzerland who had arrived on the island in 1778, and in the Vanni it was Lieutenant Thomas Nagel. Both success-

fully improved the agricultural situation in these neglected districts and their reputations lasted into British times. As we shall see, Governor Maitland used their work as example for his own policies in those regions and beyond. Therefore, their work merits a more extensive discussion.

The Vanni district covered the large area between the Jaffna peninsula and the Kingdom of Kandy and was largely inhabited by people of Tamil origin. Before the late eighteenth century, the administration of the Vanni had been the most obvious example of the VOC's system of indirect rule.[271] The *vanniyārs,* or local chiefs, were in theory subordinated to the Company and under the commandment of Jaffna. They had to pay a yearly tribute of forty elephants to the Company, but the Company did not otherwise meddle in their administration and they maintained a fair degree of autonomy. In the course of the eighteenth century their obligations became diluted and during the 1770s the Jaffna commander was complaining repeatedly that the *vanniyārs* were in arrears on the payment of their tribute. By 1780, troubles in the district caused by a succession struggle in one of the provinces of the Vanni allowed the colonial administration to step in.

The Company considered taking over the whole district, but due to the scale of the operation Governor Willem Iman Falck decided that only the province Karnawelpattu should be brought under direct Dutch rule. It was an experiment, and the aim was to learn how much profit this province would bring the Company. Falck had reason to have high expectations, since it was common knowledge that in ancient times the district had produced high yields. The resident, Mr Sprang, was requested to do everything in his power to improve agriculture.[272] By 1784, the *vanniyārs* in the other provinces started to rebel against the Dutch, which gave Governor Falck a reason to organize a punitive expedition. Under command of the lieutenant Thomas Nagel, the provinces were conquered one by one. Nagel was appointed as head of the district and commisisoned to improve the cultivation of paddy and increase the revenues of the district.[273] In 1789, Nagel requested that the colonial government lease him the district for five years. Under his proposal he would personally make the necessary expenses to improve the local situation, provided he would be allowed to keep all revenue from it, except for the paddy-tithe. The military expenses would still be paid by government. His request was honoured.[274]

In 1794, Nagel requested an extension of the lease and wrote a memorandum to explain the successes achieved so far and his plans for the future. The memorandum is divided in nine paragraphs. The first four give an introduction to the district, its nature, its people and its history. Paragraphs five and six are concerned with the history of the Company's

presence in the district. Nagel describes how and why it was occupied and what improvements were made especially in the field of agriculture. In the following two sections Nagel elaborates on the strategic importance of the Vanni and gives a description of his plans for further improvement of agriculture. The final paragraph discusses his new proposal for the next ten years. Nagel's achievements in the district were considerable: he improved the income of paddy, collected as the Company's tithe, from 14,000 *parras* of paddy to 36,000 *parras*.[275] In addition, the income from taxes on gardens and trade increased. What measures did he take to achieve this?

Thomas Nagel started with an administrative reorganization based on the Dutch administrative system in Jaffna. In the aftermath of his expeditions, he had put aside the *vanniyārs,* and in the new government they were left out. The civil administration consisted of ten, later twelve, Europeans or men of European descent and eighty natives, of whom sixty were *lascorins*.[276] Next to that he adopted a headmen system: eighteen *mudaliyārs* were put in charge of the provincial government and thirty-six *majorals* were to work under them. The new land-courts were to apply the Jaffanese laws to the Vanni.[277] Even the organization of the taxes and land revenues were copied from the Jaffna system. He ordered a *hoofdtombo* (family register, for the purpose of taxation) to be made and decided that like in Jaffna the people would be obliged to work twelve days a year for the Company (or to pay one rixdollar and four stivers for each day they did not work). The land tax was fixed at a tenth of the crop, to be paid either in kind or in money.[278]

The increase in agricultural output was achieved by three measures. First, after the bad harvests of 1787 and 1788 caused by a lack of rain Nagel lent seed to the peasants on his own account, to ensure a reasonable crop the following year. Second, he started a land registry, identifying the wasteland suitable for exploitation and reporting on the condition of the water tanks belonging to the occupied fields. Because many of the tanks were in a bad state, he made a plan to repair them and figured that in total about twenty-five thousand rixdollars were needed to fix them all. Nagel shouldered the burden of these investments himself as part of the contract he made with Governor Van de Graaff in 1789. In the same year he employed four natives in the function of *adigār* with the specific task of overseeing the agriculture and the repair of the tanks. By 1793, much progress had been made, but more time was needed to meet the objectives. He planned to set up sugar, coffee and cotton plantations by forcing the poor inhabitants from the overcrowded Jaffna district to move to the Vanni and work on his plantations. He also intended to make the people of the Vanni cultivate these cash crops for the Company with one part of their fields. These plans were inspired by Anthony Blom's 1787 treatise

on sugar, cotton, coffee and cacao plantations in Surinam.[279] Nagel regretted the fact that it was too complicated to keep African slaves on the island to set up a plantation on Blom's model, but he considered his own plan a good alternative.[280]

Nagel's rule over of the Vanni was quite different from that of the *vanniyārs*. The changes directly touched the interest of the people owing to the imposition of new taxes, the regulation of personal services and the fixing of land revenues. It was turned from a system of indirect rule based on feudal relations and only limited Company power to a relatively well organized state under European authority and a European administrative elite. The new organization was geared to agricultural development rather than to trade. The *vanniyārs* saw their power curtailed by Nagel and no longer played an official role in the inland administration. It is not clear whether or not they kept some power over the inhabitants based on their former position and traditional status.[281]

4.6 *Administrative reform in Batticaloa*

The eight provinces of Batticaloa were governed by a chief of the rank of *onderkoopman*, from 1766 onwards. Jacob Burnand was the second person to hold this post, after his predecessor Francke had held it for eighteen years. Burnand was of Swiss origin and had arrived in Batavia in 1775 in the position of *onderkoopman*, and moved to Ceylon in 1778. It had been his intention to return to Europe in 1794 as a man *in bonis* after nineteen years of service in the East, but due to circumstances he had been forced to stay on the island and he remained there even after the British take-over.[282] Burnand wrote his memorandum for reasons that differed considerably from those of Nagel. He wanted to provide his successor Johannes Phillipus Wambeek with all the information necessary for the administration of the district and, in his own words, "particularly [with] the plan which I am of the opinion should be constantly followed in order to answer the well-grounded expectation of making further improvements".[283] Like Nagel, Burnand had come to the district with the governor's commission to improve the agriculture and increase the income of paddy.[284] In this he succeeded, by enlarging the income from the tenth on paddy fivefold, from 17,010 *parras* to almost 60,000 *parras*. He even predicted that if policies were continued along the same lines, in future it would be possible to obtain one *last* or 84,000 *parras* of paddy. The measures he took to achieve this were as follows.[285]

When Burnand arrived in Batticaloa he ruled over about forty thousand people and had twelve European civil servants at his command.[286] For the administration of the district the chief had to rely heavily on the

co-operation of the native headmen, called *hoofd-pedies*. These men collected the paddy tithe for the Company and functioned as justices in the rural assembly. They all came from a group of about five hundred families who held half the fields in the district and who had also served as headmen under Kandyan rule. These families were called *Mukuvassen*.[287]

Soon after his arrival Burnand perceived two major defects in the administration of the district. The first was in the organization of the collection of the tithe: the headmen tended to keep the larger part of the tenth for themselves. The second deficiency lay in the organization of the *oeliam* services (corvée labour), which put the burden on the field labourers, the group of people who in his opinion were the crucial factor in achieving any improvement in agriculture. Due to their connection to the land, they were easy victims for the headmen who had to organize the *oeliam*-services. By forcing them to perform the Company's heavy cooliework like dragging timber, they got worn out and were taken away from their daily task of working on the land. As a result they spent less time on the fields and produced only a small harvest. Other people who were supposed to perform services, bribed their headmen or hid from them.[288]

Just like Van de Graaff, Burnand aimed to rationalize the taxes and services, and to increase control over the headmen. To achieve this, he developed a consistent bureaucracy. He did not abolish the corvée duties of the field labourers, but he decided that they were not to be used anymore to perform heavy labour for the Company. Instead their services would consist only of activities that would improve agricultural conditions such as repairing tanks and dams vital for the irrigation of their fields.[289] At the same time, the people who were not involved in agriculture were registered carefully and their traditional duties were fixed. Burnand categorized society in eighteen castes, or occupational groups. He registered all groups and his memorandum discusses the functions of each in society, their size, their place of abode and the taxes and services that each owed to the Company.[290]

At first he had organized the paddy collection in a manner similar to the way Van de Graaff had done it in the southwest. The headmen were kept responsible for the organization and supervision of agriculture, and the paddy taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder. By 1789 Burnand came to the conclusion that he could not rely on the headmen at all, despite his efforts to strengthen his control over them:

> All pains taken to make use of these headmen in carrying the present regulations into effect [have] proved fruitless either by their negligence or reluctance to take the trouble upon them or because they saw no chance to enrich themselves with the revenue of Government […].[291]

Therefore he decided to overlook the headmen and organized a native administration, composed of *canicopolies,* native accountants, and *canga-*

nies, overseers. Their tasks were clearly defined and they received a fixed salary. He described in detail how these native servants should function, how they had to make use of "annotation *olas*" (palm leaves) to report on the crop and its collection, and how often they should make these reports and send them to the secretary's office.[292] His attitude towards these civil servants was rigid. He stressed that they only worked properly if the authority of the chief was firmly established by punishing them heavily from the outset for every little attempt at fraud.[293] Here he deviated from the policies of Van de Graaff for the southwest, but resembled more the administration of Nagel in the Vanni.

By installing this twofold administration, Burnand aimed at marginalizing the headmen and rendering the Company independent of them. Despite some temporary opposition from the headmen, this was achieved in course of time and he was able to state that the "most part of them is at present entirely unnecessary and may be dispensed with, the sole utility will be to let them act as controllers of the native servants […]".[294] The headmen's income was further curtailed by the prohibition against accepting any presents from inferior chiefs or to taking fines in court. In fact, these prohibitions had been brought in to practice after the proclamations of Van de Graaff against the taking of the *paresses*, a step which was highly praised by Burnand in this memorandum.[295]

Another step to limit the power of the headmen over the people was taken in the field of justice. Burnand reorganized the rural assemblies: instead of every six weeks, as under his predecessor, they were held only twice a year. Moreover, they functioned not as the main courts for all sorts of civil and criminal cases, but mainly as an agricultural board where the expected harvests and revenues were discussed. Only cases that could directly be decided upon could be brought to trial here. This was done to improve the legal security of the common people, since they were often opponents of the headmen in the court cases. In 1789 a *landraad* was established. Native judges were appointed directly by the Company and the headmen played no role here. The final responsibility of the verdicts lay in the hands of the Dutch chief of Batticaloa, which gave him great authority over both the people and the headmen.[296]

In his discussion of plans for the future, Burnand elaborated on the importance of trade for the district. He was of the opinion that free trade in local agricultural products and circulation of money would prove to be an encouragement for agriculture. He stated that in previous times, the price of grain had been kept artificially low, which kept people from producing more than what they needed themselves. He criticized the Company's general policy of monopolizing even local trade and he praised the measures taken by Van de Graaff in 1786 to leave the paddy-trade in the district free.[297]

4.7 *Conclusion*

For the first time, not only the southwest and Jaffna peninsula were subject to the processes of colonial intervention. The peripheral regions' experience of colonial intrusion was however very different from that in the core regions. Here the main aim of the colonial rulers was to increase the production of rice, and Van de Graaff explicitly designated these areas as the storage rooms for the rest of the island.

Although the governor increased the agricultural output, this was not entirely a success story. In Matara the native labourers rebelled against the continuous call for labour. In general, the increased exploitation seems to have weighed heavily on the backs of the peasants. The new opportunities for some of the native chiefs caused jealousies among them and some of the Dutch officials. In the peripheral districts, the Dutch heads like Van Senden found that it was not an easy task to convince the local inhabitants to produce more than they needed for themselves. The continuous struggle for life and the natural and mystical threats that surrounded them made it useless in their eyes to expand their agricultural production. And although the administrators of the peripheral districts managed to increase the output of paddy, the clash of cultures and mentalities reveals the limited reach of colonial plans and policies, something with which the British were to deal with as well.

In the peripheral districts the native administration was dealt with very differently than in the core districts. There, the former elites were banned from their position and replaced by either Dutch or Portuguese burghers in the Vanni, or by men from the Vellale caste in Batticaloa. Clearly they found themselves in a very different position from the powerful native headmen in the southwest. Did this relate to a weak social-economic organization in the region, the absence of Kandyan interests in these regions, or the very specific historical collaboration between the Dutch and the headmen in the southwest? This question will be taken up in the later chapters on British policies.

CHAPTER FIVE

DUTCH PERCEPTIONS OF THE COLONIAL ORDER

In 1809, Jacob Burnand, who remained on the island after the British take-over, wrote a paper for the second British governor, Thomas Maitland (1805-1811), about the Dutch mode of government. In these "fragments on Ceylon" Burnand drew quite a positive image of the Dutch rulers of Ceylon in the last decades. He literally referred to the governors Van Angelbeek, Van de Graaff, and Falck as enlightened rulers and praised Van de Graaff for his innovative policies. He argued that Van de Graaff aspired to change society at a moderate pace and that he thought that this was to be achieved by enlightened authoritarian rule, through a good legal system like the *landraad* and systematic registration of all land and people. With regard to the bonded services, Burnand argued that Van de Graaff's long-term view was that in time the people would be freed from their services through redemption in money or kind. In some cases Burnand criticized the policies of Van de Graaff and referred to his own methods in Batticaloa. How to deal with this picture of Burnand, should it be taken seriously, or did he portray an imagined situation for the purposes of illustration? Perhaps the paper was written in this way rather to underpin Maitland's own "enlightened" line of approach. In other words, were Van de Graaff and his officials, Burnand included, really influenced by contemporary, enlightened, political thought and does this help explain their choice of policy?

Moreover, the move to the periphery, the increased colonial intervention in the core districts and the emphasis on exploitation of the territories under Dutch occupation as a means to increase the revenue for the Company, resemble contemporary developments in Java. In particular the experiments with systems of forced labour in the core regions and the formal regulation of the tasks of the subordinated native headmen are reminiscent of similar actions taken on the northeast coast of Java. Interestingly, Governor Van de Graaff had never served on Java or elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago. These similarities lead one to wonder whether it is possible to speak of a typical Dutch-colonial approach to new challenges in this era of change.

5.1 *Developments in Europe*

In Western Europe, the last decades of the eighteenth century were tur-

bulent. The American War of Independence (1778-1784) and the French Revolution of 1789 were two major manifestations of a new political-intellectual wave that affected Europe and its colonies. In the Netherlands it led to the patriotic revolt of 1787 against the *Stadhouder* William V. The rebellion was soon quelled with Prussian assistance and the *patriotten* fled to France where they participated in the French Revolution and witnessed the rise of Napoleon. With French support they returned to the Netherlands in 1795 to take over power; the Dutch Republic was renamed the *Bataafse Republiek* and the *patriotten* began to draft a new constitution based on the modern political views.[298]

The scientific developments of the previous decades and industrial and economic developments led to new visions of society, politics and economy.[299] In the eighteenth century, France had been the epicentre of enlightened philosophical thought, with leading *philosophes* like Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau criticizing the existing political and social order.[300] Most prominent were the new ideas regarding the ideal polity which they developed in reaction to the absolute power of their monarch. The idea of the *trias politica*, with the separation of the legislative, the executive and the juridical powers as its basis, became the principal argument in their quest for reform. In the second half of the eighteenth century, French *économistes* or physiocrats like François Quesnay and Scottish philosophers like David Hume and Adam Smith shifted the focus to issues of moral politics, political economy and improvement of society. The progress of society became one of the major issues of Enlightenment thought, in which freedom and individuality became important criteria.[301]

The eighteenth-century philosophers were not just concerned with Europe but also showed great interest in the world overseas. At an early stage, descriptions of the world beyond Europe were used to show the defects of their own societies. Later, these arguments made way for new overall theories on the development of humankind. The concept of the gradual progress of human societies through certain defined stages became very popular. Thanks to a growing body of travel literature, an increased knowledge of the world enabled people to find living examples for each of these stages. The lowest stage was the most primitive, closest to natural man, for which the Aborigines of Australia served as example, while the highest and most developed was, according to most, embodied in the inhabitants of Western Europe.[302]

By the end of the century this mode of thinking had spread to the Netherlands, Britain and elsewhere in Europe.[303] The insights in the natural progress of human societies and the enlightened ideals of freedom initially led to critical attitudes towards colonialism. Ideals like liberty and equality which were central in Europe did not match the colonial

situation. The American War of Independence, which had been a direct response to the new ideals of civil rights, had been a great shock to the European powers and made them insecure about which direction to take. Some intellectuals pointed at the risk of imperial over-stretch and the impossibility of ruling over such enormous distances and made comparisons with the Roman Empire. Another argument was that progress of the indigenous societies in the colonies was hampered by repressive colonial policies.

The enlightened critique focused on three issues: first was the mercantilist attitude of the big East India companies, which hampered the economic development of the colonies and undermined their economic capacity. Second was the question of whether Europeans actually had the right to rule over native societies. Third was the debate about whether rule over indigenous peoples corrupted the European mind and led to excessive behaviour among the colonial officials towards the native society. In that context, slavery was seen as a particular manifestation of barbarous European rule and was criticized most vehemently. Although it was prevalent everywhere in Europe, the severity of this critique, the public concern and debate and its effects differed from country to country. For now we confine ourselves to the reception of such ideas in the Netherlands and on Ceylon in the late eighteenth century.

It is generally assumed that the Dutch had little concern for the moral issues brought forward by Enlightenment thinkers in relation to the colonies, and certainly not prior to 1795. Schutte has emphasized in his study *De Nederlandse patriotten en de koloniën* that although the future of the Dutch East India Company and means of financial and organizational reform was reflected upon by many from the 1780s onwards, in practice not much changed. The Company and its mercantilist attitude remained as they were. When it concerned civil rights, Schutte stresses that all the authors talked about was the position of European settlers in the colonies. He concludes: "The native population remained outside of all discussions; only the slave trade formed an exception. Slavery, though in principle considered despicable, was in practice considered as a necessary evil."[304] The endeavours of the Protestant Hernhutter (Moravian) community to Christianize and emancipate the slaves in the West Indies was a notable exception.[305]

Schutte does not elaborate much on the question of why the Dutch were not much concerned with the situation in the colonies in the East and West. His main explanation is that the VOC-ruled territories were still seen as a closed shop not subject to interference from public opinion or Parliament in the mother country. Of course there were instances when information regarding the Dutch situation in Asia trickled into Dutch society, as in the case of the work of Jacob Haafner published in the early

nineteenth century. He severely criticized the Dutch religious policies in the East and he expressed a high esteem for the indigenous religion and culture. Interestingly though, his most outstanding critique regarded the activities of the British rather than the Dutch East India Company in Asia. In his description of their war conduct during the early 1780s in India, he expressed his abhorrence for their treatment of his fellow Europeans, but he was shocked even more by the Britons' ruthless attitude towards the native populations, and he describes how thousands of people starved to death due to the British war operations. The impact on Dutch public opinion of Haafner's and others' colonial criticism was very limited.[306]

This Dutch indifference regarding the fate of native populations in Asia in this period has been accepted by historians almost without question. In comparison, the absence of a strong anti-slavery movement has long been considered a Dutch anomaly and the subject of much debate. For abolitionism is considered one of the clearest manifestations of the intellectual and popular criticism of colonial practices elsewhere in Europe. Whereas the rise of capitalism and industrialization are usually used to explain the emergence of the anti-slavery movements in Britain, the Americas and elsewhere, the Dutch situation did not match that model.[307]

Recently, Angelie Sens has discussed the absence of an influential abolitionist movement in the Netherlands around 1800 and placed it in a cultural context, rather than an economic one. Through her analysis of popular reading and pamphlets she convincingly disputes Schutte's argument that the Dutch public was inadequately informed about developments in the colonies. She advances the idea that the public debate in the Netherlands at that time really concerned the peculiar situation of the Dutch themselves, their decline from the "golden age" of the seventeenth century, and their determination to seek new directions. Sens argues that agitating against slavery as an institution could be explained as a denial of the virtues of the seventeenth century, when slavery in the colonial possessions was an accepted institution. This may explain why abolitionism did not appeal to the Dutch public. On the other hand, she detects a sense of humanitarianism in the explicit Dutch ideal of civilizing the slaves through education, and good treatment. Because of the introspective nature of the Dutch public debate, the colonial governments in the Americas experienced hardly any pressure from home to change their attitude. Perhaps Sens' explanation for the absence of an abolitionist movement in the Netherlands in the late eighteenth century helps explain the simultaneous lack of interest in the colonial practices in the East.[308]

5.2 *Ceylon and the colonial criticism*

It is difficult to grasp the Dutch colonial attitude towards Ceylon in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Schutte concluded for the Dutch community on Java that the situation was not much different from that in the Netherlands. He found no signs of influence of Enlightenment or patriotic thought in the execution of colonial policy. In fact, even though typical elements of late eighteenth-century Dutch intellectual and cultural life were present in the Batavian European community, in the form of the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences[309] and masonry clubs, this did not much influence colonial rule as such.[310] Certainly, Dirk van Hogendorp strove for a government on modern principles and demanded the abolition of slavery and bonded labour in the East in the 1790s. However, he never gained strong support and his ideas were never put into practice.[311]

The situation on Ceylon seems to have been not much different from that on Java. There were two masonry clubs in Colombo, but they remain very obscure and it is unclear how they functioned. Prominent members of government were also affiliated with the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences. The official letters sent home were not very reflective and remained silent on intellectual inspirations behind new policies. Governor Van de Graaff's reforms were however so substantial that one would expect to find some contemplation on the mission of the Company on the island. Was there, as Burnand suggested, any relation with the new political theories that had developed in Europe, and was there any moral motive behind these policies?

There is no doubt that the Company officials overseas were acquainted with the intellectual and political developments in Europe and in the Netherlands. Sluijsken's remark on the French *philosophes* in a letter sent to Van Braam in December 1785, bears evidence of it.

> The great Venalon [Fénélon], in his *Telemachus* [1699], the cardinal Alberonie [Giulio Alberoni], in his *testament politique* [1753] and the abbot Raynal, in his *Histoire Politique and Philisophique* convince all of us that it is the duty of all regents, to urge their subjects to commerce and agriculture. They profess that these two branches are the source of abundance in any country. Furthermore they say that by bringing these to flower is the only means to make a country powerful and blooming. They also point out how necessary it is to stimulate the people thereto through rewards. It is said that all governing sovereigns in Europe have accepted this political system. It is generally known that the island Ceylon is very fertile. It has a fortunate climate and the inhabitants would not be suffering from want of everything if one would only put the hands to work, to make use of this island's fertility.[312]

Sluijsken mentioned in his letter a motley collection of eighteenth-century politicians and intellectuals. He may have been trying to show off how well-read he was; the letter was after all written to promote himself and

to ask Van Braam for help in furthering his career in the East.[313] Yet, his positive reference to the Abbé Raynal surprises, for Raynal was a severe and influential critic of the excesses of colonialism in general and the monopolistic rule of the VOC in particular.

Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les Deux Indes* was first published in 1770.[314] As the title reveals, the books (for there are seven volumes) present a critical overview of the situation in the European colonies in the East and West Indies. In addition, a general perspective on the various political and economic issues of colonialism is given. The work was of an encyclopaedic nature written by various authors and its message is consequently a little diffuse. Moreover, Raynal and his co-authors made substantial changes in the various subsequent editions.[315] Although the work was much criticized for its factual mistakes, it became one of the best-sellers of the eighteenth century, with more that forty reprints in French and translations into Dutch, German and English. It was a much quoted work in the anti-slavery debates of the late eighteenth century.[316]

The criticism on the Companies in Asia received not as much attention, but was very substantial. In the second part of the first volume, the mercantilist system and the monopolies of the VOC were attacked. Raynal's portrayal of the Dutch Company was one of decline because of greed and decadence. Raynal preferred the organization of the English East India Company above that of the Dutch Company and repeatedly, while comparing the two, he urged the Dutch to look at their "insular neighbours" as an example. The major problem of the VOC was its complex administrative structure, which hampered its decision-making process and its adaptability. Moreover, the Company's monopolistic and jealous attitudes towards other traders were a great evil. Raynal argued that the VOC's policies had to be overturned, that Batavia should be opened up for all traders. As far as he was concerned many of the superfluous small trading factories in Asia could be closed down. In this way, the Company could greatly reduce its costs and prevent the other Europeans from turning against them.

During his textual tour along all the Dutch possessions, Raynal also discussed the colony of Ceylon and in line with the rest of his text, he criticized the monopolistic attitudes there. He further noted that, although much of the land was under Dutch rule, cultivation of the soil was not promoted. The land and its inhabitants were left in a poor state, people had become lazy, they lived in little shacks, ate nothing but fruits of the land and only the richest had some cloths to wrap around their waist. Under the heading "hints of policy recommended to the Dutch for improving their settlement there", he advised the Dutch, and for that matter, all European powers in Asia:

> that they [should] distribute the lands to families. They will forget, and perhaps detest their former sovereign; They will attach themselves to government, which keeps itself busy with their happiness. They will work, they will consume. Then, the island of Ceylon will enjoy the affluence, for which nature has destined her. It would be a shelter for revolutions, and capable of supporting the establishment of Malabar and Coromandel.[317]

This phrase clearly demonstrates the ambiguous attitude of Raynal towards colonialism: though he generally despised the actual European power over native societies, he in fact gave here very practical advice on how to optimize the gains on the island and retain order and security. In his general criticism of the Company rule in Asia, he placed a lot of emphasis on the devastating effects of ruthless policies towards native societies and the exclusive attitudes towards the other European traders. Raynal repeatedly predicted that this would in the end backfire on the Company: the natives would rebel against the Dutch for their maltreatment and the other European East Indian Companies would wage war against the Dutch to gain access to the closed markets and trading products.

Still, independence of the colonies was not an option, but the opening up of the markets and good treatment of the natives was.[318] Raynal did not propagate to change the native societies, rather he saw the way the native societies were structured was a given, with which the colonizers had to live. In his general advice for the VOC at the end of his treatise of the Dutch activities in the East, he stated that the task of the Dutch governments in Asia was:

> to restore harmony, which is a task that grows most necessary and more difficult every day, agents should be appointed, who, with a spirit of moderation should unite a knowledge of the interests, customs, language, religion and manners of these nations. At present perhaps the Company may be unprovided with persons of this stamp, but it concerns her to procure such.[319]

Despite his critical attitude towards the Company's policies in the East, it is not difficult to see why Raynal's work would appeal to the men on Ceylon. The need for change that was felt locally was reinforced by Raynal's criticism and suggestions. His explicit remarks in relation to Ceylon may have given them a justification to actively extend Dutch territorial power on the island, increase the exploitation of the land and to seek a long-term solution for the financial problems of the island's colonial government. Could the work of Raynal, written and published for an audience in Europe, have really inspired Van de Graaff and his contemporaries in Ceylon?

Although men like Sluijsken and Van de Graaff had been in the East for a long time, they were not entirely detached from home. They kept

regular contact through letters and were kept apprised of affairs back home through newspapers, books and pamphlets. A rare example of a list of books owned by Company officials at the time is found in the estate of Cellarius of Cochin, who possessed endless books, in which also Raynal and other *philosophes* featured.[320] Intellectually, Europe and the Netherlands were closer to some of the Dutchmen on Ceylon than is sometimes assumed on the basis of their long absence from Europe. The political developments and power politics at home interested Dutch officials, not least because they depended on their connections at home for their advancement in the East. For example, when the Batavian revolution spread over the Netherlands, the Dutch in the East also chose sides of either the stadholder or the patriots.[321]

5.3 *Van de Graaff's "response"*

Let us recapitulate some of Van de Graaff's policies vis-à-vis the interior: he intensified agriculture in the core regions by planting cinnamon trees in plantations and gardens and having wasteland distributed for cultivation. The new land leases were given on the condition that one-third was planted with commercial crops for the Company. He involved the native headmen in this operation by making the supervision and promotion of agriculture an important part of their newly regulated tasks. He further stimulated the headmen to persevere in these agricultural projects by promising them better positions and giving them honorary rewards in the form of medals and other prestige gifts. Company officials were also urged to promote cultivation by promising them a percentage of the increased crop in the districts under their supervision.

In relation to the peasantry, Van de Graaff realized that improvement could only be achieved by peace and order among the cultivators and their headmen. Therefore he kept the headmen in check through the new task descriptions, which functioned as a contract between the colonial government and the local chief and kept the chief accountable for his actions. Moreover, to make sure that only those with the best intentions and capabilities would get the position of headman, minor or superior, the tradition of gift-giving upon appointment was abandoned. The idea was that the headmen could now only seek legitimatization of their power through appointments by the Dutch government; also, it served as a subversion of the autonomous power of the headmen that was usually confirmed in that ritual of gift-giving.

In this way, the "common man" was protected from the extortion of the headmen that was the object of such frequent complaint. Moreover, their private interests were secured by new regulations for the *landraad*.

The acceptance of presents by the headmen and Dutch officials was now forbidden when someone wished to register a complaint, and officials were no longer allowed to keep fines. This was to prevent the arbitrary administration of justice, which had often led to long delays in trials and appeals to higher courts. The rationale underlying these reforms was quite practical: the sooner conflicts were solved, the sooner everyone could return to the fields.

Van de Graaff underscored his words with deeds and within one month after his proclamation against the taking of gifts from inferiors, in August 1784 he temporarily suspended Don Siman Wijesoendere Senewiratne Dissanaijke, *mudaliyār* of the Belligam *corle,* for having received such gifts. Undoubtedly this was done to set an example for the others.[322] Later, in 1793, Bartholomeus Raket was impeached for giving lucrative tax farms to certain headmen after receiving substantial gifts from them. Clearly, Van de Graaff believed that if this form of fair and harmonious rule was combined with active promotion of agriculture, the colony would become prosperous. Can we understand the new line of policy as an answer to the predicament of despotic Company rule, and therefore as an answer to the type of critique expressed by Raynal?

This question is difficult to answer. Even if the new measures agree with Raynal's advice on Ceylon and the colonial operations in the East generally, this still does not prove any direct correlation. It is more likely that the measures should be seen as political interventions that were based on local officials' lengthy experiences in the local administration. Van de Graaff's predecessors like Van Goens and Van Imhoff had also expressed their intention to contain the native headmen and to encourage agricultural development of the island. Although they never succeeded in this, their writings may have served as much as examples for the officials on Ceylon as that of Raynal. To make things more complex: Raynal had made much use of Van Imhoff's comments on the Company's policies, written when he was governor-general in the 1740s.[323]

On the other hand the initiative for the new projects lay by and large with Van de Graaff in Ceylon. Except for the cinnamon cultivation, he could have decided to keep things as they were, as his predecessor Falck had done. The money he used to develop the island could have been spent to draw rice from abroad. Instead, Van de Graaff consciously made huge expenses on agricultural development and instigated major changes in the inland administration. Also, he decided to invest in the peripheral areas and turn these into the island's breadbasket. He must have had a positive long-term vision of the island's destiny and must have been confident of his goals to have done all this despite the Batavian government's opposition. It is likely that the writings of Raynal and others provided him that long-term perspective, and that this, in combination with Van

Imhoff's legacy, gave him the confidence to undertake the required action.

The following analysis of the discussions relating to the indigenous society exposed in the memoranda of the officials who operated in the periphery sheds more light on the question of how policy in Ceylon related to contemporary European thought about the non-European world and the criticisms of colonialism. The new enterprises there, the increased agricultural exploitation and new efficiency in the practice of colonial power over the inhabitants, appears to have encouraged these colonial officials to further reflect on the choices made and on their mission on the island. They may give us a clearer idea of the visions of society and the ideals pursued by the Company's officials on the island.

5.4 *The vision of Jacques Fabrice van Senden*

In Chapter Four we gave a description of Van Senden's tour of 1786 through the districts adjacent to Trincomalee. In that context his zeal for exploitation was emphasized: he considered everything he came across as fit for development. In the discussion of his encounter with the inhabitants of this neglected district, it was also pointed out how Van Senden contrasted himself with them. He exhorted them to be active and enterprising – as he was – by showing the inhabitants how to plant their gardens or sow their fields. He demonstrated his superior technological knowledge and hoped to bring this knowledge across to them. He wished to challenge them to make investments and to produce more than they needed in order to sell their crops on the markets. He ridiculed their folk stories by waving these off as superstition. He considered them childlike for attributing certain artefacts or ruins to spirits, mythical women and devils and showed off his Western rational knowledge by fixing some obstruction in the Kantelai tank.

One of the central points in his writings is that the natives needed civilization to lift them out of their inertia and backwardness. Illustrative of this outlook is the remark he made during his visit in the village of Niellepalle in Kottiyar. Van Senden complained about the lack of knowledge among the people. He pointed out to the *vanniyār* who accompanied him that children should learn to read and write, otherwise they would remain at the level of animals:

> That as long as he [the *vanniyār*] as regent and father of his people did not take care of the education of his children, he could never hope to have authority over the people, they would remain merely humans in appearance but stupid dull animals in deeds, to whom no lust for improvement of their state and consequently of the country of their abode could ever be inspired.[324]

This image of the dull natural man, in contrast to the energetic civilized man is encountered often in the text.[325] The inhabitants could best be brought to civilization through good examples, upbringing and education, and for the best results one had to start with the children since they were still young and innocent. They would have to learn from a young age to lead an active life by putting them to work while they were still young and sending them to school at the same time.[326] The best students should be rewarded with presents and upon reaching adulthood they should be able to obtain the highest positions in the native administration. In that way, civilization was equated with status, and good examples would follow automatically. Although he expected the headmen to cooperate in this, he thought it to be best if the headmen were to be supervised by European residents. After all, the headmen had been given too much freedom when they served under the Kandyan king, which had led them to rule in an arbitrary way.[327]

Van Senden had a positive view of society because he felt that every human, however close he once stood to nature, had the potential to develop himself. The civilization process would find its expression in economic behaviour, and only once does he add hesitantly that this might lead in the end to Christianity. But conversion was not really his aim. Van Senden was actually much interested in the practice of Hinduism and Buddhism which he encountered and more than once he asked for a translation of the ancient texts that were kept in the temples that he saw. Not surprisingly, he refers at times to contemporary travel authors like Sonnerat who had travelled through India and paid much attention to the origin of the Indian religion, ruins and artefacts, and who had published a travel account in 1782.[328] Van Senden gives the reader the impression of being much concerned with and sympathetic towards the fate of the natives. At the end of the diary, Van Senden addresses himself to the governor, and asked him to do as much as was in his power to improve the situation in Trincomalee. Moreover, he expressed the hope that his advice would not only lead to the improvement of agriculture and the "morals of the inhabitants", but also "to the fortune of at least some blacks".[329]

Two other examples of writings by Company officials who worked in the periphery may enlighten us and help answering these questions. In the following two sections the memoranda of Thomas Nagel and Jacob Burnand will be discussed and compared with those of Van Senden.

5.5 *Thomas Nagel and the Vanni*

We already saw that in 1789 Nagel had leased the district of the Vanni from the colonial government on the promise that he would ensure tran-

quility and develop it and deliver a quota of paddy to the Company. Five years later he wrote a memorandum requesting an extension of the lease. Although Batavia had not yet consented to his request, he was still in charge of the district when the British arrived. The following description of the meeting which General Stuart had with him highlights Nagel's peculiar position as a private entrepreneur in the district:

> With respect to Mr Nagel the land regent of the Wanny's demand for subsistence for himself and the servants who were employed under him at Molletivoe [Mullaitivu], as servants of the late Dutch Company – you will inform him I am very much surprised at this application when he must recollect, that he himself informed me at Molletivoe, that he paid not only the civil servants, but the military, who were employed with him at that place, and that the Dutch Company had nothing to do with them, and in consequence he claimed the whole of the property found there as his own and would not allow that any part of it belonged to the Dutch Company.[330]

In Chapter Four we discussed the measures he took to improve the situation in this territory. These ranged from the replacement of the chiefs with native servants, the introduction of the Jaffnanese laws, the repair of the water tanks and the advances of paddy seeds. He also planned to have the inhabitants plant parts of their land with cash crops like cotton, sugar and coffee, although he would have preferred to have proper plantations in the style of the West Indies, including the slaves from Africa. For this he was inspired by the treatise of Anthony Blom on the management of plantations in Surinam. Blom's book was very popular in the Netherlands at the time.[331] Furthermore, the memorandum gives an impression of his mentality through his reflection on the native society.

The first four paragraphs of the memorandum serve as a legitimization of the Company's possession of the district. In the first place, the right of the Company to the land was undisputable because it was based on the early conquest during the war with the Portuguese. The *vanniyārs* had since then always served under the Company. Even though the *vanniyārs* had become more and more powerful, and the VOC had been negligent and uninterested in the district, the Company had never actually ceded its right to the land. Therefore the expeditions undertaken in 1780, 1784, and 1785 against the troublesome *vanniyārs* were legitimate.

In the remainder of this plea two assumptions are highlighted: first, Nagel depicts the *vanniyārs* as tyrannical headmen, who ruled their people arbitrarily without proper laws. It was therefore no more than just for the Company to remove them from their powerful positions after its occupation of the district. However, as we have seen in Chapter Four, instead of installing new headmen on their positions, Nagel completely overturned the existing administrational structure.

Second, he legitimized these policies by placing the inhabitants of the

Vanni on the lowest scale of human development. This reminds us of the remarks made by Van Senden on the animal-like men. However, Nagel takes the argument further: "The people of the Vanni", he wrote, "are the most primitive kind, on the most natural and basic stage of human development and are much in need of Company rule to be civilized."[332] To give some examples: they had never been out of the district, there was hardly any money in circulation, and they knew nothing. They "are surprised to see artefacts like watches and paintings" and "when looking at a mirror they are so taken by their mirror image that nothing can distract them from looking at that image". Moreover, they were the dirtiest people he knew: they bathed in dirty water, among their own excrements and their buffaloes. Their deceased were not buried deep in the ground, but left close to their homes to rot and to be eaten by birds.[333]

His argument is not only based on some random examples, but it is actually well developed in the memorandum and substantiated by Nagel's discussion of three particular features of the inhabitants of the district. In the first place, he presented them as people without history. At one time the district had experienced a period of great prosperity, of which the remnants, the ruins of large buildings and tanks, bore witness. However, Nagel was certain that this great ancient culture had been destroyed by a natural disaster, leaving the district desolate and uninhabited. It was only then that the current inhabitants had moved into the district, consequently they did not have any connection whatsoever with those ancient, much more sophisticated, people. Nagel underpinned his view by stating that these people had no memory whatsoever of that ancient society in either written or oral traditions. In fact, he attested that these people had no common memory whatsoever. They did not even know what their origin was, or how they arrived at the Vanni.[334]

Second, he pointed out that, though they were Hindu in name, they were in practice people without religion because they had been instructed badly. He was certain, nonetheless, that they would be ready for conversion to Protestantism. Due to the Company's neglect, they had never had the opportunity to be taught the catechism even though he knew from personal experience that they were eager to learn. At the request of one of the elderly inhabitants of the district, Nagel had asked a Lutheran missionary, who was on his way to Jaffna and could speak the language, to educate these people. "From seven in the morning till the afternoon he instructed them about the parable Matthew 21 verse 33 to 44[335] and they were so very content." Not surprisingly, this is the "Parable of the Tenants", which deals with the ideal behaviour of husbandmen towards their landowner, which of course fitted perfectly with Nagel's ambitions for the agricultural development of the region. Nagel hoped that a conversion to Christianity would help improve the attitude of the people. He

regretted that his own efforts to bring in schoolteachers from Jaffna had proven to be fruitless, and that at the moment of writing this situation had not yet improved.[336]

Third, he represented the people of the Vanni as people without government, law or institutions. He wrote sarcastically: "The laws of the Vanni were thus very short, because there were none, neither from tradition, nor written by their lord."[337] The *vanniyārs* were to blame for this, because they applied laws arbitrarily, they could always be bribed, and they protected criminals. However, the fault was also with the people themselves, because they were so uncivilized. Their houses were nothing more than little huts, their ploughs were of the simplest sort, and they were extremely lazy. Moreover, their marriages were not based on any religious or official ceremony, but on mutual consent. Adultery was a general feature of life and men and women could easily leave each other. Nagel concludes therefore that their rules and habits were totally against natural law and therefore the society was lawless.[338] By representing the inhabitants as people without history, without religion and without laws, he underpinned his statement that they belonged to the people of "the lowest order".

The improvement of the "primitive people" of the Vanni was certainly possible according to Nagel, and in fact he considered this his duty, which gave him a moral justification for his rule over the inhabitants of the Vanni. He praised himself for having brought them already to a "higher step of humaneness".[339] Despite this negative description, his attitude towards the people was positive: he described them as children in need of a sensible father to raise them. They were lazy and indolent at first, but after a period of good government, they would improve quickly and they could improve even more in the future. Nagel demonstrated an optimistic belief in the possibilities of social change.[340] However, he did not elaborate much on the practical aspect of this social engineering, nor did he say exactly what he had achieved. He only stated at several points that they had already reached a higher level of civilization because he was reforming them into useful people. How he did so remains vague, and all that can be deduced is that their situation bettered in parallel with the improvement of agriculture and the virtue of the Company's government. This last element he stresses over and over again, warning his readers that it takes a generation to pick the fruits of such labour. He therefore pointed out that his attention was always focused on the children, more than on the adults, who were already "spoiled".

It is astonishing to find the image of the inhabitants created by Nagel fitting so neatly with the European scholarly conceptions of non-European societies. While Van Senden only made a distinction between civilized and uncivilized people, Nagel left no doubt for his contemporaries

about the stage of development of his subjects. In fact, it is as though his description of the people of the Vanni was derived from some sort of "textbook on people of the lowest order". It is precisely the neatness of Nagel's description that raises doubts about whether it was really applicable to the circumstances of the people in the Vanni or whether it was intended as rhetoric. Neither his predecessors, nor his successors in the district used the same vocabulary to describe the people of the Vanni. They all agree that it was a poor area, but none describes it as lawless, without religion, or inhabited with men as dirty as animals.[341] Nagel may well have exaggerated to appeal to the moral sentiments of his superiors in order to obtain their permission for his plans. In doing so, he gave strong proof of the need for the Company's intervention in the district and of his own indispensability to the mission.[342]

Though Nagel touches upon some of the pet topics of Enlightenment and uses them to justify his policies, others, like liberty and equality, receive no attention at all. He regarded bondage as useful, and in fact he re-installed bonded labour as a government institution without any discussion.[343] If it had been possible he would have transferred hundreds of African or Moluccan slaves to Ceylon, to start a plantation based on Blom's Surinamese model. The lack of elaboration on topics like equality and liberty and the bare insight he gives to the modes best suited to achieve the people's improvement seem to contradict his typically enlightened digression on the situation of the people of the Vanni at the beginning of his memoir. In that sense, Nagel and Van Senden differed in their attitude. Although Van Senden also stressed his superiority, he tried to involve the native headmen in his quest for agricultural improvement. Instead of sending a minister to the area to instruct the people on a parable on the "good tenant", he planted a garden himself, to give an example for the inhabitants of the villages. And although he complained about the character of the inhabitants, he did not criticize their institutions, laws or religion.

5.6 *An ideal image: the colonial ruler as humanitarian father*

Despite their differences, Nagel's rhetoric of legitimization and Van Senden's vision of improvement strongly reflect the Dutch spirit of the time. In particular it must have appealed to the domestic Dutch sentiment as it is described by Angelie Sens: the ideal of civilizing the natives has much in common with the Dutch attitude towards slavery in the West Indies. Neither Van Senden nor Nagel proposed any real change in society or in native relations with the colonial government. However, they did feel that if people were treated better and educated properly, they

would work harder within the system and their lives would be improved. Christianity played a supporting, but not a central role in this notion. The image of the colonial situation on Ceylon matched that in the West Indies: the view of the inhabitants as children and the colonial official as father to rule over them is strong in both documents and resembles the Dutch contemporary attitude towards slavery. It was an ideal image and one that both Nagel and Van Senden undoubtedly emphasized to please their superiors, convince them of the necessity of their work and thereby further their own careers. After all, both documents were not only sent to the governor, but also to Batavia and the Netherlands.

Despite the tyranny of distance, Van Senden and Nagel were both influenced by the contemporary Dutch world view, and the empathy they expressed for the natives was part of this ideology. How sincere were these two men? As colonial officials they undoubtedly stressed the difference in the degree of civilization between them and and the local people, but their reports must have sounded plausible for the intended audience. After all, these memoranda were not written for an audience in Europe, but first of all for the highest VOC officials in Asia, who had to decide their policy upon such information and who had their own first-hand experience of indigenous Asian people. Van Senden and Nagel were conscious that the governor and the members of the High Government in Batavia would read their pieces. With a view on their career perspectives it was not a bad idea to put oneself to the best advantage by revealing a thorough-going image of themselves. Still, the image they sketched of the inhabitants must have been acceptable for their contemporaries on Ceylon and elsewhere in Asia.

Perhaps what binds the two most is their model of the vigorous Company official, who ruled over his subjects in a just, paternalistic manner. Both men approached the natives in terms of character and nature that could be improved and not in terms of social structures that should be amended. A long-term vision of this improvement is absent. It is instructive to place the two memoranda in the perspective of that of their contemporary Jacob Burnand.

5.7 *Jacob Burnand's practical reflections*

Burnand's rhetoric was somewhat different from that of Nagel and Van Senden. Most notable, Burnand did not describe his subject in the same expressions on the stages of development. In part, this can be explained by the nature of the document, which was written as a guideline for his successor as head of the Batticaloa district. At the same time Burnand based his line of reasoning on two characteristic assumptions, which are

also found in Nagel's memorandum. These are the idea of arrested development owing to arbitrary rule by despotic headmen, and a belief in progress of society.

The first can be illustrated by his representation of the history of the district and its re-occupation by the Dutch in 1766. Burnand's story-line goes as follows: a long time ago, before the first arrival of the Portuguese, the region was doing very well. It was populous and agriculture was flourishing. It was unclear when the area came under Kandyan rule. However, after this happened, the country was ruined, people fled, leaving only a few *vedahs* behind and farmland turned into jungle again.[344] It was under the Kandyan Kingdom that the *Mukuvan* families, migrating from Jaffna and allying themselves with the king, became the powerful elite of the area. Every layer of the Kandyan administration, from the Kandyan *dessava* of the whole district downwards to the village headmen, extorted and vexed the poor inhabitants. Nobody's property was secure and people ran up great debts.[345] The short period of Portuguese and Dutch occupation of the district in the seventeenth century produced no change for the better. Matters grew so bad that when the Dutch war against the King of Kandy began, the *Mukuvan* and all the inhabitants offered their allegiance to the Dutch. This resulted in the *Deed of submission* signed on 14 October 1766.[346] Burnand's interpretation of the history of the district leads him to conclude that the legitimacy of Dutch rule over the district was twofold: the land had been obtained both by conquest and also by the invitation of the people. The latter implied a moral duty on the part of the Company.

Here Burnand started to deviate from Nagel's discourse. He felt that the policy of increasing the paddy revenue for the Company could be defined only within the opportunities offered in the *Deed of Submission* on the one hand, and should fulfil the moral obligation to bring back the flourishing times to the district on the other hand. These two elements of his policy did not clash, but were in fact related to each other:

> There is however [stated] in the aforementioned act of submission that without transgressing those bounds or without forsaking justice and introducing arbitrarily new taxes, the revenues of government in those districts may successively be extended much more from time to time according to the encrease of the population, the cultivation and the manufacture of cloth.[347]

Burnand strongly believed that the existing system of government belonged to the district, and that it was not up to the Company to make any basic alterations. This system had once brought it to a flourishing state, and it was only through the corruption of the Kandyan court and the *Mukuvan* headmen that the district had been brought to ruin. The last argument legitimized his marginalizing policies towards the *hoofdpedies* and also explains the rationalization of the taxes and services. In his

view, he did not change the system, but only improved it. He was of the opinion that changes to the system, if necessary sometimes, had to be implemented slowly and carefully at the right time.

The second characteristic assumption is exemplified by his attitude towards the inhabitants of the district. This appears to be negative at first: a typical picture was sketched of lazy, indifferent and indolent people. Burnand stressed however, that this was solely the result of the fraudulent and oppressive behaviour of the headmen. Like Nagel and Van Senden he believed in the effectiveness of social engineering. He was certain that their behaviour would improve dramatically once they were governed rightly. In this way, he was sure, the "natural indifference" and the "laziness of the natives" could be "conquered".[348] They just needed to experience the fruits of the new policies and according to him many already had: "The petty pedies / inferior headmen / and common people are in general more attentive in performing their duties and more manageable, which is to be ascribed [attributed] to the real amendment of their state effected by the new changes."[349] In this argument he went further than Nagel, because he not only provided examples of people who had already changed their behaviour, but he also summed up the measures that led to this change. Security of property through fair administration of justice and free trade proved to be major catalysts for improvement. He demonstrated, not without pride, that under his government this was all possible, and he used as an example the fact that there was no need anymore for people to sell their children as slaves out of poverty. He found another proof in the decreased crime rate during his administration.

He saw it as his obligation to bring "just rule" to the people, but only within their own system and based on their own laws and customs. The means to stimulate people to produce more were limited to economic and political impulses: stability and security were the magic words. If managed properly this would lead to a material and spiritual improvement of the people. Nowhere does he talk about a civilizing mission as such in the memoir.[350]

Although Burnand does not emphasize the contrast between primitive native and superior Dutchman as Van Senden and Nagel do, the other elements are still present and even more extensively discussed by him. Burnand sincerely believed in the progress of society and the vocation of the colonial official to pursue this. After all it would lead to a prosperous country, with happy subjects, and an increase in income for the Company, in part because of the growth of the Ceylonese market for Company trade goods. Since Burnand, Nagel, and Van Senden all worked closely with the governor, there is no reason why his basic assumptions of the colonial relations would have been fundamentally different.

However, there were differences in the practical realization of the ideal policy. While in the Vanni and in Batticaloa this was to be achieved by replacing the headmen who were held responsible for the stagnation, in the southwest it led to a policy of containing the headmen. The 'tyrannical headmen' form a leitmotif in colonial thought almost from the beginning of Dutch involvement with Asian societies and in one of his articles, Jurrien van Goor identified this as the central phenomenon in Dutch colonial ideology.[351]

What is of interest here is that the place of the headmen in the Dutch colonial discourse changed over time. Early on, they were viewed as competitors, working against the interests of the Company. In the 1750s especially they were accused of clearing plots of land on which the cinnamon tree grew and planting it with coconuts, which was not a product of much use to the Company. In the case of taxation, the headmen were withholding information and goods and not paying the full taxes to the Company. For this they were sometimes reprimanded by the Company. The element of competition for resources, be it land, labour, or produce, always remained a major factor in the relationship between the Company and the headmen, but by the 1780s Dutch attitudes had shifted. The headmen were now considered despotic because they did not put any energy into improving the agriculture of the island, and thereby hampered the development of their subjects. They were now blamed for the backwardness of the society. The discourse regarding the headmen adapted to the needs and the mindset of the Company government and in this period, it was the drive towards a fully self-sufficient economy.

The two strategies observed in the eastern and in the southwestern regions seem to be contradictory. In the east, the headmen were dispensed with and Company officials strove for the improvement of the common man, while in the southwest policy was aimed at improving the headmen themselves. However, it has to be remembered that in general the improvement of the people was related more to their moral improvement and that of their attitude towards work than to their social position towards the Company or the headmen. In the view of the Dutch, there was no problematic contradiction between the two schemes, because of an important omission from their discourse, namely the issues of liberty and equality.

5.8 *Conclusion*

At the beginning of this chapter I wondered whether the remarks made by Jacob Burnand in 1809 – that the last Dutch governors were enlightened administrators – was significant or supportable. We saw that the

economic policies, to better exploit the interior land and to improve the island's agricultural situation fitted contemporary ideals about economic policy. The language used to describe the native society also bears resemblance to contemporary European publications. However, in comparison to the moral-political elements of the Enlightenment, the Dutch administrators do not make a particular "enlightened" impression.

As we saw, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, Van de Graaff, Nagel, Burnand, and Van Senden hardly touched upon the concepts of liberty and equality, two very important concepts in the political Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Burnand and Van Senden did however show a bit more empathy than Nagel. Burnand accepted slavery and bonded labour as part of normal life, yet he understood that people did not prefer to be subjugated in this manner. In his view both were necessary to overcome the lack of labour in Ceylon. Even though he recognized the possibility to pay a tax instead of performing the services as a positive development for the people and the economy, he emphasized that in some cases the labour was just too indispensable and the payment of redemption money was therefore not always acceptable. In fact he pointed out that the more people started redeeming their services, the more the Company would have to rely on slave labour for coolie work. Slaves who had obtained some wealth should however naturally be in the position to buy their freedom. For the rest, control and protection from abuse by a good ruler, were more important. It is the argument that Van de Graaff always used when there were complaints against possible abuse by the headmen.[352]

The development plans reflect in many ways a typically Dutch attitude: the Dutch Enlightenment had a strong traditional Christian component and when civil society, in the form of "academic" societies, expressed its concern for the natives of the colonies it was usually in the context of the mission and its role in native societies. All forced labour, be it in the form of slavery or bonded labour, was acceptable, as long as the people were treated well. In the view of the Dutch, progress was not related to the structural relations in society, but to virtuous behaviour: harmony and industry were its major elements. This persistent attitude towards non-western societies reminds of the official policies of colonial Java in the same period, which eventually led to the acceptance of the system of forced cultivation *(Cultuurstelsel)* as major system of exploitation.[353] In all, what Burnand meant when he described the Dutch as enlightened administrators in 1809, had probably more to do with the then current debate over good rule than with the actual administration of the Dutch.

CHAPTER SIX

ISOLATION AND DISINTEGRATION: THE KANDYANS AND THE DUTCH

Thus far, the last years of Dutch-Kandyan relations have been left aside. Usually the war of 1762-1766 is seen as the last major upheaval in the relationship between the Dutch colonial government on Ceylon and the court of Kandy. Now that we know how much the policy of the Dutch government on the island was changing, and the extent to which it was more and more focused on the interior of the island, we may wonder whether this relationship was as tranquil as it is usually described. Moreover, considering the fragile state of the Kingdom it is unlikely that the political tensions within the Kingdom that were so characteristic for the 1750s and 1760s faded away entirely. Picking up where we left off in Chapter Two, we should examine how the relationship between the two political entities on the island fared after 1766.

6.1 *Diplomatic relations after 1766*

In relation to Kandy, Dutch official policy aimed to abide by all articles that were settled in the treaty. After 1766, the yearly embassies continued to be the main feature of the Dutch-Kandyan diplomatic relationship, but it was decided to drop all degrading rituals, which the Dutch had had to perform in earlier times. Embassies now went back and forth, the Kandyans usually arriving in Colombo in January, and the Dutch travelling to Kandy in March or April. The Dutch government of Ceylon had lost its vassal status and was considered as equally sovereign on the island. At the same time economic control which the Dutch had held over the Kandyan territory grew even tighter.[354]

The settlement was very advantageous for the VOC. Its subjects were allowed to peel cinnamon in the king's territories every season, as far as the mountain of Ballane, although as in former times they had to officially request permission for this at the yearly embassy. In addition, the Dutch were now in a good bargaining position since they had gained possession of the coastal salt pans near Puttalam on the west coast, north of Colombo, and near Matara in the southeast, which had formerly been in Kandyan hands. Thus, in exchange for a permit to peel cinnamon, the Dutch allowed the Kandyans to collect salt in their maritime districts.

A second advantage was the exclusion of the Kandyans from contacts with foreigners, especially other Europeans. The Dutch feared that the Kandyans would otherwise seek to challenge the Company's cinnamon monopoly by calling in other European powers to establish themselves on the island. Contact with South Indian powers also had to be conducted through the Company. Even when relatives of the king had to travel to and from Madurai or if brides for the king had to be collected in South India, the cooperation of the Company was requested.[355]

The treaty made it possible for the Dutch to enforce a policy of isolation of the Kandyan Kingdom and of making it totally dependent on them for their contact with the world beyond Ceylon. Isolation of the Kingdom was what they had always aimed for, but they were now in a much better position to impose it. The Kandyans on the other hand never fully complied with all articles of the treaty, which they felt had been imposed on them, yet in the years immediately after the war, fear of Dutch aggression prevented them from disputing the treaty. For about sixteen years after the conclusion of the treaty, Dutch-Kandyan relations were relatively smooth apart from some disputes on the establishment of the new borders.[356]

By the end of the 1770s, Kandyan courtiers tried to contact the French through their South Indian relatives.[357] These efforts came to an end in 1782 when, during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, Trincomalee was occupied by the British, who immediately began negotiations with the Kandyans through their ambassador, Hugh Boyd.[358] The British sought to conclude a treaty with Kandy to oust the Dutch. Remarkably enough, the Kandyans decided not to go into further dealings with the British.[359] Despite its limited results, Boyd's mission placed the Dutch in an awkward position. They had to be grateful now for the Kandyan court's not taking its chances with the British. Understandably, the court expected something in return. L. Wagenaar has described how in 1782 the degrading rituals at the yearly embassies to the court were reinstated despite Dutch opposition. The Dutch could not refuse to comply, because Hugh Boyd had performed all the rituals at his embassy earlier that year and they feared that if they refused the Kandyans would decide to ally with the British after all. Wagenaar also points out the court's increasing demands for a return of the ports in the Puttalam area.[360] Indeed, after 1782 it was this issue that defined the relationship between the two powers.

At their yearly embassy in the spring of 1784 the Dutch came to understand that they were not allowed to peel cinnamon in the king's land because of the ports question. Governor Falck attempted to soothe the Kandyans by stating that it was only because of the threat from other Europeans that the shores could not be given back. He argued that this was even to their own advantage because the Dutch were protecting them

from European invaders. He also maintained that not giving permission to peel the cinnamon was an absolutely unacceptable act between two friendly powers.[361] During the visit of the Kandyan embassy to Colombo in January 1785, Falck pointed out desperately that it really was not up to him to hand back the ports, but that it was something that could only be decided by his superiors.[362]

In his last years as governor, Falck could not take a firm line anymore towards the court. In a final attempt to appease the court he approved of the Kandyans sending a letter with similar requests to the *Heren Zeventien* in the Netherlands via commander Jacob Pieter van Braam who was at that moment passing Sri Lanka with his squadron. This was obviously an attempt to put off giving a final answer to the Kandyans, but also placed the responsibility of further developments with his superiors. It is clear that the Boyd episode had given the Kandyans a new bargaining position which led to a new crisis in the relationship between the Kandyan court and the Dutch. It was however not Falck who had to deal with this new situation, since he passed away on 6 February 1785.[363]

6.2 *Official policy 1785-1795*

To understand how Dutch policy towards the Kandyans evolved, it has to be remembered where and how this policy was determined. Following the line of authority in the organization of the Dutch East India Company, the decisions made by the *Heren Zeventien* in the Netherlands concerning policy in Asia were conclusive. In practice however, the High Government at Batavia, being much closer to the scene of action, had a more immediate influence on the policy that Company officials in the outposts had to bring into effect. The hands of the governor of Ceylon were tied, and the possibility of conducting an independent policy in any field were limited because he had to account for all decisions and expenses made. With Batavia about a two months' sail away, the decision-making process was slow, and only in emergencies could the governor act on his own responsibility.[364]

As we saw above, Dutch power and prestige on the island was seriously harmed after the English occupied the harbour of Trincomalee and the Kandyans dared to revive their claim to the coastal ports. The letter the Kandyans sent to the Netherlands in 1785 was not answered directly, although both in the Netherlands and in Batavia it was determined that none of the coastal possessions of the Company were ever to be given up.[365] Governor Van de Graaff, Falck's successor, considered it unwise to convey this message to the court straight away, and with Batavia's consent, he tried negotiation, offering a share in the trade in areca nuts and

elephants with the Indian continent on condition that Kandy would give up the demand for the shores.[366] At the same time Batavia stationed extra European mercenary regiments on the island for defence against foreign nations, thereby re-establishing the power of the Dutch after the debacle of Trincomalee and intimidating the Kandyans. Batavia firmly adhered to its strict policy which Governor Van de Graaff and his successor Van Angelbeek had to uphold despite Kandyan pressures. Obviously the High Government had placed its Ceylonese deputies in a difficult position.

With the tension between the two powers building up in the last years of Falck's reign, it is remarkable that Van de Graaff managed to relax the situation as quickly as he did. After his accession to the office of governor in 1785 he declared to his council that it was his intention to make the Company independent of the court as soon as possible. By speeding up the creation of cinnamon plantations in the Colombo and Galle district, he hoped that the Company would soon be self-sufficient in the production of this valuable spice. Up to that time, he would make use of the salt boycott whenever necessary to put pressure on the Kandyans, and also took serious measures against salt smuggling.[367] From his reports we learn that his policy of pacification was successful, and that he managed to control the crisis. Until 1789, the reports of embassies are positive, the Company was free to peel cinnamon in the Kandyan territory and the relationship seems to have been cordial.[368] Though yearly requests for access to the shores continued, these were usually left undiscussed. Batavia appears to have been content with this and agreed with Van de Graaff that the negative answer of the *Heren Zeventien* to the Kandyan demands should be postponed for as long as possible, certainly while the Kandyans were well disposed towards the Company.[369]

From 1789 onwards, a new phase of Dutch-Kandyan relations commenced that is quite difficult to unravel because the two main sources dealing with this period are contradictory and it is difficult to get a grip on the real motives behind the plans and schemes that were proposed. These will be discussed later. Here it is sufficient to note that relations were strained and that Van de Graaff, encouraged by secret contact between his own *mahāmudaliyār*, Nicolaas Dias Abeysinghe, the king's first *adigār* Pilime Talawe, and the *basnāyaka nilamē* of Sabaragamuwa Eknelligoda, made plans for war.

If we are to go along with Van de Graaff, developments that led to the absolute deterioration of Dutch-Kandyan relationships were as follows. From 1789 the request for the harbours was revitalized and he could no longer postpone conveying the message from the *Heren Zeventien* that they did not want to compromise on this issue and that by no means were any of the harbours to be given up to the Kandyans. Moreover, the cinnamon peelers were continuously hindered in their work, especially in the

Sabaragamuwa *disāvany*. This was discussed at the embassy in February 1790, but the Kandyans denied any role in this, and in fact they accused the peelers of stirring up the inhabitants of that district. In the end peeling was not forbidden, but it was not explicitly allowed either.[370] As a consequence, Van de Graaff decided to close all saltpans for the Kandyans. Next, there was a rumour that Kandyan soldiers were mustering at the border crossings (g*ravetten*) and he decided to close these and put his garrisons on standby.[371] In May 1791, an expedition was commenced into the Sabaragamuwa *disāvany* under the pretext that the cinnamon peelers needed protection. The expedition was supposedly without much risk because Eknelligoda, the *basnāyaka nilamē* of Sabaragamuwa, who held extensive lands in that area, had promised Van de Graaff that his people would support the Dutch. The expedition under Colonel de Meuron lasted no more than four days, having returned because of bad weather and the absence of the promised local support for his troops.[372]

Batavia's reaction to this episode was very negative. The Batavian council members wondered whether the governor could not have foreseen the rains, and suspected that other motives played a role in the whole affair. In the meantime Van de Graaff learned that the court had again corresponded with the French in Pondicherry and had asked them for help.[373] This gave him another impetus to pursue his war plans and in the spring of 1792 he wrote another extensive letter to Batavia detailing a new plan of attack. Again he counted on the cooperation of the inhabitants of the Kandyan districts and he intended to conquer the outer districts one by one before marching up to the capital. This strategy was meant to prevent a situation like the one that occurred in 1765, when the Dutch garrison in Kandy was isolated by Kandyan troops and eventually forced to abandon the capital. Van de Graaff was of the opinion that the Kandyans had absolutely violated the treaty by seeking contact with the French. As soon as he found out about it, he had contacted the French commander of Pondicherry and demanded an explanation. The French, still allied with the Dutch, confirmed the Kandyan overture, but assured Van de Graaff that there had been no intention whatsoever to actually assist the Kandyans. The fact that the French proved unwilling to ally themselves with the Kandyans did not matter to Van de Graaff, because according to him the whole affair showed how unreliable the court was. In fact, if he could manage to overthrow the king he already had a pretender to the throne ready to assume his position. This man, Sri Sanka Sarie, was said to be a descendant of the last Sinhalese king of the solar dynasty.[374]

In the end the expedition was cancelled because of a veto from the High Government, which did not take the French menace seriously and urged Van de Graaff in June 1792 to stop organizing a new expedition against the Kandyans. Batavia felt that the governor was too eager for war

and was afraid that the whole affair would eventually turn out to be too costly for the Company. Apart from this financial argument one may wonder whether a lack of insight into South Asian continental politics could also explain their reaction. In any case, Batavia's firm stand left Van de Graaff in a difficult position.

The response from the Netherlands was rather different. The *Heren Zeventien* accepted the Kandyan-French connection as a *casus belli* and when they wrote their response late in 1792 they expressed their surprise but also their hope that the expeditions had been successful. In South Asia, European power politics were much more a daily feature of international relations than in the relatively quiet environs of Java, where peace had been predominant for some forty years, and where threat of other European powers was not as apparent as in South Asia.[375]

The relationship between the governor and the court relaxed a little in the autumn of 1792 when the borders between the two territories were again opened and the Kandyan people could come down to collect salt and trade. Van de Graaff waited anxiously for the first embassy to come down to Colombo; it was beyond his pride to send one up first. Yet as events would prove, no embassies were exchanged between the Dutch and Kandy from 1790 onwards.[376] Correspondence between the two parties was now cold and distant. This lasted until mid 1795, when the new Governor Van Angelbeek, confronted with the British ascension on the island, reopened negotiations with the court in order to prevent the Kandyans from siding with the British.

At decisive moments the High Government of Batavia stuck to its own line of policy, ignoring or rejecting the initiatives of the Ceylonese governor. Though the 1766 treaty was and remained the starting-point of its policy, the High Government was not willing to sanction its violation. Batavia feared an enormous increase of expenses if war would break out, that could not be accounted for. Batavia's superior authority to make policy was re-established in 1792, but this severely strained her relationship with the government of Ceylon. This is something which Van de Graaff could not hide in his *memorie van overgave* to his successor and father-in-law Johan Gerard van Angelbeek (July 1794), in which he clearly stated that had it not been for Batavia, all troubles with the Kingdom could have been settled once and for all in 1792.[377] At the same time the High Government had grown suspicious of Van de Graaff. This suspicion was fostered by the writings of Pieter Sluijsken, who suggested treason on the side of Van de Graaff and his *mahāmudaliyār* Nicolas Dias Abeysinghe.

6.3 *Ulterior motives: the Sluijsken-Van de Graaff controversy*

In previous chapters we have already come across the writings of the former commander of Galle, Pieter Sluijsken.[378] The purpose of these writings was to show how damaging Van de Graaff's interior policies had been to the Dutch establishment on Ceylon and he had some specific criticism regarding Van de Graaff's Kandyan policies. His greatest mistake, according to Sluijsken, was to place his absolute reliance in his *mahāmudaliyār* Nicolaas Dias Abeysinghe, who deliberately set Van de Graaff against the Kandyans.

Nicolaas Dias was the *mahāmudaliyār* of the "governor's gate" from the start of Van de Graaff's governorship, and responsible for correspondence with the Kandyans via the *disāva* of the Three and Four *kōralēs*.[379] Sluijsken maintained that under Nicolaas Dias contact between the Company and the court officials became secretive, and he maintained that even the council members were not taken into confidence about the dealings of the Governor and his *mahāmudaliyār* with the Kandyans. Sluijsken makes clear that Nicolaas Dias Abeysinge and his Kandyan accomplices succeeded for a long time in maintaining the façade that all was well between the Dutch and the Kandyans. In exchange for expensive gifts, they assured the safety of the cinnamon-peelers working in the Kandyan country. According to Sluijsken, Abeysinge instigated war and unrest in the country for fear of being exposed and both sides' realizing that he had misled them by keeping all the expensive gifts for himself.

He began in April 1790 by instigating the revolt in the Matara *disāvany,* but when this did not have the desired effect he decided to trigger war between the two powers. It was his idea to invite a pretender to the throne to the island. The documents are full of accusations from Sluijsken towards the *mahāmudaliyār* and the governor. In a 1796 account, he attributes the loss of the island to Van de Graaff's careless policy. Had relations between the Dutch and Kandy remained cordial, the Kandyans would have chosen the Dutch side as they had done in 1782 and would have helped Dutch in their defence against the British.[380]

Now Sluijsken's accusations are certainly sensational and very severe, but one should be careful in using them as authoritative sources. The historian V. Kanapathypillai has accepted Sluijsken's criticism lock, stock and barrel and used them as the basis for condemning Van de Graaff. He does however not explain why he chose to rely exclusively on Sluijsken's writings. What makes these authoritative? The fact that Sluijsken contradicted the official account of Van de Graaff does not automatically mean that his own version was correct.[381]

Any reader of Sluijsken's writings should realize that his relationship with Van de Graaff was a troubled one to say the least. We have seen how

from the end of the 1780s the two men were levelling accusations at each other in official and unofficial correspondence with the Batavian authorities. One of the main problems appears to have been that Van de Graaff as governor tended to extend his authority over the Galle district, which in former times had been governed through the *commandeur* without much interference from Colombo. Van de Graaff, who had many plans for improvement of the agriculture on the island, meddled more than his predecessors with the policies of his inferior officials. In a hierarchical environment where social status depended to a large extent on one's official position, such infringements on another's authority were taken seriously. The interference of the governor with Sluijsken's *commandement* degraded his position as *commandeur* of Galle (which had always been the third-highest position on the island). This in turn may have influenced the latter's relationship with the native elite and with the other Company officials, and it would certainly have given him concern about his further career.[382] Considering this background the accusations of Sluijsken have to be taken with a grain of salt.

Sluijsken's criticism is especially thin on three accounts: first, he failed to deliver some crucial information, to buttress his story. For example, we do not learn from Sluijsken what exactly the *mahāmudaliyār* would gain from his machinations. The *mahāmudaliyār* already held the highest position on the island of any native official. He had proven his loyalty to the Dutch during the war with Kandy in the 1760s, and had been officially honoured with a gold medal in 1766. Why would he have risked all this by deceiving his closest ally, the governor? Secondly, we do not learn much about Van de Graaff's Kandyan complice, the *adigār* Pilime Talawa, whom Sluijsken mentions only incidentally. What were his motives? Knowing how important a role that man later played in the affairs with Governor North, it is difficult to believe that at this point he was only a marginal player in the *mahāmudaliyār's* game. Finally, Sluijsken does not go into Van de Graaff's motives for his supposed deceit, nor why he joined the *mahāmudaliyār* in his war plans in the first place.

Sluijsken also appears to have been badly informed. Some of the incriminating evidence he gives on Van de Graaff had already been dispatched to Batavia. With respect to the so-called secret dealings between Van de Graaff and the pretender to the throne, Sri Sanka Sarie, Sluijsken says he stayed in Colombo when in fact he was sent to Batavia in 1791.[383] Moreover, Van de Graaff had informed the court of Kandy when he had first come to know about this man in the first place. It was only later that he planned to use this person as a puppet in his dealings with the court. Van de Graaff was also quite open with Batavia about the plans he developed in early 1792 to overrun the Kingdom and to take certain provinces in possession by keeping the local *disāvas* as native rulers and allies of the

Company. Van de Graaff also acknowledged the fact that his *mahāmudaliyār* was corresponding secretly with the first *adigār*, although he often referred to him secretively as *den bekenden hofsgroote,* the familiar courtier. Finally, Sluijsken states that when Colonel de Meuron and his troops entered the Sabaragamuwa province, they were chased by the Kandians and had to run back to the borders. Knowing that the *mahāmudaliyār* joined De Meuron on his expedition, it is difficult to argue that he intended the regiment to be attacked by the Kandyans. Why would he have risked his own life? One starts to wonder whether Pieter Sluijsken himself did not have some interest at stake in this whole Kandyan business, and whether this might explain why the governor was so secretive about his dealings with the *adigār*.[384]

6.4 *Revenue and conspiracy*

On the other hand, the secret correspondence which Sluijsken grumbles so much about, is undeniably an interesting factor in the late Dutch-Kandyan relations in this period. While Sluijsken regards the *mahāmudaliyār* as the main instigator of intrigues with the Kingdom, it seems from Van de Graaff's letters to Batavia that the initiatives lay more with the *adigār* than with the *mahāmudaliyār*. Moreover, we learn that other people were involved in the whole plot, most important of whom were the high priest of the lowlands, Karatota, and the *basnāyaka nilamē* of Sabaragamuwa, Eknelligoda. It is important to realize that these three men were to play a part in the subsequent British affairs with the Kandyans. Eknelligoda was in fact the person who caught the king at his hiding place in February 1815 and thus sealed the end of the Kandyan Kingdom and the start of Britain's colonial rule in the Kingdom. This complicates the matter, and forces us to look further than Sluijsken's writings and to step into the power politics in the Kandyan Kingdom during the reign of Rajadhi Rajasinha. This will be done in the next part of this chapter.

Van de Graaff's own evidence leads us in the same direction. He states in his correspondence with Batavia that Pilime Talawe, the *bekende hofsgroote*, had asked him in a letter in 1792 to jointly depose the king. Batavia considered this an unacceptable proposal and it made them wonder how reliable this *bekende hofsgroote* could be if he was so disloyal to his own lord. Van de Graaff however used another argument, stressing that the *adigār*'s intentions were honest and that all he aimed for was the salvation of his Kingdom. That he was not averse to severe interventions to achieve this goal had to be understood as proof of his noble character.[385]

From Van de Graaff's later correspondence we finally learn why he was so interested in the conquest of the Kingdom. Apart from the cinnamon,

Van de Graaff was also after the revenues of the lowland provinces of the Kingdom. We saw how when confronted with financial deficits and a lack of rice supplies for the garrisons he worked hard to achieve an increase in the agricultural output of the maritime provinces. The acquisition of the fertile Seven, Three and Four *kōralēs* would yield him more revenue while the occupation of the Sabaragamuwa *disāvany* would ensure enough cinnamon for the Company. However, while Batavia only feared extra expenses from the acquisition of Kandyan territories, he saw in the takeover of the fertile lowland Kandyan provinces a solution to his problems.[386]

6.5 *Political developments in the Kingdom: Rajadhi, his nobles and the Europeans*

As said above, the role of the *adigār* in the political game between Van de Graaff and the court of Kandy needs further elaboration. To understand the *adigār's* motives and actions, we need to turn to the political relations within the Kingdom and the role the king of Kandy. We have already seen that in the 1750s and 1760s the presence of the relatives of the king who accompanied him from South India caused tension at the court. Kirti Sri Rajasinha managed to channel this by playing up his divine calling and focusing on Buddhism. His successor was not as skillful in the game and as we shall see, his relatives, called Nāyakkars or Malabars by the Dutch, emerged as a strong faction at the court, thereby undermining advantage as stranger-king in the eyes of the Sinhalese nobles.

As the younger brother of Kirti Sri, Rajadhi grew up in Kandy a devout Buddhist. After his brother's death in 1781, he ascended to the throne early in 1782. He is usually referred to as the poet-king, because at least one poem from his hand is known. He was apparently a patron of Buddhism, like his brother, and mention is made of temple restorations and land grants to temples under his name.[387] K.M. de Silva even places him on the same footing as his brother, noting that "The Nayakker dynasty, especially under Kirti Sri Rajasinha and Rajadhi Rajasinha, had identified itself with the Kandyan national interest and blended the Nayakker personality into the Kandyan background with consummate skill".[388] At the same time neither De Silva, nor anyone else, discusses his policies or relationships with his nobles. Yet a very different picture of this king's government emerges from the Dutch sources.

As we have seen, faction and strife were endemic in the Kandyan court and the reign of Rajadhi was no exception. Hugh Boyd, who visited Kandy shortly after Rajadhi's accession, described the factions at the court as those who were inclined to the Dutch and those who were not. He

ascribes the failure of his mission to the fact that the Dutch-inclined faction was in the lead, and that the king himself could not violate the strongest faction in his Kingdom at such an early stage of his reign.[389] Governor Falck did not report much on Kandyan internal politics and faction. Van de Graaff was more actively interested in Kandyan politics and from him we learn that Rajadhi was a playful and politically disinterested king who spent too much time on leisure and left the execution of his government to his Nāyakkar relatives.[390] Van de Graaff complained a lot about these Nāyakkar relatives whom he considered a dangerous factor, because of their South Indian connection. He both feared competition in trade and their political alliances in South India. He mentioned several times that the king was placing more and more reliance on them and was granting them extensive lands in the several *disāvanies*. The historian Ralph Pieris has also noted that the king's South Indian relatives occupied the key military positions in the palace administration.[391] This is an important observation and though several historians have contested this, it is corroborated by information from the Dutch sources. According to Van de Graaff, this even led to unrest in the *disāvanies* because the Nāyakkars oppressed the people in the provinces.[392]

In the spring of 1792, while fully occupied with the development of his war plans, Van de Graaff wrote a pamphlet to be sent into the various *disāvanies* through which his army marched. The purpose was to assure the inhabitants of his good intentions. What really stands out in the pamphlet is that he takes a derogatory tone towards the Nāyakkars: they are described as harmful for the Sinhalese nation, vengeful, oppressive and absolutely unreliable. It is easy to write this off as sheer propaganda. But Van de Graaff would not specifically mention the Nāyakkars as a negative power in the provinces if he did not think it would strike a chord. This would only have decreased his credibility in the eyes of the intended readers. Cleary Van de Graaff was appealing to existing sentiments among the higher echelons of Kandyan society, probably prompted by his accomplice Pilime Talawe.[393]

Van de Graaff and Pilime Talawe had a very good relationship. Until 1790, Pilime Talawe was *disāva* of the Three and Four *kōralēs* and he was usually present at the embassies sent by the king to Colombo. Any suspicious reader of the reports of these embassies would wonder whether information was omitted. Only the official meetings were reported upon, but from these it is clear that there were several instances each year when the governor spoke to Pilime Talawe alone. This usually happened after the first audience, when the governor offered the *disāvas* a tour around the castle of Colombo, or invited them for a demonstration of the cannons. Whatever was discussed during those tours was never mentioned in the reports.[394]

It can be argued that Pilime Talawe's rise to power was connected to his good relations with Van de Graaff. This assumption is reinforced by the following example. Some time before Pilime Talawe was appointed first *adigār*, we find the governor writing to Batavia for permission to give Pilime Talawe two thousand *pagodas* (c. 4,000 rixdollars). The reason for this was that this money had to be given to the king for the journey of some of his Nāyakkar relatives to the coast. When one considers that offices were usually bought in the Kandyan Kingdom and that money was scarce, the timing makes it very likely that the money was to serve at the same time as a gift (payment) for the office of *adigār*. The governor had given Pilime Talawe the ability of offering the highest bid. Obviously, for the Dutch governor it was advantageous to have Pilime Talawe as most powerful man in the Kingdom because he could then direct the official relations with the court.[395]

It is not unreasonable to suggest that the rival faction of Pilime Talawe, composed of Erevvala, Leeuke, and Dumbere, was backed by the Nāyakkars. In the end, that was the only other source of money to pay for offices. They attempted to restrict Pilime Talawe's rise to power by seizing his authority over the Sabaragamuwa districts, and Erevvala was raised to the office of second *adigār* in 1792. General unrest in the Kingdom in the 1790s can be detected from the many shifts in offices within only a few years. In this case, the system of checks and balances worked against the interest of the king, since Eknelligoda, the *basnāyake* of Sabaragamuwa, who held extensive lands, sided with Pilime Talawe thus ensuring that the latter maintained an influential position in this province, despite the fact that his opponent Leeuke was now in charge of it.[396]

Not only did the king lose his power over some of his nobles due to Dutch intrigues, even his control over the *sangha* was loosened. Arguments with the lowland head-priest Koratota over the control of the temple of Buddha's footprint at Adam's Peak, Sri Pada, led to a breach between Koratota and the king. Koratota decided to ally himself with Van de Graaff, who accordingly gave him a yearly stipend of 25 rixdollars. Koratota, who sought the priesthood of Sri Pada, even encouraged Van de Graaff in 1792 to conquer the Sabaragamuwa province.[397] Later Koratota allied with the British, and was highly esteemed by them. He had good relations with John D'Oyly and instructed him in the Sinhalese language. In the early nineteenth century, the Kandyan king completely lost control over the *sangha* when the *maha nayaka* Moratota was also set against him.[398]

Active Dutch intriguing in Kandyan affairs in the 1780s proved the first step in the collapse of the Kingdom. The economic isolation of the Kandyan Kingdom and its decentralized power inevitably brought further

misfortune. From Van de Graaff's war plans we can conclude that disintegration was exactly what he and the *adigār* were aiming at. He wanted to conquer the provinces one by one, and make the nobles collaborate with him. They would be left in power, but the Company, acting as a stranger-king amidst the Kandyan nobles, would pocket the larger share of the revenue of these provinces.

It is attractive to understand the whole affair as a political solution of the Sinhalese nobles to get rid of their competitors, the Nāyakkar relatives of the king. The king had been invited as stranger, and to balance the power between the Sinhalese nobles he had allowed his own relatives to become far too involved in local politics and thereby turned into a local power factor. That is why the Sinhalese nobles searched for a new outsider to strengthen their power and found this in the person of the Dutch governor. As we shall see, the troubles within the Kingdom were far from over and in the end this played a large role in the final subjugation of the Kingdom by the British.

6.6 *The aftermath: Batavia's opposition and Van de Graaff's prophecy*

Under Governor Van de Graaff the administration of Ceylon began to drift away from Batavia and set its own course. Naturally this caused opposition from Batavia. The great expenditures, the troubles with Kandy and the rebellion in Matara worried the High Government. In the Netherlands the *Heren Zeventien* were pleased with the development of the cinnamon plantations. When it was announced that Van de Graaff was to come to Batavia to serve as director general his enemies made sure that Batavia was kept informed about his schemes and cast him in the worst possible light. Van de Graaff's fate in Batavia was tragic; he never gained the seat of director general and was sent away from Batavia in 1796. And while he quarreled in Batavia, his prophesy came true: the British attacked Ceylon.

Part Three
The second colonial transition: imperial design and local practice

INTRODUCTION

In his "Fragments on Ceylon", which was probably commissioned by Governor Thomas Maitland (1805-1811), Jacob Burnand compared Dutch and British policies and their effects on the island's society and economy.[399] He dealt with the main facets of inland administration, namely the agriculture and the administration of the island's revenues and expressed an extremely low regard for the early British government. He actually suggested that the people had been better off under the Dutch:

> Ceylon, having changed its masters in the years 1795 and 1796, a total subversion in the system of its government took place; and this subversion, in spite of the many advantages possessed by the English Company of introducing improvements, has had a deplorable effect on the agriculture, and consequently on the bulk of the people.[400]

He referred here in particular to the policies of the Revenue Commissioner Robert Andrews in 1796 and 1797 and those of Governor Frederick North between 1798 and 1805. Further down, he put across more explicitly the devastating effects of then new regime: "In a word, the inhabitants of the country have retrograded from the civilization and dependance in which they formerly lived, into a degeneracy that may be attended with the most deplorable consequences."[401]

The following chapters discuss the problem of how the British dealt with the Dutch legacy and how they shaped their own government in the period between 1796 and 1815. This question is more complicated than it may seem at first. Historians have found it difficult to draw a systematic picture of this transitional period of British rule which saw the formation of four different governments in fifteen years. Each had its own particular way of dealing with the Dutch legacy and with that of their British predecessors on the island. Jacob Burnand's observation, quoted above, lifts a corner of the veil: as we shall see, the first government distanced itself as much as possible from the Dutch regime, whereas the last proclaimed to stay as close to the Dutch system of government as possible. On the surface, this suggests that the outcome of the transition to British rule was nothing more than a change of officials at the highest level and that the precedents established during Dutch rule continued after a short upheaval. This is the customary picture of Ceylon in this period, but modern insights into the processes of regime change suggest a more complex outcome of the period of transition.

It is clear that the British met great difficulty in setting up the new government on the island and it would be more than ten years before the

government was on a more or less stable footing. Regime changes have become a popular subject of study among political scientists in recent decades. Such studies discuss certain recurring patterns that are found in contemporary changes of regime, and on this basis they have attempted to develop models to understand regime change. Of course such models do not prescribe actual outcomes, but they do show how particular elements tend to reappear. Very broadly, the process of regime change can be summarized as follows: at the beginning of a transitional period, the new people in charge usually express a strong sense of change and progress and feel that society and government are malleable and susceptible to reform. A discontinuity with the former regime is desired and consequently all elements that remind of the old regime are done away with. Old elites lose their power and have to make place for new power groups. This initial phase is usually followed by one of rapprochement and exploration and in which the interests of all power groups are considered. The end of the period is characterized by consolidation, crystallization and stabilization, which often implies a renewed esteem for the situation prior to the period of change and even a desire to return to the *status quo ante*. By this time a new system has come in to being, in which new elements are merged with the old ones.[402]

We will examine the political developments that took place under the first British governors against the background of those that took place in the final decades of Dutch rule in Ceylon. Chapter Seven deals with the regime of Robert Andrews and General James Stuart, under the supervision of the government of Madras. Chapter Eight deals with the government of Governor Frederick North under the shared supervision of the governor-general and the Crown. Chapter Nine deals with the government of Thomas Maitland who ruled entirely in name of the Crown. The main points of analysis will be, respectively, the relationship between the government on the island and its superiors in England and India; the institutional composition of the British administration, its relationship with local power groups and their function within the administrative organization; and finally a closer look at the revenue and agricultural policy.

We have seen that a particular Dutch vision of native society and of the Dutch as a colonial power played a role in the implementation of the new policies. To understand the level of continuity and change between Dutch and British policies, the background to the British policies are taken into account in Chapter Ten. Chapter Eleven continues the story of Kandy and places its dramatic end in 1815 in the perspective of the developments in Dutch times, discussed in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REGIME CHANGE AND TRANSITIONAL POLITICS 1795-1798

7.1 *The incorporation of Dutch Ceylon in the British Empire*

In South Asia, the second part of the eighteenth century was characterized by continuous British expansion and infiltration throughout the Indian subcontinent at the cost of both indigenous states and rival European trading companies. The disintegration of the Moghul Empire, the conclusion of alliances with local princes and the French competition drew the British deep into the subcontinent. During the Mysore Wars in the 1780s and 1790s, British attention was drawn towards the eastern Ceylonese harbour of Trincomalee, the main attraction of which was its strategic and sheltered location close to both the Coromandel and Malabar coasts. It was possible to sail from there in both monsoons and therefore it could function well as a central base for activities in those regions. That is why in 1782, midway through the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the British decided to occupy Trincomalee. To their disappointment, this occupation did not last long because the French, who were then allied with the Dutch, captured it within the year and returned it to the Dutch after the conclusion of the war in 1784.[403]

The eventual British conquest of the Dutch possessions on Ceylon in 1796 was linked to international political events in Europe and in Asia. When early in 1795 the French conquered and occupied the Netherlands, the British feared a French annexation of Dutch possessions in Asia, which in turn would enhance France's competitive position. The Dutch stadtholder William V, who had fled his country to take refuge with king George III in Kew, had similar concerns about French activities in Asia. Hoping to gain British support to retain the Dutch possessions in Asia, he asked the British to protect these against the French. These requests were addressed to George III and are now usually referred to as the Kew Letters.[404] The British responded instantly to his appeal and this had repercussions for Ceylon among other Dutch possessions. Within two days after the reception of the Kew Letters, instructions were sent to the governors of Madras and Bengal, where they arrived in June 1795. The situation in South India continued to be pressing, because the wars with Mysore were far from over and the French had by then tactically allied themselves with Mysore's new sultan, Tipu. The British could not run the

risk that Ceylon with its strategic port at Trincomalee might fall in French hands.[405]

Immediately after they received the information about the Kew Letters, the commanders in Madras took action. They sent a letter to the Dutch government in Colombo to inform them about the Kew Letters and proposed to bring Ceylon under the protection of the British army. Without waiting for a reply, they sent out a fleet under the command of General Stuart to occupy Trincomalee. The much desired harbour was conquered in July 1795, but it took another seven months before the remaining Dutch territory was taken over. From the beginning there had been confusion over the concept of "protection" in the negotiations with Governor Van Angelbeek. In the Dutch view, protection meant the temporary stationing of a British garrison on the island, while in the British view it implied a temporary occupation of the Dutch possessions.

The British annexation of Ceylon certainly does not match the concept of reluctant or "absent-minded" imperialism often used to explain the British expansion in this period. It was in fact a conscious strategic step initiated in England and smoothly adopted in India. From the beginning the British had set their mind on using the Kew Letters to conquer Ceylon. The letters of the Scottish professor Hugh Cleghorn to the Secretary of War Henry Dundas and the scheme he proposed to reach this goal bear witness to this. Cleghorn suggested persuading the Count de Meuron, the Swiss commander of the most important mercenary regiment on the island of Ceylon, to switch to British service. He proposed it as follows: "Whether Britain shall be under necessity of declaring *war* against Holland, or whether she may be only induced to *seize* the Dutch possessions for the stadholder, the advantages which much arise from detaching his regiment from the service of the republick or [Dutch] East India Company are equally obvious."[406] Dundas' answer to Cleghorn's suggestion was positive, and Cleghorn was asked to execute the plan as quickly as possible. Indeed, from Dundas' further correspondence with Cleghorn and with the officials in Madras, it is clear that he was consciously aiming at the annexation of Ceylon. In response to a letter written by General Stuart on the tenth of September 1795, which reported of the conquest of Trincomalee, he wrote anxiously:

> The judgement and discretion which have marked your conduct both in the political negotiations and the military operations undertaken by you in the island of Ceylon, and the uninterrupted success with which it has been attended, lead me to indulge in the daily expectation of hearing that the town and settlement of Columbo [sic] together with the remaining possessions of the Dutch in that island, have been added to the valuable acquisitions already made there.[407]

In September 1795, British troops marched up from Trincomalee to Jaffna and soon they headed for Colombo. It was not a campaign to be proud of, with the troops behaving badly in the field which resulted in the inhabitants of the island anxiously fleeing at their approach.[408] Consequently, Stuart wrote in an reproving tone to Major Dalrymple in Jaffna: "I hope it is unnecessary for me to mention that I expect the strictest discipline will be observed among the troops under your command, in order to check the licentiousness and irregularities, which I am sorry to be forced to remark, have too often occurred amongst our troops since they first landed on the island of Ceylon."[409]

The withdrawal of De Meuron's troops was settled in October and this seriously weakened the Dutch defence of the capital Colombo, where five hundred of the eight hundred men of his regiment had been garrisoned. After that operation was executed successfully, Cleghorn informed Dundas that "I have this moment received information on which I can rely that governor Van Angelbeck is resolved not to hazard the effects of a siege and is determined when a British force appears before Columbo, to prevent by capitulation the consequence of an assault."[410]

7.2 *The capitulation of Colombo*

Indeed, the Dutch officials in Colombo were now put in a difficult situation, with their defence seriously weakened. The minutes of the political council of those last months show how the governor and council were put into a corner. Their defences, which had not been in a good state anyway, were now seriously hampered by the withdrawal of De Meuron's regiment. Moreover, their reserves were running out and no supplies were coming from abroad. They could not call in the help of the court of Kandy, because of the diplomatic impasse with that power and in fact the Kandyans had sought contact with the British. The final decision to capitulate was not made by the governor alone, but by the whole council after the staff officers were consulted on their opinion. The question of capitulation was a delicate matter, and the governor made sure he safeguarded himself against any critique or slander by inserting the opinion of all staff officers and members of the council. In the council minutes of 15 February 1796, a day before the actual capitulation, the consideration of all members of the political council and those of the staff officers were reproduced. Even Pieter Sluijsken, then commander of Surat who was staying over on the island, was asked for his opinion. With the British at the doorstep of Colombo, all but one (Major Vaugine) voted for capitulation.[411]

Despite Van Angelbeek's precautions, his reputation was seriously damaged by the capitulation.[412] In a letter to his son-in-law and predecessor

Willem Jacob van de Graaff he expressed his concerns and his hope that Van de Graaff did not believe the allegations:

> That Colombo surrendered by capitulation without any resistance must certainly surprise you, especially since I have no doubt that some persons may have written from here to Mauritius that the place could have been defended; this is a gossip which has spread all over, both here and in Coromandel. It will become clear that I have done from the beginning until the last day what is, in such circumstances, to be expected from an alert governor.[413]

The allegations against Van Angelbeek were twofold. On the one hand, it was said that he would have withstood the British if he had only called in the help of the Kandyans and in return given in to some of their demands. Second, it was said that Van Angelbeek cared more for his private property on the island than for the Company's interests. The question of whether these allegations were correct must remain unanswered here. Regardless, the British force was much larger and in other respects in a good position to conquer Colombo, and its commanders were prepared to do so even if the Dutch had chosen not to capitulate straight away.

The articles of capitulation dealt with a wide range of matters: the dismantling of the military forces; the security of private property and finances; the continuity of clerical and charitable institutions; the right of civil and military servants of the Company to remain on the island if they so desired; and the continuation in office of the native headmen and servants. The Dutch officials' attachment to the island found expression in these articles, and they were clearly not without hope that Ceylon would eventually return to the Dutch. This hope lasted until 1802, when at the Peace of Amiens Ceylon was ceded permanently to Britain. Until that time, many of the Dutchmen on Ceylon, in Batavia and in the Netherlands assumed that Ceylon would revert to the Netherlands after the war.[414]

As early as 1797 rumours were spreading that Van de Graaff was coming with French assistance from Mauritius (Île de France)[415] and on 31 March the High Government in Batavia discussed what instruction to send to Ceylon after its recovery.[416] At the same time, during the peace negotiations at Paris in 1796 and in Lille the next year, it was clear that the British were determined to keep their new possession. The island was considered to be of too great strategic importance to give it up, Trincomalee had to stay out of French hands, and plans were developed to turn the port into a maritime base for Britain's Asian possessions. At this point peace was not concluded, and many still regarded Dutch Ceylon as occupied territory rather than a permanent British possession.[417] The new government of coastal Ceylon had to cope with this uncertain status, as well as with the restless hopes of the Dutch who stayed behind.

7.3 1795-1797, coconuts and dubashes

The first period of British rule on the island is a little obscure. It took six months before all the Dutch possessions on the island were occupied by the British. Trincomalee was taken in July 1795 and Jaffna in September when it was placed under the military command of Major Dalrymple. From the establishment of British civil and military authority under General Stuart in February 1796, the connection with the government of Madras remained very strong, and all decisions had to be sent there for Governor Hobart's approval.

For Stuart, the Dutch inhabitants remaining on the island were a major point of concern. They continuously asked for financial assistence but at the same time refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown and to work for the British.[418] Serious trouble arose from the fact that the Dutch magistrates refused to sit in the courts or hear cases, which paralysed the whole judicial system and caused enormous delays. Stuart also reported upon the correspondence with Kandy, which went less smoothly than expected because the Kandyans turned out not to be the loyal neighbours the British had expected.[419] Military matters concerned the distribution of Ceylonese booty among the troops, maintaining order in the country and transporting of auxiliary troops back to the subcontinent where they were needed in the war against Tipu Sultan.[420]

Although the British had occupied Ceylon chiefly for geostrategic reasons, the government of Madras also had high expectations regarding the wealth of the island and expected it to yield much revenue. Robert Andrews, who had earlier been involved in secret missions to Kandy, was appointed as permanent ambassador to Kandy in October 1795 and at the same time put in charge of the revenue department of the conquered territories.[421] Therefore it was he who formulated the inland policies and he, like Stuart, corresponded directly with the government in Madras.[422] In practice, Andrews basically determined the inland policies on his own and informed Stuart, his superior, only sporadically on his measures. At first, he had two assistants at his disposal: John Jervis was put in charge of Jaffna, and Robert Alexander was put in charge of Galle and Colombo. Later, a third assistant, Garrow, was added for Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

At first the island's revenue was enormous, just as the Madras government had hoped. It was derived from two products: the pearl fishery and the cinnamon. Andrews had turned to the pearl fisheries of Mannar as soon as the region was conquered. The pearl fishery had been dormant more than forty years but after inspection the pearl banks were found to be ready for fishing and these were an immediate source of revenue: within two years they yielded £265,000 for the East India Company (EIC).[423]

As was customary, the pearl fishery was farmed out to the highest bidder. It was a large operation, and there were many irregularities and a lot of fraud. The fishing grounds had suffered from over-fishing in the early eighteenth century, but the fishery had also been affected by diplomatic crises with the nabob of Arcot and the Rajah of Tanjore both of whom claimed a right to part of the fishery. This conflict had kept the Dutch from fishing for many years. By the 1790s, the crisis had been overcome and a new contract had been made with the nabob. The pearl banks had been inspected regularly, and the Dutch government had finally planned a fishing campaign for 1796 – the first year of the British occupation.[424]

The second major sources of revenue in the first year were the stocks of cinnamon left in the Dutch warehouses and loaded aboard ships that had been ready to sail – almost 9,000 bales (more than 700,000 lb), a two years' supply for the European market. This earned a lot of money in Europe.[425] But the British wrongly assumed that the cinnamon was both abundant and easily harvested on the plantations. Joseph Greenhill, the EIC's commercial resident on the island, was appointed as superintendent of the cinnamon plantations. He did not receive any help or information from the Dutch inhabitants about the management of the cinnamon plantations and the private gardens, and as a result the plantations were seriously neglected, which was to have its repercussions later on.[426]

Based on his experience in India, where land taxes formed the basis of the colonial revenue, Andrews also expected a lot from the inland revenue. With his three assistants from Madras, he set up the inland revenue department and decided to reform both the system of taxation and the function of the inland headmen. As Burnand stated in his "fragments",[427] discussed at the introduction to Part Three of this book, Andrew's steps were drastic and disastrous for the EIC. He did away with the import and export duties and the *oeliam* services, and abolished the service tenures in the Sinhalese districts where he taxed the inhabitants for the jak and coconut trees in their gardens. In the case of the coconut trees he determined that taxes were to be paid only by those who had more than fifty trees in their garden. He also dismissed all the native headmen, and instead employed *aumildars* or *dubashes* from Madras.[428] They were in charge of the administration of justice and were to control the fields and gardens; the new tax-farms were rented out to the highest bidders.

The replacement of native headmen with *aumildars* was common practice when the British expanded their power in new regions, but it seems that Andrews did not realize that he was dealing here with a very different situation from that with which he was familiar. Before he took up his appointment, he had not been well informed about the situation on the island and his experiences were limited to Jaffna, which was in many respects quite different from the southwest of the island.[429] Furthermore,

Andrews' plans regarding the coconut trees bear a great resemblance to the measures proposed by Martinus Mekern a year earlier, and this could be no coincidence.[430] Although there is no direct proof, it seems likely that Andrews was influenced by the ongoing discussions in Jaffna regarding the capitation taxes and the tax on coconut trees. Certainly, there was communication between the British and the Dutch in Jaffna, and Andrews had good contact with Bartholomeus Raket's successor and son, Mattheus Raket.[431] This places the measures of Andrews in a new light. That Andrews implemented the plans island-wide, without regard to local differences is another issue. As shall be seen in the next part, Andrews was not the only person who ignorantly transplanted Dutch plans and policies from one region to another.

Andrews explained and promoted his plans in his correspondence with Madras. His decision to abolish the import and export duties and the *oeliam* services were taken to stimulate trade to and from the island. The new taxes on the coconut trees were in his opinion much fairer than the old service tenures because the burden would now lie largely on the shoulders of the native headmen and the Dutch inhabitants who owned large coconut plantations in the regions surrounding Colombo and Galle. He emphasized that he tried to alleviate the lot of the common man and did not conceal that his measures were mainly taken against the old administrative elite:[432]

> The whole face of the country is covered with luxuriant plantations of cocoanut trees the property of the Dutch or rich natives from which no revenue is collected, and while they are left to enjoy their profits and live in idleness and luxury, the lower order of people are in little less than a state of slavery.[433]

Of course the replacement of the *mudaliyārs* by *aumildars* from Madras was another measure designed to curb the power of the native headmen. The move was made in the summer of 1796 and was to be put into effect from the administrative year that commenced in August.

This policy has been the subject of much debate because it led to a large-scale rebellion on the island which forced the governor of Madras to visit the island in an effort to calm the situation. The revolt had not come entirely as a surprise and Stuart for one had predicted it when Andrews began his program. He had therefore advised the government of Madras not to withdraw all their troops until the new system was fully implemented.

> The Moodeliers and headmen are likely to lose many advantages, and to suffer in their consequence by the change: they may therefore be expected to make some struggles to oppose arrangements which will operate so powerfully against their individual interests, and they will most probably have sufficient influence to excite the inhabitants to revolt, while the latter remain

> ignorant that their advantage will be promoted by the new system, although the moodeliars suffer […].[434]

The government in Madras was not much concerned with the effects of the changes in the headmen system. The members of government did not really care about the new taxes imposed. However, they disagreed on the abolishment of the service tenures, the *oeliam* taxes and the trade duties and cautioned Andrews about it. Also, they were afraid that the British government would lose control over the trade on the island and thus they would lose revenue.[435]

Various petitions against the system were sent by former Governor Van Angelbeek and other prominent Dutch inhabitants to Major General Welbore Ellis Doyle, who succeeded Stuart on 1 January 1797, and directly to the governments of Madras and Bengal. The Dutch were especially opposed to the coconut tree tax which they considered injudicious. Although meant to affect only the richer inhabitants, they actually hurt the poorer because coconut was an important source of food supply for many. Coconuts yielded high prices around Colombo, but this was not the case in areas farther away from the roads and markets. In addition, the tax was too high because not all trees bore the same amount of coconuts. The Dutch also complained that Andrews had represented the Moors as poor people as an excuse to abolish the *oeliam* services; but as a rule they were not poor and the *oeliam* services were not a burden.[436] At first the petitions were ignored on the assumption that they were written only to secure the interests of Dutch inhabitants.[437] However, within half a year the whole country was in a revolt and by the end of April 1797 Major General Doyle was at his wit's end. He eventually wrote to Madras an alarming letter stating that he no alternative but to abolish the coconut tax, but strangely enough Madras made Doyle continue the taxes.[438] In the meantime, it was decided to establish a committee to look into the island's revenues and the proper management and policy that should be followed. The committee was headed by Colonel de Meuron, assisted by Robert Andrews and Major Agnew. When Doyle died on 11 July, Hobart appointed De Meuron to succeed him.[439]

7.4 *The Dutch approach revisited*

The most informative sources for De Meuron's government are the minutes of his "Committee for Investigating the state of the revenue, and other important matters on the island of Ceylon". These give additional insight into the rebellion and the problems that instigated it. Hobart had given the committee some guidelines in an extensive minute dated 9 June

1797, and expected a full report from the committee.[440] The coconut tree taxation was temporary suspended in August 1797, after instructions from Hobart in order to quell the rebellion.[441] The other major problems to be resolved were whether to return to the former headmen system and what to do with the service lands. De Meuron took his job very seriously and made an intensive investigation in the papers of the Dutch government to analyse their sources of revenue and how its collection was organized.[442] In the meantime, the rebellion was ongoing, now directed against the Malabari renters, or *dubashes*, who not only functioned as tax collectors but also held juridical authority in the districts. The three members of the committee, De Meuron, Andrews, and Agnew, did not entirely concur in their ideas on these matters and were still debating the matter and sending proposals to Madras when the revolt reached its climax in November and December 1797.[443]

It was at this time that the story circulated that former Governor Van de Graaff was approaching the island with a French fleet from the island of Mauritius.[444] Many Dutch inhabitants now openly chose to side with the native headmen and even the Kandyan prime minister started to meddle. This potential union of forces made the rebellion most threatening for the British. De Meuron sent alarming letters to Hobart, informing him that the rebellion was growing out of proportion and requesting orders for how to deal with the situation. Hobart took these developments very seriously and decided to move to the island to oversee the situation in person. This decision was, it seems, inspired more by the news that the Dutch and the French were working together with Kandy against the British, than by the ongoing revolt against the new revenue system itself. However, while he was there he realized that these issues were connected and informed himself on the situation in conversations with the committee of investigation. Subsequently, he wrote an extensive minute in which he represented the sources of tension and proposed his solutions.[445]

> It was not to be supposed that the Moodeliars, alarmed by these measures for their influence over the people, would be active in suppressing the dissatisfaction which the assumption of the service lands and the introduction of the coast system of revenue had generated–the intrigues of the Dutch, an expected French force and an injudicious tax on the cocoanut tree, increased the ferment, whose consequences we have seen in those insurrections.[446]

In this minute Hobart was careful to draw a disctinction between the situation in parts of the subcontinent and in Ceylon. His conclusion is fundamental to understanding the course he recommended to be taken next.

> The great source of revenue upon the coast differs essentially from that upon Ceylon–upon the coast, grain constitutes the primary source of revenue, in Ceylon it is secondary to almost every other article of taxation. So insignifi-

> cant indeed is the government share of that produce, that, if it were necessary for the attainment of the public tranquillity, and the easy collection of the other taxes, I should have little hesitation in advising its relinquishment altogether under an assumption of the service lands, [otherwise] this produce would certainly increase, but not in proportion to the expenditure which must be then incurred for official servants and daily labourers.[447]

These considerations eventually led to the decision that the service tenures had to be reinstated and that the *mudaliyārs* had to be invested again with their former authority.

In the end, Hobart's suggestions were adopted. It was decided that for the time being the British government should return to the former Dutch system of government. This implied a definite abolition of the coconut-taxes and a restoration of the power of the *mudaliyārs*. The custom duties and the *oeliam* services were also reinstalled. This was a radical switch, and according to some men, like Burnand, it was done too easily. According to these people the question of who was at fault for the underlying causes of the rebellion required more intensive investigation, before moving on. The task of the committee appointed by Hobart had been to advice on the best mode of governing the country in order to yield the most revenue and although they looked into some specific complaints, no one was put on trial. Later in 1799, Davy Robertson who was send to London to inform the Secretary of State Dundas on the situation in the island, criticized the committee's approach:

> As the Malabar and Madras Dubashes were accused by the vellales and other inhabitants of having been guilty during the time that they were employed in the revenue department of the most gross abuses and as they, whilst they denied the crimes, as loudly recriminated, on the Vellales; these charges ought to have been fully examined and enquired into, the guilty ought to have been publicly punished and the innocent persons rewarded and confided in for the future, whereas now whether these peculations and abuses that were certainly practised, were committed by the Malabars or Vellales, must ever remain uncertain….[448]

Probably this did not happen because the government in Colombo feared another revolt if they investigated the crimes of the *mudaliyārs* themselves. There were many rumours that the latter had been as much involved in the extortion of the people as the *dubashes*, since many of them had actually taken up tax-farms besides the *dubashes*. Because of this cover up, the whole episode has remained rather obscure.[449]

7.5 *Regime change and collaboration*

The British government had had a problematic start in the island and the

new regime of Stuart and Andrews suffered from a "regime change syndrome" as described in the Introduction of Part Three of this monograph. Both Andrews and the government of Madras felt that as new overlords, they were in a position to do as they wished on the island. Andrews absolutely did not trust the native elite, nor the Dutch whom he considered his political enemies. Therefore he searched for new allies to govern the island according to his will. He called in the *dubashes* from Madras, and at the same time tried to tie the native merchant class to his interest by relieving them from the taxes, and the peasants by relieving them from their service obligations. These new alliances failed for two reasons. First, Andrews did not have a proper understanding of the structures and needs of native society and second, Andrews underestimated the power the native elite had over the peasants.

By trial and error the British rulers learned of the strength of the local elites in the southwest of the island, and they came to realize that without them their government simply could not work. The collaboration of the native elite with some of the former Dutch officials and Kandyan ministers put too much pressure on the British and they had little choice but to give in to their demands. After the insurrection had quieted down, they were not in a position to persecute the powerful elites for their misbehaviour, because they were too dependent on them. There was an existing power structure in the island, which had a definite legitimacy in the eyes of the inhabitants, and the British had to come to terms with this and could not just ignore it. In the historical perspective of the Dutch period, this is no surprise: it has been pointed out in the last chapter that the bargaining power of the *mudaliyārs* was very strong and had been enhanced by the Dutch policies in the previous decades.

A question that will be answered in the next chapter is how Andrew's successors dealt with this situation and whether power relations on the island changed. At least the local power relations were much better understood by De Meuron. Hobart came to realize this during his visit and that is why he turned the clock back so decisively. In his view there was no other way without using force. The choice to return to the Dutch system and the search for stabilization fits in very well again with the regime change theories, but in this case it did not mark the final phase of the transitional period. Not all local relations had crystallized, nor was the island's destiny and function within the British empire decided. Thanks to changing international and local circumstances, the transitional situation would be prolonged for seven more years.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A NEW DESTINY FOR CEYLON 1798-1805

8.1 *Transition to Crown government*

From the outset, the island of Ceylon's place in the British Empire was a peculiar one. It was described above how Ceylon was conquered by the deputies of the East India Company in Madras, but at the initiative of Henry Dundas in his function as Secretary of War.[450] In the first instance this meant that the Company claimed the annexed territories on the island and governed it from the presidency of Madras. The position of the government in London and particularly of Henry Dundas concerning this entitlement changed in 1797. Although the peace talks in Lille were inconclusive, the British government had placed a strong claim on its possession of Ceylon during the negotiations and the conviction that it should be hold on to grew firmer. The joint interests of the state and the Company in the territories of Ceylon resulted in a dual Crown-Company government. The government of the colony fell under the charge of a governor appointed by the Crown and thus the formal sovereignty lay with the Crown, but at the same time the Company was responsible for the actual administration and the revenues.[451] In practice, the government of Ceylon fell under the responsibility of the new governor-general, the Marquess Richard Wellesley, while the civil servants were recruited from the Madras presidency. Therefore, in many ways Ceylon functioned as another presidency within the East India Company's government of India.[452]

The newly appointed governor, Frederick North, has earned an interesting reputation in the historiography. His immediate successors were full of criticism regarding his government and most historians have shown little sympathy for the man. The positive evaluation of North's government started in the late colonial period, when local historians wrote enthusiastically about his attention to the educational and Christian establishments on the island. North's governorship is often characterized as one of good intentions and bad luck. The war with Kandy certainly did not reflect well on his administration, and it is often used to explain his failures.[453]

In this chapter the focus will be on the interaction between North and his superiors in Calcutta and London, and the plans that were made for the role that Ceylon was to play in the arena of the British Empire. At the

same time, attention will be paid to the way Frederick North shaped his government and dealt with the legacy of his immediate predecessors and the Dutch rulers. This means that we shall not only focus on the institutional development, but also on North's interpretation of the system of indirect rule. The key to successful governance, after all, lay in the relationship between government and the native establishments.

8.2 *Pacification of the remaining Dutchmen and judicial reform*

Frederick North was appointed in March 1798 and sent to Ceylon in a rush, without instructions from Secretary of State Dundas. He arrived in Bombay in June 1798 where he awaited the instructions from Dundas and only moved to Ceylon at the end of September 1798. North had a strong inclination towards Governor-General Wellesley, and corresponded privately with him during the whole term of his government. Their letters largely deal with the military operations in the East and the advances and defeats of Napoleon in Europe, but especially in the first years, North also wrote a lot on the situation on the island and expressed his ideas on government.[454] While waiting in Bombay he was anxious to get started on the island, and in his letters to Wellesley he reveals a sense of drama when he writes about his "embryo government" and "my little island of cinnamon".[455] He also expressed his worries about working together with the Madras servants who were already involved in the island's government and he had a ready opinion on the preceding affairs over there:

> Of the actual state of that island, I can give you little information. You have heard by this time of the disturbances which had been occasioned by the hasty reforms in the Dutch method of administration, which I remember, we both supposed, before I left England, but too likely to produce them.[456]

Not much later North received his instructions in which it was decided that he was to follow the advice of the De Meuron committee and revert to the Dutch system of taxation and management of inland affairs. Consequently, he was ordered to set up a well organized revenue department. North absolutely agreed with these instructions and praised the work of the committee. He was also ordered to look further into the judicial matters, which had been much neglected, and he had to set up a well functioning and just judicial department.[457] These were the two major issues at the time of his arrival, with which he commenced energetically. Therefore, the focus of North in those early years was in the first place on the organization of the administration and mainly as it related to the functions of the English servants in the revenue and judicial departments. At that time, he left the native administration as it was and did not much interfere with the headmen system, so the *mudaliyārs* kept the power they had retrieved in the rebellion of 1798.

The courts had hardly functioned in the time prior to his arrival and therefore serious action in the judicial departments was required. Although he originally wished to organize the department in the same manner as the Dutch had done, he soon changed his mind and made some major changes. One of these was paying judges proper salaries, to prevent bribery. He also curbed the powers of the native chiefs in judicial matters and those of the fiscal, who had had too much power invested in him.[458] Following the example in Bengal, North installed a supreme court of criminal jurisdiction with full jurisdiction over the maritime provinces. This court consisted only of European servants. Civil courts in the towns of Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna were re-established, and the *landraden* were now in charge of all civil cases in the countryside. However, courts of appeal were installed to hear the appeals from these civil courts. The higher and lesser courts of appeal consisted of the governor, commander-in-chief and the chief secretary. The organization of the judicial department did not deviate much from the former Dutch system, but the implementation differed. Judges were now salaried and political and juridical power were disconnected as far as possible.[459]

In the meantime, North worked hard to win the trust of the considerable numbers of Dutch inhabitants who remained in the major towns of the island. Many of them had been agitating vehemently against the British when North took up the office of governor and one reason the courts had not been functioning when North arrived was because these Dutchmen refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, a necessary requirement for entering British service. North realized that he needed the Dutch to get his judicial department back on its feet and he strove actively to appease them. By the end of 1799, most of them, realizing that the prospect of Ceylon returning in Dutch hands was growing less and less likely, decided to take their chance with the British. The death of Van Angelbeek in the same year probably lowered their morale and hastened this process.

Diederich Thomas Fretz, the former commander of Galle, was one of the first to take the oath of allegiance and to take up a job in the civil court of Galle.[460] This started something of a chain reaction, but it was not to the liking of all Dutch inhabitants. In September 1799, North was confronted with a fight between Pieter Adolf Loffman against Pieter Sluijsken. Loffman had taken the oath of allegiance not long before and had taken up a job in the *landraad*. Sluijsken accused him of being a traitor, and in his testimony he stated:

> At the end of our conversation I among other things asked mr Loffman in a jest whether he did not think that our Dutch nation could come again to Ceylon, to which Loffman answered laughing, yes, I long already for them, and if I must then hang, many others will also be hanged. Considering this

> as a blumsy [sic] answer, I replied to it with only these words: Here are coconut trees enough.[461]

North decided not to reprimand Sluijsken openly for his insults, because of his age and character and because he did not expect his words to have any serious effect. By this time, many of the Dutch had switched to the British service, and Sluijsken's "peer pressure" could not endanger that process anymore.

In the course of his first two years in office North developed an antipathy for the former Dutch government and by the end of 1799 he was cursing its practices in his despatches home. A sense of British superiority was certainly present in these remarks. His critique concerned the unprofessional practices in the judicial department in particular, but he also accused the Dutch government of fraud and an inhumane attitude towards the natives. He abhorred their intolerant religious policy, and almost immediately did away with all restrictive rules against Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.[462] At the same time he acknowledged the political advantage of the former Dutch practice of attaching the inhabitants to the colonial government through education and religion. Therefore he put a lot of energy into the re-establishment of the Dutch schools and clerical institutions. The Reverend James Cordiner, who later published a lengthy description of Ceylon, was one of the men sent out to work on this.[463]

North's ambiguous attitude towards the Dutch institutions and former policies did not stop him from developing a fondness of the Dutch inhabitants. He reinstalled many of their charitable and clerical institutions and offered those in need an adequate pension. He persuaded many of them to continue in the juridical, clerical and educational profession. He intended to actively educate them and prepare them for the lower echelons of the British civil service, in January 1800 he wrote in a dispatch to London:

> The public officers to be provided for Ceylon are remarkably few. The numerous colony of Burghers whom it would be unjust to banish and impolitical to disunite from the state, will give an easy supply to all the offices of inferior nature; were the nomination to those of greater responsibility vested in the governor subject to the control of the governor general in Council, little harm would possibly arise from it.[464]

North further hoped to encourage some of them to engage in agriculture, which would add to the development of the country. North had found in the Dutch the middlemen so much needed for a new government with little knowledge about the island. Thus at this point many of the Dutchmen started to play an important role again at the local level because of their availability, local knowledge and experience.

8.3 *Internal strife and changes in the revenue department*

The revenue department also underwent a major administrative reform, and as in the juridical department, North's new department resembled the former Dutch system in many ways. North installed four collectorates (Colombo, Galle and Matara, Jaffna, Vanni, and Batticaloa) that functioned independently of each other and were under direct control of the governor and his chief secretary. The function of collector was like that of the former *dessavas*, except that the juridical authority was taken away from him. The substructure of the collectorates existed of the native headmen, following the Dutch example. The first *mahāmudaliyār*, in this case Johannes de Saram, was in close contact with the governor and advised him on all sorts of inland matters. As in Dutch times, he also held great authority over the native headmen in the southwest.[465]

Although North changed the organization of the revenue department, the civilian officers from Madras who were in charge of the various regions at first remained the same as they had been under Andrews. Even before he arrived on the island North had expressed his distrust of the Madras officials and within a year after taking up his post he was in a fight with most of them often over the various cases of fraud and mismanagement that came to light. Garrow, the collector of Batticaloa and the Vanni, had abused his authority and treated his native servant in an extremely violent manner. Garrow was dismissed in July 1799 and a commission was sent to look into the affairs in the collectorates. John MacDowall, who functioned as the collector of Colombo and deputy secretary, was suspected of fraud in the organization of the pearl fishery.[466]

A more extensive investigation into the pearl fishery in 1799 led to a revelation of many more cases of corruption and fraud. Hugh Cleghorn and his Lieutenant Turnour were held responsible and were dismissed at the end of the year. One of North's major enemies, Cleghorn had opposed North's judicial reforms in 1798 and tried to discredit him with Wellesley and Dundas. Although North was certain of Wellesley's confidence, he feared Cleghorn's influence with Dundas and the directors in London, and he accused Cleghorn of having planned a kind of *coup d'état* during his absence in Madras in the summer of 1799. The affairs at the pearl fishery eventually made it possible for North to get rid of him.[467]

From North's correspondence with Wellesley it is clear that from the beginning North was convinced of the injudiciousness of keeping the Madras civilians in office. He feared that he could not exert the proper authority over them and therefore did not trust them from the beginning. Within two weeks after his arrival he spoke of "that spirit of clique and party" and his letters to Wellesley in those years continuously address his problems with the Madras civilians.[468] Although there were actually

serious cases of fraud and misbehaviour, North's attitude towards the Madras civilians can once again be understood in the light of regime change. To North, these men had worked under a regime – British to be sure, but which had totally failed in its operation. Therefore they were contaminated with failure; he did not trust them and he did not want to work with them. By the end of 1799, many of them were replaced by men sent from Bengal or recruited from the military department. Those that did remain in office submitted to North's authority. It was also at this time that North proposed to the Home Office that he be allowed to employ Dutchmen in the civil service.[469]

In the first two years of his term, the problems in the judicial and revenue departments much paralysed the government. In fact, in those first years the finances of Ceylon deteriorated markedly. The pearl banks became exhausted by the intensive and uncontrolled fisheries of the previous years and the fishery had to be suspended after 1799. Moreover, North had misjudged the fertility of the existing cinnamon plantations. Shortly after his arrival he had decided that the four large government plantations in the environs of Colombo and Negombo could produce sufficient cinnamon if taken care of properly and he ordered all other plantations and gardens to be demolished and discouraged the inhabitants from growing cinnamon trees in their own gardens. This resulted in a decline in the cinnamon production which was only partly overcome by sending cinnamon peelers into the Kandyan country. Many of the other sources of revenue had been neglected or mismanaged in past years while at the same time expenses were on the rise due to the reforms in the juridical department, the installation of salaried judges and a general rise in wages. The enormous rice imports from Bengal and Madras were particularly costly. Now that peace and order had returned to all departments, it was time to focus on the economic situation of the British possessions on Ceylon. The renewed spirit of change was instigated by the departure of the Madras civilians, and was reinforced by developments and decisions made in India and London.

8.4 *From bulwark to granary*

The construction of dual government in 1798 resulted in the peculiar situation that the government of Ceylon fell under the authority of two opposites in colonial policy, Secretary of War and president of the Board of Directors Dundas, and Governor-General Wellesley.[470] Wellesley had arrived in Calcutta in the Spring of 1798. He was a military man and of great importance to the British expansion in India. Soon after his arrival, he set his mind on the overthrow of Tipu Sultan who at the end of 1799

was killed in the famous Battle of Seringpatnam. The defeat of Tipu was of great importance for British security in India, for they had continuously worried about the alliance between Tipu and France. Wellesley remained unconvinced, however, and under the pretext of the French menace he continued to expand the British territories and influence on the Indian subcontinent. In his view, Ceylon played an important part in this effort.

He saw Ceylon as a bulwark of the Indian empire and wished to reinforce it with extra garrisons. In his eyes the strategic function of Ceylon compensated for its limited revenue. Wellesley preferred to look at Ceylon from an all-India perspective and argued that Ceylon's finances could be balanced with the income from other regions. It was after all thanks to the possession of Ceylon that those other regions were kept secure. In the winter of 1800, Wellesley decided to assemble an expedition for Bombay at Trincomalee for the protection of the British possessions in India. His brother, Colonel Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington) was appointed to head the mission and arrived at Trincomalee early in 1801.[471]

Dundas on the other hand, was an experienced bureaucrat with a long record of service relative to India. In the 1780s and early 1790s he was involved in the administrative reforms in Bengal. In general, he did not believe in the idea of consolidation of power through aggressive expansion in India. Dundas turned more careful after the defeat of Tipu Sultan because in his view the French were now outplayed in the Indian arena. His opinion was reinforced after the defeat of Napoleon in Egypt two years later, which convinced him that the French would not turn to India again. This diminished the strategic importance of Ceylon, although Dundas agreed with the consensus opinion that a French occupation of Ceylon should be prevented at all costs. However, he did worry about the bad financial situation of the colony, and concluded that Ceylon had to become self-supportive.[472]

As the policies and strategies envisioned in India and London diverged, Dundas realized that a solution had to be found for the dual government that had been installed in 1798. Moreover, the problems with the Madras civilians on the island had made it all too clear that the government of Ceylon needed to be put on a better footing with stronger supervision. At the coming peace negotiations at Amiens, Ceylon was likely to remain British and to be internationally acknowledged as such. On Ceylon, North hopefully expected the government to become a separate dependency entirely under the authority of his befriended Governor-General Wellesley, just as Dundas had promised in 1798. In the meantime, however, Dundas had changed his mind and decided that the island was to fall entirely under the Crown, if it was retained at the peace negotiations in the winter of 1801/02.[473]

At the same time, both in Ceylon and in London new strategies were devised to improve the financial and organizational situation on Ceylon during the years 1800 and 1801. These strategies were based on different expectations regarding the future position of the island within the expanding British empire and resulted in the development of two schemes that crossed each other on the way from the metropolis to India and vice versa. By the time the two sides received the other's plans, both had already started to carry out their own schemes. In the following sections, both of these will be discussed before the narrative of the actual policies and developments on the island is continued.

8.5 *Dundas' scheme*

The bad financial situation and the serious friction between North and the Madras civilians led Dundas in London to reconsider the existing construction of government in Ceylon. Contrary to expectations in both Ceylon and India, he decided in 1801 to turn the British possessions on the island into a proper Crown colony instead of returning it entirely in to the hands of the East India Company, and after the conclusion of the Peace of Amiens in 1802 this plan was put in practice.

In his despatches to North Dundas explained why he had reached this decision. Ceylon had been conquered for strategic and not for commercial reasons in the first place, but by now the situation had changed. Although it was considered best to keep the island to prevent the French from occupying it, the colony now had to become self-supporting and preferably even profitable to the mother country. He considered the prospects of Ceylon's prospering in the future good, but considering the sorry state of the agricultural sector the colony required investment and active government to achieve a positive outcome. This required civilian servants with the right mindset, which those serving the East India Company did not have. A career in Ceylon was not as lucrative for them as a position in India. Because career prospects on the island were limited, only Company servants of lesser ability would be willing to serve there.[474]

Consequently, Dundas considered it proper to commence with the organization of a separate civil service for Ceylon and he selected twenty-four men to be sent out from London. He did not see much fruit in the role which North had attributed to the Dutch inhabitants, and in fact he wanted North to discourage their service as much as possible.[475] An agent for Ceylon was also appointed to assist the Secretary of War, and Dundas instructed North to install an executive council to serve him with advice when needed, because he was no longer in a position to ask the governments of Madras or of Calcutta for advice.[476]

In London Dundas had informed himself well on the situation on Ceylon and showed great personal interest in the affairs and circumstances of the island. Central to the new instructions stood the agricultural development of the island:

> To restore the decayed Agriculture of the island and particularly to promote and encourage the growth and increase of rice, ought certainly to be one of the first objects of your solicitude in the situation you now hold, and with this view the reparation of the tanks appears one of the first and principal means to which you should have recourse.[477]

The possibilities to increase the revenue from cinnamon production were limited, since five thousand bales was all that was needed for world consumption. Therefore all other lands had to be made ready for paddy cultivation. This emphasis on agriculture was new and contradicted the conclusions that Lord Hobart had reached four years before when governor of Madras. He had stated that cultivation of rice was the last product to yield revenue on the island and advised it to focus on the cinnamon, the pearl fishery and other cash crops like areca nuts. Dundas now advocated the stimulation of the paddy culture as the spear point of the colonial government of Ceylon. This was certainly a change in policy.

Dundas had made sure that he was informed thoroughly on the subject by Lord Glenbervie (alias Sylvester Douglas), who had written an extensive report on all aspects of the government of Ceylon based on North's dispatches and other writings about the island.[478] He had paid particular attention to the development of agriculture in a treatise entitled "On the Improvement of the Agriculture and Natural Advantages of the Country and the Appointment of a Civil Engineer" and which was sent to North in March 1801.[479]

Glenbervie commenced this paper with "Rice, being the corn of India (which is the first consideration in the agriculture of all countries), I shall treat of here". The importance of rice lay not only in the fact that it was basic foodstuff for the inhabitants of the island, but also that it was an easy good for the government to tax. It was even desirable to make rice the number one source of the island's revenue, instead of cinnamon, because of the limited possibilities of growth in the trade of that spice. The starting point of his argument was the assumption that in former times, the island had functioned as a granary and had never suffered from a lack of rice.[480]

How did Glenbervie propose to achieve this? He first informed his readers that the yield of rice was relatively low on Ceylon, while yields per seed were much higher in Sumatra and Bengal. Therefore, the government should inform itself of the means of agriculture in those regions. Also, waste land had to be given out free from taxation for five years to whomever wished to cultivate it, and the ancient waterworks and reser-

voirs had to be repaired. For this purpose a civil engineer had to be send to the island. Waterways and roads had to be established for the improvement of communication and transport, for which the "personal service of those inhabitants who hold their lands in that tenure might be very useful and actively employed".[481] He expected that these measures would eventually result in an annual surplus produce of up to 150,000 pounds. For that reason government should not hesitate to invest some money in the development of the colony. Moreover, he acknowledged the importance of knowledge for government and recommended the establishment of a society "for cultivating and promoting the knowledge of Nature, history and agriculture the useful arts, manufactures and the languages, history antiquities and literature of Ceylon".[482]

The spirit of Glenbervie and Dundas are reminiscent of Van de Graaff's *broodkamer* ideology. The plans for surveying the island and repairing all sorts of irrigation works tally with the Dutch governor's enterprises. Also the image of a rich past with an abundance of rice on the island is presented here, the difference being that the English blamed the neglect of the paddy culture on the Dutch and the Portuguese instead of undefined natural disasters. Thus, as in the last decades of Dutch rule, the British were drawn inland with agricultural schemes; but this time action was ordered from above in order to safeguard the position of Ceylon within the British Empire. Another crucial difference was that it had never been Van de Graaff's aim to turn the whole island into a granary, but only to promote the rice culture in the peripheral districts while reserving the southwest for the production of all sorts of cash crops and timber.

Why were Dundas and Glenbervie so keen on rice and why did they not opt for the cultivation of cash crops like coffee or pepper instead? The West Indies already provided the British economy with various cash crops and at the same time the success of Bengal must have been on their minds. The two men reasoned that no major changes in the system of government were necessary to turn Ceylon into a granary. All that was needed was a proper management and supervision of affairs. That is why Dundas instructed North to leave things the way they were in relation to the service tenures, because in his view such changes should be brought about only gradually, and the risks of sudden changes had been experienced by Andrews. He sincerely wished that anything like that would not happen again.[483] North's plan of engaging the Dutch in agriculture was also rejected and in fact Dundas forbade all private Europeans from undertaking any agricultural enterprise. He apparently feared the growth of independent European interest groups, who could in time undermine state authority by requesting self-government as had happened in the American colonies and the Cape Colony.[484]

In many ways Dundas dealt with Ceylon as he had with India. His

instructions for the reorganization of the judicial and revenue departments resemble his proposed reforms in India. His instructions were very important and were to have a long lasting influence. Even the ideal of turning Ceylon into a granary was copied from earlier successes in Bengal. The complex ideological and practical connection with developments in India, Britain and elsewhere in the British Empire characterize the early development of British rule on Ceylon and will be further discussed in Chapter Nine.

8.6 *North's drift*

In his first two years on the island, North had come to the conclusion that the improvement of the island's revenue could only be reached through proper management by capable British servants on the one hand and by a general increase in the agricultural produce on the other. He was of the opinion that in the southwest, the core area of the British possessions, agricultural development was hampered by the inland social and economical structure. Already in his despatches of the end of 1799 he wrote that although he had returned government to the shape it had under the former Dutch system, he wished to make amendments in time. The changes he had in mind actually remind us of some of those implemented by Andrews three years earlier. In his despatches to London that year, North was still careful in his expressions. But at the end of 1799 he sent his confidant Major Davy Robertson to convey his dispatches to London, and this man wrote an extensive report regarding the situation on the island and the possibilities for improvements.[485] The tenor of this memorandum concurs with that of North's dispatches, but it is more explicit. The most important element of Robertson's recommendations was the abolition of the service tenures:

> The industry of the Cinglese [sic] might be promoted and encouraged by giving them lands to be cleared and cultivated on easy and moderate terms, and then insuring them the permanent property of the grounds that they may have cleared, on tenures either of the *ottoe* or *ande* tributes according to the nature of the soil, and by abolishing all personal services, that degrading and humiliating mark of a feudal system, established in remote unsettled and barbarous times.[486]

North and Robertson were of the opinion that thanks to the new system, the peasants would soon learn to enjoy the fruits of their labour, in contrast to working only for the benefit of others. As a result they would become much more industrious in the field and be inclined to work for wages for the government if required. In line with this plan, North also proposed to abolish the *accomodessan* system, and instead to pay the *mudaliyārs* and *lascorins* regular wages. If they wished, they could keep the

fields that were given them as *accomodessans*, but these were then taxed in line with other properties. Within two years of the failure of Andrew's government and Hobart's and Dundas' explicit instructions to restore the old order, North was tending once again in a more revolutionary direction.

This change of spirit was accelerated by his tour of the island between June and November 1800. North visited all major stations on the coast with the purpose of personally supervising his departments and in order to remove the backlog of criminal cases.[487] Prior to his tour, North had imposed a new tax on jewelry, the joytax, against which the inhabitants of the region north of Colombo from Negombo to Mannar soon revolted. This rebellion was quickly suppressed, and North remained convinced of the worth of this tax. He also prided himself and his military officers for dealing with the ringleaders justly. He compared his rule with that of his Dutch predecessors, which he considered too severe, and that of De Meuron, whom he regarded as too mild. He was certainly not set back by the rebellion, but rather gained strength from it. He optimistically wrote to Wellesley that from a new government it could hardly be expected that everything would go well at once, but his grip was strengthening and things were getting better and better.[488]

While staying in Galle in July, he corresponded a lot with the Kandyan ministers whose propositions induced him to embark on a new diplomatic course.[489] Moreover, during the tour he realized that the department of revenue and the judiciary could be further improved. He placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of the quality of his personnel and he expanded on his idea of appointing more Dutch servants to the lower posts, although he reserved the higher offices like those of judges and collectors for Company servants. In all, North moved further away from the original instructions of his superiors. The letters North wrote to Wellesley during the tour show a very positive and confident spirit, in contrast to his letters of the year before. In October 1800 he wrote from Trincomalee:

> The only thing I want is a greater latitude in the choice of my instruments than I now have, and a greater power of rewarding and encouraging those with whose merit I am acquainted and whose services are tried. With that power I will engage to leave the colony in three years time / unless unforeseen accidents prevent it / in such a state as to add considerably not only to the security but to the affluence of the Indian possessions.[490]

Thus, North imposed on himself the ambitious task of solving all the island's financial and political problems by the end of his term. He must have thought that as long as this goal was attained some deviation from the official line of policy was acceptable. If successful, he would certainly benefit from it since the good impression he would leave behind increased his career opportunities.

The new spirit was aroused by the hands-on control North established over his inferiors through his severe approach of the Madras civilians and his inspection tour over the island. Another factor that played a role in the formulation of North's new plans was that he expected the island soon to fall entirely under the East India Company, in which case he would serve directly under his friend, the governor-general. Wellesley's military attitude towards Ceylon and his lack of interest in financial and administrational matters made North confident that he would have more freedom to operate on the island and that this would increase his authority over his servants. The plan to turn Trincomalee into a military rendezvous increased the importance of the island for the British empire, and added to the prestige of North's governorship. Also in the case of Kandy, he knew that if the opportunity arose, Wellesley would not be adverse to a scheme that would lead to occupation, even if this implied a declaration of war.[491]

Thus, without the approval of the home authorities, but probably with the consent of Wellesley, North started to transform the government once again, and moved away further and further from the original idea that the government should resemble that of the Dutch as much as possible.

In the end both parties were presented more or less with a fait accompli: North could do nothing to obstruct Dundas' decision to place Ceylon directly under the Crown or to prevent the arrival of the twenty-four new appointees. At the same time, Dundas disagreed with North's reforms of the judicial and revenue departments and service tenures and even the diplomacy with Kandy, but he could do little about them. The uncertain solution for the dual government and the long-distance communication caused a new dynamism in colonial policy which was now moving in two directions.

North was of the opinion that proper rules and justice would stimulate the inhabitants to work harder which in turn would lead to improvements in the island's economy. Dundas assumed that good supervision and organization of the departments would be most fruitful. This contrast was not unique, and should be understood in the context of the colonial policy-making for India, as shall be discussed in Chapter Ten. For now the focus is on how North dealt with the contrast between his ideas and those of Dundas, his superior, and what policies he pursued in his last years as governor.

8.7 *A failed mission*

In the course of 1801, Governor-General Wellesley had to abandon the plan of turning Trincomalee into a military rendezvous. The visit of his

brother Colonel Wellesley turned out to be a failure. He left a memorandum stating the unsuitability of Trincomalee as a rendezvous for the Indian army. "I conclude that Trincomalee is useful as port only", wrote the Colonel,

> that it is a bad place of rendezvous for an armament, because refreshments cannot be procured at it; because it has no buildings or conveniences for the troops in the bad weather during the winter months; because the communication with it is long and difficult at all times, entirely interrupted; and because it is probable that the passage from thence to any other part of India will be long and difficult.[492]

This was not the only change that North had to deal with. North's response to the news that Ceylon was to be a Crown colony was not very enthusiastic. As he wrote to Wellesley:

> Unfortunately Dundas, as I see by the papers, has been busily employed in filling up the vacant offices in his gift, particularly those on Ceylon, so that, after having introduced regularity, economy, energy and parity, into all the departments of government, all the men who have served for these two years are to be displaced […].[493]

He worried about the new servants that Dundas was sending out. Now that he had his departments under control and everybody was working so hard and had finally got the right spirit, he did not want new people. Moreover, he worried that these newcomers would not be as qualified as Dundas presented them to be and that extra functions would have to be created to sustain all of them. North's prejudices even allowed him to write that

> All that I have heard of most of the individuals, is that they are in too high a situation at home to come out merely for a change of air; and I scarcely think that they would like to go through the drudgery which is cheerfully submitted to at present by the principal officers under me. The consequence will be an immoderate increase of the civil establishment.[494]

After they arrived, North was more measured in his judgement and in a way he seems to have felt empowered by the new situation: serving directly under the Crown gave him extra authority. In his letters to Wellesley he does not comment on the new instructions he received from Dundas, but from his despatches to London we learn that for the most part he continued with his own plans, though he adapted to those of Dundas in some respects. The reformation of the revenue and judicial departments went through. At first he replaced the four collectorates with thirteen revenue agents who were supervised by a board of revenue over which he presided. Obviously, this was done to increase control over the revenue and inland administration. Later he reduced the agents to six and named them collectors again, although they were all given an assistant. According to North, such departmental hierarchies were necessary to foster the possi-

bility of career development on the island, which would stimulate the servants to do their best.[495]

In the judicial department North focused on the inland part of its organization. By December 1799, the new courts were all operating successfully and North's measures were confirmed in the new charter of justice of 1801. Some changes regarding the organization of the supreme court were introduced and its authority was extended over civil cases as well. Yet after his tour over the island and before the new charter arrived North continued to reform the judiciary. He felt particularly uncomfortable with the eleven *landraden* and the three civil courts and decided to replace them with five provincial courts to be presided over by civil servants and assisted mainly by Dutch burghers. However, North intended to have the courts eventually headed by professional judges. More important was that the native headmen lost their official judicial powers in the districts. The reforms were successful in the sense that juridical establishment worked quite well until the end of North's rule, but the establishment had become very expensive and the implementation of the verdicts did not run smoothly. Moreover, it is difficult to really assess these changes because, due to the war with Kandy, martial law was implemented in the maritime districts starting 1803.[496]

In all, the period between 1800 and 1802 was a vibrant one. Following his own plans and in part those of Dundas, North turned to the agricultural development of the island. According to his despatches, his abolition of service tenures was slowly showing off its fruits. As the historian C.R. de Silva later wrote:

> There were over five thousand lascorins in the Colombo districts alone (holding accomodessans), which meant a waste of labour in an ill-peopled and inadequately cultivated land. A considerable increase in the land revenue might therefore be expected.[497]

North not only expected a natural increase in land revenue from the abolition of the service tenures and *accomodessans*, he also thought that the inhabitants who had formerly worked without payment would become much more productive if they received salary for their labour, and could keep the produce of their land. North had commenced with the reforms only after consultation with his *mahāmudaliyār* who approved of it. Unlike in the days of Andrews, the radical switch did not cause any rebellion.[498]

Therefore North was in a position to reply very confidently to the doubts that the new Secretary of War, Lord Hobart, expressed in his first letter of 1802 concerning the abolition of the service tenures. North wrote that he had implemented these measures only after three years of experience and due consideration, that things were going well and that certainly he himself was in the best position to judge this. In his next

letter, Hobart took back his doubts and praised North for his actions. The abolition of the service tenures was combined with the commencement of large-scale land registration, in the manner of the Dutch *tombos*. North enthusiastically reported about the progress on this as well. Following Dundas' instructions, North had commenced with the development of the irrigation works. In each general letter North gave a report of their progress. This was not the only concession to Dundas' instructions. In the case of the Dutch servants, he did not stimulate them to engage in agriculture and gave up the idea of forming them into a class of administrative middlemen between indigenous society and the British. In practice, however, many Dutchmen kept their posts as clerks in the lower order of the administration and in the judicial department.[499]

North's general letters were very passionate about the developments in the inland government. He only expressed some disappointment about the fact that the people of the southwestern districts did not wish to be wage labourers for the government. He expected however that this would change over time after they had seen some good examples to follow. North also made more plans to improve the agriculture and general production of the island by inviting Chinese settlers and South Indian weavers to the island.[500] These years (1800-1803) were really the heyday of his rule; his despatches are very positive and the reader can really believe that he had succeeded in his aim of making the island rich and orderly. The distance between London and Colombo and the consequent limited control from London gave him extra space to follow his own course.

This optimistic spirit, combined by the military successes of Wellesley in India, led North into a disastrous war with Kandy (1802-1805). We will see in the Chapter Eleven how after some initial successes which even led to the occupation of the capital, the British army was ambushed and one of its detachments massacred. The troops retreated to the maritime provinces but casualties continued along the border. The two parties remained at war until the end of North's governorship in 1805, although no major campaigns were undertaken anymore after 1803. From the moment that the Kandyan war started, North's despatches say less and less about the agricultural situation. Statements of the revenues are made, but he does not write about developments in the southwest or the results of the new modes of land possession. The war took up most of North's time, and in consequence at the same time he was losing control over the civilian officers. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this failure was the result of the inexperience of the new corps sent out by Dundas. In any case, the preoccupations with the war clearly wreaked havoc on North's plans for the southwest.[501]

The last years of North's rule, which had begun with such promise,

ended in disaster. The Kandyan campaign ran out of control thanks in large part to problems with the military staff from 1804 onwards. The newly appointed General David Douglas Wemyss, who arrived in 1803, was responsible for extraordinary military expenses. Moreover, he and North got into a severe argument over judicial matters. The implementation of martial law over the whole of the southwest is a clear indication of the state of emergency faced by the colonial government. Moreover, the plantations were still not producing enough cinnamon and no extra cinnamon could be fetched from the Kandyan territories. To make things worse, a cattle plague in 1802 and two hurricanes in 1804 caused serious crop failures which resulted in famines in various regions of British Ceylon.[502]

This confluence of difficulties showed starkly that North's policy was spread too thin over too many issues. The effects of his inland policies were limited and from the remarks of his successor Thomas Maitland, who came early 1805, it is clear that by the end of his tenure North had lost his grip on the administration of the island and that the collectors and native chiefs were acting at their own discretion. North's energetic attitude between 1800 and 1802, the arrival of new civil servants and the war with Kandy had prolonged the transitional period and resulted in a call for a reactionary regime in London. North had in the meantime had requested his dismissal in 1803 and again in 1804, because of "bodily infirmity".[503]

8.8 *Conclusion*

During Frederick North's governorship, the destiny of the island within the British empire changed in two ways. First, the island was set apart from the East India Company administration and placed directly under the Crown. Second, the function of the island within the empire changed. It was occupied at first to help guarantee the security of Britain's Indian possessions, and the harbour of Trincomalee was considered a major strategic stronghold. Even as Governor-General Wellesley made plans to turn the harbour into a military rendezvous, Secretary of War Dundas changed his opinion and ordered the government of Ceylon to turn to the development of agriculture as its major source of income. The island was no longer to function as a bulwark of empire, but rather as a granary not only to be self-sufficient but in the future to provide the rest of the Indian empire with rice. This is very much in line with Van de Graaff's ambition for the island, with the major difference that Dundas wanted the whole island to produce paddy to the exclusion of other commercial crops suitable for long-distance trade.

The changes of policies directed "from above", in Madras, Calcutta, and London, and the practical changes of authority and personnel, produced effects similar to those that resulted from the transition from the Dutch government to that of the EIC. North turned against the former civilians from Madras and tried to reorganize the various departments to assert his control. He depended on the native establishment and tried to ally with the former Dutch servants, whom he trusted more than the civilian bureaucrats installed by his predecessors. He initially followed the course of De Meuron in copying the Dutch mode of governing, but soon changed his mind and set upon a new course.

The simultaneous changes in authority and policy and Wellesley's successful campaigns in India may explain the new endeavors North made in the organization of the government and the inland policy after 1800. Perhaps he felt empowered by British superiority on the battlefields and the final decision that the island was to remain in British hands. North did not so much change the system of indirect rule; after all he stuck to the native establishment as De Meuron had suggested, but he modernized it by formalizing the relationship by paying the headmen in money rather than land. Moreover, he took away the administration of justice from the native headmen and transferred this task to British civil servants. His further tax and land reforms, intended to free the peasants from the bonded services and to encourage agriculture, caused chaos. Whereas the change of the island's destiny and the imperial successes in India help us understand the sudden shifts in his government, they do not necessarily explain North's choices. The ideas behind his reforms and what inspired his choices will be subject of Chapter Ten.

In any case it is clear that North's mission eventually failed. He did not succeed in turning Ceylon into a prosperous colony, nor did he succeed in overturning the Kandyan Kingdom. In fact, the Kandyan war was viewed as an excuse for his failures; but as we shall see, his successor had a different opinion on the matter.

CHAPTER NINE

TOWARDS A NEW ORDER 1805-1815

On 12 January 1805, Thomas Maitland was appointed to succeed Frederick North as governor of Ceylon. Maitland entered office under entirely different circumstances than North had done seven years earlier. Ceylon was now considered a colony of the Crown, obtained for strategic reasons but retained to become profitable for the Crown. Due to the Kandyan wars, the negative trade balance and the disappointing revenue, the colony was in a bad financial state. Indeed, one of the reasons for Dundas to separate the administration of Ceylon from that of the Company was his anticipation that no direct positive balance was to be expected in the colony's first years. However, a war with Kandy had not been anticipated and this caused an enormous increase in expenses which could not really be justified. Moreover, political opinion in England was turning more and more against the great expenditures made in overseas wars.[504]

Thomas Maitland was forty-five when he became governor. He had already pursued quite a career. As a military officer he served in India in the 1780s. After his return to England in 1790, he entered Parliament and found a position on the board of the East India Company. He served again as military officer in 1795, this time on San Domingo, to return to Parliament in 1802.[505] He had prepared himself for the office of governor of Ceylon by studying North's despatches and discussing with Lord Camden, Hobart's successor, which lines of policy to pursue. Austerity was central to his plans and he was ordered to stick to the recommendations made by Dundas in 1801. The first instructions for Maitland mainly referred to the attitude that was necessary towards Kandy and the reorganization of the army. He brought with him a letter to discharge General Wemyss, who was by and large responsible for the exorbitant expenses of the campaign and had caused a lot of unrest in his conflict with the governor. Maitland prepared plans to curtail expenses in the civil and judicial departments as well.[506]

The period of Maitland's rule is usually considered as stable and conservative, with an authoritarian character. The Sri Lankan journalist and historian H.A.J. Hullugalle called him a "rough old despot" and Colvin R. de Silva stresses that this was a period in which peace and order returned and the colonial government was set on a sound footing again.[507] At the time, Maitland's authoritarian character was underlined by Rudolf Prediger, the Dutch commissioner sent to Ceylon in 1806 to fetch the

former Dutch employees of the VOC and who described Maitland as vigorous and peremptory.[508] It is therefore not surprising that Maitland's term of office is contrasted with the chaotic administration of Governor North. The difference in personality between North and Maitland is obvious, but how this was reflected in his policies and the practice of his government is less clear. This chapter discusses in further detail the ups and downs of Maitland's government and places his policies in the perspective of those of his English predecessors and the developments in Dutch times.

9.1 *North's heritage*

Within twenty four hours after his arrival on 19 July 1805, Maitland wrote his first despatch to the Secretary of State in which he portrayed governor North very positively. Indeed, the military force was in a bad state, but North was not to be held responsible for it. He felt that North had done a good job in his administration of the civil department, but criticized the military and judicial establishment and he actually dismissed General Wemyss upon his arrival.

However, by October, Maitland's letters begin to complain of North's management. He particularly disagreed with the legislation regarding all sorts of inland affairs that North had promulgated. Maitland believed that these laws were formulated in a very complicated language, which made it impossible for the natives unfamiliar with British legislation to understand it. In addition, the officials and native servants had not taken enough pains to make sure that the regulations were complied with. In fact, they had operated entirely outside of North's control and had been more occupied in filling their own pockets than in working for the government. The case of Jaffna was brought forward by Maitland as exemplary, but he assured Camden that the problem was endemic. He stated repeatedly that North had exercised no control whatsoever over his civilian corps.[509]

In particular, Maitland disagreed with North's measures regarding the service tenures.[510] Nothing but chaos had come of it. In his later despatches he returned to this subject and reacted vehemently against North's policies. Maitland absolutely rejected the principle of such radical changes, and wrote that all this should have been pursued more gradually.

> We find that the Dutch uniformly did claim it [the services], we find that their attention to keep it up was most astonishing, and we find in all their memoirs for the last 40 years, when some, as able men as are to be met with anywhere, administered the Government of this island, particularly Falck and Van de Graaff, that they uniformly considered it as the object, out of

> which not suddenly, but by degrees they had the prospect of increasing to an enormous extent, stated by some no less than 2 or 300,000 pounds per year, the revenue of this island. We find that General De Meuron in his very able memoir on this subject entertains a similar view of it, yet in the face of all those grave, and I must state great authorities, Mr North chooses at once to do the whole of a system matured by the wisdom and approved of by the experience of ages, totally away. Most fortunately however, with all his inclination, it is not done away and from the modeliars having still carried it on for their own emolument, I have been enabled in one or two instances already to reap the benefit of the ancient system.[511]

In practice, apparently not much had come from North's measures, but contrary to his intentions they had created chaos in the interior. Not only had the native headmen managed to gain power even while North intended to curtail their power, but gangs of landless vagrants were roaming the countryside where they continuously harassed people, the inevitable outcome of North's ill-conceived land policies. The case of Jaffna was explained as follows: the most valuable asset consisted in land and in the right of the higher castes to demand servitude from the inferior castes. In exchange for the services of the inferior castes, the higher castes were bound to support and protect them. The recent interventions had thrown the district out of balance:

> These circumstances have not only tended to diminish the value of land, but have materially checked the cultivation of the country and gradually destroyed the whole of its police.
>
> The property in land is shaken by its being exposed to constant and vexatious litigation […]. The servant from these decisions refuses to obey his master; The master consequently refuses to support his servant; The ancient system of subordination is done away; numbers of the lower castes without the means of subsistence are daily turned upon the public and uniformly commit those enormities which for the last two years have disgraced the province of Jaffna, and which demand the immediate and salutary interference of his Majesty's government.[512]

Bands of robbers roamed the province, and gangs from the territories of Kandy abducted women and children. In the case of Jaffna one may wonder whether this explanation of the high crime rate was entirely correct, for it was already a problematic and unsafe region in the Dutch period, and Maitland may have been predisposed to blame North's policies regarding the service tenures.[513] In any case, it led to a reversal of the service tenures and strict regulations to decrease the crime rate.

In Matara and Galle, the government encountered a similar situation. In the course of 1806, many robberies were reported to have taken place over the course of several years in a row without the government being informed of it. The headmen had not acted either because they were bribed, feared repercussions from gangs of robbers or simply neglected the protection of the inhabitants. In addition it was found that there were

"at present a number of vagrants on this island who having no visible means of obtaining a livelihood, generally support themselves by being guilty of all kinds of petty offences".[514] It led to new regulations that made the headmen responsible for the peace in their district. It forced them to observe more strictly their duty to protect the inhabitants from gangs and to prevent gangs from operating in their district. If they did not uphold this regulation, the headmen risked removal from office and being brought before the court of justice. In addition the magistrates were allowed to apprehend all vagrants and put them to work repairing public roads or any other public works, until they found another job or could be discharged for good behaviour.

Thus within his first months in office, Maitland had begun not only to reform the military and judicial establishments, but also to work on the inland department. He installed a native police department after the example of the Dutch, with the village *vidānē* (village chief) at the head of the departments. Time and again, he contrasted North's policies with those of the Dutch, who in his view had promoted proper government rather than bad management as North and Andrews had always insisted. The Dutch method of governing now served to legitimate Maitland's new policies. By praising the former Dutch governors, Maitland pointed out that there was no shame in reverting to their policies. Again his arguments fit in well with the models of regime change: the time of restoration and stabilization had begun.

9.2 *The fate of the Dutch who stayed behind*

Despite Maitland's positive assessment of the former Dutch regime, he did his best to make sure that the Dutch "prisoners of war" would finally leave the island. The pensions to which they had a right as prisoners of war and which were established in the capitulation had become too costly. Maitland also seriously mistrusted them and considered it wise to secure their departure from Ceylon as a matter of security: in case of a European attack they were liable to side with the enemy. He also feared the possibility of their colluding with Kandy.[515]

In the fall of 1805, he contacted the Batavian government and within six months a commissioner named Rudolf Prediger arrived to pick up these Dutchmen. Due to unexpected problems with the ships and administrative business in Ceylon, it took more than a year before the mission was accomplished. Eventually, only about one third of the Dutch inhabitants, around one thousand people, went to Batavia. The rest stayed on, some because they were too old and infirm to travel, others because of their vested interests on the island and the subcontinent, but in most

cases because their creditors would not let them go until their debts were paid of. These stay-behinds could however no longer claim any pension or subsidy from the British government.[516]

Thus, while North had treasured the burghers and their charitable institutions, but scorned the former Dutch government, Maitland acted the other way around. He did not consider the well-being of the Dutch a particular concern for the British government. Those who decided to remain on the island were now responsible for these institutions themselves and these were detached from the government's responsibilities. Therefore certain essential elements of the Dutch establishment now disappeared and the community of Dutch burghers no longer had a privileged position relative to the other inhabitants of the towns and coastal areas.

The position of the Dutch officials and burghers had certainly changed since the British take-over. Prediger wrote to Batavia how impoverished they all were, and the difficulties they had in getting by. Upon his arrival in Ceylon, his house had to be guarded and he had to be protected from the desperate Dutch men and women. The poverty of the Dutch inhabitants also surfaces in the few letters sent to the Netherlands and Batavia that are now found in some of the private collections of the *Nationaal Archief* in The Hague.[517] People complained much about the increase in prices and the decline of the value of their properties. Many earned an income by letting their houses to English officials, but often this was not enough.

Prediger writes how some men could not adapt to their new modest position under the British government and continued to live in a luxurious manner. Only some of them kept a small shop or were engaged in small-scale retail trade along the coast.[518] It seems that within ten years, they lost their position as the major capitalists in the country and were unable to make new investments, but were rather bound by debts.[519] In fact, their decline created opportunities for native entrepreneurs and their whole trade business in the southwest was taken over, most likely by the Karāva headmen who already built up experience in this business and managed to accumulate money while working with the Dutch capitalists in the last decades of the eighteenth century.[520] As we shall see below, the rise of the Catholic coastal inhabitants like the Karāvas, was something which Maitland actually encouraged.

Not only had the economic position of the Dutch burghers changed, but so also their status. In a letter to the advocate fiscal and later chief judge Alexander Johnstone, the principal Dutch inhabitants complained that the British did not differentiate among the various classes of Dutch, and they instructed him about how they had been divided and employed under the Dutch government. The hierarchy was strongly connected to

the degree of racial mixture, with those descending from European parents in Europe at the top and those descending from the offspring of mixed marriages at the bottom. They complained that whereas in the past the prominent members of the burgher community all had careers on the island with the VOC and enjoyed certain privileges in relation to the taxes and judicature, they were now deprived of such career opportunities. Clearly, the more prominent members were the ones who wrote the statement and were the ones who had lost most of their prestige due as a result of the British take-over. These men wished to be regarded not simply as Dutch burghers but as capable Europeans.[521]

Young men with money and connections like Christiaan van Angelbeek and Hendrik Jan van de Graaff had already left in the course of time after the death of Johan Gerard van Angelbeek in 1799, when they realized there was no future for them on the island.[522] Maitland actively diminished the power and influence of the remaining Dutch inhabitants, but in contrast, in the determination of his inland policies he was inspired in many cases by the former practices of the Dutch government.

9.3 *Cutting expenses*

The scheme of removing the Dutch was part of his larger plan of cutting all unnecessary expenses on the island and make the finances healthy again. The military establishment was the next item to which he turned. Although Maitland did not manage to sign a peace treaty with Kandy, he did make sure that no warlike movements were made during his governorship. He cut the expenses in the military department by sending off a large part of the troops to the subcontinent just as he had been instructed. Furthermore, Camden asserted once again that there should be no confusion about Ceylon's military position in Asia, which was no longer to be considered a bulwark. In Camden's words:

> It appears to me that the island of Ceylon would be considered chiefly as an outwork to the British Posessions in India, and accordingly the military force should only be estimated in reference to protection from internal attack and from foreign European invasion; but by no means on the principle that he island would be enabled in case of necessity, to furnish material military aid to our continental possessions.[523]

In the judicial department, huge expenses were made that needed to be cut down: North had arranged that the officials received a separate salary for their work as judges, even if they already received a proper salary for their permanent job. Maitland also restructured the department; he decreased the provincial courts from six to three, and gave the collectors the function of judge and fiscal, without extra payment. In the major towns, magistrates were appointed to assist the collectors. In so doing, he

managed to cut down the enormous expenses made by the supreme court in the circuits. These changes were only temporary though; later on he was to look into the judicial department more critically and more precisely, and advocated trial by jury instead of by one judge, and strove for a full return of the Dutch *landraden* with native judges. However, the judicial department was first set to work to clear away the arrears, for Maitland found out that many people had had their trial but were kept in prison without proper orders.

In all, Maitland's new police system and his fascination with the court system give the impression that there was a sense of increased insecurity. Plundering gangs and robbers continued to trouble the country side and there was a high rate of capital offences. Of course it is questionable whether this increased insecurity was real or only perceived by the British administrators. It has already been pointed out that in the case of Jaffna there are reasons to believe that the crime rate was already high in the Dutch period. More generally, Dutch proclamations in 1789 and 1790 give the impression that crime was increasing elsewhere on the island: a striking example is the *plakkaat* of 1 December 1789, allowing anyone to shoot robbers and anyone causing trouble on private properties, or on the public roads when not responding to call from the police. Another one is the placard issued for Kattukolom and Tamblegam urging the people who had left their fields due to gangs of *Kafirs* (former African soldiers and slaves) roaming the countryside, to return to their villages.[524]

Of course these are just some examples and perhaps a more thorough examination of the Dutch criminal records would better answer our question. This is also what the British did themselves. Alarmed by the high crime rate on the island, the advocate fiscal made a comparison with Dutch times by searching the criminal records and concluded that he "does presume to infer from these premises and from the information he has received from others that the perpetration of crimes and of murder more particularly, is fast increasing".[525]

The executive council decided to ask the principal Dutch inhabitants whether they were of the same feeling, which they answered positively. Therefore, it seems it was more than perceived unsafety, and the increased crime rate points at social unrest. It seems logical to explain this by the continuous changes of policy and increased colonial intrusion from the time of Van de Graaff on, which must have caused insecurity among the inhabitants. Maitland's obsession with justice is more extensively discussed in Chapter Ten.

In the civil departments, Maitland had a similar approach to cutting expenses. First he discovered that there were a lot of unnecessary expenses made on the spot without any government control. North had certainly failed to increase his personal control over the civil servants. Not long

after his arrival, Maitland had made a tour over the island and came to the conclusion that the civil departments were lacking the necessary zeal and order. He decided to increase the control over this department and issued regulations stating that no extra expenses could be made without approval of the governor and the secretary.[526]

The agent of Jaffna was punished for his fraud, but this was an exceptional punishment and Maitland decided not to go into further detail in the other cases for fear that this would cause too much unrest. He hoped that the example of Jaffna was enough of a warning against such practices in the future. Essential to Maitland's system was the administrative control over his collectors in the outposts. Monthly reports had to be made, with a statement on the financial accounts on the outposts. This was put in to practice, as the many bundles of correspondence with the outposts from 1805 onwards at the Sri Lanka National archives show. Indeed, the larger part of these letters deal with financial matters and requests to spend money.[527]

Maitland also abolished the board of revenue, and instead of the six collectors with their agents as assistant, he limited the revenue department to the appointment of eleven collectors who were required to make yearly tours through their district to ensure that they were well informed about what was happening and to report their findings to the government. He raised the pay of these men, but at the same time decided that the collectors would not be remunerated for their tours, but had to pay for it from their own salary. Maitland expected that this would stimulate the efficiency of his collectors and would make them more economical in their spending patterns. Finally, he made the civil servants in England accountable for their behaviour in Ceylon. This meant that if they wished to pursue a further career, civil servants were forced to behave well on the island to avoid public trial in England.[528] In contrast to North, who seemed to have only an eye for the southwest, Maitland expanded his attention to the periphery, just as the Dutch had done.

These measures enhanced the power of the governor over the various departments and centralized his power in Colombo, where the governor still functioned with an executive council, which had first been appointed by Dundas to advise the governor on all sorts of matters after ties with Madras and Calcutta were severed. North never really made use of this council. Maitland relied a lot on the advice of the advocate fiscal Alexander Johnstone. Part of their private correspondence can still be consulted in Johnstone's papers. The close cooperation between the two was no secret, and often the executive council consisted only of the governor, Alexander Johnstone and the chief secretary. Therefore, the minutes of this council are very irregular. It certainly was not as important as the political council had been in the days of Dutch rule.[529]

9.4 *Understanding the island and the Dutch system*

The tight control over the civil and military departments and the increased efficiency was not enough to achieve the profit and order which the British longed for. In line with the scheme that Dundas and Glenbervie had worked out in 1801, Maitland aimed at turning the island into a prosperous rice-producing region. Maitland realized that successful government of the maritime district could only be realized if it was based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the island's natural and social constitution. Here Maitland again revealed his inclination towards the policies advocated three years earlier by Dundas, Hobart, and Glenbervie. The last had promoted the creation of a society that would concern itself with all sorts of knowledge on the island's nature, culture and history. Maitland did not found such a society, but he did stimulate all efforts in that direction and sent his Jonhstone on various tours around the island to look into subjects relating to traditional law, administration of justice, education and agriculture. Maitland based his policies by and large on the results of Johnstone's researches.

Alexander Johnstone was a typical early nineteenth-century Orientalist. He was interested in everything related to the history of the island's society, from indigenous religious texts and common law to Dutch practices and regulations. Copies of many of his manuscripts are found in the collections of the colonial office in Kew and in the Sri Lanka National Archives.[530] After his return to London in the 1820s, he was involved in the establishment of the Royal Asiatic Society in Britain, to which he donated his papers, manuscripts and translations.[531] Johnstone's intensive labour in the gathering information about Ceylon can be compared with that of his contemporary Colin Mackenzie, who undertook a similar task in South India for the government of Madras. The two had met first in the 1770s in India, where Johnstone grew up as a boy, and Mackenzie frequently visited his father's house. According to the historian Nicolas Dirks that is when they became "dearest friends", and they kept in contact from that time forward. In 1807, Johnstone went to India for a short period to compare the situation there with that of Ceylon, and it is likely that the two met again there.[532]

Johnstone did not work on his own; he was assisted by Jacob Burnand and Captain Schneider. As we saw earlier, Burnand had been responsible for information regarding the Dutch mode of governing in the maritime provinces and strategies to increase the revenue. When he was still a young recruit under Dutch rule, Captain Schneider had been educated to become a civil engineer. Johnstone and Maitland were impressed with his skills, and appointed him as surveyor.[533] Between 1807 and 1808, he went through all the districts, describing the state of agriculture and the possi-

bilities of improvement.[534] He listed per village how many inhabitants it counted, how much land was cultivated, and with what produce.

The image his survey gives of the state of the agriculture in many regions is deplorable. In the Vanni, many of the village water tanks were damaged and the inhabitants, unable to repair them, had moved away from the villages and left the land waste.[535] In some parts people were so poor that they lived off what they found in the forest and could not even afford a straw roof. Schneider suggested that the tanks needed to be repaired and seed paddy needed to be given to help put these people back on their feet. A lot of land was also laying waste in the southwest including most of the *ande*-fields, half the produce of which had to be given to government. In a few cases he pointed out that in Dutch times groups of *goyigama-naindes* from specific villages were forced to repair annually to these fields to sow it and that they received half of the crop, while people from other villages had to deliver the oxen to plough the fields and were likewise given a share of the crop. "Was this mode to be introduced again", he wrote, "it would tend to the benefit of government and the *mudaliyārs* as well as the inferior heads of the villages ought to be ordered to take care that all those *ande* fields be sowed."[536]

More generally, Schneider complained that instead of cultivating the abundant fertile soil, people cut out *chēnas* in which they grew paddy and small grains and root vegetables. In addition, they lived off the coconuts and jack fruit that they grew in their garden. This was unfavourable to government, for the *chēnas* were difficult to tax and the garden trees were not taxed at all. Schneider was of the opinion that a lot more people could be involved in agriculture than there were at that moment. The impression one gets from these reports is that the supervision of agriculture was much neglected in the first decade of British rule. The various shifts in land policies will have contributed to the neglect of the fields by the peasants, and the lack of interest on the part of the headmen.[537]

9.5 *Changes in the department of justice and the native department*

On the basis of the information gathered from these two men and his own work, Johnstone drew up his advice for Maitland. This led to adjustments of policy in the various districts in agricultural policy and the native departments and a new plan for the department of justice. Johnstone had concluded that the provincial courts could best be replaced by the former *landraden*, giving the native elite once again the power to decide in native cases. The Sinhalese common law was too complicated and because it was not written down, except in parts in a lengthy report by Johnstone himself, could best be decided upon by the natives. That is

why the courts took too long to decide, which in turn hampered agriculture. Maitland agreed and sent Johnstone home in 1809 to discuss the matter with the Secretary of State and have a new charter of justice drawn up. This plan was accepted by the Secretary, but withdrawn four months later when a new Secretary of State was appointed and the provincial courts were re-established.[538]

Through the work of Johnstone, Burnand, and Schneider, Maitland was presented with a picture of the Dutch period of which the most important element was the Dutch attitude towards the native system of agricultural organization in general and service tenures in particular. The Dutch were represented as conservative and thoughtful in their policies. They based their decisions upon a thorough knowledge of society and while they strove for change in the service obligations, they did so only through a very gradual replacement of services for capitation taxes. Whether or not this image of the Dutch policy on the island was correct, it helped to justify Maitland's own careful course.

This knowledge over the inland affairs in all districts helped Maitland understand the power relations among the inhabitants and Johnstone encouraged him to interfere in this. He commenced with a policy of divide and rule in the southwest and Jaffna, where in his view the old elite had gained too much power. The instructions he made for the collectors of Matara and Jaffna bear witness to this policy. Maitland identified those headmen they should engage and those whom they should try to ignore. Both in Jaffna as in Matara, the power of the headmen was strongly related to the religious establishments and Maitland advised his collectors to use their authority regarding the temples and monasteries to single out the less powerful ones.[539]

> But I imagine independent of the benefit you will derive from a strict and vigilant superintendence over the headmen of the cutcherry and the various churches, that there are means in that district of Jaffna, if providently made use of, of very materially strengthening the hands of government which is principally the effect by forming an intimate connexion between the government and one of the two temples at that place.
>
> One of those temples is of late erection having been supported by Vittilingane Chetty the great merchant at Jaffna. Vittalingane chitty whose intrigues and influence with government enabled him render the new temple more powerful and to give it more sway in the country than the old one. From this you will find that an inveterate jealousy exists between the bramies [Brahmins] of the old and the new temple, which it will be your business to keep as much alive as possible, giving however in everything you do a clear and decided preference in point of support to the bramies of the old instead of the new temple; and you will cultivate as much as possible the head bramie whom you will find extremely useful if properly managed.[540]

Johnstone also urged Maitland to bond with the Catholic fishermen on the coast and Catholics in the interior, by treating them as equal to the

Protestants. Much was expected from this group, if they attached themselves well to the British government they could in time counter the Kandyan-Buddhist influence in the interior. At the same time, Maitland meddled in Buddhist affairs and tried to establish a Buddhist council separate from the organization in Kandy, upon which he felt they were too dependent.[541] Thus instead of replacing the *mudaliyārs* as Andrews had done in 1796, Maitland tried to undermine their power by making alliances with other power groups on the island, which would render government less dependent on the *mudaliyārs*. At the same time, he reduced the number of offices for native headmen and replaced those headmen who were not performing well to assert his authority over them. In any case, it did not help Maitland much in achieving his other major goal, namely the improvement of agriculture.

9.6 *Agricultural development*

Frederick North had assumed that restricting the cinnamon production to the four plantations in the environs of Colombo and Negombo would suffice to supply the EIC with the annual demand of 450,000 pounds of cinnamon. The other gardens and plantations were neglected and in the final years of North's administration the full demand was not met. When Maitland came to the island, he concluded that the four plantations could never cover the total demand and he reintroduced the former Dutch laws that protected all cinnamon trees in the interior and allowed the peelers to harvest trees on private lands. In addition, he ordered the headmen of the cinnamon department to plant certain numbers of trees, although this never reached the scale it had in the days of Van de Graaff. It really meant a reversal from the multiform system developed by Van de Graaff to the more rigid system of protective rules and regulations regarding cinnamon tree that had existed prior to his term of office. In the end, about half of the required produce came from the cinnamon plantations, and the rest was taken from the gardens and woods in the interior. After the submission of Kandy, supplies from there once again added to the staple and in the time of Governor Edward Barnes (1820-1822 and 1824-1831), the Kandyans were allowed to pay their land-taxes in cinnamon, and some Kandyan headmen started cinnamon plantations.[542]

At first, Maitland had set his mind on the agricultural improvement of the island along the lines proposed by Glenbervie. He endeavoured to repair water tanks and irrigation works, though not on the scale Glenbervie had planned, as these were after all expensive undertakings. Maitland expected that a lot could be achieved from active involvement and supervision by the collectors, and supervision of agriculture was one of the rea-

sons why Maitland instructed all collectors to make a yearly tour through their district. Though some complied, judging from their reports, in practice not much came from these tours. According to the historian Kannangara, this was largely related to the fact that the collectors had to pay for their tours themselves.[543] Maitland was the first British ruler who paid structural attention to the peripheral districts of the Vanni and the East coast.

9.7 *The periphery*

In 1807, George Turnour was appointed collector of the Vanni with orders to investigate the state of the Vanni and draft a plan for improvement. Maitland had gained knowledge of Thomas Nagel's work in the Vanni under Van de Graaff, and ordered Turnour to use Nagel's reports as a guideline for his own work. Turnour unfortunately could not get hold of a copy of the paper before he left for a tour around the district, which he found in a "most deplorable state of poverty and wretchedness". The situation of the region had declined after the British take-over:

> When we consider the care and prudence with which Mr Nagel formed his system of administration and the vigilance and activity with which he attended to its execution we can feel little surprise at any effect that followed its sudden overthrow and the substitution of a fluctuating management, with […] a rapid succession of collectors, residing at a distance and acting through the delegated agency of people, whose education and habits of life excepting in the instance of my predecessor / equally incapacitated them for the task.[544]

In addition, since 1800 nine-tenths of the cattle had died from a disease that was still virulent in the countryside. The dams of the principal water tanks had been ruined by great storms in 1802, and in 1805 one of the *vanniyār*s had rebelled and overran the Vanni resulting in substantial damage to the fields and dams. Finally he mentions the lack of rains in the previous two years.

> These repeated and heavy losses involved the inhabitants of the district in one general ruin, and the advances made for their support being feeble, ill-timed and too much under the control of the moodeliars, have tended to incur them with debts without affording them any substantial relief. The want of the superintending and controlling principle of Mr Nagel's system is sufficiently apparent from the preceding statement.[545]

Although Turnour considered Nagel's system of government an expensive one, he did not think think Nagel would have made the investments if it was not worth it. Turnour therefore decided to more or less copy Nagel's system by appointing *adigārs* to counter the power of the native headmen.

These were to superintend the advances of rice seed made by government to the inhabitants and at the same time they were to prevent embezzlement in assessments of the tithe of the crop. Turnour roughly followed Nagel's administrative organization of the district. The same happened in Batticaloa, where translations of Burnand's extensive memoir were used as a guide.[546]

In 1815, Simon Sawers wrote a short memorandum upon leaving the district after six years of collectorship. In this he paid homage to the heritage of Burnand and wrote that the most useful information on the district was found in Burnand's memorandum and that "the plans therein fully detailed from the cases upon which the system at present followed is founded; and it is my opinion vesting upon six years of experience, that the more strictly Mr Burnand's plans are adhered to the better, so far as they are consistent with the more liberal and equitable spirit of the English government."[547]

Between 1806 and 1811, Maitland managed to double the revenue of the paddy-fields from 128,750 to 255,500 *parrahs* of paddy. This increase was gained by and large in the peripheral districts and considering the fact that the revenue on the fields was fixed at one-tenth, the total production was ten times as much.[548] Anthony Bertolacci was a civil servant who had come to the island in the days of North and he remained there until 1810. In 1817, he published a book on the financial and commercial state of the island and included his own advice about how to improve the situation. Bertolacci praised Maitland for turning to the peripheral regions and explained the particular efforts that were made there to improve agriculture. For example, he stressed the propriety of the government lending seed corn to the peasants without interest. He also commented on the failure to improve the rice production in the southwestern districts and he used the common argument that the mode of landownership among the Sinhalese hampered all improvement.[549]

In January 1809, Maitland commented on the worrisome situation in the southwest as follows:

> This enormous encrease [sic] has taken place in those districts where the government reached the cultivator himself and could see its own measures carried into full effect. In the Manar district a similar progression of improvement is rapidly taking place; but in all the Cingalese [Sinhalese] part of the island, where government is alone able to get at the nature through the medium of a head man, the base is widely different; no such improvement has or is likely to take place, and it is only yesterday that from the activity of one of the sitting magistrates, I discovered, that for years past, the returns made by the modeliars of the cultivated lands, in the district were just 15 per cent under the real cultivation that existed. Should there be therefore any doubt existing in the minds of government with regard to the policy I have ever stated of diminishing the power of the Modeliars, I am confident this

> statement will completely do it away and I beg leave further to refer on this very important subject to Mr Johnstone.[550]

Maitland however did not intend to make any changes in the mode of land ownership; the experiments of North and Andrews had shown the impropriety of this. It was by his policy of undermining the power of the headmen that he tried to get the people to produce more rice. This change of view is discussed in the next chapter: first the mode of land possession hampered development, later the headmen hampered development. In fact, although he had resumed the service tenures, Maitland had continued North's practice of paying the headmen and *lascorins* in money instead of *accomodessans*. On the possibility of improvement of the agriculture in the southwest, Schneider had advised him the following:

> For improving the whole district it would be better to order the mudliars of the corles and pattoes and the other headmen, they having very little to do to take care that all the fields be properly and annually sown, and that all the dams and tanks be kept in good order, and further to cause that all the canals, thro' which the water is led to the fields be digged and deepened. Should any fields be found [wanting] after issuing of the said order the above mentioned headmen shall not only be therefore responsible but also for the loss sustained by that negligence […].[551]

Maitland did not take up all of Schneider's recommendations. Instead, he decided to increase the power of the paddy tax farmers by having them supervise the sowing and harvesting of the crop. At the same time, he forbade the *chēna* cultivation, to protect the cinnamon, but also because the *chēnas* did not deliver much taxes. In addition, Maitland fell back on some of the Dutch methods to improve the agriculture in these districts, Burnand being his main advisor in this. The collector of Matara was for example instructed to implement as far as possible the regulations that were issued by Burnand in the district of Batticaloa when he was collector of that region in Dutch times. As we saw in Chapter Five, Burnand's main strategy in Batticaloa had been the replacement of the native chiefs by government agents.[552]

It was also in this period that Maitland developed the view that the island needed to have European entrepreneurs investing their capital in the land. This had been strictly forbidden by Dundas in his instructions of 1801, but Johnstone convinced Maitland of the judiciousness of attracting European planters after his journey to Madras where he had travelled to compare the state of agriculture there with that in Ceylon. He had come to the conclusion that the situation in Ceylon was much different from that in India. In Ceylon there was a great deal of land laying waste which could easily be brought into cultivation by European capitalists, which would stimulate the island's economy. The natives could work for them and in addition labourers could be brought over from India and

China. When Johnstone returned to London with his mission to change the charter of justice, he also proposed this change, which was eventually approved of by the Crown. It was only in the late 1820s though that such capitalists were attracted.[553]

Thus, whereas in the Vanni, Jaffna, and Batticaloa the Dutch example was followed from Maitland's time onwards, the situation in the southwest was different. Maitland would have preferred to organize the government there on the model of Batticaloa, but he failed to do so because the power of the native headmen was too strong. In general, Maitland's agrarian policies for the southwest differed much from the Dutch example: he did not wish to engage the headmen in the further cultivation of the district, but rather wished to attract Europeans to invest their capital. The former agricultural enterprises like in Diviture were not continued, to the regret of the inhabitants. In 1809, the collector noted that the estate of Diviture was flooded. The inhabitants explained to him that they had cultivated the vast area at the time of Governor Van de Graaff, when various rivulets had been dug to drain the superfluous water from Diviture. They went on to state that "after this place surrendered to the British Crown, the work of this country was neglected and not continued and that therefore by the falling of trees in those rivulets caused the course of the water to be stopped and was filled up again".[554]

It seems that the restless beginning of British rule and the attempts of Maitland to undermine the power of the headmen actually had the opposite effect on the agriculture. The reason why Maitland held on so strictly to these measures is related to his ideas about progress and development, which are discussed in the next chapter.

9.8 *The aftermath: accommodation to local conditions*

Maitland's successors, Robert Brownrigg (1811-1820) and Edward Barnes (1820-1822 and 1824-1831), by and large followed his administrative and institutional set-up. In this sense Maitland's historic reputation is appropriate: he placed the government on a regular footing. Of course, considering that he was responsible for the occupation of the Kanyan Kingdom in 1815, Brownrigg was concerned more with the administrational organization of Kandy. Although at first it was agreed that the Kandyan nobles were to rule their provinces independently, Brownrigg changed his mind after a rebellion broke out in 1818. The reorganization of the Kandyan administration was done following the example of the institutional organization of the maritime provinces. Only the judiciary remained set on a separate footing.[555]

The aftermath of Maitland's agricultural development plans for the

southwest was tragic. At first, three years of drought and cattle plague caused a famine and impoverishment in Matara in the years 1812-1813. In addition, there was an outbreak of disease and people were moving away from the district because they were not allowed to cultivate in *chēnas*. Once again, gangs of robbers were making the region unsafe.[556] Not surprisingly, we find from 1813 and 1817 series of collectors' letters discussing whether a change in the system of taxation could make the people more keen on producing more. The answer was generally that this would not serve as a remedy, that the key was in the superivision of the agriculture and that this required the involvement of native headmen. The British policymakers continued to search for solutions for the bad state of agriculture in structural changes in the mode of land possessions, systems of inheritance of land or taxation, topics that were not discussed in Dutch times.[557]

It is also typical that the local answers to such problems were almost always that the bad state of agriculture in the interior related to the demise in power of the native headmen: they were not overseeing agriculture as they had in the past, supervising the sowing of crops, and the repair of dams and canals, in return for which they had received a small part of the crop of all fields. This traditional system had fallen apart in Maitland's time and according to the collectors this was the cause for the bad state of agriculture. In addition they mention the irrigation works with which the Dutch had started, and which had been taken up by some collectors, but were never finished.[558] Edward Barnes was the first governor to undertake such activities on a scale comparable to that of the Dutch times, to the cost of the peasants who were forced to work hard on the public works for their service tenures.[559]

Whereas the institutional organization remained largely untouched under Maitland's successors, government policies and practice did change. Under Brownrigg the granary ideal was abandoned and he focused more on the facilitation of the production of cash crops like coffee. Johnstone's mission to Europe in 1809-1810 had resulted in the approval of European private investments and landownership in Ceylon.[560] However, Ceylon's position within the empire was still not an attractive one. While coffee from the West Indies was imported cheaply to sell on Britain's markets, coffee from Ceylon still paid high import duties. Brownrigg encountered a similar problem with the export of arrack to India, where officials favoured and protected the Indian-made arrack. The situation reminds of the Dutch period, when Ceylonese products were unable to compete with the same products from Java which were protected by the policies of the High Government. Nonetheless Brownrigg's lobbying of members of Parliament proved fruitful in the end, and the high tariffs were rescinded.[561]

Barnes continued to improve the circumstances for foreign investment and colonial control by undertaking large infrastructural projects. As with the irrigation project, he made intensive use of the gratuitous services and relied heavily on native headmen to organize this. He justified this practice by arguing that the service was used in the interest of the community only. The increased use of the gratuitous services is something that had already begun in the days of Brownrigg, particularly in relation to his conquest of Kandy. Thus, we find Brownrigg ordering lists to be made of services due to government per community or caste, something that reminds of the policies of Van de Graaff.[562] In Kandy, Barnes allowed people to pay their taxes and remunerate their services by producing cinnamon for the government in their gardens. It was a situation not unlike the system of forced cultivation of cinnamon under Van de Graaff. A major difference was that the services were not openly used for private matters, nor were the European investors supposed to rely on the services for labour on the plantations as had been the case in Dutch times. Finances improved in the course of the 1820s, thanks to the revenue from Kandy and the increasing income from coffee production, which eventually became the most important of the island's products.[563] Although cinnamon still accounted for a regular profit, the market was taken over by cassia, a type of cinnamon of lesser quality found elsewhere.[564] Another noteworthy development in this period was the rapid growth in population, which could probably be related to the inoculation campaigns against smallpox.

Although Barnes did not refer as much to the Dutch period as Maitland had done, the period of his government probably compares best with that of Van de Graaff. Maitland's strict attitude regarding the native headmen was abandoned, and Barnes made it an important point to treat the headmen with respect and to make the most of them.[565] The hostile attitude towards the headmen and the rigid policies of Maitland's tenure were over and the policies of the British government accommodated to the local circumstances.

But changes were once again in the wind, when in 1823 it was announced that an investigation into the government and revenue of the island was to be initiated from London. The committee came in 1828, and it was once again decided to change the institutional basis of the government and the basic policies.[566] As shall be seen in the next chapter, metropolitan involvement in affairs in Ceylon was far more intense in British times than it had ever been under Dutch rule either in Ceylon or in Java, which remained a Dutch possession.

9.9 *Conclusion*

North had left behind a chaotic and expensive administration and a countryside in very bad condition. The interior had become insecure due to his new land policies. It is therefore not surprising that Maitland put most of his energy into the reorganization of the administration, which he totally revamped, revoking many of his predecessor's inland policies in the process. This was all done to establish peace and order and to cut expenses. It is also in that context that Maitland decided to have the remaining Dutch inhabitants expelled from the island. Those who decided to remain could not apply for any government assistance. Maitland was also the first to put real effort in getting to know the island. He sent his closest employee, Alexander Johnstone, on a tour around the island, to provide him with all sorts of advice about the management of the colony. It was on the basis of this information that Maitland developed his strategy of divide and rule in order to contain the power of the native headmen.

During Maitland's regime the granary ideal formulated by Dundas in 1801 continued to be the basis of his inland policies. Whereas Maitland was seemingly successful in the peripheral districts, he could not get grip on the agricultural production in the southwest, which frustrated him much. He tried to change this by undermining the power of the native headmen, but this only had the opposite effect. In contrast to the Dutch development schemes, Maitland did not actively pursue the involvement of the native headmen. This did not harm them significantly because they had already grown into a strong, independent landowning class, thanks in part, perhaps, to North's chaotic administration and his new land policies. The real growth of their power strongly related to the Dutch policies in the second half of the eighteenth century, for it was at this time that their power was substantially enhanced and their possessions and capital increased. In comparison to the Dutch times, the relationship between the *mudaliyārs* and the colonial government was of a different nature in Maitland's period. They were set further apart from the colonial officials, because they did not jointly venture in businesses on the island. The absence of any interest in indigenous religion and education on the part of the British may have contributed to the cultural divide between the headmen and the Europeans.

The Dutch burgher community probably lost the most from the British the take-over. They never became administrative middlemen, as North had wanted them to be. Instead, they lost their privileged position vis-à-vis the government and thereby lost the attraction as trading partners. In time, their local trading ventures were taken over by Karāva entrepreneurs. Clearly, as migrants the Dutch inhabitants had never fully fused with the native society, despite the intermarriages. Therefore, they had

never become an indispensible factor in the government of the interior and they possessed no autonomous power over the inhabitants comparable to that of the mudaliyars. In practice, they formed a temporary link between the British government and the native society because of their local knowledge, but not because of their power over the inhabitants.

Maitland paid little attention to the growth of cash crops, but focused on the rice production. In this he was however not very successful, which can be attributed partly to his hostile attitude to the headmen. In the end he did open the way for European investors to start plantations on the island. This only really took of in the 1820, when London lifted the high tariffs on coffee from outside the West Indies. Maitland did not involve the native headmen in this type of agricultural enterprise, even in the case of the cultivation of cinnamon. The energy and capital put into the development of coffee, indigo, cinnamon, and *kiate* (teak) plantations in the last decades of the eighteenth century was lost because these products had been purchased only by the Dutch government. As before only the traditional indigenous crops like coconut and areca did well on the open market.

In hindsight, the transitional period followed the trajectory suggested by the regime change model: after a turbulent period and various changes of authority, the colonial government searched for stabilization. Although Maitland proclaimed a return to former practice, he actually created a new regime. In contrast to what is usually assumed, Maitland did not "just" revert to the Dutch system, but picked out those elements which he thought suitable. His choices were based on personal experience on the island and the advice of Burnand and Johnstone, but also on British ideas of proper rule developed in London and India. These ideas are explained in the next chapter. Although the administrative organization remained by and large as Maitland left it, the real accommodation of the colonial policy to local circumstances only started after his departure, but again this was only short-lived.

CHAPTER TEN

BRITISH CEYLON AND THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE: CONNECTING POLICIES

It has become clear that despite the similarities in the Dutch and British approaches regarding the interior, there were some structural differences. This counted in particular for the approaches towards the native headmen in the southwest, the organization of the judiciary department and the implementation of the law and the organization of the labour force and landownership. Local responses to British policies differed, but in many cases it was impossible to directly implement the intended policies; for example, the southwest never turned into the rich rice-producing area that Dundas wanted and North and Maitland strove for. Still, despite the accommodation to many of the local practices and the foundations of colonial power as developed under the Dutch, the British remained persistent in certain instances and for example they never resorted to the practice of forced cultivation as the Dutch did.

It has been pointed out in the previous chapters that historians tend to portray governor North as a radical and idealistic reformer and Maitland as a pragmatic and reactionary ruler. However, not much attention has been paid to the actual inspiration behind both their respective policies. In this chapter, I argue that both North and Maitland were ideologically inspired and tried to accommodate their policies to contemporary political trends in Britain and India. This places North's radicalism in a different perspective, and calls into question Maitland's conservatism and his proclaimed return to the Dutch system of government.

10.1 *In search of a proper rule for India*

Colonial policy was a hotly debated issue in late eighteenth-century Britain and was much influenced by contemporary ideas on progress and development. Discussions on colonialism arose in response to two drastic developments. First was the expansion of British power in India, which had begun in earnest midway through the eighteenth century with the conquests of Robert Clive in Bengal. The violence in India, complemented by a chaotic administrative organization, often through sinister alliances with local rulers, sparked criticism in England. Second was the loss of the thirteen colonies of North America after the War of American

Independence (1775-1784). The passionate demands of self-determination by European colonists in America and their victory in the subsequent revolt against their mother country, left a deep mark on British pride.

As a consequence, the 1780s and 1790s are distinguished by significant reflections among British policy-makers and intellectuals about the nature and purposes of colonial rule. In concurrence with the general intellectual tendencies sweeping Europe, people in Britain felt that colonies stimulated greed for luxury goods and corrupted the British mind. This found its expression first in the influential anti-slavery movement. Abolitionists managed to get a broad following in Britain from all sections of society, and Britain grew to be the leading European country in the anti-slavery debates of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[567] This resulted in private experiments with the emancipation of slaves on the plantations in the West Indies and the establishment of the Sierra Leone Company, which offered voluntary black labour as a morally superior alternative to the slave trade in Africa. Despite the limited success of the Company, Sierra Leone, with its capital bearing the symbolic name Freetown, was to grow into a safe haven for former slaves in Africa.[568] In 1807, the slave trade was abolished, and within a few years the British managed to pressure many other European countries to do the same.[569] Many historians have sought to explain the success of the abolitionist movement, and for most of them it is difficult to believe that it was motivated only by true altruistic motives.

The British historian Linda Colley, for example, has suggested a causal connection between the development of the antislavery movement and the American War of Independence, by arguing that through the abolitionist cause the British could show off their moral superiority in comparison to the Americans.[570] The sincere belief in the economic advantages of free labour, one of the propositions of Adam Smith, is another factor. In that context, the growth of capitalism and industrialization in Britain was a necessary condition for abolitionism to succeed. Recently, historians have turned to cultural and religious factors to explain the success of abolitionism in Britain, and its concomitant failure in countries like the Netherlands.[571]

The impeachment of Warren Hastings was the other major political issue that stemmed from the general anti-colonial spirits of the 1780s that were described above. Hastings had been governor and governor-general of Bengal from 1772 to 1785 and was responsible for the expansion of British power in the subcontinent during that period. Parliamentarian Edmund Burke was the main advocate for his impeachment and in 1786 he laid before Parliament twenty-two charges of "high crimes and misdemeanours". Although Parliament did not accept all charges, Hastings was accused of ruling the Indian properties arbitrarily and consequently of

setting a bad example for his successors.[572] The emphasis in the discussion was on the moral behaviour of the British overseas and resulted in the reorganization of the administrative structure of the Company in India in 1787.

The debates regarding British rule in India were also influenced by contemporary publications on the history, culture and religion of India by Alexander Dow and others. In the 1770s and 1780s, interest in the native languages and culture had increased and men like William Jones and Charles Wilkins zealously collected and translated information regarding India's ancient history. They published their findings in *Asiatic Researches*, the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, which they established in Calcutta in 1783. Their portrayal of ancient Indian civilization was usually very positive, and contemporary critics of colonialism like Raynal and Smith contrasted their positive descriptions of India and with the Europeans' ruthless and violent behaviour in the region.[573]

These studies gave the debate a historic twist and fitted it in the current concept of progress of civilization: India was considered stuck midway in the stages of human development. There was a strong image of a civilization that had once been great but that had declined thanks to corrupt Oriental despots who had brought the people to a stage of indolence and apathy and brought development to a standstill. The British attitude in India had not changed it for the better, since the EIC servants had copied the despotic behaviour of the native power holders, instead of ruling the country by higher British standards. In the course of the 1780s, a consensus was reached that it was the task of the British to bring "just rule" to the subcontinent. This assumption at first helped define colonial policies, but at a later stage it once again legitimized British expansion in the subcontinent.[574] The contemporary intellectual digressions on moral politics, freedom of trade and individualism helped shape the arguments and the work of intellectuals like Adam Smith much influenced the debates.

Jennifer Pitts recently analysed liberal arguments relative to colonial rule in the speeches of Edmund Burke and saw many comparisons between his line of thinking and Adam Smith's theory on moral philosophy. Smith had found a way to explain variation in societies around the world by seeing them as determined by historical developments. He described these societies in a hierarchical manner, with "improvement" as a key concept, and approached the various societies as impartially as possible, stressing the universality of moral principles and expressions like the law. This implied that all societies were capable of improvement, and in the end because of this intrinsic aspect of all societies, none could be considered absolutely superior to the other. His sympathetic attitude towards other societies and the absence of value judgements of one society over

the other are a hallmark of his work. In Smith's view, the falseness of the popular presumption of European superiority over Asian and other societies was proven by the behaviour of Europeans in the colonial contexts.[575]

Burke expressed a belief in the universality of principles like justice and humanity and like Smith he stressed the importance of sympathy for the subjects. Neither he nor Smith were against colonialism as such, both realized that opposition to colonialism was not a viable option. However, the fact that the native society of India was in a backward stage of development did not mean that the British subjects in India should be treated differently from subjects in Britain itself. In fact, the British overseas had to behave with the same moral rigor that would be expected from them in Britain itself. The fact that they worked in India changed nothing, and if they behaved morally this would work to the betterment of the Indian subjects, who would improve naturally.[576]

The Indian question remained largely a parliamentary affair and the initial popular interest in the impeachment of Hastings petered out in the beginning of the 1790s. Eventually, after many years of hearings, Hastings was cleared of the charges in 1795. Nonetheless, the affair had stirred up a substantial discussion about the future of Britain in India, which may have been its greatest legacy. It was the type of debate that, as we saw, was by and large absent in the Netherlands, and it caused a substantial divergence between Dutch and British colonial policy in the East.

Burke's point that the corrupt situation in India had a bad influence on the Company's administrators and seduced them to indulge in a form of despotic rule detested in Britain was generally accepted. Tighter control over the Indian government was needed, and Parliament installed a Board of Control to supervise the governor-general in India. Secondly, it was assumed that the low salaries which the Company paid its servants discouraged better qualified people from joining the service. Because of the low wages they received, it was difficult for employees to resist the temptations that India offered in the form of private trade and private dealings with native princes. Hence, the wages of the Company's personnel were increased considerably.[577]

Last of all, the administration in India itself had to be set on a proper footing. The first region to be worked on was Bengal, which formed the principle territorial base of the British in India. Henry Dundas as president of the Board of Control, together with Marquess Charles Cornwallis as governor-general, set up a new system of administration in Bengal. The new arrangement found its origin in the enlightened criticisms of Burke and Smith and was based on the idea that "just rule" in India should be based on the same principles of what was considered just in Britain. Strong emphasis was laid on the universality of the principles underlying law and economics. If people's rights and property were secured, they

would automatically grow keen on increasing their property by making investments, and development would follow.[578]

Freedom was an important element in these anticipated improvements and "feudal" relations and slavery were considered absolutely detrimental to the development of society and therefore they had to be banned as soon as possible. Because of the emphasis on security of property, the judges and courts took a central position in the new system. Although native law was administered, the principles of the English court-system were considered universal. British professional judges were employed and they were assisted by natives who advised them on local laws and customs. The function of district collector was subordinated to the courts of justice and the collector or his assistants could be prosecuted if they abused the natives, for instance by collecting more than was assigned to him. This separation of powers was considered necessary to prevent that arbitrariness in the Indian administration so characteristic in the past.[579]

As for the revenue administration, the organization relied on the *zamindars*, the former tax gatherers of the Mughal court. Following the physiocratic ideal, they were to function in the new system as landlords and were seen as an engine for change and development. The revenue collection was so organized that they would naturally press for agricultural development: they paid their tax in advance and this was fixed permanently per village. Hence, once the revenue was settled, all increase in produce would be to the advantage of the landholders. If a landholder could not meet the revenue demands, his lands were put up for sale to someone capable of meeting the obligation. The new system of administration was based on the idea that the British government should not interfere in or regulate Indian society too much. The juridical and institutional framework made this unnecessary; development would come naturally and autonomously under these just circumstances. This so-called permanent settlement was passed in Parliament in 1793 and put into full effect from then on.[580]

The audience at home was content, for India was now ruled in a just and proper manner. This stood in contrast with the West Indies, where slavery was still a stain on the British Empire. India now functioned as a counter example, where British rule was just and proper. Peter Marshall has aptly described how, for the next several decades, abolitionism diverted attention from India in the course of the 1790s. He shows how after 1793 India was not only seen as an example of a morally good colony, but that in contrast to the 1780s, the conquests in India, in particular those made by Wellesley, added to the national pride. The focus of moral liberals in Britain remained on the West Indies until the 1820s.[581] In India itself, however, the functioning of the permanent settlement was a matter of debate. On the one hand it was argued that the government lost out

on any increase in production; on the other hand it was said that despite the high expectations, the *zamindars* were not inclined to promote agricultural improvement, but rather did their best to evade taxes.[582] This debate resulted in the development of an alternative revenue system in the Madras presidency, the initiative for which originated in India and not in Britain.[583]

10.2 *Frederick North and the Bengal reforms*

Both the Governors North and Maitland sat in Parliament in the 1790s and witnessed the reorganization of the EIC, the settlement for Bengal, and the result of the impeachment of Hastings. They could not have missed the effect of the antislavery movement on these matters and it is likely that they took part in the discussions. When North took office as governor, the Bengal system was still held in high regard. Dundas, who played such an important role in the formulation of the policies for Ceylon, had been actively involved in the administrative modernization in Bengal. It is therefore not difficult to discern parallels between the administrational developments in India and Ceylon. Clearly, Governor North was inclined towards the approach carried out in Bengal, with its emphasis on social theory and the universality of moral values. Many of North's regulations and ideas in Ceylon echo the changes that took place within the Company's organization a few years earlier. In fact, the Bengal project helps us understand North's drive for change in Ceylon.

For example, he complained of the lack of professionalism of the civil servants, which he sought to improve by raising their salaries and organizing their pensions. He did his utmost to make sure that a colonial career in Ceylon became an attractive one. Dundas encouraged him in this matter: "I am clearly of the opinion that the same rule of patronage and promotion should be adopted in Ceylon that I have enforced with success in India."[584] Another direct influence of the Company reforms was found in the judiciary. Dundas had instructed North to follow the Bengal procedures of registration of government regulations and to organize the supreme court after the example of Bengal. It is a striking coincidence that, when from late 1799 onwards, North zealously started to reform his administration, Governor-General Wellesley decided to export the Bengal system of rule to Madras.[585] Is this what directly inspired North, or possibly reinforced his confidence?

In any case, the major judicial reforms began after personal communication with the governor-general and on the advice of the chief justice Edmund Carrington who had come from Bengal and knew the system. It was in this context that North separated the judiciary and the revenue

departments. As in Bengal he wished to divide their powers and make sure that the collectors were supervised properly in order to secure the property of the peasants. At the root of North's policies lay the idea that security of property through the application of British institutions was the best means to achieve improvement, again based on the Bengal model. To provide for the proper administration of justice, North wanted to appoint professional European judges in Ceylon after the Bengal example, not only in the supreme court but in all courts, which is why he dismissed the native *landraden* and installed the provincial courts. He also intended these to be run by British professionals rather than by the collectors and native headmen.

It is important to realize that in contrast to what is usually thought, North's reforming zeal was not unique, but fitted the spirit of the time. This also explains why he met with little opposition from home, despite the extra expenses incurred for the new judicial system. Dundas totally agreed with North's new plans for the judiciary, and repeatedly instructed him to follow the practices in Bengal.[586] The only obstacle North met was that he never got the professional judges for the provincial courts that he had asked for. Hobart, who had succeeded Dundas in March 1801, opposed their despatch for the simple reason that they would be too expensive. The administration of justice finally had to make shift with some of the civil servants that were sent out by Dundas.[587]

The reorganization of the revenue department carried out under North, with the Revenue Board henceforth controlling the agents, should be seen as part of the same effort to control and prevent abuse. And like the judicial system it was copied from the system developed on the subcontinent, and again Dundas concurred with this move and had actually instructed North in 1801 to organize the revenue department in this manner.[588] North's land policies were likewise inspired by the settlement in Bengal although there were signficant differences. The service tenures formed a particular problem, because these did not exist as such in Bengal, and they certainly stood in the way of the improvement of society as envisaged by North. In line with the current mode of thinking about property and free labour, North was certain that the people would work much harder and produce more if they reaped the fruits of their labour.

In 1803, two years after he had abolished the service tenures, he advocated the institution of a permanent settlement per proprietor rather than per village as had been the case in Bengal. After every purchase of land, a settlement was to be made for the term of possession. During that term all improvements would be to the profit of the proprietor.[589] Whereas for the rule of law, North had copied directly the instruments developed in Bengal, in the case of the revenue administration he came up with his own adjustments which were based more on theoretical ideas than on

practical experience. In relation to the ideal of free labour, North's attempts to forbid the importation of slaves and enslavement on the island, and his efforts to improve the position of slaves in relation to their masters have to be mentioned too. Unlike in the Dutch period, the evidence of slaves was admitted in court to protect them from abuse. By abandoning caste servitude on the island, the low castes in Jaffna, the *Nalluas* and *Palluas*, which had been held in virtual slavery by their caste obligations towards the higher castes, were freed from these bonds.[590]

The similarities with the Bengal system and the adoption of rule to the current ideals explain why North had a high reputation in England, where the Bengal reforms had been applauded and were in fact contrasted with the West Indies as a good example of proper and just colonial rule. It also shows that North was not the exception in colonial policy that he is often shown to be; in fact he fitted in well with the political tendencies at home. This also explains why, despite Maitland's very severe criticisms of North's administration, North was not reproached for his rule on Ceylon. The criticism did not even hamper his career: in fact, "London" stood up for North after the complaints of Maitland:

> Lord Castlereigh has not entered into the discussion of your charges against Mr North's administration. The chief expences seem to have originated entirely from the war and are solely attributable to it. His government previously does not seem to have been otherwise than economical, and you do full justice to his high honor and integrity.[591]

The same is true for North's reputation in the history books. He gained the sympathy of historians because his moral approach appealed to them. Men like Colvin R. de Silva and H.A.J. Hullugalle attribute his radical zeal to his youthfulness, and praise his intentions.[592] North's legacy in the historiography has reinforced the image that there was an absolute difference between Dutch and British policy. The Dutch government is seen as part of the *ancien régime*, that of the British is seen as influenced by modern traits. Moreover, because Maitland reversed many of North's measures and returned to the Dutch regulations, his rule is also considered reactionary and conservative.

Now that we have established that North was less exceptional than he has been portrayed, we may turn to the question of Maitland's motives. How did Maitland's policy relate to that of the Dutch in their last decade on Ceylon, and how does it relate to the developments in India? Like North he had witnessed the reorganization of the EIC, while in Parliament he had opposed Hastings and revealed an anti-expansionist attitude. As an officer in San Domingo in the late 1790s he had also witnessed the slave liberation and the subsequent civil war.[593] As we shall see, developments in Maitland's day actually had a more progressive outlook than is usually assumed.

10.3 *Thomas Maitland and the return of the European despot*

When Maitland was sent out to Ceylon, he was urged to economize and make the colony financially healthy. Under the pretence of cutting expenses, he overturned the whole administrative establishment by reforming the revenue and judicial departments. He abandoned the principle of spreading government power over the various institutions and did away with the controlling mechanisms installed by Governor North in the Revenue Board. All power of government was now integrated in the functions of the collector, who acted as overseer of agriculture, revenue collector and judge. The provincial courts were discontinued and the *landraden* re-established, with the collectors as presidents and native headmen as judges. Moreover, Maitland restored the service tenures and caste obligations. In all, his reforms ran contrary to those of North and by extension to the ideals underlying the Bengal administration.[594]

Maitland was certainly not ordered by his superiors to take this course of action. Nobody had demanded it from him, and in fact the metropolis was not all that happy with Maitland's reforms. We already saw that Castlereigh criticized Maitland for expressing his negative opinion of North's administration. In other despatches, we find that Castlereigh opposed the re-establishments of the *landraden*, and that he wished to keep judicial power in the hands of European judges instead of with the *mudaliyārs*. He was often wary of the reforms that Maitland initiated, but realized that there was not much he could do about because of the distance and lack of local knowledge and because the Napoleonic wars occupied most of his time and attention.[595] For example with regard to the service tenures, the only aspect of North's policy that London had had reservations about, but which had been approved of anyway after enthusiastic reports from North, he wrote disapprovingly to Maitland: "With respect to the land rents we cannot form here a judgement upon the subject but we hope the line you have taken is the true one and permanently true."[596]

The question thus remains, why did Maitland make so many amendments in the colonial administration while risking the criticism of his superiors? The following quote, from Maitland's despatch to Lord Castlereigh on 13 Janyary 1806, has been cited often as a distillation of Maitland's criticism of North's policies: it is an eloquent remark made by Maitland in one of his first despatches in which he dealt with effects of North's abolition of the service tenures.[597]

> By the explanations I have already given, your lordship will perceive that the tenure on which land rested here, is not peculiar to the island, but exactly the same with what exist in every country in the world in a certain state of society; or in other words, that there being no money in the island to pay for

> the protection afforded by government, the subjects under that government agree to pay for that protection by a certain portion of their labour – The same was the base in England; the same is the base still in the more barbarious parts of Europe.
>
> If this be true, we need not look to the island of Ceylon, but exemplify what has happened here by a reference to our own country, and I think your lordship will agree with me upon reflection that it would have been a most strange and unaccountable measure supposing it possible, when we were in this state of society, if one of the ancient barons had pulled out of his pocket Adam Smith, and said, I will apply to you vassals whose situation renders it impossible to carry it into effect, all the rules and regulations laid down by him for society in the last state of civilization and wealth.
>
> Your lordship must be well aware of the natural progress from the state of society of which I am now treating to complete civilization, and the concomitant change that takes place as civilization advances in the situation of the subject towards the sovereign.[598]

The contrast between the sudden changes of his predecessor and his own practice of encouraging moderate change was repeatedly emphasized by Maitland and turned into his pet notion. Here too, Maitland strongly contrasts his own, practical approach, with the abstract and theoretical approach of North's policies. However, it needs to be pointed out that he does not reject the essence of North's motives, namely to stimulate the progress of society, nor does he criticize the value of the work of Adam Smith. Rather, it seems that both were as much influenced by the writings of this Enlightenment philosopher and the general views on progress that were popular at home. The difference in their approach towards the concept of progress lay in the question how and on what timetable this progress could be achieved.

Interestingly enough Maitland insisted that his reversal of North policies on the service tenures and bonded labour was carried out not only because it had caused chaos in the inland administration, but more important because they had undermined the principle of security of property and thus driving down the value of the land:

> It appears however that of late years, measures have been adopted inapplicable to the situation of the country, shaking in a considerable degree the tenor on which various species of property rested, and destructive of the police and the tranquillity of the people. The most valuable property in that district consist partly in land and partly in a right to servitude possessed by persons of higher castes over those of inferior; viz the Covia Nallua and Pallua castes, approximating nearly to a state of slavery.
>
> The proprietors' titles to both these species of property have been rendered obscure and uncertain; their rights to land by the introduction of a new plan of registration and by the means which have taken to enforce it; the right to servitude of persons of the lower castes, by the decisions of provincial courts and the abolition of those regulations which under the former system secured to each proprietor the particular services that from

> immemorial custom he was authorized to expect from those of the inferior castes bound in service to him, and he was equally bound to support.[599]

In the view of Maitland, North had looked too much for theoretical inspiration to reach this goal, without taking local circumstances into consideration, and he therefore made the mistake of commencing reforms for which the native society was not yet ready. Maitland felt that progress would come naturally to a society if it was ruled fairly and justly. In the above quotations, he clearly expressed his belief that the type of government should suit the stage of development society was in. He did not deny the universality of moral behaviour, but he found such behaviour in the responsible rule of the collector and the governor, rather than in property laws and other judicial principles. Thus, Maitland was motivated by ideological precepts and intellectual discourses at home just as North had been. One may therefore wonder whether the merely conservative and pragmatic reputation that historians have allotted him is correct.

His instructions for the collectors of Matara and Jaffna written up about a year after his arrival may give the best impression of Maitland's ideal of the strong collector. He started his instruction for the Jaffna collector by criticizing the previous practices: "It would appear that hitherto the common duties of an agent of revenue and commerce have been considered to be limited to a residence in the chief town of his district."[600] In contrast he instructed the collector that:

> You will therefore consider it as a primary part of your duty to visit every part of your district so as to be able to give government an opinion not obtained from hear-say or from black-intelligence; but from personal knowledge of the state of all the churches and provinces in your district and of the characters of the headmen […], and of all other persons possessed of influence and talent in those districts.[601]

The collector was to make a circuit once every three months and to report to the governor and held extensive criminal and civil jurisdiction.[602]

The idea was that through direct control, the power of the native headmen could be broken and that the peasants would be protected from their vexations. Had it not been for them, the country would have been in a much better state, Maitland argued:

> The power originally possessed by this class of persons was at all times a matter of extreme jealousy during the Dutch government, and the means they employed to diminish it in different ways and at different periods was various and extensive. It does not however appear they ever succeeded even to their own wish and there is the strongest reason to believe that the present uncivilized state of the island, possessed as it had been upwards of three centuries by Europeans is much owing to the continuance of their authority subversive of every amelioration and improvement and acting in the strongest sense of that time distinctly as an imperium in imperior.[603]

Maitland's instructions for the collector of Matara have been used by other historians to point out his pragmatic attitude, however from the above quotation, a distinct ideological motive is clear. Maitland did not blame the Dutch for the bad state of the country, but saw the headmen as the negative factors and as the ones who had obstructed progress. In fact, in the early years of British rule, their power had only increased, with the deterioration of the affairs on the island as a result. They were the ones who had to be kept in check, and this could only be done through the personal power of the collector. In the instructions for Matara and Jaffna we find particular information on the power relations between the headmen in the districts, the family connections and the religious institutions, and instructions on how the collector should deal with them. Maitland proposed to make use of the jealousy that existed between supporters of the various temples, and by singling out the least powerful temple, the power of the other was checked. He advised to do the same with the Buddhist orders in Matara.[604]

We already saw that Maitland made sure that he was well-informed about the general situation of the island. Schneider researched the actual state of agriculture and the villages. Alexander Johnstone made extensive tours through the interior to study the judicial circumstances and the application of the native and Dutch laws. Jacob Burnand wrote extensive treatises on the judicial organization in the Dutch period, the headmen system and a variety of other subjects.[605] All these activities bear witness to the real interest Maitland had in the state of the country and his ideas about how to rule the country on its own cultural terms and at its own pace. Maitland took an even broader view, in fact, and in 1807, after Johnstone had toured through all the districts of Ceylon, Maitland sent him to Madras to compare Ceylon to the situation there.[606] The connection with Madras should be elaborated upon a bit, because at the same time Thomas Munro was promoting a form of colonial government that had many elements in common with that of Maitland, which reinforces the idea that Maitland was influenced by something more nuanced than mere pragmatism.

10.4 *Simultaneous trends in Madras*

Thomas Munro administered the "Ceded Districts of Madras" from 1800 to 1807. The region had been in the possession of the Nizam of Hyderabad and was ceded to the British as remuneration for the costs of subsidiary forces stationed in Hyderabad. Governor-General Wellesley had decided in 1799 that Cornwallis' Bengal regulations had to be put into effect in all the districts of Madras. However, soon after his arrival in the

Ceded Districts, Munro concluded that a permanent or *zamindari* settlement was not a viable one for this region. The *poligars*, native officers who had gained regional power in exchange for their mercenary activities for the Nizam, were chosen to fulfil the position of *zamindar*, even though in the previous years, during the wars the British had done their best to annihilate their power. Munro did not entirely refute the basic principles of improvement underlying the settlement of Bengal, but he argued that rule in India should be based on direct knowledge of how society functioned, and not on ancient texts. Through his personal experiences with the *poligars* and investigation into the local circumstances of the Ceded Districts, namely the former practices of revenue collection, modes of land possession and practices of the administration of justice, he chose to develop an alternative system. In 1805 and 1806, a debate flared up between Munro and the governor of Madras, Lord William Bentinck, which resulted in extensive writings on the part of Munro to convince his superiors of the propriety of his alternative system of rule.[607]

The system Munro proposed for the Ceded Districts was based on an authoritarian form of rule, central to which was direct contact with the *ryotwar*, the peasant. In contrast to the Bengal system, there was no place for the native headmen in the system. The *poligars*, who had held villages in return for military services from the time of Vijayanagar, were considered by Munro to be responsible for the arrested development of the region and had to be removed from power as much as possible. British enlightened despotism was legitimated by India's peculiar historic development; or to put another way, India's stage of development at that moment called for enlightened despotism.

At the center of this system was the collector, who was seen as a father raising and taking care of his children who needed guidance while growing up. In other words, the function of revenue commissioner and judge that were so carefully separated in Bengal, were in Madras combined in the function of collector. Taxation was based on individual assessment, which took into account the quality of the soil and location of the fields and could be adapted to fluctuations in crops and agricultural activity. As a result, large surveys were undertaken to measure all the fields and make assessments of the agricultural produce. Native agents were used to execute this and to collect the revenue. Property was secured through the proper rule of the collector. The judicial power invested in him speeded up cases against those who collected the revenue. The lower levels of the jurisdiction would be in the hands of the native agents of the collector, since they were best acquainted with the common laws and practices in the region.[608]

On the surface the Munro system has strong similarities with that of Maitland. This accounts in particular for the central role of the collector

as revenue agent and judge, and the native engagement in the administration of justice. Also, the response of Munro's superiors was quite similar to that of Maitland's superiors: Governor Bentinck was quite easily convinced that a *ryotwari* settlement could be more fruitful than a *zamindari* settlement, but he was against the fusion of judge and collector in the same person and the engagement of native agents in the judiciary. In London most people were against the new system at first, for the same reasons. However, within a few years the sentiment turned around, and by 1813 the Munro system was fully put into practice, including the judiciary elements. In fact it became the basic system of government for most of the new British territories in India.

Historians still argue about the effects of both the *zamindari* and the *ryotwari* settlements, how they functioned in practice and whether or not they caused major changes in society. It is generally assumed that Cornwallis' and Munro's mindsets did not differ a great deal. Despite their different emphasis, in essence the two systems were not so different in outlook. Both agreed on the idea of progress in society and the singularity of India's situation. Abstinence of direct interference with society stood central, the role of the British was mainly to trigger the progress of Indian society, not to enforce it. The difference lay in their respective emphases, on institutional changes to stimulate the natural development of society in the case of Cornwallis, or personal influence to achieve the same in that of Munro. The universality of British legal institutions was not questioned by Munro, but local society was not ready for it yet. The concepts of just rule and improvement stood central to Cornwallis as well as Munro. The major difference between the two was their confidence in the capabilities of the British officials. This confidence was lacking in the 1790s, but was gradually restored in the 1800s.[609] The outlook common to both Munro and Cornwallis was fundamentally different from the one developed in the 1820s by the Utilitarians. At the outset confidence in British superiority already played a major role, but not untill the 1830s when Utilitarians argued that India could only succeed if it became British in a cultural sense as well, did it lead to a radical assimilation policy.[610]

The connection between the policies of Maitland and Munro shows that in contrast to what is usually assumed, Maitland's policies were inspired by ideology and were not merely the work of a conservative and pragmatic bureaucrat. Central to his evaluation was the idea that Ceylon was different from Britain and had to be ruled according to its own situation and stage of development. This is the ideology that speaks out of the quote from Maitland's despatch to Castlereigh discussed at the beginning of this section. This made it possible for Maitland to even accept such "unenlightened" aspects of native society as the service tenures. It meant

the reversal of a lot of measures that North had taken and a denial of many of the celebrated Bengal principles. The early British administration in Ceylon did not stand central to the debates in England regarding the administration of the colonies, but it lifted on the same waves. The British governors on the island were much influenced by the developments and discussions at home and in the other colonies, and were thus clearly British in their colonial ideology.

10.5 *Maitland and native headmen*

Munro's *ryotwari* system and authoritarian, paternal, rule concurred broadly with Maitland's ideas and explains the difficulty Maitland had with the Sinhalese headmen who did not fit in this ideal. Just like the *poligars* in the Ceded Districts, these men stood in the way of development and had to be removed. In Ceylon, however, this was no simple job. They could not be done away with easily, without fear of revolt. Maitland limited the power of the headmen by taking away from them the responsibility of collecting taxes. However, in the management of the fields and, more important, in the management of labour in the maritime districts, they remained central figures. Maitland believed that in the long run strict supervision by the collector and a decrease in official appointments would diminish their powers.[611]

Maitland's attitude towards the headmen in the southwest was essentially different from that of the Dutch. Because of his ideological preoccupations, he could not even think of reaching a joint interest between government and the headmen in the island's exploitation as Van de Graaff had managed to do. He was aware of the Dutch private dealings with the headmen in the past, and could have continued on the same path, if not in the form of private engagements then in that of government engagements. Instead, Maitland wanted to encourage European enterprise on the island. This had been forbidden by Dundas who felt that Europeans settlers would be corrupted by the Asian context. However, in this time of new ideologies, when European qualities were once again contrasted with the corrupt ones of the natives, Maitland received approval for his idea. The introduction of European entrepreneurs was in Maitland's view the best way of improving agriculture, without disturbing peace and order, and without oppressing the peasants.[612]

Considering the fact that Maitland had a distinct ideological agenda for achieving progress in Ceylon which differed from those of both Governor North and the Dutch, it is curious that he is always described as a conservative governor who reverted to the Dutch system of rule. That reputation can be explained by the fact that the Dutch period was given

a special and in a way sound-board position in Maitland's discourse. Jacob Burnand played an important role in the creation of that Dutch image.

10.6 *Conclusion*

It seems that the Dutch and the British on Ceylon were both affected in some way by the new ideas on political economy that had developed in Europe in the course of the eighteenth century. Their visions of society as trapped in a low level of development but capable of improvement have striking similarities. They found the situation on the island matching the descriptions in learned books. However, unlike their British successors the Dutch did not have an agenda about how to improve the situation on the island and bring the natives to what they called a higher degree of civilization.

There were clear differences between Dutch and British perceptions of good rule and progress and development on the island. These were directly related to the intellectual climate and political developments at home. The influence of Parliament in London and the increase of moral interference with colonial affairs, be it the rule of Bengal or the position of slaves in the West Indies, are exceptional. As a consequence, intellectual and political discussions on proper colonial rule were a common feature of the British politicians and high officials. This element was virtually absent in the Netherlands, where Parliament had no role in colonial affairs until 1848.[613]

The difference between Dutch and British colonial outlook lay not just in the absence of a clear formulation of Dutch ideals. In the field of law and personal freedom, the Dutch and the British held very different opinions. The Dutch left the rule of law to the natives, whereas the British saw jurisdiction as the major instrument of progress and development and kept it in their own hands. Free labour was a prerequisite to progress, and even if only temporary use had to be made of the system of service tenure, its abolition had to be encouraged. This opinion is totally absent among Dutch authors with the possible exception of Burnand. It is important to note that the same considerations played a role in Stamford Raffles's administration of Java, which shows how much Raffles owed to the prevailing ideology in the Britain of his day, something that Dutch historians tend to underestimate.

The image that Burnand created of the last Dutch rulers as enlightened and authoritarian, and which is captured in the writings of Anthony Bertolacci, Thomas Maitland, and Alexander Johnstone, reflects perhaps more the image of his own practice in Batticaloa and the ideas he had developed since the British take-over, coincidentally he had adapted this

picture to Maitland's ideals. This certainly suited Maitland, because as with most regime changes, the need to achieve stability, peace and order forced him to claim a return to the proven results of the former, in this case, Dutch regime. By adopting the image of the former regime to his own ideals, by stressing its stability, experienced and what he called "enlightened" background, Burnand legitimated Maitland's own course on the island, based on his ideas about the progress and development of societies.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE COLONIAL PROJECT COMPLETED: THE FALL OF THE KANDYAN KINGDOM

In the preceding chapters on the development of British policies on the island, Kandy was discussed only sporadically, but it certainly deserves more attention. If we can identify Governor Maitland as the one who laid the foundation of the definite reorganization of the British administration, his successor Robert Brownrigg should be singled out as the governor who took care of the formal political unification of the island under the British flag in 1815, thereby completing the colonial project in Ceylon. A lot has been written about the fall of the Kingdom of Kandy and it is usually seen as an isolated incident that came about as a result of either British expansionist attitudes or the tyranny of the last king. However, as has been pointed earlier, the Kingdom suffered from continuous political tension in the late eighteenth century, and this tempted certain nobles to intrigue with Van de Graaff. At the same time, the Dutch Governor thought that the acquisition of the Kandyan territories could solve his financial troubles and increase the necessary agricultural output to feed the labourers on the plantations and the soldiers in the garrisons on the coast. The literature generally fails to connect the breakdown of the Kingdom with other long-term political developments on the island. Here I will attempt to fill this gap and present a fresh view on this episode of Sri Lankan political history.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first deals with official and unofficial policies towards the Kingdom adhered to by British governors and their superiors. In this analysis both external, "global" factors and local factors that affected the policy are taken into account. The second part deals with the "Kandyan factor": how relations between the Kandyan courtiers and the British government were conducted, to understand the effects of Kandyan internal developments on British policy. Finally, I will show how closely Dutch and British colonial policy were intertwined with Kandyan political developments, and how a complicated set of developments led to the fall of the Kingdom.

11.1 *Defining a course: Colombo, the EIC, and the Secretary of State*

In previous chapters we saw how the British lines of authority changed several times between 1796 and 1802. First, the government of the island

was placed entirely under the government of the Madras presidency of the East India Company. By 1798, the government was headed by a governor appointed by the Crown, but the commercial affairs were still decided by the East India Company.[614] Under Governor Frederick North the ties with Fort St George were loosened because he did not get along very well with the Madras officials and was more inclined to work with Governor-General Wellesley at Fort William, Calcutta. Large bundles with correspondence between North and Wellesley, preserved in the Western manuscripts collection of the British Library, attest to this.[615] Finally, after it was decided by the Treaty of Amiens (1802) that Sri Lanka was to remain a British possession, all matters – administrational, economical and military – were decided in London. In the meantime, Secretary of State Henry Dundas had drafted new guidelines for the policies to be followed by the governor of Ceylon. All successive governors received such a charter upon accepting their office.[616] As we saw, this significantly changed how policy was made. With London nearly six months away, there was more latitude for governors on the spot to decide urgent questions.

In general, British governors followed their superiors' policy towards the Kandyans more closely than the Dutch did. However, owing to the frequent changes in personnel and shifting international circumstances in the period under research, the policy of the superiors and their capacity to impose it upon their governors varied quite a bit. Just as in Dutch times, the main aim was to secure a treaty with the king to formalize the relationship with Kandy. In fact the British were negotiating with Kandyan envoys that had arrived at Madras in early 1795 even before they had captured the Dutch possessions on the island.[617]

A lot has been written about the British arrival in Sri Lanka and their preliminary contacts with the court of Kandy.[618] After Boyd's failed mission of 1782, contacts were not renewed until the 1790s. Relations between the court and Madras intensified in July 1795, after the landing of the British at Trincomalee earlier that month. The British wanted to gain Kandyan support in their battle against the Dutch, and despite Governor Van Angelbeek's desperate appeals they did support the British. Not aware of the contents of the Dutch treaty, or perhaps too eager to have an official alliance with the Kandyans, the English drafted a treaty that agreed to let the Kandyans occupy certain parts of the coast then in Dutch hands.[619] This treaty was never ratified because the British realized soon enough that the Dutch possessed the entire coast and that if they were to follow in their footsteps, they would also have to hold on to these possessions. Moreover, it was feared that if the European powers arrived at a peace settlement, they would have to return their possessions on the island to the Dutch, and there would be significant repercussions if it was found that they had ceded part of them to the Kandyans. So from 1796

onwards, the policy followed in Colombo and Madras was to obtain a treaty based on conditions similar to those the Dutch had. If that was impossible, it would be better to have no treaty at all.[620]

The years 1796-1801 were marked by British attempts to obtain such a contract with the Kandyans. Embassies were exchanged and as they had with the Dutch, the Kandyans continuously demanded part of the shore, which the British did not want to surrender. Fearing French intrusion, the British felt rather uncomfortable with the situation.[621]

11.2 *North's ambitions and the first Kandyan war*

From 1800 onwards, approaches by the first *adigār* Pilime Talawe marked the beginning of a new episode in British-Kandyan relations. Governor North started to push his own demands further when he decided it would be a good idea to have a garrison stationed at Kandy. Not only was a treaty with the same terms as the old Dutch one required, North envisioned a British garrison in Kandy of about one thousand men whose avowed mission would be to protect the king. Stationed midway between Trincomalee and Colombo, these troops would also ensure quick communication between the two ports in case of a French attack, and they could be flexibly deployed. North's strategy to station a garrison in Kandy was based on Wellesley's policy of subsidiary alliances in India.[622]

In his negotiations with Pilime Talawe, North stressed that he wanted permission to construct a road between Trincomalee and Kandy to facilitate contacts between the two places. Depending on the circumstances the troops could descend from there to either Trincomalee or Colombo. In those days rumors of a French attack were common and the possibility could not be ruled out. Because the troops were to protect the king, he was to bear part of the costs. Long negotiations with the first *adigār*, who seemed to prefer to dethrone the king with the help of North's forces, led to nothing but strained relations between North and the *adigār*. The main problem was that the *adigār*, who agreed to North's plans, could not prove to North that the king himself also agreed to it. North did not want to violate the position of king because it could make him the instigator of war. From the correspondence between North and Wellesley, it is clear that the latter, as North's superior, agreed with and even encouraged this policy. The historian Wickremeratne sees in this proof that the initiative in the negotiations between the first *adigār* and North was taken by North himself, thereby making the *adigār* more a victim of North's plots than the initiator of intrigues, as he is depicted in the British sources.[623] One may wonder whether this is not a simplification of the whole affair, given how much Pilime Talawe stood to gain from the new plan. Moreover we have

seen that intriguing with foreign powers on the island was not a new game for him. This argument will be elaborated upon further down in this chapter.

This new policy revealed a shift from commercial to strategic motivations in the British dealings with the Kandyans. Certainly, the policy of isolation which North's predecessors had held on to was to some extent inspired by strategic motivations as well, namely to prevent any foreign intrusion. However, North took a more active stance in this respect and at the same time cinnamon, which had always been a major point in Dutch policy towards the court, became only a minor point of interest. The emphasis on strategy in North's policy perfectly suited the spirit of the time, when the British Empire was still expanding at a brisk rate.[624] Wellesley concurred with the whole of North's plan, and Secretary of State Dundas gave his final approval from London. Though at first he had been reluctant to allow North to interfere too much in Kandyan affairs, Dundas later argued that even if it would lead to war, not too much damage could be done. It was clear that a Kandyan defeat would not confront the British with a new frontier, and a chain reaction of expensive wars, as had happened in India, was out of the question.[625]

The secret contacts with the first *adigār* Pilime Talawe were mainly conducted through the governor's *mahāmudaliyār,* Johannes de Saram.[626] It was unclear to North whether or not the king was going to agree to his proposals and he gradually lost faith in the *adigār* and started to contact other court officials. By 1802, North was so disappointed that no treaty had been signed that, with disaffection spreading through the Kandyan provinces, he returned to his old accomplice Pilime Talawe. The *adigār* convinced him that the time was good to invade the country since many of the chiefs and the people in their *disāvanies* would readily collaborate with the British. In January 1803, an attack on certain areca nut merchants whom the Kandyans considered spies gave North his *casus belli*.[627]

Unravelling the episode that followed is complicated by official and unofficial stories of secret contacts and treachery. North invaded the Kandyan territory and even occupied the Kandyan capital, which had been abandoned by the king and his retinue before their arrival. But either through treachery of the first *adigār*, or through miscommunication, the British troops already weakened by lack of provisions and injuries, were ambushed and massacred at the moment they intended to retreat. This offensive act made it impossible for North to negotiate for peace with the Kandyans and they remained in a state of war until he left office, although hostilities remained limited to the border areas.

11.3 *A period of passive appeasement*

When Thomas Maitland was sent to the island to succeed North in 1805, the Kandyans and the British were still at war. Before his departure from London, Maitland had discussed the situation on the island with the new Secretary of State, Lord Hobart. Maitland had studied the papers and had come to the conclusion that there were no valid grounds for seeking possession of the whole island. The preceding war had been costly and had led to nothing. In Britain, willingness to pay for expensive colonial wars was fading and a general cut in colonial expenses was required. Hence already before Maitland departed, it was decided that he should stop the war and attempt to appease the Kandyans. Any negotiations would use the Dutch treaty of 1766 as the starting point, and the plan to place a garrison in Kandy would be abandoned.[628]

During the six years of Maitland's rule, there was no official diplomatic contact between the two parties, but active warfare was over from the moment he commenced as governor. Maitland stuck to his promise and thereby followed the policy decided upon in London by him and his superiors. Contact with Kandyan parties was kept up through the correspondence of Maitland's secretary and interpreter John D'Oyly. The *mahāmudaliyār* thus lost his traditional position as mediator between the Kandyan court and the government in Colombo. Instead of relying on only one person, contact was maintained with several parties in the Kandyan court. One of the main issues in this contact was the fate of Major Davie, who was kept as a war captive by the Kandyans since 1803. Among Maitland's despatches to Londen are some agonizing requests for help that Davie managed to smuggle across the borders. Maitland sought his release but was not prepared to use force and Davie died in captivity somewhere in the Kandyan hills in 1813.[629]

In a way Maitland's policy resembled that of the Dutch who, after the severance of diplomatic contacts in 1792 still honoured the treaty of 1766. Maitland was determined to keep the status quo, staying informed about Kandyan affairs through contacts with monks via his interpreter John D'Oyly. As in the 1790s, cinnamon was receding into the background as an issue in determining policy. But possession of the coastal saltpans proved to be an effective means of putting pressure on the Kandyans. In the last year of Maitland's rule, there were rumours of suspicious moves on the Kandyan side, and after his departure in 1811, correspondence more in the style of Governor North was resumed with the Kandyan nobles.

11.4 *Irresistable temptation*

Finally, on 18 February 1815, the Kandyan Kingdom ceased to exist. It was late in the evening, when king Sri Vikrama Rajasinha was caught at his hiding place by his own first minister (*adigār*) Ahalapola, the British interpreter John D'Oyly, and the *disāva* Eknelligoda. In a violent arrest, described in a vivid account by William Granville, the king and his four wives were stripped of most of their clothes and valuable ornaments and delivered to Governor Brownrigg in Colombo. They were eventually sent in exile to Vellore.[630]

The coup was the result of collaboration between Kandyan aristocrats and British officials. Under the terms of the so-called Kandyan Convention, it was decided that the nobles would rule their respective provinces in relative independence. In return they agreed to deliver a certain amount of their revenue annually to the British. In justifying the scheme, both parties pointed to the king's oppressive behaviour towards his subjects and emphasized that their pursuit of the king's ousting was first and foremost in the interest of the people. Saving the people from their tyrant king was all that counted and it had been worth surrendering the Kingdom.

The prelude to the final fall of the Kingdom had been launched by Pilime Talawe's cousin and successor, Ahalapola, and Eknelligoda who had also been involved in the secret plans with the Dutch. The latter assured a revolt in the Seven *kōralēs* and Sabaragamuwa, two Kandyan provinces bordering the British posessions. Robert Brownrigg, who succeeded Maitland in 1811, found a cause for war in the otherwise insignificant intrusion into the British territories by Kandyan troops chasing rebels near the Sabaragamuwa borders. He was joined by Ahalepola and Eknelligoda, whose assurances about the state of affairs in Kandy proved correct, and Brownrigg managed to capture the Kingdom with hardly any bloodshed.

Like Maitland, Brownrigg had been cautioned by his superiors to keep expenses to a minimum. In a private letter to Brownrigg written in 1814, William Huskisson, the colonial agent for Ceylon in London, aired the sentiments then prevailing in Britain: he warned Brownrigg that no one was prepared to spend anything on war now that peace was coming to Europe. Moreover, so many colonies had been added to the British Empire recently that military costs in times of peace were already much larger than before the wars, and the government most certainly did not need the expense of another war. He further cautioned Brownrigg of the fear that the governor's military background and inclination would automatically lead to an increase in military spending.[631]

Brownrigg finally decided against the good advice of his friend when

he thought the time was ripe. Assured by the Kandyan chiefs of popular support for British military action against the king, he took his chance. When he reported his success, he was promptly and enthusiastically congratulated from the London office.[632] The expedition had not cost much and the additional Kandyan territory would bring in extra income: the Kandyan chiefs were to remain in their position and hand over part of the revenue from the lands under their control. Had London been closer, the home government might have prevented the invasion, just as the High Government in Batavia had vetoed Van de Graaff's plans in 1792.

About twenty years after the fall of the Kingdom, Henry Marshall, a surgeon in the British army at the time, published a quite different account of the fall of the Kingdom. He pictured the Kandyan nobles as selfish, treacherous and unreliable and the British as naturally inclined to imperialist and expansionist acts.[633] Other historians lay the blame entirely with the British. Following Marshall's argument, they emphasize that the British consciously intrigued with the Kandyan nobles and they hold that, even if the nobles were treacherous, the British are still to blame because they really took the initiative in the negotiations and should therefore be considered responsible for the fall of the Kingdom.[634]

Before further elaborating on these issues, it should be remarked first of all that the unification of the island under the British was not an isolated development, but clearly related to new developments in maritime Ceylon. The British governors were not as secretive about their contacts with the Kandyan nobles as Van de Graaff had been, and coincidentally there are not such severe accusations of treachery by the British governors. However, Marshall's accusations that Brownrigg covered up his real motives when he wrote that he occupied the territories to protect and help the Kandyan citizens are not difficult to accept nowadays. In fact, during the expansionist years of British Empire, it was not uncommon to describe political enemies as tyrants and to use their crimes as a pretext for conquering their kingdoms. Such legitimization fitted the contemporary ideals of progress and improvement discussed in the last chapter, and this example shows clearly how such rhetoric carried a strong opportunistic element.[635]

Clearly Brownrigg had the same ulterior motives for accepting the offer of the Kandyan nobles that Van de Graaff had had a quarter century earlier, for he was really after the revenue of the Kingdom.[636] Just like their Dutch predecessors, all British governors had to cope with serious budget deficits and financial cuts by their superiors. With no funding available for extensive warfare, both Brownrigg and Van de Graaff could only execute their plans with the help of the Kandyan nobles. Still this does not explain the entire context of the intrigues. After all, Brownrigg managed to incorporate the Kingdom without much bloodshed. Did Van

de Graaff and his British successors consciously aim at the overthrow of the Kandyan Kingdom, or was it because of its disintegration that they were approached by some of the courtiers?[637]

11.5 *The Kandyan factor*

Many historians have accepted Brownrigg's official account placing the cause of the fall of the Kingdom entirely upon the oppressive character of the last king's rule. Central to this view are the facts that the king was a tyrant and that he was an outsider of South Indian origin. A closer look at political developments within the Kingdom is necessary to explain its relatively smooth subjugation.[638]

If certain Dutch and British personalities played an important role in European-Kandyan relations, the same counts for the Kandyans. Though in theory the king's power was centralized, courtiers heavily influenced his decision-making. We already saw how in the second half of the eighteenth century, and specifically from the 1780s onwards, various power-groups at the court strove for political influence and control in the Kingdom. Each group had different means of accomplishing their goals and in their schemes the Dutch or the competing European powers played an important role. Basically, three groups could be distinguished.

First was the group of the pro-Dutch Pilime Talawa. Second was the faction of Erevvala, who was first *adigār* between 1783 and 1790 and second *adigār* from 1792 to 1798. He was anti-Dutch and looked for other allies. In a memorandum to Batavia, Van de Graaff wrote that

> it is well known that the second adigār is a cunning and evil man, of totally different principles, who has together with the courtiers of his party, among whom Dumbere and Leeuke, for long conspired to destroy both the court and the Company, and that moreover it has appeared from the intercepted correspondence with the French, that he is the most important actor in the scheme.[639]

In the British sources, Pilime Talawe only really enters the picture after he had Erevvala and several other opponents murdered in 1798, the same year that he selected the eighteen-year-old nephew of the king, Sri Vikrama, to be crowned. In the course of this king-making process, Pilime chased away the king's South Indian courtiers. These kinsmen of the king made up the third faction at the court. That party, usually referred to as Nāyakkars or Malabars in Dutch and British sources, is the most obscure to foreign observers but, because of their affiliation with the king, the most debated in contemporary literature. Central to this debate is the question of whether the whole affair should be seen as an early expression of what was later called Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism.

11.6 *The Sinhala consciousness debate*

It has been argued that the Sinhalese nobles of the court deposed their king in 1815 because of their aversion to his ethnic background. Indeed, in the Kandyan Convention, the use of the word Tamil (*Demala*) is strikingly negative.[640] This issue has received much attention. Some historians explicitly connect it with the current ethnic problems on the island, while others passionately reject the idea. This has led to overemphasis in the literature on the king as an outsider on the one hand, and on the assimilative features of the Kingdom on the other hand. Two lines of inquiry flow from this. The first has to do with the legitimacy of the king as a South Indian ruler of a Sinhalese kingdom, and the second with the degree of ethnic consciousness in the Sinhalese part of the island and the emergence of a Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism in the same period.

For some scholars it is clear that the Nāyakkar kings were never fully accepted and that a general aversion to their background finally led the people to dethrone the king. According to Dewaraja's study on the Kandyan Kingdom, there were two reasons why a South Indian had been made king in 1739, both having to do with Sinhalese (and general South Asian) conceptions of kingship. Marriages between Sinhalese kings and the daughters of the petty aristocracy from Madurai were already prevalent in the seventeenth century, before the rise of the Nāyakkar dynasty. The selection of brides from abroad has been interpreted as a political move consciously designed to curb the power of rival Sinhalese nobles.

Secondly and more central to Dewaraja's argument is the fact that with the extinction of the other kingdoms on the island it became more difficult to marry a wife of c*hastrya* origin as was required for a king. Dewaraja accepts this for long prevalent South Indian connection, but when she comes to discuss the origin of the first Nāyakkar king, she strongly emphasizes that in fact he was not of real c*hastrya* origin. Therefore in hindsight she questions the legitimacy of the Nāyakkar dynasty.[641] By combining this doubt of royal ancestry and the foreignness of the Nāyakkar kings she implicitly justifies the opposition of the nobles against their alien kings, which ultimately led to the deposition of the king in 1815.

K.N.O. Dharmadasa takes the issue of the foreignness of the Nāyakkar dynasty farther still and argues that it was the adoption of alien kingship that triggered the rise of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism in the eighteenth century. He uses indigenous poems and songs to underline his argument and stresses that though the first three Nāyakkar kings did relatively well, an anti-Nāyakkar sense was present all the time. He stresses that the Sinhalese political and religious leaders never forgot the kings' alien origins, and in his view the rebellion against Kirti Sri in the 1750s proves this. However, it was not until the last king, Sri Vikrama, behaved so

tyrannically and went against the Buddhist ideology in his policies that the opposition became widespread enough for a rebellion bring about the fall of the Kingdom.[642]

In a recent interpretation of famous Sinhala war poems written in praise of those who dethroned the Nāyakkar king, Michael Roberts concludes that there was an absolute sense of Sinhala consciousness in this period, and that this was restricted not only to the Kandyan area, but encompassed all Sinhala-speaking people on the island.[643] Roberts is careful and precise in his use of the war poems, and while he convincingly shows that these texts reveal a degree of Sinhala consciousness, his conclusion that this consciousness was at all times widespread among all segments of society is not persuasive.[644] Nor, and perhaps more importantly, does he prove that this ethnic consciousness was a driving force in Kandyan politics and society. The study of ethnic consciousness or identities in the pre-modern era is a slippery field and historians have to acknowledge that identities were not as fixed as they have become in modern times, and that they were usually applied very pragmatically. We may wonder whether this approach really contributes to our understanding of eighteenth century Kandyan politics and society.

Two historians, R. Gunawardena and John D. Rogers, leave no doubt about their objections to such an approach. They convincingly point out the inconsistencies in the former historical representations, emphasizing the long-lasting ties between Kandy and the South Indian kingdoms, the general acceptance of Tamil (Telugu) as a court language, and the fact that after the British take-over of the Kingdom the Kandyans supported South Indian pretenders to the throne on various occasions.[645] Gunawardena also points out that the extant versions of some of the Sinhalese poems are actually nineteenth-century copies and that their authenticity can be doubted. John D. Rogers has built a similar case against the European sources to argue that the representation of the Kandyan king in British travel writings changed over time. First represented as a Sinhalese king, he only changed into an evil South Indian king when the British needed to convince their audience at home of the justness of their actions.

Unfortunately, none of these historians show a way out of this bickering over sources, the ambiguity and inconsistency of which remains a problem that has not been dealt with properly. It is striking that the available Dutch archival sources of the late-eighteenth century have been almost entirely ignored in these studies. Moreover, the tendency to look at the Kandyan Kingdom as an isolated case and overemphasizing its specifically Buddhist ideological characteristics limits the view of the political processes at stake.

11.7 *The stranger-king as political factor*

More exciting views concerning the subject have been expressed by H.L. Seneviratne, J.C. Holt, and J.S. Duncan. Not coincidentally, they hold a more balanced position in the Sinhala consciousness debate and point at competition at the court between Sinhalese and Nāyakkar noblemen. While Holt stresses the importance of economic factors, Seneviratne and Duncan expand upon the ideological factors in Sinhalese kingship. They conclude that opposition to the king was not endemic among the people in the Kandyan Kingdom and that the kings, by fitting into the ideal shape of a Buddhist king, held their position legitimately. However, in his analysis of the building projects of the last king, Duncan shows that he shifted to a more worldly ideology. This estranged the clergy and certain noble families, but he maintains that this did not negatively affect popular support for the king. Only when the building projects demanded an unreasonable amount of labour from the peasants in 1814 did the latter start to oppose the king. Seneviratne rightly points out that although opposition to the king was largely absent there certainly was friction between the nobles and the Nāyakkar kinsmen of the king owing to economic competition. Unfortunately, neither Seneviratne nor Holt expand further on this issue.[646]

Pilime Talawe's palace revolution following the death of Rajadhi Rajasinha in 1798, ironically reveals the more pragmatic attitude among exactly those Sinhalese nobles who were supposedly the great propagators of Sinhala consciousness. Through the reports of Governor North one learns that shortly after his arrival on the island in early 1798, there was great unrest in the Kingdom, and that many Malabaris and certain important Sinhalese nobles were killed and that a Malabari was placed on the throne again. North writes how he took care of the Malabari relatives of the former king who fled to Jaffna: not knowing yet which side he was going to chose, he thought it best to help them to keep all options open. Clearly there was an anti-Malabari or -Nāyakkar attitude among certain nobles at the court, of whom Pilime Talawe was the most outstanding. But ethnicity did not play any role in this political event: a South Indian king was placed on the throne by the same person who was responsible for the killing and chasing away of both South Indians and Sinhalese nobles.[647]

If the political intrigues of British times are placed in the perspective of that of the Dutch it becomes clear that the disintegration and factionalism of the court was an ongoing process. Earlier I have introduced the concept of the stranger-king, a concept generally accepted among historians as a political means to channel factions in Southeast Asian political entities in early modern times, and I suggested that this could be applied

to the political situation in the Kingdom of Kandy in the eighteenth century as well. If we accept that his outsider status was essential for a Kandyan king to maintain the balance of power in the small Kingdom, we may arrive at a closer understanding of the political process that led to the transfer of power over the Kingdom to the British in 1815. Moreover, it also helps us to understand the revolt of the Kandyan nobles in 1818. Within three years the nobles had come to realize that they had lost rather than gained power under the British regime, and they intended once more to install a South Indian stranger-king named Dore Swami. The rebellion was crushed violently by the British and led to even tighter control over the Kandyan provinces and a sharp curtailment of the Kandyan nobles' autonomy.[648]

What had been happening since the 1780s was that the relatives of the "stranger-king" had become more and more established in Kandyan society and became serious economic and political competitors to the traditional nobles. Their inherent proximity to the king, combined with their access to resources outside the Kingdom, endangered the position of the traditional nobles and turned the outsiders into a new political factor at the court. Paradoxically it was because of this that the king lost his important political quality as outsider, which in turn fanned Sinhalese hatred of their king and his "Nāyakkar" retinue. Indeed, as Seneviratne and others have pointed out, their opposition was inspired not by ethnicity but by political and economic concerns. The Sinhalese nobles wanted to replace the king with other strangers, first the Dutch and later the British, to secure and probably also increase their own autonomous power in the Kingdom.

11.8 *A long-term view of Kandy's collapse*

Political factionalism rather than ethnic strive caused the Sinhalese nobles to collaborate with the British and brought about the fall of the Kingdom of Kandy. How these factions developed and what the sources were of the power of the king's Nāyakkar kinsmen is difficult to determine, and these questions have certainly not received enough scholarly attention. The literature generally refers to the reign of only two kings: the second, Kirti Sri, and the last, Sri Vikrama. Undeniably, they were the most notable and their policies the most radical of the four Nāyakkar kings. It is, however, impossible to connect the developments in the 1750s under Kirti Sri and those in the early nineteenth century under Sri Vikrama without taking into account the developments in the intervening period. The third king, Rajadhi Rajasinha, reigned for almost eighteen years and it was during his rule that the first signs of disintegration took shape.

Active Dutch intriguing in Kandyan affairs in the 1780s proved the first step to the collapse of the Kingdom. The economic isolation of the Kandyan Kingdom and its decentralized power almost naturally called down misfortune. From Van de Graaff's war plans, we can conclude that disintegration was exactly what he and the *adigār* intended. He wanted to conquer the provinces one by one, and make the nobles collaborate with him. They would be left in power, but the Company would pocket the revenue of these provinces.[649] Indeed these plans are very similar to the ones made in 1803 and 1815.

The faction best disposed towards the Nāyakkars comprised Erevvala, the second *adigār*, Leeuke, and Dumbere. They gained the lead after the failure of the war plans made by Van de Graaff, Pilime Talawe, and Eknelligoda. After 1792, the Dutch worried that Pilime Talawe was losing his power and influence at the court, and there were rumours that his treachery had been revealed and that he was to be removed from his position as *adigār.* This did not happen, but for some time he kept a low profile and moved to the background. Despite this, Van de Graaff remained loyal to him and in his *memorie van overgave* he once more stressed the virtues of this Kandyan minister.[650] In the meantime, Erevvala and his party not only contacted the French for support, but the Nāyakkars also requested their South Indian relatives to send troops.[651]

It is not clear whether these forces were meant to fight the Dutch or their Kandyan enemies within the Kingdom. Erevvala was the one who in 1782, while still *disāva* of Matala *disāvany*, had enthusiastically invited Hugh Boyd for an embassy to the king.[652] In 1795, when contacts with the British were renewed, it was again Erevvala they dealt with.[653] In fact, until 1798 the British dealt mostly with him, and Pilime Talawe remained on the background. However, in 1798 Pilime Talawe made his move, killed Erevvala, chased the king's Malabari relatives to the coast and crowned his puppet Sri Vikrama, thus re-establishing his supremacy over the other nobles.

The Van de Graaff-Pilime Talawe episode even helps our understanding of why the alliance between Pilime Talawe and North failed. The *adigār* wanted to work out the same plan as he had made with Van de Graaff and hoped to work on the same basis of trust. North, as we saw, wanted something else, and was less inclined than Van de Graaff to play the secretive game. After Pilime Talawe's treachery was revealed, the young king grew more and more attached to his Naÿakkar advisers. This increased power of the Nāyakkars finally led to conflicts with those nobles who had earlier been allied to them. This once more underlines the idea that anti-Nāyakkar sentiments were economically and not religiously or ethnically inspired. Though the Dutch sources illuminate certain political developments in Kandy and even show that the Dutch played an active

role in these developments, the story is still not complete. Many unanswered questions about the part of the Nāyakkars in the whole affair remain. What exactly was their power? What lands did they hold? With whom were they allied? What were their intentions? A careful approach is essential though, and one issue in particular that requires attention is that at least some if not all of them used Sinhalese names when performing palace services.[654]

If nothing else, the fate of the Kandyan Kingdom shows the extent to which developments in Kandy were related to developments in the Dutch period and at the same time inherent to the political organization of the Kingdom. The processes of disintegration that irreversably started in the 1780s could not be ignored by the British and called for a clear response. This is not to say that the British had no ulterior motives: North wished to secure Kandy as a military base, while Brownrigg saw in the occupation of the Kandyan Kingdom as a solution to the island's financial troubles.[655]

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

12.1 *The first and second colonial transition: long-term processes*

The period 1780-1815 in Sri Lanka was marked by increased colonial intervention, a process put in motion first by the Dutch colonial regime and later by the British. Whereas at the beginning of the period colonial power was limited to the coastal strip, except for some of the cinnamon-producing areas further inland, at the end of the period the whole island, including the last autonomous Kingdom of Kandy, was subject to colonial rule.

The period stands out as one of expansion and reform, instigated by a mix of local and international factors. Changes in international trade patterns caused a decline of VOC income and forced the regime on Ceylon to search for new resources locally. At the same time local administrators were influenced by some of the exponents of the European Enlightenment, in particular the economic ideals first expressed by French *économistes* and later enlarged upon by Scottish moral philosophers, that countries (and colonies) needed their own basic agrarian foundation. As a result, the focus of the colonial regimes shifted from the coast to the interior and plans to develop the interior led to a more intense colonial infringement of local society than ever before. Shifting political relations in Europe and competition for power and resources in Asia resulted in a sense of insecurity among the Dutch on the island. The political instability of the Kandyan Kingdom and the international political insecurity – first during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war and later during the Napoleonic wars – combined with the everlasting search for new resources, greatly influenced political decision-making. These factors even made the consecutive Dutch and British governors on the spot susceptible to the temptations offered by some nobles of the court to bring the Kingdom under colonial authority.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the function of the island of Ceylon changed from the perspective of the European colonizers. Ceylon developed, after some detours, from cinnamon supplier into an exploitation colony with coffee as its basic produce. It is clear now that this process had already taken off in the late eighteenth century, during the VOC regime, despite the Company's decline. As suggested in the introduction, these developments in Ceylon compared in many ways with

those in Java and elsewhere in Asia in the same period. As in Java, the first outlines of a colonial state became visible in the last decades of VOC occupation, and the process of colonial encroachment continued in the British period. The colonial transition on Sri Lanka was, like elsewhere, marked by four processes: the formal political unification of the island under the flag of the colonial regime, the shift from trading colony to exploitation colony, the inward focus of the colonial administration and concomitant centralization of colonial power, and finally the formalization and rationalization of relations with native power holders and the fiscal and judicial administration of the interior.

The changes did not come about suddenly but were preceded by a slow path of increased intervention that accelerated in the 1780s under the governorship of Willem Jacob van de Graaff, when the governor was compelled to respond to shifts in global trading patterns. Both the Dutch and British governments anxiously searched for ways to make the colony profitable, to maintain it as a strategic foothold and to enrich the financial interests in the mother country. In contrast to the policy-making of the British regime, which was directed to a large extent from Britain and founded on the Indian experience, the Dutch intervention built on time-honoured local experience, and the local initiative for change lay with the men on the spot. This is one reason why the Dutch and British systems of government that developed on Ceylon during this period of transition were not quite similar, even though for most of the time they aimed at similar goals.

12.2 *The colonial interplay: characteristics of Dutch and British rule*

Why a study of this period as a whole has not been written before is hard to say. It may have had to do with a lack of interest among present-day historians in the history of colonial policy-making or simply be the result of the language barrier. Most historians dealing with Sri Lanka's history do not master the Dutch language and therefore find it difficult to consult the Dutch sources. As a Dutch native speaker I did not face these hurdles, but I must confess that the incorporation into one study of two bodies of source materials belonging to two very distinct administrative traditions was not always easy. The switching back and forth between the different organization of the material, writing style and rhetoric on the one hand, and actual distinctions in policy, thought and colonial relations on the other is a challenge in itself. However, a growing familiarity with the various types of source material eventually helped to strengthen my grip on the nuts and bolts of the colonial transition process. In the end it led to new insights that enabled me to challenge the traditional periodiza-

tion of colonial policy-making in Sri Lanka. My archival research has shown that, not unlike other regions in Asia, Ceylon went through an extremely dynamic period at the turn of the century. Colonial aims regarding the island were redirected and the colonial institutions and policies were the outcome of clashes, negotiations and cooperation between the members of native society and the colonial overlords.

In the Dutch period, for example, the cultivation of cinnamon on Company plantations and in private gardens was a novelty, for cinnamon had always been collected in the wild and after a period of experimentation its production was brought under the Company's control. As a result it became possible to loosen the formerly restrictive agricultural policies and develop the interior. The Government leased wastelands on the condition that a part of the land be cultivated for commercial crops like cinnamon, coffee and timber, and that these would be purchased by government at fixed prices. Native headmen and company personnel in particular were encouraged to undertake such agricultural undertakings, which seem to have been facilitated by a successful cooperation between the headmen and servants of the Company, at the expense of the peasants. This is reminiscent of the systems of forced cultivation that developed simultaneously in Java in response to new challenges of the Company there.

At the same time, with the VOC in decline, supplies of basic foodstuffs like rice for the garrisons arrived less regularly on the island than before, leading to food shortages that were aggravated by the increase in the size of the labour force deployed on the new cinnamon plantations which required additional supplies of rice. Consequently, Governor Willem Jacob van de Graaff decided that Ceylon had to become self-sufficient in rice. To achieve this end, Van de Graaff shifted his attention to the peripheral regions on the island, like the east coast and the Vanni and Batticaloa regions, which he brought under tight control and where he invested in irrigation works and the clearance of new grounds with a view to turning these regions into a *broodkamer* or breadbasket for the rest of the island. He was inspired partly by the remains of great water reservoirs and temples found around the island that gave the impression that the region had once been a rich rice-producing area, and a belief that if only the water reservoirs and irrigation works were repaired and the country was ruled properly, the land could prosper once more.

Colonial intervention in the countryside had always been limited and the encroachment of colonial power did not go unchallenged. While ambitious men like Van Senden, Nagel, and Burnand, inspired by European ideas about progress of society, tried to develop the countryside and to stimulate the cultivation of more land and to increase the agrarian output, the local inhabitants resisted their efforts, which led to clashes

between the Dutch colonial overlords and their subjects. Colonial intervention in the peripheral regions in the east and north not only implied interference with the agriculture, but also administrative changes. Native headmen were replaced by government agents who worked in close cooperation with the colonial officials.

At the same time the government of the island became more centralized and the relationship of the VOC with the native headmen in the southwest, who had played the role of middlemen between colonial government and native society, became tighter and better defined. The original system of indirect rule was transformed into a more direct type of government, in which the native headmen had well-defined task descriptions and were held accountable for their performance. Also the judicial system of *landraden* was scrutinized and its procedures were described by new protocols. The efficiency of the revenue departments increased and Van de Graaff managed to improve the revenue of the colony by fifty per cent. The process of centralization, reform and exploitation was still under way when the British took over the Dutch possessions on the island and turned the administration in new directions.

Progress in the early years of British rule was rather chaotic and vague because of the many shifts in personnel, authority and policy, and because of the strong and contradictory rhetoric used in the despatches sent to London. In the course of this research it became clear that the initial overthrow of the Dutch administrative infrastructure – both in terms of institutions and of native administrators – had features common to other regime changes. Moreover, the various shifts in authority – from Company, to joint Company-Crown and finally to Crown rule – and the previous experiences in colonial policy-making in India appear to have much influenced politics in Ceylon, despite the different conditions in the two places, which helps explain the protracted chaos. Studies of general patterns of regime change helped me focus on the institutional developments and to read beyond the strong intentions of the governors. I found that when Governor Maitland claimed to have returned to the Dutch mode of rule, he basically meant to say that he tried to stabilize the government; but he did this very much in his own way.

Further I investigated how policy-makers at home and on the island saw the place of the island within the British Empire as a whole. This view changed a few times. The strategic position of the island was emphasized until changing circumstances elsewhere nullified its strategic value, and the British realized that the colony would have to developed in such a way as to become self-sustaining. When eventually Henry Dundas, the Secretary of State, reached the conclusion that the island should become a granary for the rest of the Empire in 1801, he based his assessments on

the experience in Bengal. His concept for the island resembled the *broodkamer* of Van de Graaff, but this time rice was to be the island-wide focus. The Indian experience had shown that rice was easy taxable and, moreover, commercial crops like coffee and sugar were already grown in the West Indies. This remained the axiom of the British policy until the end of Maitland's term of office. Maitland anxiously tried to make the inhabitants of the southwest increase their rice production, but did not, as the Dutch had done, involve the native headmen in his development schemes. On the contrary, he saw them as obstacles and did everything in his power to diminish their influence.

When his attempts proved to be fruitless, his successors focused once more on commercial crop production, and by the 1820s the coffee culture in the southwest and Kandyan regions really took off. In contrast to the Dutch period, this relied less on the help of the native headmen than on investments and enterprises from Europe. In that way the British clearly opted for a very different system of colonial exploitation than the Dutch.

12.3 *Connecting debates*

Since the 1970s, the study of the long-term development of particular social groups or castes in Sri Lankan society has been a popular subject. Another important issue is the emergence of ethnic consciousness and the origins of the violent divide between Tamil and Sinhalese communities in post-colonial times. Such histories tend to cover a long time-span, often from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries; in other cases they commence with the British period and continue well into the twentieth century. In both fields of research the period around 1800 is often regarded as a crucial period. Through its emphasis on the eighteenth century, my research contributes to these histories, but puts developments in a new perspective and provides some crucial missing links.

An example of the latter has to do with the rise of the Karāva caste to a socio-economic elite, a development which the historian Michael Roberts connects with the late Dutch period and arrival of the British. I found that the Karāvas had already cooperated with the Dutch in their private enterprises, and took over part of their economic position after the change of regime. Thus, on the one hand the increased private activities of the Dutch gave the Karāvas the opportunities to join their activities, while the change of regime and the economic decline of the Dutch enabled them to step into their shoes. Once again it shows how developments that may seem to have occurred autonomously were actually related to the European presence on the island. This also accounts for the

growth of power of the *mudaliyārs*, native headmen in the southwest, which Patrick Peebles connected to the British take-over, but which clearly had much stronger roots in the eighteenth century when they already became a major landowning class.[656]

Another case in point was found in the analysis of the relationship between the colonial powers and the Kingdom of Kandy. That the Sinhalese nobles deposed of their South Indian king in 1815 and more or less invited the British to rule their Kingdom has been explained by many historians as a manifestation of Sinhalese nationalism (or ethnic consciousness), or by aggressive British expansionism. However, the final collaboration of the Sinhalese nobles with the British can be seen from a different angle and the fall of the Kingdom was really brought about by economic and political factors within the Kingdom. The political balance in the Kingdom was inherently unstable and suffered almost continuously from internal tensions among the nobles, which was reinforced by Dutch intrigues from the 1780s. The Kingdom had been economically isolated by the Dutch, which caused a weakening of the position of the Sinhalese nobles relative to that of the king's South Indian retinue, who still had access to South Indian resources. This drove the Sinhalese nobles away from their king and made them search for a new stranger-king, which in turn made them amenable to overtures from the colonial rulers on the coast. Neither ethnic consciousness nor British expansionism seems to have been the decisive factor in this particular case.

12.4 *Clashes, cooperation and negotiation*

If we place the story of Ceylon against the backdrop of global developments, it becomes clear that the changes on the island were part of a widespread phenomenon of modernization in the period under study. It was, however, the personalities of Dutch, British, and Sri Lankan individuals – men like Van de Graaff, Pilime Talawe, Abeysinghe, Sluijsken, Dundas, Andrews, North, Maitland, Johnstone, Burnand, Koratota, and Eknelligoda – with their specific backgrounds, who played the most important roles in shaping colonial institutions and policies and determined the final form of the colonial state.

The analysis of the relationship between the Kandyan Kingdom and the colonial governments on the island underlines once more the significant role that native elites played in the development of the colonial state. In the absence of more comprehensive indigenous sources, the interplay between colonial challenges and native responses is difficult to interpret. In the Introduction I discussed the colonial transition on Java and pointed out how historians recognize many eighteenth-century foundations of

the later Dutch colonial state, and how such foundations were the result of early interaction between the Dutch and the Javanese. In the case of Ceylon, similar eighteenth-century foundations can be recognized in some instances, but in other cases British rule led to real deviations from earlier colonial and native institutions.

By analysing the differences and similarities, a more complete picture emerges of continuing local pressures, the influence of particular power groups on the construction of the colonial state and specific Dutch, British governmental and individual colonial influence. For example, despite concerted attempts to do so, the British did not succeed in finding native collaborators in the southwest other than the group of headmen that had held power in the Dutch days. However, the relationship they established with this group differed markedly from that of the Dutch. Instead of a convergence of interest as happened in the Dutch period, the gulf between the British colonial government's interests and those of the headmen widened. This was a consequence of British mistrust and attempts to diminish the power of this group by giving them less privileges and authority. Only in the 1810s did they realize, to their own surprise, that this had led to a decline rather than growth in agriculture. Lack of insight into the functioning of local society and an overestimation of their own authority compared with that of the native powerholders was to blame.

This example reveals the limits of colonial power in this period of transition, but also points at the divergence between intention and practical outcome. It shows that the colonial state was the function of a confrontation between the capacities of native society and the demands of colonial rulers. The outcome was not pre-determined by either the social structures of native society or the particular policies of the colonial ruler. Rather it was the result of clashes and accommodations between the two. Thanks to their affiliation with the Dutch in the eighteenth century, the *mudaliyārs* had built up such a strong powerbase that they could not be ignored by the British and had to be given a place in their administrative hierarchy. The case was very different in the peripheral regions where the recent colonial intervention had weakened native power bases. Paradoxically, it was in these areas that the British approach towards the native elite most closely resembled that of the Dutch.

From the very start two major preoccupations distinguished the efforts of British policy-makers from those of the Dutch: the practice of justice and the use of bonded labour for the island's exploitation. There was a very strong sense among the British rulers that justice should be in the hands of the colonial government, and not shared with the native headmen as had been the case with the Dutch *landraden.* They experimented with various types of provincial courts, and although for some years the

landraden were reinstalled, the magistrates eventually took over the real judicial responsibilities for the interior.

The case of bonded labour was even more complex. The notion of free labour as a basic right for all people was an ideal that had become very popular among liberals in Britain. It was reinforced by the idea that improvement of society was only possible within a system of free labour. This had fuelled the abolitionist movement and the reform of the British government in India, and it also influenced British policy in Ceylon. The British governors strongly felt that bonded labour retarded economic growth and consequently obstructed further development of society. After failed experiments with abolition under North, Maitland compromised and allowed bonded labour to be used, but only for public works and the collection of cinnamon. That is why the British preferred to leave the commercial exploitation to European investors who were to pay for the labour they used, rather than to native headmen who appropriated the bonded labour system for all agricultural enterprises.

After a short period of very intensive use of this form of labour by government for infrastructural and irrigational projects, the revived abolitionist spirit in England led to intervention in the labour systems on the island. In 1824, Parliament announced its intention to set up a Commission of Enquiry to look into, among other things, the labour issue in Ceylon. Thus, liberal British opinion with its strong moralist convictions remained a strong element in policy-making on the island, an element absent in the Dutch period, and which remained absent in the case of Java until the Dutch Parliament was given a role in colonial affairs in 1848.

The current study also gives clues for a further comparison between the colonial histories of Java and Sri Lanka. The considerations underlying the choices made by North and Maitland, resemble the "modern" choices made by Raffles, when representing the British Crown in Java. Interestingly one of the members of the Commission of Enquiry, Charles Hay Cameron, had worked with Raffles in Java and drew his inspiration from Raffles' reforms there, when he proposed together with Colebrooke the reform and modernization of the government of Ceylon in 1830. The current emphasis on the eighteenth-century indigenous foundations of the colonial state in Java gives the impression that the Dutch government had no choice but to adapt to institutions that already existed and in which the native elites had large interests at stake. The case of Ceylon clearly shows that the way in which the modern colonial state adapted to such foundations depended largely on the preferences and will of the colonial rulers.

NOTES

Notes to Introduction

[1] In the monograph I will use the name Ceylon only when referring to the island in its historic, colonial setting. When referring to the island in modern times or mainly its geographic designation, I will use the current name Sri Lanka.

[2] Lieberman, ed., *Beyond Binary Histories*; Reid, ed., *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies.* Blussé and Gaastra, eds, *On the Eighteenth Century as a Category of Asian History.* For an overview of recent publications on India on this period: Barrow and Haynes, "The Colonial Transition: South Asia 1770-1840".

[3] Sophia Pieters and R.G. Anthonisz translated and published the memoirs of Rijklof van Goens jr. (1675-1680); Thomas van Rhee (1693-1697); Cornelis Jan Simons (1703-1707); Hendrick Becker (1707-1716); Jacob Christiaan Pielat (1732-1734); and Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff (1736-1739).

[4] P.E. Pieris, *Tri Sinhala: The Last Phase*; Turner, *Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon, 1795-1802;* Anthonisz, *The Dutch in Ceylon;* Perera, *The Douglas Papers;* P.E. Pieris, *Ceylon and the Hollanders*.

[5] Wickremasinghe, *Ethnic Politics in Colonial Sri Lanka,* 56-99.

[6] See Chapter Eight.

[7] G.C. Mendis, *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*. Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687*. Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon*. Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service, 1802-1833*. Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation 1795-1833,* Vols 1-2.

[8] Kanapathypillai, *Dutch rule in Maritime Ceylon 1766-1796* (PhD thesis University of London 1969), Wickremeratne, *The Conservative Nature of British Rule of Sri Lanka*.

[9] The Commission of Enquiry to the eastern colonies was installed in 1823 by Parliament to investigate in the Crown colonies (The Cape Colony, Ceylon, and Mauritius) the general state of government and revenue, with particular emphasis on the question of slavery. The commission arrived in Ceylon in 1829. G.C. Mendis, *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers,* Vol. 1, xxxi- xxxvii.

[10] Van Goor, "Continuity and Change in the Dutch Position in Asia between 1750-1850", 185-200.

[11] Kwee, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast*. Van Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast 1740-1840.* Ota, *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java.* Carey, "Waiting for the 'Just' King". Hoadly, "Periodisation and Institutional Change in Eighteenth Century Java".

[12] Van Goor, "Continuity and Change in the Dutch position in Asia between 1750-1850", 185-200. Hoadly, "Periodisation, Institutional Change and Eighteenth-Century Java", 96-103.

[13] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830,* 248-254.

[14] Bayly, *Imperial Meridian,* 209-214.

[15] Rasanayagam, "Tamil Documents in the Government Archives".

[16] The *Cūlavamsa* basically stops with the death of King Kirti Sri Raja Sinha in 1782. Later in the nineteenth century, a few pages were added concerning the rule of the last two kings.

[17] Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon.* For a collection of his essays and articles see: Arasaratnam, *Ceylon and the Dutch, 1600-1800*; Goonewardene, *The Foundation of Dutch Power*; Goonewardena, "Calculating Merchant Rulers and Cultivating Colonial Subjects"; Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch in South-west Ceylon, 1743-1767"; Wagenaar, *Galle, VOC vestiging in Ceylon*. See also the contributions of Arasaratnam and Kotelawele, in K.M. de Silva, ed., *University of Peradeniya History of Sri Lanka,* Vol. II (hereafter *UPHS).*

[18] Kanapathypillai, *Dutch Rule in Maritime Ceylon 1766-1796*.
[19] In particular: Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Administration,* Vol. 1-2*,* praiseworthy because of its detailed descriptions.
[20] The six chambers were: Amsterdam, Zeeland, Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC*, 20.
[21] Meilink-Roelofsz, Raben, and Spijkerman, *De archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*.
[22] See Chapter Eight.
[23] G.C. Mendis, *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers,* Vol. 1, xxxiv.
[24] SLNA, 1/2159-2163: resolutions of the inland department.
[25] He sent his letters and reports to men of influence like Governor General Alting, Commissioner General Sebastian Nederburgh and Admiral Van Braam.
[26] This feud is dealt with in Chapters Three and Six.
[27] Meilink-Roelofsz, Raben, and Spijkerman, *De archieven van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie.* Jurriaanse, *Catalogue of the archives of the Dutch central government of coastal Ceylon 1640-1796*. Gommans, Bes, and Kruijtzer, *Dutch sources on South Asia c. 1600-1825,* Vol. 1. "Index to the Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren" in the reading room of the Nationaal Archief in the Hague, now accessible on internet via www.TANAP.net. The catalogues of the archives of the British government on Sri Lanka are unpublished but found in typescript in the reading room of the SLNA. Also in typescript in the reading room of the Sri Lanka National Archives: Mottau, *Index to the Despatches of the Governors*. & *Summary of Despatches 1798-1822.* In Jakarta, I picked the fruits of TANAP-archival labour by using the new (unpublished) catalogue of the archives of the High Government of Batavia (see www.TANAP.net). For the National Archives in Kew and the British Library and India Office collection: G.P.S.H. de Silva, *A Survey of Archives and Manuscripts Relating to Sri Lanka and Located in Major London Repositories*.
[28] Perera, *The Douglas Papers*.
[29] Bertolacci, *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon.*

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[30] Tennent, *Ceylon, an Account of the Island,* Vol. 1 & 2, 3.
[31] Siriweera, "Agriculture in Mediaeval Sri Lanka", 34-35.
[32] C.R. de Silva, "Sri Lanka in the Early 16th Century: Economic and Social Conditions", 54-56.
[33] Marco Polo, *The Travels*, 258.
[34] For an overview of the major sites on the island vide: *The Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka*. For a recent discussion of the Pali chronicles of Sri Lanka see: G.C. Mendis, *The Pali Chronicles of Sri Lanka*.
[35] Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Period: Religion, Literature and Art", in S. Paranavitana, ed., *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon.* Vol. 1: *From the Earliest Times to 1505.* Part 1: *Up to the End of the Anurādhapura,* 386-387. Hereafter *UCHC.* K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka*, 50-51; 73-77.
[36] A lot remains uncertain about this period in Ceylon's history, although it has always received a lot of attention from scholars and is still very much the focus of Ceylonese historical and archaeological research. Most accounts relate to its political history, which is generally deduced from the chronicles and rock inscriptions. Increasing interest in the field of socio-economic history has resulted in some interesting debates regarding the economic organization of the Kingdoms and their demise.
[37] See Chapter Four and Sections 8.4-8.5.
[38] Siriweera, "Agriculture in Mediaeval Sri Lanka", 48-50. He argues that land was never fully in use and that the scale of the irrigation system was probably smaller than hitherto assumed because not all tanks and canals were functioning at the same time. Also, there were various records of famine in the Pali chronicles that raise questions about the likelihood of the *Rājarata* kingdoms producing such enormous surpluses. He therefore concludes that at the most it could be assumed that the island was self-sufficient in its rice

production in the days of the ancient civilizations. Although there are still historians who reject Siriweera's suggestions, his account of the economic history of the ancient civilization is now more or less commonplace. On the limited use of the tanks: see also K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka,* 69; and Wimalaratana, *Changes in Consumption Pattern and Economic Underdevelopment in British Ceylon*, 157. He accepts the argument of limited production, but argues that rice was always the island's staple food.

[39] K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka,* 63, 81-84.

[40] Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, 23-25, 121.

[41] C.R. de Silva, "Sri Lanka in the Early 16th Century: Political Conditions", 35.

[42] Arasaratnam, "The Vanniar of North Ceylon", 101-112. On the early history of the *vanniyars*: K. Indrapala, "The Origin of the Tamil Vanni Chieftaincies of Ceylon", 111-140.

[43] Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 54-55.

[44] C.R. de Silva, "Sri Lanka in the Early 16th Century: Economic and Social Conditions", 50-60.

[45] Wimalaratana, *Changes in Consumption Pattern and Economic Underdevelopment in British Ceylon,* 155-164. C.R. de Silva, "Sri Lanka in the Early 16th Century: Economic and Social Conditions", 37-60. The rest of this section is based on this article by De Silva.

[46] Idem; Wickremeratne, *The Conservative Nature of British Rule in Sri Lanka*, 29.

[47] The standard work on the Sinhalese caste system is still Bryce Ryan, *Caste in Modern Ceylon: The Sinhalese System in Transition*.

[48] For a discussion on this subject see Chapter Two, below. Take for example the following title: Lorna Dewaraja, *The Muslims of Sri Lanka. One Thousand Years of Ethnic Harmony, 900-1915*.

[49] Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Period: Religion", in Paranavitana, ed., *UCHC,* Vol. 1, Part 2, 754-769.

[50] These estimates may be too high even. In comparison, Portugal had a population of 1.25 million people, about double the size. the Netherlands 1.5 million.

[51] Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 120-121.

[52] C.R. de Silva, "Trade in Ceylon Cinnamon in the Sixteenth Century", 14-27.

[53] P.E. Pieris, *Ceylon and the Portuguese, 1505-1658*; Abeyasinghe, *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon 1594-1612*; Winius, *The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon: Transition to Dutch Rule*; C.R. de Silva, *The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638*.

[54] C.R. de Silva, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Sitavaka (1521-1593)", 61-104.

[55] C.R. de Silva and Pathamanathan, "The Kingdom of Jaffna up to 1620", 105-121.

[56] Abeyasinghe, "Portuguese Rule in Kotte, 1594-1638", 123-137.

[57] C.R. de Silva, "Expulsion of the Portuguese from Sri Lanka", 163-181.

[58] Lieberman, *Strange Parallels,* 21-66.

[59] Winius, *The Fatal History*, 36-170.

[60] According to Goonawardena, the Dutch manipulated the Dutch translation of the treaty to deceive the king by omitting the essential sentence "if the king so desired" thereby taking away his sovereignty over the coast. Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon 1638-1658*, 32-33. Winius questioned Goonewardena's interpretation. According to him, it was not the coastal possessions they were after in the first place but rather the remuneration for the war expenses and the security of the cinnamon monopoly. Only when Raja Sinha did not live up to his promise of payments did they start to insist on the coastal possessions. Winius, *The Fatal History,* 37-43. In any case, the outcome was the unclear status of Dutch sovereignty in Ceylon, which was to have further consequences for Dutch-Kandyan relations in the eighteenth century.

[61] Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC*, 37-57.

[62] Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687*, 77-97.

[63] Turner, ed., *A Sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyan Kingdom by Sir John D'Oyly and Other Relevant Papers;* Davy, *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants with Travels in That Island*.

[64] Upham, *The Mahāvansi the Rājā-Ratnācari and the Rājā-vali*. Vol. 2. A Sinhalese version of this document was found in the cave monastery of Mulkirigala.

[65] Duncan, *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan*

Kingdom, 34; Bandarage, *Colonialism in Sri Lanka: The Political Economy of the Kandyan Highlands, 1833-1886,* 17-46.

[66] R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation: The Kandyan Period*, 5-13.

[67] Ibid., 11.

[68] Henley, "Conflict, Justice and the Stranger-King: Indigenous Roots of Colonial Rule in Indonesia and Elsewhere", 112-128.

[69] R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation*, 14-18.

[70] Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom of Sri Lanka 1707-1782*, 206-212.

[71] R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation*, 20-21.

[72] Wagenaar, "Knielen of buigen?", 441-466.

[73] R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation*, 306.

[74] They had a large retinue when they travelled around. Most remarkable must have been the whipcrackers who walked behind them to scare-off the audience. Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom,* 202-205; R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation,* 19-24.

[75] Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom*, 218.

[76] Ibid., 219-221.

[77] Ibid., 224-226.

[78] Ibid., 228-229.

[79] Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900: A Study of Religious Revival and Change*; Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*; Seneviratne, *Rituals of the Kandyan State.*

[80] Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society*, 50-52.

[81] Raymond, "Étude des realtions religieuses entre le Sri Lanka et l'Arakan du XIIe au XVIII Siècle: Documentation historique et Évidences Archéologiques", 479-487. Wagenaar, "Looking for Monks from Arakan", 91-111.

[82] Seneviratne, *Rituals of the Kandyan State*, 89-115.

[83] Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society*, 82-87. Ferguson, "Mulgiri-Gala", 197-235.

[84] Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom*, 241-249.

Notes to Chapter Two

[85] Kotelawele, "The VOC in Sri Lanka, 1658-1796: Social and Economic Change in the Maritime Regions", 417-451.[86] Kotelawele, "Some Aspects of Social Change in the South West of Sri Lanka, c. 1700-1833", 65-83; Arasaratnam, "Elements of Social and Economic Change in Dutch Maritime Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 1658-1796", 35-54.

[87] Arasaratnam, "Dutch Commercial Policy in Ceylon and its Effects on Indo-Ceylon Trade 1790-1750", 109-130. See also Raben, *Batavia and Colombo*, 48-49. On the tax farmers in Jaffna: Arasaratnam, "The Historical Foundation of the Economy of the Tamils of North Sri Lanka", 20.

[88] Wagenaar, *Galle. VOC Vestiging in Ceylon*, 61-64.

[89] Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687*, 130.

[90] Ibid., 120-144. The first tombo registration campaign in Jaffna turned out a failure at first when the inhabitants rebelled against the government: Ibid., 137-139. See also: Kotelawela, "The VOC in Sri Lanka, 1658-1796: Social and Economic Change in the Maritime Regions", 417-451.

[91] Arasaratnam, "Baron van Imhoff and the Dutch Policy in Ceylon", 454-568, and Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies", 3-34.

[92] Ibid. Goonewardena, "Calculating Merchant Rulers and Cultivating Subjects", 1-76.

[93] UB Leiden, manuscript collections. Pamphlet of Casparus de Jongh, *Noodzakelijke verdediging, wederlegging en ophelderinge, voor het belang van de Ned oost ind, comp* [….] (1769), 64: "*lof der pepertuinen".*

[94] Arasaratnam, "Baron van Imhoff and the Dutch Policy in Ceylon", 454-568, and Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies", 3-34.

[95] Burnand, 'Fragments on Ceylon', 442.

[96] Abeyasinghe, "Princes and Merchants: Relations between the Kings of Kandy and the Dutch East India Company in Sri Lanka (1688-1740)", 35-60.

[97] Seneviratne, "The Alien King: The Nayakkers on the Throne of Kandy", 60. Wagenaar, "Looking for Monks from Arakan", 91-111.

[98] Arasaratnam, "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce", 109-127.

[99] More on diplomatic instruments in this period: Wagenaar, "'Met eer en respect': Diplomatieke contacten tussen de VOC-gouverneur in Colombo en het Hof van het Koninkrijk Kandy, 1703-1707", 227-251.

[100] Kotelawele, "The VOC in Sri Lanka 1688-1766: Problems and Policies", 281-320.

[101] Wagenaar, "Knielen of buigen?", 441-466. Schrikker, "Een ongelijke strijd? De oorlog tussen de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de koning van Kandy, 1760-1766". Wickremasekera, *Kandy at War: Indigenous Military Resistance to European Expansion in Sri Lanka, 1594-1818*, 195-200.

[102] The cinnamon plantations are dealt with more extensively in Section 3.2.

[103] Burnand, "Fragments on Ceylon", 443. Falck gained the reputation of a gentle, disinterested governor. In fact, not much was written about him, except in relation to Kandy. However, a fragment of a private letter written by Arnoldus de Lij, commander of Galle in the beginning of the 1770s gives us another impression of Falck "[...] *wat de Ceilonsche zaaken aanbelangt, bemoei mij met niets anders als het aanvertrouwd commandement aanbelangt, ben met de gouverneur, schoon de hoogmoet en de waan wijt loop[end] met de rijkdom accresteert, in redelijke terme* [...]", SLNA, 1/3425.

[104] Abeyasekera, *Romantic Muturajawela, an Eyeful of Bounteous Nature*, 17-37.

[105] Paranavitana and R.K. de Silva, *Maps and Plans of Dutch Ceylon*, 93.

[106] ANRI, HR 3858 *"De gehouden correspondentie met de Gaalse bedienden over en aan den heer kommandeur Sluijsken door hunne Hoog Edelheeden opgedragen kommissie omtrent Diwitoere."* (Correspondence with the servants from Galle about the commission regarding Diviture assigned to the commandor Sluijsken). f. 25: Extract from a despatch written on 23 April 1791 from Colombo to Galle.

[107] Newbury, *Clients Patrons and Empire: Chieftaincy and Over-rule in Asia, Africa and the Pacific,* 265-285.

[108] On the organization of the Company, see Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC*, 66-81.

[109] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. I, lxxxii-lxxxvii.

[110] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. I, lxxxviii-lxxxix.

[111] NA (NL), VOC 3571, 26 January 1781, f. 74, secrete resolutie van Ceilon, despatch to Batavia.

[112] At Tuticorin, on the Madura coast of India, which also fell under the authority of the Ceylon government, a civil servant held the post of chief.

[113] ANRI, HR, 3855, Copia berichten weegens de inkomsten der dienaaren op Ceilon 1790.

[114] Raben, *Batavia and Colombo,* 70. Raben states that from 1680 the *dispens dorpen* were no longer issued to company officials. However, in the list of incomes of the Company officials on the island of 1790, *dispens dorpen* are mentioned: ANRI, HR, 3855.

[115] Jurriaanse, *Catalogue of the Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon*, 5-20.

[116] Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon,* 127: Arasaratnam points out that both Van Goens the elder and the younger, turned rich in the East through moneylending.

[117] SLNA, 25.1/36, correspondence of Alexander Johnstone, letter of the principal Dutch inhabitants to Alexander Johnstone. No date, no folio no, the letter in question was bound between letters written in 1811.

[118] Wagenaar, *Galle*, 45-51.

[119] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, lxxxvii.

[120] On race and status hierarchy in Colombo: Raben, *Batavia and Colombo,* 264-271.

[121] Raben, *Batavia and Colombo*, 66-72.

[122] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. I, xcviii-civ.

[123] Arasaratnam, "The Administrative Organisation of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon", 6.

[124] Unless stated otherwise, this section is based on Arasaratnam, "The Administrative

Organisation of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon", 1-13, and Arasaratnam, "The Dutch administration", 341-356.

[125] On the *paresses* of the cinnamon peelers as example of local influence on the Dutch Colonial political culture: Wagenaar, "'Eerst eenigen tijd versleeten met hunne dansers zien danssen en springen.' Ceylonese compagniesdienaren schrijven over Kaneel en kaneelschillers in 1786", 19-34.

[126] Van Goor, *Jan Kompenie as schoolmaster*, 30-37. For the experience of the Catholics: Perniola, *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka: The Dutch Period*, Vols. 1-4.

[127] Van Goor, *Jan Kompenie as schoolmaster,* 109-121.

[128] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. I, civ-cx; Kotelawele, "The Administration of Justice under the VOC", 356-374.

[129] Kotelawele, "The VOC in Sri Lanka, 1658-1796: Social and Economic Change in the Maritime Regions", 419-422; Paranavitana, *Land for Money: Dutch Landregistration in Sri Lanka*. Land registration was taken up already in 1676 in Jaffna, but stopped after the inhabitants of Jaffna rebelled against the registrations. Van Imhoff was responsible for the revitilization of this practice.

[130] Arasaratnam, "The Indigenous Ruling Class under Colonial Rule in Dutch Maritime Ceylon", 65.

Notes to Chapter Three

[131] Paranavitana and R.K. de Silva, *Maps and Plans of Dutch Ceylon*.

[132] Ibid., 56, 79-80, 87, 93, 120, 130, 136-137, 141, and 142.

[133] Ibid., 65 (Original: NA (NL) Leupe 4.VEL 927).

[134] Ibid., 22-23.

[135] Steur, "Activities of S.C. Nederburgh as Commissioner General (1791-1799)". Van de Graaff was to become director general in Batavia. However, after his arrival in Batavia in 1795, the ruling clique refused to accept him as director general, which resulted in a big row in Batavia. Many letters and other documents still survive, and it is difficult to establish who was right. In any case, after Van de Graaff's return to the Netherlands, all charges against him were cleared. His historic reputation was tarnished by the writings of Nederburgh. In an effort to clear his reputation, the historian Lauts published an article entitled "Willem Jacob van de Graaff" in the *Utrechtse Volksalmanak* of 1846.

[136] *Den illustere broeder die thans het roer van Ceilonsch scheepje bestierd.* Quoted from: SLNA, 1/2792, *"Dagregister gehouden gedurende de ronde in het Koetjaarsche, Tamblegamsche en Kattoekolompattoesche door den onderkoopman D.E. Jacques Fabrice van Senden in 1786"*, f. 31.

[137] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 440, "Schriftuur Sluijsken 1792". No page numbers. Some examples: *"Van de Graaff hoogmoedig genoeg om een grote rol te willen spelen"* and *"Van de Graaff daarentegen, trots in den dienst, hoogmoed, gedwongen en meesterachtig"*.

[138] Thunberg, *Voyages de C.P. Thunberg,* 413.

[139] Ibid.

[140] NA (NL), VOC 3689, 29 December 1785, despatch governor and council to governor-general and council in Batavia, ff. 117-119.

[141] NA (NL), VOC 3692, 14 April 1785, resolution in council to pay out the premiums.

[142] NA (NL), VOC 3843, 20 May 1790, appendix to despatch to Batavia: overview of expenses made in the cinnamon plantations and list of expenses made for the sustenance of the labourers and their tools for the years 1784-1788, ff. 2477-2480.

[143] NA (NL), VOC 3878, 28 January 1793, copia despatch to Batavia, ff. 1948-1949. See also for a reference to the resolution in council and example of such a title deed: NA (NL) Com. tot OI handel 128, 31 July 1794, despatch to Batavia: resolution *Inlandsch departement* 20 September 1793, f. 1080.

[144] It was certainly not only headmen who applied for land to be cultivated. In the resolutions of the *Inlandsch departement* we come across such requests from servants of the Company, Dutch and Portuguese burghers, Moors and other inhabitants of the coast. To

give but some examples: a laskorin who planted 1500 cinnamon trees: NA (NL), VOC 3692, 19 March 1785, resolutions in council; NA (NL), VOC 3726, 9 and 24 May 1786: resolution regarding the request for a piece of land to cultivate with cinnamon by the Moorish woman Slijma Naatje; NA (NL), VOC 3799, 17 August 1788, resolution *Inlandsch departement*, overview of all high grounds given out in the Colombo dessavonie between 9 October 1787 and the end of February 1788.

[145] NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, despatch to Batavia, ff. 299-300.

[146] NA (UK), CO 416/24, "Burnand's papers", 5 February 1809, original of his fragments on Ceylon in French, f. 12.

[147] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 440; on the cover is written: pieces belonging to the memorandum to the governor-general, 1 July 1795. The memorandum in question written by Nederburgh, is found in Collectie Nederburgh 832, complaints about Van de Graaff are expressed from f. 18 onwards. In relation to this, Nederburgh makes explicit references to Sluijsken's writings.

[148] Kanapathypillai, "Helen or Costly Bride", 133-145; Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië,* 50; and Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 415.

[149] Kanapathypillai, "Helen or Costly Bride", 133-145. NA (NL), VOC 3799, 14 February 1788, resolution *Inlandsch departement*, comments of Fretz on Sluijsken's criticism. He emphasized that the *Heren Zeventien* were content with the qualitity of Garden cinnamon. NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, memorandum of Van de Graaff for his successor, 14 July 1794, §50 and 51, Van de Graaff refers in these sections to old samples of the preferred cinnamon in the Netherlands and suggests that such samples could be made once more, to make sure that the best quality was peeled and send home.

[150] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 414.

[151] For example: OIOC G/11/54, memoir of Davy Robertson, f. 158.

[152] NA (NL), HR 586, notes of the High Government in the margins of Van de Graaff's memorandum, made in Spring 1797. See the comments in margins of §38.

[153] Steur, "Activities of S.C. Nederburgh as commissioner general (1791-1799)", and Schutte, "De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën", 150-163. The mission failed to set reforms as they intended, but later in 1802 and 1803, Nederburgh influenced the formulation of new colonial policies; his advice was based on his experiences in Java in this period.

[154] SLNA, 1/4959, 5 May 1794, Letter from the commissioners general (Nederburgh and Frijkenius) and Governor Alting and Director general Siberg to Governor Van de Graaff; 21 April 1795, answer from Governor J.G. van Angelbeek.

[155] Expenses:

1779/80	*f*1,197,210.9.4	1786/87	*f* 1,532,955.19.–
1780/81	*f* 1,363,332.15.8	1787/88	*f* 1,677,319.10.8
1781/82	*f* 1,400,787.17.8	1788/89	*f* 1,820,346.7.12
1782/83	*f* 1,641,204.–.–	1789/90	*f* 1,497,326.10.8
1783/84	*f* 1,667,008.17.8	1790/91	*f* 1,675,380.12.12
1784/85	*f* 1,503,564.8.8	1791/92	*f* 1,900,982.18.–
1785/86	*f* 1,607,378.19.4		

[156] Soon after the arrival of the Luxemburg regiment, colonel Hugonet and Van de Graaff started to fight over who controlled the army on the island. NA (NL), VOC 3720, 26 July 1786, f. 62 and onwards separate letter of Van de Graaff to Batavia; NA (NL) 3691, 18 March 1786, ff. 909-914, despatch to the chamber Zeeland (responsible for the military recruitment); NA (NL), 3692, resolution 30 June 1785 (among others) on all sorts of irregularities among the troops, reports of fights between Dutch soldiers and members of the Luxemburg regiment.

[157] NA (NL), VOC 3689, *extract patriaasche missiven* 18 November 1786, ff. 159-160. Just after the war, the *Heren Zeventien* urged the Ceylon government to cut expenses. However, they acknowledged that this was a difficult task, because the military establishment was now larger than ever. They expressed the hope that at least the income could be increased.

[158] SLNA, 1/4959, 21 April 1795, Governor Van Angelbeek to Batavia.

Income under Falck	1779/80	*f* 652,340.3.–
	1780/81	*f* 556,252.18.8

	1781/82	*f* 419,385.17.8
	1782/83	*f* 641,491.3.8
	1783/84	*f* 938,228.6.–
Income under Van de Graaff	1784/85	*f* 642,770.1.8
	1785/86	*f* 809,302.15.–
	1786/87	*f* 793,749.17.8
	1787/88	*f* 822,283.1.–
	1788/89	*f* 861712.13.4
	1789/90	*f* 895,959.8.8
	1790/91	*f* 981,979.5.–
	1791/92	*f* 954,575.2.–

Van Angelbeek pointed out that the year 1783/84 had to be considered as an exception, because over 300,000 guilders were earned by selling the goods of the stranded ship *De Overduin*, which had been bound for Malabar.

[159] Van Angelbeek must have been well aware that the government of Batavia was in possession of all documents regarding the finances up to this period, and thus it is not likely that he falsified the numbers. On the other hand, it is not entirely clear what they are based on. This is not of real importance here though, as it is clear enough that both expenses and income were increasing.

[160] Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië,* 209-223.

[161] On the Japanese copper trade and the British competition in India with copper from Europe, see Shimada, *Intra-Asian Trade in Japanese Copper,* 65-129.

[162] See for the papers of the military commission: NA (NL), VOC 10022-4; VOC 3843, NA (NL) Collection Ver Huell 21-32; SLNA, 1/4960-5965.

[163] NA (NL) Com. tot OI Handel 128, 31 July 1794 ff. 857-879, Governor and council to Batavia, answer to despatch from the Netherlands 26 November 1792, with criticism on military expenses.

[164] Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*, 73-122 and 218-223. Unfortunately the exchanges between the Dutch factories in staple goods like arrack, rice and salt are missing from her analysis. Only the sugar trade receives attention. Perhaps it was impossible to include this in her research, but it is certainly a topic waiting to be explored.

[165] SLNA, 1/2159, 1 September 1791, f. 218: Jaffna to Colombo; SLNA, 1/1795, letter from Nagel in the Vanni about the elephant trade written 1792.; SLNA, 1/2710, 2 April 1793, memorandum commandeur of Jaffna Bartolomeus Raket for his successor, f. 13.

[166] NA (NL), VOC 3692, 3 March 1785, resolution in council regarding rice delivered by various traders: Tranchell, the Jew Hain Gabaij, "an Armenian merchant" and "a banker". Blume's proposal: NA (NL), VOC 3573, resolution 17 March 1780. On deliveries by Graaf van Bijland, chief of Sadraspatnam: NA (NL), VOC 3692, resolution 24 June 1785. Conradi was a regular provider of rice: NA (NL), VOC 3842, 7 May 1790, despatch to Batavia, ff. 2557-2558.

[167] The rice prices in the 1780s in Madras were also exceptionally high because of droughts, bad harvests and warfare. Ajuha, "Labour Relations in an Early Colonial Context", 817-818.

[168] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*; between 1766 and 1784 Falck issued 100 *plakkaten*, while Van de Graaff issued the same amount in nine years.

[169] Wijnanaendts van Resandt, *De gezaghebbers der Oost-Indische Compagnie op haren buiten comptoiten in Azië*, 83-84.

[170] SLNA, 1/2707, 12 June 1784, memorandum of the commander of Galle Arnoldus de Lij for his successor Willem Jacob van de Graaff, ff. 1-16.

[171] SLNA, 1/3425 (Buultjens), letters written by Arnoldus de Lij in 1773 and SLNA, 1/2707, 12 June 1784, ff. 1-16.

[172] SLNA, 1/5083, 16 November 1784, minutes of the political council of Galle: *"miserabele en hulpeloose menschen, en daaronder verschijde met besmettelijke ziektens, die hier en daar langs de publike weegens leggen te beedelen, en veel al op een beklaagelijke wijze omkomen".*

[173] SLNA, 1/2707, De Lij speaks of the *Gaalse ziekte,* but from his description, a swollen

scrotum and thick legs, venereal disease seems more likely. Another possibility is that he was dealing with an outburst of elephantiasis, a disease that was still present in that area in the nineteenth century. Perhaps Van de Graaff's measures against the prostitutes were inspired by Thunberg, who complained about the bad hygiene in the garrisons and towns and pointed at the negative influence of the prostitutes. Thunberg, *Voyages de C.P. Thunberg,* Vol. 2, 457.

[174] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, plakkaat 575: hygienic regulation about the treatment and location of cattle for slaughtering.

[175] SLNA, 1/5082, 20 October 1784, minute of the Galle political council.

[176] SLNA, 1/1383, 23 June 1784, Van de Graaff from Galle to the political council in Colombo.

[177] SLNA, 1/5082, minutes of the Galle political council July-october 1784.

[178] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* plakkaat 578; see also NA (NL), VOC 3692, 10 February 1785, resolution: in this way the lack of expertise among the headmen could be checked.

[179] Ibid., plakkaat 611: this is a plakkaat for Colombo, but Hovy points out in a note that this proclamation was based on a *sannas* issued in Galle on 4 August 1784.

[180] See also Section 2.1 on the Dutch use of *oeliam* services.

[181] SLNA, 1/5082, 20 October 1784, minute of the council of Galle.

[182] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, plakkaat 608.

[183] Ibid., plakkaat 608: extensive regulation for the police 28 December 1786; plakkaat 609: improved instructions for the quarter, or neighbourhood, masters.

[184] Ibid., plakkaat 635 regarding the widows and orphans. NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 129, 18 February 1795, ff. 1229-1230 despatch to Batavia. On the small pox inoculation: Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, plakkaat 646, January 1791; first reference to inoculation: SLNA, 1/193, 22 June 1786, minute political council Ceylon, also refers to recent epidemic that killed 800.

[185] NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, f. 302, despatch to Batavia.

[186] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, plakkaat 586; the plakkaat counts 33 sections in total.

[187] Ibid., plakkaat 586: sections 1 and 2.

[188] Ibid., plakkaat 586.

[189] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, plakkaat 615.

[190] NA (NL), VOC 3799, 7 August 1788, ff. 44-62, resolution *Inlandsch departement*: report of Fretz on land and gardens given out to be cultivated between 9 October 1787 and February 1788.

[191] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, 15 July 1794, memorandum of Governor Van de Graaff for his successor. *"§53: In het geen van ouds de Kolombosche dessavonij heeft uitgemaakt, is de vordering daar in wel niet groote. Met de kanneel kulture is deeze dessavonij verscheide jaaren veel te doen geweest. Daar toe heeft heel veel volk moeten worden gebruikt, en heeft dus in dezelve ter bevordering der nelie kultuure wijnig buitengewoons kunnen worden gedaan."*

[192] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, plakkaat 611.

[193] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, plakkaat 628.

[194] NA (NL), VOC 3692, 10 February 1785, resolution in council regarding the native headmen. This resolution shows that this was the explicit intention of Van de Graaff.

[195] Van Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast*; Kwee, *Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast*; and Ota, *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java*.

[196] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, Vol. 2, plakkaat 563 on the taxation on transport of coconuts. The commander of Galle, the dessava of Colombo and the dessava of Matara all received considerable percentages on the arrack and coir taxes: ANRI, HR, 3855 "Statement of income of all company's officials 1790". See the statement of Kraijenhof for Galle, Fretz for Colombo and Christiaan van Angelbeek for Matara. Coir or coconut fibre was used to make ropes and sails for the Company's Ships.

[197] Roberts, *Caste, Conflict and Elite Formation,* 84-89.

[198] Kotelawele, "Some Aspects of Social Change", 97.

[199] This continued in the nineteenth century. Burnand, "Fragments on Ceylon", 560, states how the headmen started building houses in the European manner, and burned wax

candles in silver candlesticks instead of the oil lamp. The headmen made a very rich impression on Robert Andrews, the first British commissioner for the revenues: NA (UK), CO 416/22/H10, 10/5 1796, Andrews to Madras.

[200] SLNA, 1/5082, 20 October 1784, minutes of the council of Galle, decision to go ahead with the plan; NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, f. 301, despatch to Batavia §244&245: positive remarks about the progress in Diviture.

[201] ANRI, HR, 3858, 23 April 1791, f. 25 extract from a despatch from Colombo to Galle; NA (NL), VOC 3840, 12 January 1789, ff. 1983-2073; NA (NL), VOC 3799, 21 October 1788, ff. 63-147 resolution *Inlandsch departement*: includes report of the committee, the angry response of Kraijenhof and the comments of the political council and decision to send out a second committee.

[202] These problems of credit would be a very interesting subject of study. It lasted to well in the twentieth century. For a literary impression on the problems of credit, see Woolf, *The Village in the Jungle.*

[203] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 448, unknown author, no date (1792?) ff. 7-8: *"Maar dat de §530 voorgestelde toe eijgening van de ingenieurs, smeeden, oeliassen en 18 famillies van kolenbranders gedurende den tijd van 10 jaren buijtensporig is."*

"Dat hoe loffelijk ook het gedrag van Abbesinge, daar bij deese menschen woonplaatsen aangeweesen en hun door zagte behandeling §533 van een swervend leeven afgetrokken, tot goede ingeseetenen hebbe gemaakt, ook zijn, of schijnen moogen, deese lieden egter niet aan de familie van Abbesinge overgegeven dienen te werden; maar beschout als waare ondersaten der Ed. Comp."

[204] NA (NL), VOC 3840, 12 January 1789, f. 2045.

[205] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, Vol. 2, plakkaat 595.

[206] ANRI, HR, 3855, statement of the income dessava of Colombo (Fretz).

[207] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 444, 21 March 1795, Van de Graaff to the Commissioners General. Among other things, he discusses his policy to have pepper and coffee produced by the natives: *"uit hoofde van hun verplichte landsdienst"* on the basis of their service tenures. It goes rather slowly, but is costless at the same time, the only thing needed is the installation of some *"opzienders"* (supervisors).

[208] NA (NL), VOC 3838, 24 April 1789, ff. 976-978.

[209] NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, ff. 203-205, despatch to Batavia, discussing the appointment of lieutenant Mitman as supervisor of the agriculture in the Colombo dessavony.

[210] Some references to the work of the civil engineers, Walhberg and Foenander in the periphery: NA (NL), VOC 3878, 28 January 1793, ff. 1936-1942; NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 128, 31 July 1794, ff. 883-884, on Foenander and the Giant's tank; Ibid., ff. 1122-1130, on Foenander and Walhberg, and Diviture. The projects in the periphery are discussed in Chapter Four.

[211] ANRI, HR 3852 (the description in the catalogue is incorrect, the contents of the bundle bearing this number concurs with the description of 3851), 19 April 1790, resolution in council of Galle. The first reports on the complaints of the rebels state that they talked *"over verscheide onrechtvaardigheeden die tans de ingezeetenen aangedaan worden, zeggende dat zij zelvs geen tijd hebben om aan zeegen die hun door het floreeren der velden is toegevallen, en het geen zij aan den goede order en bestelling van den tegenswoordigen Heer dessave verschuldigd zijn met rust te genieten, wijl zij geduurig moeten werken in de kaneel plantagies nu een svan den Wel Edelen Grootachtbaaren heer Gouverneur, dan van welgemelde heer dessave of ook wel van de modliaars en andere hoofden. Hier op gedagte drie perzoonenen zich stilhoudende kwam er een groot geroep als uijt eenen monde, Je verswijgt niet dat wij ook moeten werken in de kanneel thuijn van de arraatjes."*

[212] Ibid.

[213] SLNA, 1/2159, 1791 correspondences Inlandsch departement; NA (NL), VOC 3842, 1790 ff 2514-2565, various reports and letters; NA (NL), Collectie Alting 82-83, letters from Sluijsken, mostly relating to the rebellion; NA (NL), HR 596-597, 1790-1791, 2 reports on the rebellion: one by Sluijsken and one by Fretz and Samlant; ANRI, HR 3852 (confused in catalogue with 3851).

[214] An example of Sluijsken's patronage in Galle: SLNA, 1/2161, 28 March 1793, ff. 18-

19. Case of Andries Fernando Jajewardene vidahn arrachi, headman of the barber caste in the Galle *corle*. He had been a loyal caste-headman since the commandership of de Lij. But when Sluijsken took office he brought his own confidant, named Gabidja from Colombo and discharged Fernando Jayawardene and appointed this Gabidja as headman. Furthermore, Gabidja accused him of witchcraft, which he was supposed to have employed to get rid of Gabidja.

[215] NA (UK), CO 54/31, despatch Governor Maitland to London 1809, f. 141.

[216] ANRI, HR 3855, no folio, statement of Fretz on the income of the dessava of Colombo, 1790.

[217] De Bruijn and Raben, eds, *The World of Jan Brandes, 1743-1808,* 239-241.

[218] On the endeavours of Von Ranzow: SLNA, 1/2708, memorandum of chief of Kalpetty Von Ranzow for his successor: remarks on his cotton plantations f. 34; NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, 15 July 1794, memorandum Van de Graaff for his successor, §133. Other examples NA (NL), VOC 3841, 27 January 1790, f. 2174 on the sale of the plantation of dessava De Cock. NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, f. 304, on the sales of the plantation of Lieutenant Rudolf.

[219] Bertolacci, *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon,* 32.

[220] NA (NL), Collectie Alting 93, writing of Sluijsken 1796. *"Op het aller onverwagts wierden de hier voorengem. Bartolomeus de Zilva, Don Daniel Perera, Simon De Silva, Don Gregorius, gearresteerd en beschuldigd dat eenige pasquillen tegens den Heer Gouverneur zoude hebben gemaakt en op de weegen verstrooijt: zonder verhoord gecondemneerd verzonden te worde NB naderhand sijn even gelijk libellen op de algemeene weegen nog verstrooijt gevonden geworden. De Mohotiaar na Jaffenapatnam en d'drie anderen na Trinkonomale als suspecte perzoonen: en waardoor men dus de commandeur Sluijsken de geleegenheijd meende afgesneeden te hebben, van eenig vertrouweling meer te hebben, ider was zeeker verschrokken over deeze wreede handelinge en nog te meer daar men verspreijde commandeurs voorspraak: die zig egter alleen bepaald hadde tot zijne dinaar den gem: mohandiram der wilsdschutters Simon de Zilva welke commandeurs partikuliere zaaken behandelde en met wien hij commandeur bijna een reekening van 40 duijzend rds hadde: geen het minste gehoor in deezen hadden gevonden."*

[221] Neild-Basu, "The Dubashes of Madras", 4-9; and Arasaratnam, "Trade and Political Dominion in South India, 1750-1790", 19-40.

[222] Bertolacci, *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon,* 32-33.

[223] Roberts, *Caste Conflict and Elite Formation,* 83.

[224] NA (NL), Collectie Alting 93, writings of Sluijsken 1796. *"Bij desselfd afsterven hadde Abesinge den Mahamodliaar de Saram, den attepattoe Modliaar te Gale* [...] *den vrijkoopman Philip Simon de Waas, zijne twee nagelaatene zoon Balthazar en* [...] *neffens de modliaar der vissers Renaldus de Anderado, tot executeurs sijne uijterste wille aangestelt, en benoemt, en die dan ook immediant, tot sekerheid van alles te kunnen opneemen en nagaan, eene generaal beseegeling van alles hebben gedaan."*

[225] SLNA, 1/5082, 20 October 1784, minutes council Galle; SLNA, 1/5084, 30 December 1784, minutes council Galle; NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, §120-123.

[226] NA (NL), VOC 3692, resolution 4 June 1785, yearly memorandum on debtors: this lists *mudaliyār*s, Moors, *Chetties*, Dutch and Portuguese Burghers, and people bearing Portuguese names (Karāva or other coastal inhabitants). About frauds of company officials with the tax farms: Bartolomeus Raket was a major example in this period, his case is discussed below. NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 129, 18 February 1795, ff. 1303-1321, despatch to Batavia.

[227] SLNA, 1/5082 & 5083, 16 November 1784, minutes political council Galle.

[228] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, plakkaat 622.

[229] See Chapter Four.

[230] On the landtombo: NA (NL), VOC 3571, 26 January 1781, f. 387, despatch to Batavia; SLNA, 1/179, 29 July 1779, minutes of the political council Colombo.

[231] This committee was composed of Nagel, Ebell, Williamsz, and Mooijaart. About the reasons for the instalment of the committee and the consequent devepments: NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 129, 18 February 1795, ff. 1303-1321, despatch to Batavia. For the

report drawn up by the committee see SLNA, 1/6816, 30 June 1794.

[232] NA (NL), VOC 3693, resolution 2 August 1785: about Waitelinge as renter; Ibid., resolution 3 September 1785 about Ritna Singa as renter.

[233] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, plakkaat 589. His doubts about the low rate of the tax farms in Jaffna: NA (NL), 3693, resolution 3 September 1785.

[234] NA (NL), VOC 3693, resolution 2 August 1785. More on the developments in the Vanni in Section 5.5.

[235] NA (NL), Collectie Alting 72, fragments of letters and private correspondence between Bartolomeusz Raket and Adriaan Moens. He complains often about Van de Graaff's policies.

[236] SLNA, 1/6816, 30 June 1794, report of the Nagel, Ebell, Williamsz, and Mooijaart committee.

[237] NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 129, 18 February 1795, ff. 1303-1321.

[238] SLNA, 1/2887, 26 December 1794: Raket's defence. NA (NL), Collectie Alting 72, see the many bitter letters written in 1794 and 1795 by Raket regarding his impeachment and answers from Moens of an equally bitter tone.

[239] The investigation report of Burnand and Mekern: SLNA, 1/2932, 1 December 1795; the advice of Mekern: SLNA, 1/2875; Van Angelbeek's comments on Mekern's recommendations and ideas on improvement: SLNA, 1/2796.

[240] SLNA, 1/2875 and 1/2796.

[241] Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch in South-West Ceylon". Governor Van Imhoff installed *landraden* (landcourts) and started with a large land and people registration campaign in the southwest and in Jaffna.

[242] The ruins of ancient water tanks and irrigation systems were spread around these peripheral regions. For the Dutch and later the British this proved that these regions could successfully be brought into cultivation.

Notes to Chapter Four

[243] NA (NL),VOC 3689, 29 December 1785, ff. 117-119, despatch to Batavia: the lack of rice has forced the governor to decrease the amount of labourers on the cinnamon plantations from 1,100 to 300. NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, ff. 203-205. There is still not enough rice to continue the work in the plantations at full force.

[244] NA (NL), VOC 3689, 28 January 1786, f. 225, despatch to Batavia: overview of the revenue of rice in: Colombo dessāvony, Muturajawela, Gale, Matara, Jaffnapatnam, manar Kalpettij and Chilaw. Ibid., f. 303, on the amount of rice coming from Batticaloa.

[245] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek*, Vol. 2, plakkaat 586 § 6.

[246] SLNA, 1/2159, Galle to Colombo 4 November 1793, f. 81: "The Manioc was planted in various gardens in the Galle *corle* and in Matara and is growing well. However the natives were at first not charmed by the root, and the reason thereof was that in the description of the preparation of the root the dangers of wrong preparation were also discussed and scared them. They have made a new description, and now some of the natives have planted the root in their garden, which is a good sign"; SLNA, 1/1795, 1791-1792: letters from the Vanni: Nagel writes to Van de Graaff how his attempts to plant the manioc failed. Moreover, he writes that the inhabitants were not particularly interested in the root, for in cases of rice shortage, they already used roots they found in the forests. (Nagel also remarked that he particularly liked the taste of "Allekanlenga" and "Kawelie" that remind him of the taste of potatoes. The bears also have a liking for these roots.)

[247] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, §81.

[248] SLNA, 1/2813-2816, papers referring to the restorations of tanks in the Vanni and plans for the repair of the Giant's tank by Foenander. NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 128, 31 July 1794, ff. 1132: reporting that the tank of Kantelai has been mapped out by the land surveyor Struis.

[249] See Sections 3.9 and 4.1 on the rebellion.

[250] This part is largely based on my previous article, "Grenzen aan de beschavingen: de reis van Jacques Fabrice van Senden door het achterland van Trincomale in 1786".

[251] SLNA, 1/2792, *Dagregister gehouden geduurende de ronde, in het Koetjaarsche, Tamblegamsche en Kattoekolompattoesch, door den onderkoopman D.E. Jacques Fabrice van Senden, waarneemende het gezach te Trinkonomale in den jaere 1786.* (Diary kept by the *onderkoopman* Jacques Fabrice van Senden during his tour in Kottiyar, Tamblegam and Katukolompattu in the year 1786), f. 30. There are two other copies in the National Archives in The Hague: NA (NL), HR 537 and NA (NL), Collectie Van Braam 199.

[252] I used the literal transcription of the names of these headmen. The same goes for the place names in the text. The title *vanniyār* refers to the time when the area fell under the Kingdom of Kandy. The king of Kandy appointed the *vanniyārs* as provincial headmen at the outskirts his Kingdom, therefore they enjoyed relatively great autonomous power.

[253] The village Moedoer is probably the contemporary town Muttur, but for sake of clarity I use Van Senden's naming of villages and settlements.

[254] SLNA, 1/2792, Wednesday 24 May, f. 8 *"tot het beeter gebruik maaken van het geen de natuur hem en zijn volk zo mildelijk schonk".*

[255] Another example is found in his description of Oemenagere, a settlement with fourteen adult men. He decided to explain to these men how to make a simple harrow. If they used the harrow, ploughing the fields would require fewer buffalos and less time and manpower. In that way the village would create a surplus, the profit of which after sales would benefit the local population. SLNA, 1/2792, f. 5.

[256] *"hier is een kleijne pagood die niets bijzonders heeft dan de Bramineeschen priester die een liefhebber van pooten en planten zijnde, eene gedeelten van de leedige plaats welke gewoonlijk bij de pagooden is, met limoenboomen en andere vrugtboomen beplant heefd"*, SLNA, 1/2792, f. 22.

[257] SLNA, 1/2792, Sunday 11 June, f. 23: *"voor niemand dan boschmensen gemaakt."*

[258] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 23: *"mijne laskorijns op het gezigt van den eersten oliphant zig reeds regts en links zoodanig in 't bosch geworpen hadden, dat zij alle, door de doornen gekwetst er uijtkwamen."*

[259] For example on 18 May: SLNA, 1/2792, f. 3: *"*[...] *Schoon mijn onpasselijkheijd voortduurede en mij voornamelijk door swakheijd in de beenen en een volkoomene verdooving in de toppen der vingeren zeer sterk kwelde* [...]."

[260] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 19: *"en de schakering van het ligtgroen der velden die niet afgemaaijd zijn, het hooij geel dier geenen die hunnen bewerken reeds voldaan hebben, en het donkergroen der boomen, roemd een dier vertooningen, die ons, gelijk in alles, de meerderheijd der natuur boven de kunst vertoond."*

[261] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 2: *"door de voor eenige jaaren geheerste buikloop en kinderziekte het land ontvolkt was* [...] *en elk der weijnig overgebleevene niet meer bebouwen dan hij in een jaar noodig had."*

[262] Van Senden speaks about *buikloop* (diarrhoea) and *kinderziekten* (children's diseases). The first could refer to dysentery, the second is more problematic. Considering the fact that the region is now known to be malaria-prone, it is possible that this children's disease was actually endemic malaria: the death rate among children during a malaria epidemic can mount to fifty percent, those who survive built up a resistance against malaria, provided they are stung by the malaria mosquito regularly. This also explains why Van Senden perceived the adult population as healthy. Henley, *Fertility, Food, Fever: Population, Economy and Environment in North and Central Sulawesi, 1600-1930*, 261-264. See also: Van der Burg, *Malaria en malaise. De VOC in Batavia in de achttiende eeuw,* 74.

[263] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 7: *"Na lang prevelen trad een stok oud man die weinig hoop had van de vrugten te eeten, voor en zeijde met een laggend gezicht: waarom zouden wij die moeijte doen, onze grootvaders en vaders hebben het nooijt gedaan. Het geen door allen beaamd wierd."*

[264] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 23. See also other stories regarding the washerwoman, Ibid., f. 21. Van Senden intended to collect the stories: "*van deese wassersvrouw worden zoo veel wonderlijke dingen verhaald, dat ik gelast heb er een verzameling van te maeken, te meer ik reeds verscheijde wonderstukken gezien heb, die haar toegeschreeven worden."* Van Senden not only collected the stories about the washerwoman, he also received a transcript of all the information regarding the Kantelai tank, and sent the pieces to Jaffna to have them translated. Ibid., f. 22.

[265] SLNA, 1/2792, Thursday 8 June, f. 20: *"smorgens 10 minuten over half 5 uuren vertrok ik van Kooij Koedieroeppoe na het berugte en door geen Mallabaren zonder schrik genoemd wordende Kandelaaij. Alles was aangewend om het mij te beletten; waerschouwingen, vermaeningen en het geen het ergste was; aanhaalingen van een meenigte voorbeelden, die ik wist maar al te waarachtig te zijn, van nieuwsgierigen, die kort na de bezoeking gestorven of nimmer van kweijnende ziektens hersteld waaren, dog niets hielp; het nut van de Kandalaaijsche tank, voor den landbouw van de provintsie Tamblegammo was te gewigtig, dan dat ik dit beroemde werk niet met eijgen oogen zoude gaan zien.-Voor den berugten duijvel Poedem, die als dienaar van den koning Kollekooten de beschoeijing van den tank in zes dagen gemaakt heefd en de zelve als nog moet bewaeren, was ik niet bang, dog wel voor de papjes en kookzeltijes der bij geloovigen* [...]."

[266] SLNA, 1/2972, f. 21 "*gelijk ik dagt, door menschen gemaekt, schoon zij het de geesten toeschreeven."*

[267] SLNA, 1/2972, f. 22.

[268] SLNA, 1/2972, f. 24, Wednesday 14 June. Because this man had a wife and children, he proposed that they would have the right to the fields on which his body parts were to fall down. His fellow country men accepted his offer and the bravery of the victim. He was crushed against the cliffs by the strong force of the water and parts of his body stranded at various places and were returned to his wife and children. Though because for practical reasons they preferred to have one piece of land joined together, they chose the field on which his right arm landed (because that hand had worked to open the tank) and as many fields surrounding it as they had found parts of his body. *"Zijn lands lieden namen het beding aan en den braven Tamblegammer wierd, zijn vaderland gered hebbende, het slagtoffer zijner grootmoedigheijd; hij wierd door den sterken drang van water tusschen de klippen vermorseld en de deelen van zijn lichaam kwamen op verscheijde plaatsen aandrijven, die ook werkelijk aan zijn vrouw en kinderen toegeweesen wierden, dog deze om het gemak wille, liever alles bij een willende hebben, verzogt en verkreegen het veld, waar op / zeeker, wijl die het werktuig der openening van de tang gevoerd had/ den regter arm aangedreeven was en zoo veel velden rondom dit, als er stukken van zijn lighaam gevonden wierden."* Van Senden emphasized that he was not sure whether the story was true, but it seemed that some of the elderly had been acquainted with the washerman's children, though in Van Senden's time none of his descendants were still alive. Quote in text: *"Om de eer van het menschdom wenschte ik het geval als waaragtig te kunnen boekstaven, het op een steen te laaten uijtsnijden in verschillende taalen en er onder aan te schrijven met Gulde letteren <u>Welk een man! Welk een vader! doch voor al welk een meede burger!</u>"*

[269] NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 128, 31 July 1794, despatch to Batavia, f. 1132.

[270] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, §52 and 53.

[271] This point is made by Arasaratnam in his article "The Vanniar of North Ceylon".

[272] NA (NL), VOC 3571, despatch to Batavia, 26 January 26, ff. 390-393; NA (NL), 3573, resolution 7 March 1780. More extensively about this operation SLNA, 1/1296, minutes of the policital council of Jaffna, March-August 1780.

[273] NA (NL), VOC 3692, resolution 26 April 1785 and NA (NL) VOC 3693, resolution 2 August 1785.

[274] NA (NL), HR 585, *"Memorie over den staat der Wannijsche landen [...]",* 23/5 1793.

[275] One parrah of paddy equals twenty-eight pounds. Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, appendix 1.

[276] NA (UK), 55/1, 2 August 1796, f. 137: "List of Company servants in the Vanni in need of subsistence". Next to their names and functions their background is mentioned. Most are called "of Portuguese native descent", but bear typical Dutch names like Jan Anthony Twekkerts or Johan Carel de Hoed.

[277] The Jaffnanese laws and customs, called *Thesalavami,* were codified by Governor Simons in 1706. Nadaraja, *The Legal System of Ceylon in its Historical Setting* , 13.

[278] NA (NL), HR 585, *"Memorie over den staat der Wannijsche landen [...]"*, 23/5 1793. 16-17. No folio-numbers are given in the document. In my transcription I numbered the pages myself, these are the page-numbers referred to.

[279] NA (NL), HR 585, 31. Blom, *Verhandelingen van den Landbouw in de colonie Suriname*, a popular title in the Netherlands at the time. See Sens, *"Mensaap, heiden,*

slaaf", 28, 100, 122.

[280] Slaves would have been expensive and there was great risk that they would flee to the Kandyan Kingdom. That is why he had to use salaried labourers from the area. NA (NL), HR 585, 31-33.

[281] Arasaratnam, "The Vanniar of North Ceylon". He uses the term feudal to define the relationship of the *vanniyārs* with their subjects.

[282] NA (UK), CO 54/42, 26 February - 29 March 1812, f. 74 no date. The circumstances were: war with England, no ships to Holland, disastrous events in Switzerland, bankruptcy of his agent Ritmeyer in Amsterdam, and finally, the French occupation of the Netherlands rendered his investments in public funds worthless. See also the introduction to Burnand's "Fragments on Ceylon", 440. He was looked at with "utmost respect by the Europeans and native inhabitants".

[283] NA (UK), CO 54/125, f. 655. Unlike Nagel's memorandum, Burnand's memorandum was not supposed to be sent to Colombo, Batavia or elsewhere, nor was it written to sell a plan or to secure a career. It was meant only to inform his successor. In comparison with Nagel, Burnand gives more detailed descriptions of his policies and goes into the practical aspects of ruling the district in depth. It is a long and extensive document covering about three hundred pages.

[284] NA (UK) CO 416/24, f. 131. Although the memorandum is divided in five paragraphs, the composition of the document is not that different from the one written by Nagel: Burnand starts with an introduction on the ancient history of the island and the state of the district under the Kandyan government until 1766. Next he discusses the changes which the government undertook during Francke's term of office. He then goes on to explain the measures he took during his own administration, followed by an overview of the civil service in the district. Finally he discusses the plans he made for improvement of the district in the future.

[285] Burnand speaks even of 2,000 *lasten* in his fragments (= 150,000 *parras*).

[286] NA (UK) CO 416/24, f. 168.

[287] Ibidem, ff. 139-140.

[288] Ibidem, f. 147.

[289] Idem and Ibidem, f. 203. James Cordiner, *A Description of Ceylon*, 350: one of the descriptions of a journey made by Thomas Christie from Batticaloa to Matara gives evidence of Burnand's irrigation works.

[290] Such categorization of people is a subject of research in itself, for which this memoir could serve well as a practical example.

[291] NA (UK), CO 416/24, f. 177.

[292] Ibid., ff. 155-157 and 189.

[293] Ibid., f. 175. In fact, he states that the native servants wish to be treated that way and that they are "being respectfull and obedient *pro rato* the severity with which they are treated when found guilty of an offence for they are regardless to a more gentle and indulgent treatment".

[294] Ibid., f. 177.

[295] Ibid., ff. 167, 217 and 218 (praise); Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. 2, plakkaat 595 and 596, and NA (NL), VOC 3692, resolutions 27 February 1785 and 26 April 1785.

[296] NA (UK), CO 416/24, ff. 184-186.

[297] Ibid., ff. 197-199.

Notes to Chapter Five

[298] For a recent and extensive discussion of this period in Dutch history, see Van Sas, *De Metamorfose van Nederland,* 67-399.

[299] Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914,* 286. He emphasizes the continuity of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment with seventeenth-century intellectual developments with leading philosophers and scholars like Locke and Grotius.

[300] Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind,* 214.

[301] Pitts, *A Turn to Empire,* 25-58, on Adam Smith on development; Pagden, *Lords of All the World,* 113; on Quesnay and his ideal of the agrarian nation.

[302] Sens, *"Mensaap, heiden, slaaf".* See also her recent article, "Dutch Debates on Overseas Man and his World, 1770-1820". Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind,* 214-221. Schutte, "De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën", 1-6.

[303] Sens, *"Mensaap, heiden, slaaf"*, 129-135, and Marshall and Williams, *Great Map of Mankind*, 128-155, 299-305.

[304] Schutte, "De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën", 103. For a discussion of the plans for the organizational and financial improvement see: Steur, *Herstel of ondergang.*

[305] Oostindie, "Same Old Song?", 179-193.

[306] Van Zonneveld, "Een échte antikoloniaal", 19-29. This may be explained by the fact that Haafner published these accounts between 1806 and 1810, when the Batavian Republic was at war with the British. The work of Haafner is curious, in particular his stories of Ceylon; they read more like adventure novels than as real travel accounts. Van Zonneveld also emphasizes the influence of early Romanticism on his work. Between 1992 and 1997 the Linschoten Vereeniging published all Haafner's writings in De Moor and Van der Velde, *De werken van Jacob Haafner*.

[307] Drescher, "The Long Goodbye", 25-67, and Oostindie, "Introduction", 1-25.

[308] Sens, "Dutch Antislavery Attitudes in a Decline-Ridden Society, 1750-1815", 89-105.

[309] Bataviaasch Genootschap voor Kunsten en Wetenschap, a detailed study of which is in Groot, V*an de Grote Rivier naar het Koningsplein*.

[310] Schutte, "De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën", 214-216.

[311] Ibid. Studies on early nineteenth-century ideology: Schutte, "Winds of Change", 154-163; Van Goor, "Continuity and Change"; Schrieke, "The Native Rulers", 185-186. About the plans and policies of Dirk van Hogendorp: Van Niel, "Dutch Views and Uses of British Policy in India around 1800", and Paasman, "Het onvolmaakte paradijs", 30-51.

[312] NA (NL), Collectie Van Braam 115, 30 December 1785: *"Den grooten Venalon, in zijne Telemachus, den cardinaal Alberonie, in zijn testament politique en d'abt Reijnaal, in zijne histoire politique en Philospique bewijsen ons alle, dat het de pligt is van alle regenten, om hunne ondergeschikte aan te moedigen, tot de commercie en den landbouw zij pretendeeren, dat deese twee takken, de bron des overvloeds in een land zijn zij zeggen al verder, door deese in vleur (bloei) te brengen, 't eenigste middel is, om een land magtig en bloeijend te maken, en wijsen al verder aan hoe noodsakelijk 't is, het volk door beloning daar toe te animeeren. Men pretendeert dat alle regerende vorsten in Europa dit politique systeme reeds hebben aangenomen. Het eijland Ceijlon, is algemeen bekend, seer vrugtbaar te weesen, 't legd onder een seer gelukkiglijk climaat, d'inwoonders zoude niet soo als tegenwoordig aan alles gebrek hebben indien men d'handen aan 't werk wilden slaan, om van dit eiland haar vrugtbaarheid gebruik te maaken."*

[313] Among the rest of the letters in this bundle we find his curriculum vitae and direct demand for promotion, descriptions of the islands government and ideas for improvement.

[314] The book was not only of his hand, but in fact a compilation of texts by various authors, of whom Diderot was the most important contributor; see Wolpe, *Raynal et sa machine de guerre*, and Pagden, *Lords of All the World,* 163-177. For an analysis of Diderot's contributions see Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire,* 72-122.

[315] On the various editions and additions by other authors: Wolpe, *Raynal et sa machine de guerre,* and Feugère, *Bibliography critique de l'abbé Raynal.*

[316] Irvine, "The Abbe Raynal and British Humanitarianism", 564-577.

[317] Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens & du commerce des Européens dans les Deux Indes.* 7 vols. (The Hague, 1774), Vol. 1, Book 2, 257: *"A Ceylon, beaucoup plus encore que dans le reste de l'Inde, les terres appartiennent en propriété au souverain. Ce système destructeur a eu, dans cette isle, les suites funestes qui en sont inséperables. Les peoples y vivent dans l'inaction la plus entière. Ils sont logés dans les cabanes; ils n'ont point des meubles; et ils vivent des fruits; et les plus aisés n'ont pout vêtement, qu'une piece de grosse toile, qui leur ceint le milieu du corps. Que les Hollandois fassent ce qu'on peut reprocher à toutes les*

nations, qui ont établi les colonies en Asie, de n'avoir jamais tenté: qu'ils distribuent des terreins proper aux familles. Elles oublieront, détesteront peut être leur ancien souverain; elles s'attacheront au gouvernement, qui s'occupera de leur bonheur; elle travailleront, elles consommeront. Alors, l'isle de Ceylon jouira de l'opulence, à laquelle la nature l'a destinée. Elle sera à l'abri des revolutions, et en état de soutenir les établissemens de Malabar et de Coromandel, qu'elle est chargée de protéger."

[318] Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire.* 102, 108-109, and Pagden, *Lords of all the World,* 163-165. Raynal is often described as relatively moderate, in particular regarding the anti-slavery debate. The more radical contributions came from Diderot. This explains some of the ambiguities in the text. For example, Raynal did not directly support the abolition of slavery on San Domingo. In his piece about Ceylon in the 1776 edition of his *Histoire* he even suggested fetching slaves from the Moluccas to cultivate waste land in Ceylon and to serve as good example for the inhabitants of Ceylon.

[319] Raynal, *Histoire* (English edition 1798 / reprint New York 1969), Vol. 1, Book 2, 276.

[320] The inventory of the estate of warehousemaster Cellarius, gives us an overview of an extremely rich collection of books, old and contemporary, including a copy of Raynal's *Histoire*. TSA/DR/1557: *"Papieren betreffende de boedel en nalaatenschap van de heer Johan Adam Cellarius tot den 31 december 1803."* (With the courtesy of Ms. Anjana Singh.) Cellarius had good connections with Van Angelbeek, who wrote about him to Nederburgh: *"Hij is twintig jaar onderkoopman, een bekwaam dienaar, een geleerd en beleezen, en het geen meer bij mij geacht word, een eerlijk deugdzaam man, weshalven ik hem mijn favorabel getuignis niet durve weigeren."* NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 141, no date (c. 1791).

[321] Schutte, "De Nederlandse Patriotten en de koloniën", 150-175.

[322] SLNA, 1/5083, defence of the *mudaliyār*: *"De s. heeft nooit iemand van zijne onderhoorige niets met geweld afgenoomen doch hij heeft en wil dit niet verbergen eenige paressen van hen ontvangen, die ze naar 'slands gewoonte aan hem gebracht hebben. Dit is in de Matureesche dessavonij voor geen verboode zaak gehouden en van alle de inlandsche hoofden in dezelve dessavonij zal er vermoedelijk geen een gevonden worden die wanneer daar na behoorlijk onderzoek gedaan wierd, niet zal blijken het zelfde te hebben gedaan ten aanzien van hunne ondergeschikten, tot dat het neemen van geschenken door UwelEdele gestrenge grootagtbare onlangs strengelijk verbooden is. De suppliant zoo wel als de andere hoofden in de Matureesche dessavonij hebben dit te minder voor een misdaad gehouden, wijl ook zij alle wanneer ze een dienst verkrijgen de gebruijken ten hunne opzigte in agt neemen."* It was decided that he had to pay a fine and would be reinstated in office, for the proclamation had been implemented only very recently. The case would however be used as an example to others.

[323] Raynal often refers to Van Imhoff and to Mossel in his piece about the VOC establishments in Asia.

[324] SLNA, 1/2792, Tuesday 25 May, f. 9: *"Dat zoo lang hij* [de *vanniyār*] *als regent en vader van zijn volk niet voor de opvoeding der kinderen zorge, hij nimmer hoopen konden gezag over de menschen te voeren, dog dat het slegts menschen in gedaente en domme botte gediertens in der daed zouden blijven, aan wien nimmer enige lust tot het verbeeteren hunner staat en gevolgelijk die van het land hunner inwooning zoude kunnen inboezemen."*

[325] He repeatedly made remarks like *"De aard der ingezeetenen is die, welke het naast aan dien der woestheijd komt"* (the character of the inhabitant resembles most closely that of savageness): SLNA, 1/2792, f.14; or he talks about inhabitants who *"buijten de gedaente en spraek niets menschelijks vertoonden"* (apart from looks and speach do not appear human), SLNA, 1/2792, f. 23.

[326] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 15.

[327] SLNA, 1/2792, f. 15. *"Den inlander eens bij ondervinding hebbende, hoe een grootere werkzaamheijd hem niet alleen aanzien maar ook een aangename overvloed bezorgde zoude zich van alle moogelijke middelen bedienen om beijde te vermeerderen en dus zijn zoonen niet meer tot hun vijftiende of sestiende jaar te laaten loopen, zonder ander werk te verrigten dan 'savonds de beesten van den vader vast te binden en 'smorgens weder los te maken."*

[328] SLNA, 1/2792, Van Senden refers to Sonnerat when he discusses the resemblance

between the tripod of Shiva and that of Neptunus. About Sonnerat and his interest in Indian religions and iconography, see Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 82.

[329] SLNA, 1/2792, 21 June, f. 31.

[330] NA (UK), CO 55/1, 10 July 1796 General Stuart to Barbut, officer commanding at Jaffenapatnam.

[331] Oostindie, "Same Old Song?", 153.

[332] NA (NL), HR 585, for example: 4, 12, 13, 16, 19.

[333] NA (NL), HR 585, 12, 13.

[334] Ibid., 5: about migration to the district: *"Dog deese ingeseetenen weten er niets bij overlevering van, nog in geschrift nog bij monde, zij weeten dus van hunne afkomst niets te brengen."*

[335] Not surprisingly, this is the "Parable of the Tenants", which is concerned with the behaviour of husbandmen towards their landowner.

[336] NA (NL), HR 585, 7-9; quotation: 6.

[337] Ibid., 10: *"De wanniasse wetten waaren dus zeer kort, want zij hadden gene, nog van ouds, nog van den landsheer in geschrift."*

[338] Ibid., 10-12. He writes literally that they ruled: *"dispolisch en strijdig met de wetten der natuur".*

[339] Ibid., 19. Literally: "[...] *om hun tot meerder trap van menschelijkheid te brengen* [...]"; other examples of similar expression are "inspire the nation with human feelings" (*de natie menschelijke gevoelens inboesemen*) and "the reform of a wild nation" (*hervorming eener woeste natie*).

[340] Ibid., 4: *"hunne begrippen, hun caracter, hunne neijgingen kunnen ongetwijfeld verbeeterd worden onder den invloed eens geschikten mentors."* Nagel draws the father-child parallel literally, further on in the memorandum, at page 27.

[341] I have checked the following works whose authors wrote about the Vanni either because of their administrative connection with the district, or because they travelled there: Wolf, *Reyze naar Ceylon benevens een berigt van de Hollandse regeering te Jafanapatnam* (Den Haag, 1783); Pieters, *Memoir of Hendrick Zwaardecroon*; Pieters, "Memoir left by Anthony Paviljoen"; Cordiner, *A Description of Ceylon* (London 1807); and Lewis, *A Manual of the Vanni districts, Ceylon* (1895).

[342] Colonel Stuart mentioned his great wealth NA (UK), CO 55/1, Stuart to Barbut, 10 July 1796. How he gathered this wealth remains unclear. In an anonymous document, written around 1793, Nagel's administration is called obscure. Moreover, this person claimed that it was common knowledge that Nagel made large profits from the trade in timber from the region. NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 448. Perhaps he also made some profits on his plantations: he mentions one large coconut tree plantation in his memorandum. According to Wolf, *Reyze naar Ceylon,* 186, his place of residence on the east coast, Mullaitivu, was a well-known smuggling port.

[343] See Section 4.5.

[344] *Vedahs* were people living a nomadic live in the woods. They were said to have been the first inhabitants of the island.

[345] NA (UK), CO 54/125, ff. 659-663.

[346] Idem.

[347] Ibid., f. 161.

[348] NA (UK), CO 54/125, f. 687.

[349] NA (UK), CO 416/24, f. 164.

[350] He makes this point in his "Fragments on Ceylon" (1809).

[351] Van Goor, *Kooplieden, predikanten en bestuurders overzee. Beeldvorming en plaatsbepaling in een andere wereld,* 135-195.

[352] NA (UK), CO 416/24, ff. 145 and 182.

[353] Emmer, "The Ideology of Free Labour and Dutch Colonial Policy, 1830-1870", 207-223. According to Emmer, Dutch colonial policy-making was characterized by the limited impact of the free-labour ideology in comparison to that of the British. In fact the successes of the cultuurstelsel in Java reinforced the Dutch reliance on unfree (slave) labour in the West.

Notes to Chapter Six

[354] Arasaratnam, "Dutch Sovereignty in Ceylon", 105-121.

[355] NA (NL), VOC 3571, 16 August 1780, ff. 94, 96, 119-200: references to princesses for the king of Kandy. NA (NL) VOC 3842, 7 May 1790: references to contact with the Nabob of Karnataka.

[356] This had to do with a disagreement on the measurement of the distances between the shore and the border. The Kandyan measurements did not concur with the Dutch: obviously the Dutch measured a wider strip of land than the Kandyans.

[357] Rasanayagam, "Tamil Documents", 18-22; he refers on these pages to Tamil letters in the Sri Lanka National archives nos. K45, K24, K38, K43 and K 64. The French, at that point allied with the Dutch, kindly declined the king's offer.

[358] Tammita-Delgoda, "The English East India Company and Sri Lanka, 1760-1796", 531-552. V.L.B. Mendis, *The Advent of the British to Ceylon*, 52-79.

[359] See also Section 11.1 on this issue.

[360] Wagenaar, "Knielen of buigen?", 441-446.

[361] NA (NL), VOC 3664, 20 March 1784, Governor Falck to the Kandyan *dessava* of the Three and Four *korales*.

[362] NA (NL), VOC 3665, January 1785, ff. 1032-1034 notes of the dealings with the Kandyan envoys.

[363] NA (NL), VOC 3692, resolution 6 February 1785.

[364] Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC,* 66.

[365] Kanapathypillai, *Dutch Rule in Maritime Ceylon,* 156-164.

[366] Perhaps the strict attitude towards possession of the coast had to do with the fact that following the peace negotiations of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the Dutch had been obliged to admit foreign traders

[367] NA (NL), VOC 3692, resolution in council, 10 February 1785.

[368] NA (NL), VOC 3841, 27 January 1790.

[369] Kanapathypillai, *Dutch Rule in Maritime Ceylon,* 156-170.

[370] SLNA, 1/3317, 24 March 1790, report of the embassy to Kandy by Van Vollenhove.

[371] NA (NL), HR 532, secret resolutions, 7 May - 17 June 1791.

[372] Colonel de Meuron from Switzerland was in charge of the Regiment de Meuron, which was placed on Ceylon in 1788 for its defence. NA (NL), HR 532, ff. 98-99. The colonel was instructed to judge for himself the feasibility of Eknelligoda's plans. Ibid., f. 43.

[373] NA (NL), VOC 3975, 18 March 1792, correspondence between Colombo and Pondicherry; Ibid., 8 January 1793, Colombo to Batavia with a recapitulation of the whole affair. Some of the letters are to be found among the Tamil letters in the Sri Lanka National Archives. Rasanayagam, "Tamil Documents in Government Archives", 23-28.

[374] NA (NL), VOC 3975, despatches to Batavia 24 May 1792 and 31 December 1792. The king in question was Narendra Singha (1707-1739).

[375] NA (NL), Com. tot de O/I handel 128, 31 July 1794: *generale beschrijvingen* with extracts of the *Patriasche missive*, ff. 880-881.

[376] SLNA, 1/3350, letters relating to Kandy 1791-1795. Many letters between 1793 and 1795 concern the question of the embassies. From September 1795 the letters of Van Angelbeek concern the English. NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, memorie van Overgave Governor Van de Graaff to his successor Johan Gerard van Angelbeek, 15 July 1794, §260-261. NA (NL), VOC 3975, 11 January 1793, Colombo to Batavia, ff. 644-645.

[377] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, paragraphs 4 and 8.

[378] Pieter Sluijsken was commander of Galle 1788-1792 and commander of Suratte from 1792 until 1796. The documents in question are the following: NA (NL), Collectie Alting 93, NA (NL) Collectie Nederburgh 440. The first is dated 17 February 1796, just after the British take-over of the Dutch possessions on the island. The second was written in the autumn of 1792, just after the borders with the Kingdom were reopened.

[379] "Governor's gate" is a translation of the Portuguese 'porta', referring to the palace and therefore the importance of this function, as the first advisor of the governor.

[380] NA (NL), Collectie Alting 93. NA (NL) Collectie Nederburgh 440.

[381] Kanapathypillai, *Dutch Rule in Maritime Ceylon,* 156-216.

[382] NA (UK), CO 416/24, 5 February 1809. Jacob Burnand refers here to the argument between Sluijsken and the governor, concerning the production of cinnamon in plantations, but it shows how important the status of a position was to Sluijsken: *"cette question dans laquelle le premier ne peut être pas trop de bonne fois parceque la culture dimminnoit l'importance de son employ."*

[383] First mention of Sri Sanka Sarie and decision to inform the court about him: NA (NL), VOC 3837, 10 November 1789, ff. 745-749, despatch to Batavia. NA (NL), VOC 3975, 24 May 1792, despatch to Batavia, ff. 295-300. Van de Graaff suggest here that it would be a good idea if Sri Sanka Sarie was sent back from Batavia to Colombo.

[384] In fact there were rumours going around in 1792 that Sluijsken corresponded with the dessava of Sabaragamuwa, Leeuke, who was an enemy of Pilime Talawe: NA (NL), VOC 3975, 31 December 1792, despatch to Batavia, ff. 302 and 304. In his own writings Sluijsken stresses that he was highly appreciated by the Kandyan courtiers, NA (NL) Collectie Alting 93.

[385] NA (NL), VOC 3975, f. 309 about a letter received from Pilime Talawe, in which he asks the Dutch to help him depose the king: *"Dat de waare meening daarvan ons scheen te zijn, om aan te duijden dat men het hof door active middelen moest doen buijgen, daarmeede kan een man van gematigde gevoelens, niet wel geagt worden iets anders te hebben bedoeld, dan zijn land en landgenooten van de overheersching der Naijkers te bevrijden, en de goede harmonie tusschen hof en komp.*[= compagnie] *als de eerste grondslag van de welvaart en zelfs het voortduren van het Kandiasche rijk te herstellen, en we denken daarom zeer needrig, dat hij, zoo wel als wij, overtuijgd zijnde dat dit door zagte middelen nimmer op eene toerijkende wijze zoud bereijkt worden, door het geeven van dien raad, zoo min verdiend ene landverraader genoemd te worden, als een heelmeester, die geen kans ziet een wonde te geneezen als met het snijmes, daarom verdiend een moordenaar genoemd te worden."*

[386] NA (NL), VOC 3975, 31 December 1792, despatch to Batavia, f. 281.

[387] Gunawardana, "Colonialism, Ethnicity and the Construction of the Past", 199. The poem in question is called *Asadisadâ Kava*. On temple restorations and land grants see Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, 13, 56, 131, 188, 206, and 277.

[388] K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka,* 222.

[389] OIOC G/11/1, ff. 469-470.

[390] NA (NL), VOC 3842, 7 May 1790, seperate despatch to Batavia, ff. 2620-2622: *"een tijd lang geleeden deed mij den eersten hofsgrooten die ik reeden heb te gelooven dat de komp. zeer is toegedaan in vrij onbewimpelde termen weeten, dat de koning anders een goed man, zig wat veel begon over te geeven aan zijne plaisieren, en om zoo te spreeken daar van zijne voornaamste bezigheijd maakte."*

[391] R. Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organisation,* 207.

[392] NA (NL), VOC 3842, 7 May 1790, seperate despatch to Batavia, ff. 2620-2622 *"*[...] *Dat deeze Naikers zig hier door [presenten van de kust aan de koning] diep begonnen door te dringen in 'skonings gunst zoo dat hij hun tegens de gewoonte nu en dan begon te gebruiken tot bestellingen in het land, het geen niet alleen strekte tot merkelijk ongenoegen van de hofsgrooten, maar ook doorgaans uitliep op verschijde knevelarijen op den gemeenen man."*

[393] NA (NL), VOC 3975, 31 December 1792, appendix to despatch to Batavia, ff. 350-356: *"*[...] *Ten eenenmaal in genoomen met de verderflijke projekten der Naikers, die hem omringen, ziet de koning gerust zijnen onderdaanen lijden, zonder de middelen te zoeken om de dingen te herstellen volgens den inhoud van het vredens en alliantie traktaat, het welk tusschen de Ed. Komp. en de Singaleesche natie subsisteerd. Eindelijk is het hatelijk projekt, waartoe de koning zig heeft laaten overhaalen, en waer bij hij volstandig schijnt te blijven, ten duidelijksten voor den dag gekomen. God die 't eiland Ceilon en de Singaleesche natie beschermt, heeft in handen van den heer Gouverneur doen vallen den brief van de koning, welke aantoond dat hij de zwakheid gehad heeft, gehoor te geeven aan de schaadelijke raadgeevingen van de ontrouwe Naikers die bij hem zijn, en dat hij niet alleen heeft toegestaan, maar zelfs verzogt om troupes van eene vreemde mogentheid op dit eiland te doen koomen. Deeze ontrouwe Naikers, die bij den koning zijn, afgunstig dat ze niet ook over de Singaleesche natie kunnen oeffenen, die verdrukkingen die de Mallabaaren gewoon zijn te oefenen tegens een elk die ze*

kunnen vertrappen, hadden zig niets minder voorgesteld dan dat ze door vreemde troupen op dit eiland te doen koomen, gemakkelijk de grote des rijks en alle verdere aanzienlijke Singaleeschen zouden kunnen vernielen. Door den een na den anderen op te offeren aan hunne wraakzugt en misdadige uitzigten, zouden ze spoedig de eenigste raadsluiden van de koning geworden zijn, en niets zouden ze ontzien hebben om den totalen ondergang der Grooten te berokkenen, en het volk onder zwaare juk te brengen [….]*"*

[394] See for example NA (NL), VOC 3691, 26 and 30 November 1785, ff. 637-640.

[395] NA (NL), VOC 3837, 9 February 1789, despatch to Batavia.

[396] Vimaladharma*, Directory of the Office Holders of the Kandyan Kingdom*.

[397] NA (NL), VOC 3975, 31 December 1792, f. 262: "[…] *en aan hem uit naam van den opperpriester Karetotte Oenanse is koomen verzoeken, om aan de Maha Modliaar bekent te maaken, dat wijl er tans over en weer boodschappen gingen, er midsdien door het geheele land faam was, dat de vreede zoude getroffen worden, dit een zeer goede zaak was, dog dat schoon het ook tot een oorlog mogte komen de ingezetenen van de Saffregam de comp. niet zouden tegenvallen."*

[398] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 149-150.

Notes to Part Three, Introduction

[399] NA (UK), CO 416/24, Burnand's papers. *"Fragments sur l'état ancien et moderne de l'isle de Ceylon sur son agriculture, les servitudes de ses habitants et les revenues."* 6 January 1809, Colombo. The essay was translated into English and published in 1821: Burnand, "Fragments on Ceylon". Bertolacci makes a remark on Burnand as informant of Maitland in *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon,* 36. See more on Burnand's "fragments" in the Introduction and Conclusion of Chapter Five and in Chapter Eleven.

[400] Burnand, "Fragments on Ceylon", 444.

[401] Ibid., 447.

[402] De Haan, *Politieke reconstructie,* 16.

Notes To Chapter Seven

[403] V.L.B. Mendis, *The Advent of the British to Ceylon 1762-1803*, 52-106.

[404] Ibid., 139-141; Nypels, *Hoe Nederland Ceilon verloor*, 5-37.

[405] V.L.B. Mendis, *The Advent of the British to Ceylon,* 145. Ceylon was not the only Dutch possession in the east that was captured in this manner. Others were Malacca, the Moluccas, the Cape Colony and Cochin.

[406] NA (UK), WO 1/361, Cleghorn to Dundas, 14 February 1795 (my italics).

[407] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to Stuart, 5 April 1796, in response to a letter from Stuart dating 10 October 1795.

[408] SLNA, 1/2932, 1 December 1795, report of the committee of Burnand and Mekern on Jaffna.

[409] NA (UK), CO 55/1, 30 September 1795, Stuart to Major Dalrymple in Jaffna. See also SLNA, 1/2932, 1 December 1795, report of Mekern and Burnand on Jaffna; they could not finish their research because of the British arrival. Many people had fled to the interior on the moment the British arrived.

[410] NA (UK), WO 1/361, 24 October 1795, Cleghorn to Dundas.

[411] NA (NL) Com. tot OI handel 130, 13 February 1795. There are quite a few copies around of this daily register of the council of Colombo written between July 1795 and 15 February 1796: BL add 40737 "Transcripts of Duch East India records 1796"; UB Leiden, Westerse Handschriften, LTK 732.

[412] The British thought that he would surrender because of his attachment to the stadtholder. For further allegations against Van Angelbeek, see for example the report of Carel Fanken on the British take over NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 446, Batavia 20 February 1797. NA (NL), Collectie Alting 93, Sluijsken's writings of 17 February

1796, Sluijsken argues that if Van Angelbeek had managed to appease the Kandyans he could have stood a chance against the British. For further discussion of the allegations against Van Angelbeek see Nypels, *Hoe Nederland Ceylon verloor,* 59-95; Fyres, "A Collection of Notes on the Attack and Defence of Colombo"; Thomé, "Governor van Angelbeek and the Capitulation of the Dutch Settlements in Ceylon".

[413] UB Leiden, LTK 732, 16 September 1796, Van Angelbeek to Van de Graaff: *"Dat Colombo zig, zonder slag of stoot, bij capitulatie heeft overgegeeven, zal Uw: zeeker bevreemden, vooral wijl ik niet twijffele, of eenige menschen van hier zullen na Mauritius geschreeven hebben, dat de plaats zig had kunnen defendeeren, een uitstrooizel, het welk zig overal, zoo hier als te Coromandel, verspreid heeft, zal blijken, dat ik van den beginne af aan tot den laatsten dag toe, tot behoud van Colombo gedaan hebbe, wat in zulke omstandigheeden, van een wakker Gouverneur verwacht kan worden, dog dat alle mijne poogingen en te werk gestelde middelen, door een zaamenloop van weederwaardigheeden vereideld zijn, en dat ik door de capitulatie, die ons aangebooden werd, af te wijzen, en de defensie van de vesting op mij te neemen, de colonie ongelukkig en mij verantwoordelijk gemaakt zoude hebben."*

[414] See in NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh: various letters sent privately by men like Sluijsken (no. 757) and Fretz (no. 727: Fretz applying for the function of governor after the death of Van Angelbeek 1799) to Nederburgh. NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 130, preparations are made for 1797; NA (HR), 586: comments of the *Hoge Regering* in the margins of the memorandum of Van de Graaff, dated 31 March 1797. NA (NL), Collectie Brugmans 118, letter of Louis Monneron on the importance of Ceylon and the need to hold on to it in the Paris and Lille peace negotiations.

[415] OIOC p/245/13, 2 January 1797, Col. de Meuron to Fort St George. He feared that Van de Graaff and Pierre Monneron could count on the support of over least 2,000 men, if they proceed to Ceylon, "for the inhabitants of every class will fly to him".

[416] NA (NL), HR 586, "marginale dispositien op de memorie over Ceylon van Willem Jacob van de Graaff genomen in Rade van Indien March 31, 1797."

[417] Nypels, *Hoe Nederland Ceylon verloor*, 96-112.

[418] Of course there were exceptions. Captain F.T. von Meybrink, who bred horses on the island of Delft, offered his services to the British government on 3 November 1795. Brohier, "Chronological Catalogue of Letters and Reports on Ceylon Affairs", 29. In most cases the Dutch, who expected the island to return to the Company, refused to work for the British government: NA (UK), CO 55/1, fall 1796, ff. 151-164, various letters and proclamations on the oath of allegiance to be taken when entering the British service and the Dutch refusal to take the oath.

[419] On the early relations of the British with Kandy, see Chapter Eleven.

[420] NA (UK), CO 55/1, copies of all Stuart's correspondences with Hobart in Madras are collected in this bundle. A copy is found in SLNA, 7/47.

[421] See Chapter Eleven.

[422] OIOC, p/275/8, Proceedings of the Madras Revenue Board, 12 February 1796, f. 343: decision to appoint Andrews as ambassador to Kandy and head of the revenue department.

[423] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 502. However it did not yield as much in the following years due to problems with the organization of the fishery, frauds and finally the exhaustion of the pearl banks. Ibid., 502-510.

[424] NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel, 128, 31 July 1794, despatch to Batavia, ff. 931-933.

[425] This cinnamon had laid waste for three years, since 1793 no ship was sent to the Netherlands anymore. Presumably this was the cinnamon load for 1793 and 1794. It is likely that no cinnamon was collected in 1795; there are rumours that Van Angelbeek neglected the plantations, but perhaps he consciously did not have the cinnamon peeled in the last year, since there was still so much in stock. See NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 446, 20 February 1797, evidence of Franken, f. 12. Amsterdam warehouses still had cinnamon in stock, and they brought it on the market at the same time as the cinnamon that the British had found on the ships; it was enough to considerably devaluate the price. Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 414.

[426] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 417. The British government had three good investments from the plantations between 1796 and 1799, but

this was followed by a steady decrease because the plantations were not well maintained. See also BL, add 13866, North to Wellesley, 27 October 1798, in which he explains to the governor-general in Calcutta that 5,000 bales of cinnamon is enough for the yearly world consumption and that "their quantity is nearly supplied from the government gardens planted by Governor van der Grave, by the trees found in our woods and by those in the gardens of individuals".

[427] See Introduction to Part Three.

[428] Neild-Basu, "The Dubashes of Madras", 1-31.

[429] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 201: Andrews was appointed superintendent of revenues on October 15, right after the conquest of Jaffna. After his return from Kandy on 7 November he rushed to Jaffna to take up his office. The position was later extended to all possessions on the island, OIOC p/275/8, proceedings of the Revenue Board, 2 February 1796.

[430] See Section 3.12.

[431] Brohier, "Chronological Catalogue of Letters and Reports on Ceylon Affairs", 41-43. References are made here to contact with Thomas Nagel and Raket. A nice view of the early private contacts between the Dutch and the British is found in the diary of Macquarie, a military commander who, when stationed in Galle was quartered in the house of Diederich Thomas Fretz, the Dutch commander, and they appear to have been on a good footing. See the publications on Lachlan Macquarie and the 73rd regiment on Sri Lanka 1796-1821 by Macquarie University Library in New South Wales, Australia: www.lib.mq.edu.au/digital/under/index.html.

[432] NA (UK), CO 416 22/H10, Andrews to Josiah Webbe (secr. Fort St George), 10 May 1796, ff. 233-234; Ibid., 4 April 1797, ff. 257-262, Andrews to Major General Doyle explaining once more his motivation for the imposition of the new taxes.

[433] NA (UK), CO 416 22/H10, Andrews to Josiah Webbe (secr. Fort St George), 10 May 1796, f. 233

[434] NA (UK), CO 55/1, June 1796, f. 71, Stuart to Hobart.

[435] Brohier, "Chronological Catalogue of Letters and Reports on Ceylon Affairs", 51: extract of a letter from the Madras Revenue Board to Robert Andrews 30 July 1796.

[436] See letters of Van Angelbeek and the principal Dutch inhabitants in NA (UK), 416/22 H10, February 1797 and 22 June 1797.

[437] NA (UK), CO 416 22/H10, among others, Hobart to Andrews, 28 May 1796, f. 235. July/August 1796 Hobart to Andrews, ff. 241-243: Hobart forbids Andrews to lower the taxes on the coconut trees. Ibid., 22 June 1797 petition from Dutch inhabitants responding to Hobart's letter. Ibid., 4 April 1797, Andrews explained once more in a letter to Doyle that he instituted the taxes on purpose because he felt that the richest inhabitants, the Dutch, native headmen and merchants, paid the least in taxes.

[438] NA (UK), CO 416 22/H10, 4 April 1797, Andrews to Doyle, ff. 257-262. See also Brohier, "Chronological Catalogue of Letters and Reports on Ceylon Affairs", 65.

[439] Ibid., 65-66, extract of the letter ordering the inauguration of the committee of investigation, and 67, extract of the letters regarding the death of Major General Doyle and the appointment of Brigadier General de Meuron to assume the command of the Island of Ceylon.

[440] NA (UK) Co 416 22/H10, Hobart's minute 9 June 1797, ff. 269-281.

[441] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Vol. 1, 214.

[442] Collins, "Extracts from the Proceedings of the Committee of Investigation", 1-15.

[443] Andrews was replaced by Robert Alexander in May 1797 when he went for a visit to Madras "to the benefit of his health". Brohier, "Chronological Catalogue of Letters and Reports on Ceylon Affairs", 82. Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 223.

[444] OIOC, p/254/12 Madras military and political proceedings. 2 January 1798, ff. 11-12, Brigadier general De Meuron to the board: "In the present state of things it is to be supposed that messieurs Monneron and Van de Graaf are acting in concert against us and I think the only place they can have in view is Ceylon, the influence Mr van de Graaf has here would be worth than to 2000 men to them for the inhabitants of every class and condition will fly to him, mr. Monneron made the fortunes of several people when he was

French agent here in the war of 1780. – Together they will unite all voices whilst we have exasperated. All the good I have been able to do is not yet consolidated sufficiently to think that we have any for us, but our own forces, you know the state of them, and I have had the honour to write to you on the subject."

[445] Brohier, "Chronological Catalogue of Letters and Reports on Ceylon Affairs", 77; OIOC, p/254/13, Madras military and political proceedings 16/2 1798, "Lord Hobart's minute communicating information deriving from his journey to Ceylon", ff. 1086-1088: "I submitted to the board, previous to my journey to Ceylon the intelligence I had received from that island; and added my reasons for supposing that my presence there, even for a short period, might be attended with beneficial effects. The first object of my attention was the disposition of the king of Candia to our government, which, as had been represented to me previous to my leaving Madras, I found far from satisfactory. That confidence and cooperation which he had manifested on our first landing upon the island had been changed into disinterest and disaffection: but I could trace no substantial ground for this alteration of sentiment. He certainly had been disappointed in the concessions he had looked for upon taking possession of the Dutch settlements, but, as those concessions were expressly stated, and were to be made so soon as the treaty executed at Madras should be ratified by them, he can in fact have no real cause of complaint-It appears however that Dutch and French emissaries, availing themselves of the temper of the court of Candia, have taken infinite pains to misrepresent our national character, and to render that court discontented with it's alliance with our government having produced that impression they had persuaded the king of Candia to expect the disembarkation of a body of French and Dutch troops, and there was no reason to apprehend that he had been induced to prepare for cooperating with them in hostile measures against us. Under a supposition of a descent on Ceylon, the alliance or hostility of the King of Candia become subject of serious importance for such is the nature of the country that an European force, if unassisted by the natives would find it difficult, if not altogether impracticable, to procure supplies."

[446] OIOC, p/254/13, 16 February 1798. f. 1096. Lord Hobart's minute communicating information deriving from his journey to Ceylon.

[447] Ibid., ff. 1097-1099.

[448] OIOC, G/11/54, Factory records Ceylon 1799-1800, f. 186: Memorandum of Davy Robertson sent by Governor North to England to report on the situation on the island, 3 December 1799 (ff. 143-231).

[449] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 446, 20 February 1797, report of Carel Franken on the British take-over addressed to Governor-General Van Overstraaten, f. 12: Franken mentions that districts were farmed out to Sinhalese headmen against the will of the peasants: *"Wat de ingezeetenen betreft, dezelve hebben zij in haare bezittingen gelaten, dog even voor mijn vertrek van Ceilon waaren zij bezig om de meeste pattoes en districten bij wijze van admodiatie aan de Singaleesen die maar het hoogste bood af te staan, waar door de gemene man, so als men vernam, gantsch niet te vreede scheen, en alzo daar uijt seer ligt opschuddingen konden resulteeren, voor al zo zij daar meede bleeven continueeren, wijl den inlander nimmer aan diergelijke dingen is onderworpen geweest, maar daar en tegens van onheugelijke tijden af, in de geruste beheering is gebleeven van het zijne."*

Notes to Chapter Eight

[450] Although he was also president of the board of control of the East India Company.

[451] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 224-225.

[452] Richard Wellesley also bore the name Lord Mornington, and he was the brother of Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington who was to play such an important role in the Napoleonic Wars. Richard Wellesley arrived in Calcutta at the beginning of 1798. Lawson, *The East India Company,* 134-135.

[453] Hullugalle, *British Governors of Ceylon,* 13-14. Various articles by Turner in *The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* 4-6 (1918/19-1920/21), and by Gratiaen regarding North's education system in *The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* 7-8 (1921/22) - 1922/23). Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 257-258: "[…]

North's easy-going optimism had induced him to bite off more than he could chew."

[454] BL add 13866, North to Wellesley, Bombay 5 and 28 June 1798.

[455] BL add 13866 North to Wellesley, Bombay 31 July 1798.

[456] BL add 13866 North to Wellesley, Bombay 28 June 1798.

[457] G.C. Mendis, *Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*, Vol. 2, 66-90.

[458] The fiscal examined the witnesses and at the same time wrote the report to advice the judges. Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 312-313.

[459] Ibid., 310-314.

[460] BL add 13867, North to Wellesley, 5 October 1799, ff. 64-65. Fretz was one of the first take the oath of allegiance to the British crown, however he had several irons in the fire. He had sent a letter at the same time to Nederburgh, requesting to be installed as the new governor of Ceylon after the death of Van Angelbeek on 3 September 1799. NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 727, letter from D.T. Fretz in Galle 1799.

[461] SLNA, 7/36, North's public diary, 17 September 1799.

[462] SLNA, 7/35, North's public diary, 29 November and 16 December 1798: letters from Catholic priests asking for improvement of their status.

[463] Cordiner, *A Description of Ceylon*; Gratiaen, "The First English Schools in Ceylon", 141-147; Gratiaen, "The Parish Schools under Governor North", 35-45.

[464] NA (UK), CO 54/2, despatch North to Dundas, 30 January 1800, ff. 31-32.

[465] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 229-231. In his letters to Wellesley he writes positively about the native department: BL, add 13866, North to Wellesley 27 October 1798, ff. 99-100.

[466] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 232-233.

[467] BL add 13866, various letters of North to Wellesley, 1799, ff. 266-385. BL add 13867, 1799, Cleghorn's defence regarding North's accusations on frauds with the pearl fishery.

[468] BL add 13866, ff. 266-385 in these letters North almost continuously complains about the frauds of the Madras civilians, most often those of Hugh Cleghorn and John Macdowall. Quote: BL add 13866, North to Wellesley, 27 October 1798, f. 87.

[469] NA (UK), CO 54/2, despatch North to London, 30 January 1800, ff. 31-32.

[470] Lawson, *The East India Company,* 134-137. Brynn, "The Marquess Wellesley and Ceylon 1798-1803", 2-13. Wellesley fought Tipu Sultan of Mysore successfully and killed him in the famous Battle of Seringapatnam in 1799, but continued expanding the British territories violently without permission, causing a near bankruptcy of the Company. Wellesley was however extremely popular in England. In 1802, Dundas urged Wellesley to stop warfaring and send the troops home, which Wellesley refused. Dundas was of the opinion that all danger was over now that Tipu Sultan was dead and Napoleon was defeated in Egypt, and that there was no danger of the French turning to India. On the divergent opinions of Wellesley and Dundas regarding policy in India, see Ingram, ed., *Two Views of British India*, and V.L.B. Mendis, *The Advent of the British to Ceylon,* 198-200.

[471] D.G.B. de Silva, "Hugh Neville's 'Notes on Military history of Trincomalie'", 70-71.

[472] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to the board of directors of the EIC, 30 December 1800, ff. 79-86.

[473] Idem.

[474] NA (UK), CO 55/61, 30 December 1800, Dundas to the board of directors of the EIC, f. 82

[475] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, §32-33.

[476] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, §1-10.

[477] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, March 1801, §131.

[478] OIOC, G/11/54, ff. 1-142 papers written by "by the right honourable Sylvester Douglas, now lord Glenbervie". These papers were published in the early twentieth century: Perera, "The Douglas Papers".

[479] NA (UK), CO 416/4/a17. The treatise was called "On the improvement of the agriculture and natural advantages of the country and the appointment of a civil engineer", and was added as an appendix to Dundas's dispatch to North of 13 March 1801.

[480] Glenbervie based himself on the "ancient" writings of Barros, Ribeiro, Baldeus, Knox, and the recent information given by Robertson, North, Joinville, De Meuron, and

Cleghorn. He argued that since none of the ancient authors point out that there was a shortage of rice, this shortage could only have become a problem at a later time, as the result of Dutch neglect of rice cultivation. They had started importing rice during the war with the Portuguese and continued the practice afterwards. He further argued that all the authors point out that the soil is so fertile and the rivers flow abundantly in many areas. According to Barros the eastern part, Batticaloa, was particularly fertile, and was also commonly referred to as "the kingdom of rice".

[481] NA (UK), CO 416. 4/a17, 13 March 1801 (Glenbervie's treatise on the improvement of agriculture).

[482] Idem.

[483] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, §93.

[484] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, §29-33.

[485] BL, Add 16867, 30 July 1800, North to Mornington, f. 297.

[486] OIOC, G/11/54, 3 December 1799, f. 180, memorandum written by Davy Robertson based on his own experiences and memory on the island and on his conversations with North (ff. 143-231).

[487] BL, add, 13867 North to Mornington, 20 June 1800, f. 255: "I am going to set out on my tour of the island tomorrow, which is fortunate, as my physician declares that repose and amusement are absolutely necessary for me. Indeed I have for this last fortnight been labouring under a most horrible nervous disorder, which has almost deprived me at times of the power of seeing, and hearing and I have had a quantity of business on my hands, which was quite insupportable."

[488] BL add 13867, North to Mornington, 1 July 1800, ff. 258-261.

[489] For Kandyan affairs, see Chapter Eleven.

[490] BL add 13867, North to Mornington, 19 March 1800.

[491] See Sections 11.1 and 11.2.

[492] D.G.B. de Silva "Hugh Neville's 'Notes on Military History of Trincomalie'", 73-74: "Memorandum by Col. Wellesley on Trincomalie".

[493] BL add 13867, North to Mornington, 7 September 1801, f. 501.

[494] Ibid., f. 503. On patronage system: R. Pieris, "Some Neglected Aspects of British Colonial Administration", 73-77. Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service,* 125-157.

[495] Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service,* 56-57.

[496] Ibid., 69.

[497] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 341.

[498] Ibid., 340-344.

[499] Mottau, *Summary of Despatches to the S/S,* Vol. 1, 19-40.

[500] BL add 13865, Mornington to North 8 December 1801; SLNA, 10/38, 3 April 1805, letter of F. Rossi from Prince of Wales Island to Governor North.

[501] Mottau, *Summary of Despatches,* 40-60.

[502] Mottau, *Summary of Despatches.* References to the hurricanes: 8 February 1805. Reference to the cattle plague 16 March 1802.

[503] Ibid., 1 January 1804, 5 October 1804, 8 February 1805.

Notes to Chapter Nine

[504] Lawson, *The East India Company,* 140.

[505] Dixon, *The Colonial Administrations of Sir Thomas Maitland*, 1-17.

[506] NA (UK), CO 55/62, Camden to Maitland, 21 February 1805, f. 128.

[507] Hullugalle, *British Governors of Ceylon,* 19-27.

[508] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 270; ANRI, HR 3861, 2 April 1807, Prediger from Galle to Governor General Wiese and the political council in Batavia, f. 15: *"De gouverneur Maitland is een man met wien men in weijnige woorden iets kan afhandelen, maar men moet voorzigtig zijn, zijn Ed. ja en neen is onveranderlijk, en wanneer hij een idee heeft geformeerd gebeurt het zelden dat hij het zelve onuitgevoert laat."*

[509] Mottau, *Summary of Despatches*, Maitland to Camden, 10 March 1806: "I believe mr. North to be perfectly upright and honorable as a public man, but the whole of his government was so loose, so undecided and so perfectly farcical, that dealing as he had to do with young men whose principles were not fixed, they all got into a state when thoroughly investigated, equally dishonourable to themselves and disadvantageous to his Majesty's service."

[510] NA (UK), CO 54/18, Maitland to Camden, 19 October 1805, ff. 177-195.

[511] NA (UK), CO 54/20, Maitland to Camden, 31 January 1806, f. 22.

[512] SLNA, 2/2, minutes of the executive council, 22 December 1806, f. 86.

[513] Regarding criminality in Jaffna: NA (NL), Com. tot OI handel 128, despatch to Batavia, 31 July 1794, ff. 1094-1103. For North's policies regarding the service tenures: see Section 10.3-10.5.

[514] SLNA, 2/2, minutes of the executive council, 14 August 1806.

[515] NA (UK), CO 54/20, Maitland to Camden, 31 January 1806, f. 68.

[516] SLNA, 2/2, minutes of the executive council, between 26 November 1805 and 27 October 1806, ff. 50-56 and 9 December 1806 f. 81, copies of the correspondence with Governor General Wiese in Batavia; ANRI, HR 3861; 3862 and 4480, papers and letters kept by Rudolf Prediger regarding his mission to Ceylon.

[517] NA (UK), Collectie Nederburgh 727, letter of D.T. Fretz at Galle. Ibid., 757, letters from Sluijsken 1804. See also Bosma and Raben, *De Oude Indische Wereld,* 64, 85-86.

[518] ANRI, HR 3861, Prediger to Wiese, 2 March 1807, f. 63.

[519] ANRI, HR 4480, 20 January 1806, Prediger to Wiese, f. 303. This is but one example, the collectors of the various outposts were requested by Maitland to send him lists of those inhabitants who wished to depart from Ceylon and those who wished to remain. In some of the lists the reasons for not embarking are given and are related to old age, diseases or debts. See also SLNA, 6/101, inward correspondence from Batticaloa, list of inhabitants who wish to remain on the island; SLNA, 6/69, inward correspondence from Galle. SLNA, 6/128, inward correspondence from Trincomalee; SLNA, 6/45a, inward correspondence from Colombo. More extensive lists of who embarked on the ship are found among Prediger's papers, ANRI HR 3861 and 4480.

[520] Bertolacci, *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon,* 32-33. See also Section 3.10.

[521] SLNA, 25.1/36, correspondence Alexander Johnstone. No date, no folio no. The letter in question was bound between letters written in 1811.

[522] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 757, letter of Sluijsken to Nederburgh 1804. Sluijsken complained bitterly about how Christiaan van Angelbeek had left without saying goodbye (*Sonder van eenig mensch afschijt genomen te hebben*). One strategy to get closer to the British was for the daughters of Dutch families to marry British civilians and military officers. One of the daughters of Willem Jacob van de Graaff married one Melville Leslie soon after the take-over. After her brother Hendrik Jan left the island to seek his fortune, she was left at the mercy of this man. Apparently it was an unhappy marriage for Maitland requested Prediger to take her with him: *"§31 Het dringende verzoek van zijn excellentie den Heer Gouverneur zoo wel, als den aanzienelijkste ingeseetenen, om de vrouw van Melvill Leslie die een dogter van den geweesen Ceilons Gouverneur de Graaff is, een plaats aan bord van het schip Rusthoff te vergunnen heb ik niet kunnen wijgeren, vooral daar zij zeer jong zijnde is gehuwd, en thans onder het getal der ongelukkigste vrouwen behoort",* ANRI, HR 3861, Prediger to Wiese, 2 April 1807.

[523] NA (UK), CO 55/62, Camden to Maitland, 21 February 1805, f. 131.

[524] Hovy, *Ceylonees plakkaatboek,* Vol. II, plakkaat 635 and 639. With regard to problems with gangs of *kafirs* prowling around the hinterland of Trincomalee: SLNA, 1/2792, ff. 23; 25-26; 29.

[525] SLNA, 2/3, minutes of the executive council, 12 December 1808, f. 97.

[526] Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service*, 65-66.

[527] See for example the letters from the collectors in Batticaloa between 1806 and 1813, SLNA, 6/101-104. By far the most letters regard financial matters.

[528] Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service,* 65-66.

[529] SLNA, 25.1/34, papers of Alexander Jonhstone, incoming correspondence with

Governor Maitland; SLNA, 25.1/35 & 36 papers of Alexander Johnstone, various incoming letters, unbound. SLNA Lot 2 contains the records of the executive council.

[530] NA (UK), CO 54/123-126, papers of Alexander Johnstone donated to Secretary of State Lord Londonderry.

[531] NA (UK), CO 416 4/A31, 3 October 1831, letter by Alexander Johnstone accompanying the papers he offered to the Commissioners of Enquiry, including a list of the papers donated to the Royal Asiatic Society.

[532] Dirks, *Castes of Mind,* 84; NA (UK), CO 416 4/A31, for some remarks on his journey to Madras. "Sir Alexander Johnston's proposals for improvements in Ceylon", in G.C. Mendis, *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*, Vol. 2, 221-227.

[533] Instructions for Schneider's surveys in Mannar and Jaffna, SLNA, 2/2, 13 February 1807, ff. 145-147.

[534] These reports are now in the collection of the Commissioners of Enquiry NA (UK), CO 416 and among the papers donated by Alexander Johnstone to the Colonial Office NA (CO) 54/124.

[535] NA (UK), CO 54/126, 10 June 1807, report of Schneider on the state of the Vanni, ff. 13-23.

[536] NA (UK), CO 416 28/J28, Schneider's report on Tangalle and Matara, f. 399.

[537] NA (UK), CO 416/22/H8; CO 416/4/A21; CO 416/28 /J28 (200 pages of reports and recommendations made by Schneider for Maitland) and NA (UK), CO 54/126 (Johnstone's papers).

[538] His remarks for Lord Londonderry are published as: "Sir Alexander Johnstone's Proposals for Improvement", in G.C. Mendis, *The Colebrooke-Camero*n *Papers*, Vol. 2, 221-227. See also SLNA, 2/3, December 1808, ff. 90-101, for the discussion in the executive council about the judiciary, and the mission of Alexander Johnstone. About the brief implementation and revocation of the judicial reforms proposed by Johnstone, see Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1*,* 327-329.

[539] SLNA, 2/2, instructions for the collector of Jaffna, 22 December 1806, ff. 81-103 and ibid., instructions for the collector of Matara, 10 February 1807, ff. 115-127.

[540] SLNA, 2/2, 22 December 1806. Instructions for the collector of Jaffna, f. 100. This is undoubtedly the chetty Waitelinge who made his fortunes in tax farming and the Jaffna trade in Dutch times.

[541] SLNA, 2/2, 27 August 1806, ff. 41-43 petitions of twelve Buddhist priests from Matara to set up a Buddhist council falling directly under the British government. This was part of the strategy to draw the lowland Buddhist priests closer to government. See also: SLNA, 25.1/34, 2 May 1806, statement of Alexander Johnstone on the policy towards the Catholics and Buddhist.

[542] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* 414-445.

[543] Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service,* 65.

[544] SLNA, 6/143, letters from the collector of the Wanny, 14 July 1807, §25, report of George Turnour.

[545] SLNA, 6/143, letters from the collector of the Wanny, 14 July 1807, §28, report of George Turnour.

[546] SLNA, 6/101, 9 September 1806, letter of MacNab, the collector of Batticaloa inquiring after the memorandum of Burnand.

[547] NA (UK), CO 416/27/J12, 23 May 1815, f. 120-128.

[548] Bertolacci, *A View of the Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon,* 180.

[549] Ibid.*,* 181-182.

[550] NA (UK), CO 54/31, Maitland to Castlereigh, 25 January 1809, f. 6.

[551] NA (UK), CO 416/28/J28, f. 418, reports of Schneider on the state of agriculture in Galle and Matara 1807.

[552] SLNA, 2/2, 10 February 1807, f. 117, instructions for the collector of Matara, §4.

[553] NA (UK), CO 416/4/A31, 3 October 1831, letter of Alexander Johnstone, accompanying the papers he gave to the commissioners of enquiry.

[554] NA (UK), CO 416/26/5, reports from collectors' circuits in Galle: "they did not only give the necessary information, but also informed me by a Cingalese ola that in the said

quality they had upon them the cultivation of this country in the Dutch government and well at the time of his excellency the Governor Van de Graaff, the extent of one hundred and ten amm. [ammonam] and seventy burnies low ground was caused to be cultivated and the produce thereof given, and that by the assistance of three rivulets called De Kande, Elle Kandan Elle and Kirybattawille Elle which were made to discharge the superfluous water of Diviturreh."

[555] Kannangara, *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service*, 109-124.

[556] SLNA, 6/84, letters from the collector of Matara to Colombo 1812; NA (UK), CO 54/44, despatch from Brownrigg to London, 28 August 1812, reporting on the famine: over 4,000 people have died and many have migrated to Kandy. It was reported to Colombo only at a very late instance, which is why government was late with help.

[557] NA (UK), 416 2/A1: "Mr Orr's proposal for a land tax or fixed quit rent to be permanently established on all landed property in Ceylon" (1813-1815). Based on the system in Bengal, Orr was of the opinion that the backward development of the agriculture was the result of the system of small landholdings and different sort of titles. His colleagues responded negatively to his proposal. In 1817, Brownrigg suggested such a change in modes of taxation and possession of land once more. The extensive and informative replies to his questions by all the collectors, almost all negative, are kept in the following bundle: SLNA, 10/201-202.

[558] SLNA, 10/201-202, reports sent to Brownrigg by the collectors and magistrates in 1817 in answer to his question about improving agriculture through modes of taxation and laws of inheritance. For example, the collector of Galle writes the following interesting remarks: "1st to take a general view of the present state of cultivation; It will be found that lands of all description are much neglected; That it was in a more flourishing state under the Dutch government is an observation which comes from the natives themselves." Another such example is found in the description of Matara by Granville, 1813: NA (UK), 416/26/J10, f. 382: "It however appears to me highly necessary that headmen should be appointed whose particular duty would be to superintend the cultivation of the country. To be able by a proper authority vested in him, to call upon the people at pleasure to work the lands, to order the cutting of crops and inspect the due division of the different share. This might be done by appointing weebadde mohandirams, a title which has been extinct since the Dutch time, but nevertheless in itself highly necessary. Another title and situation existed under the Dutch government called saaymeesters or sowing masters […]."

[559] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation.* Vol. 2, 385-413.

[560] Ibid., 371.

[561] Correspondence with the commercial agent for Ceylon Huskisson BL, Add 38739, Huskisson papers, Huskisson to Henry Goulburn 11 July 1814, ff. 233. Letter discussing the bad financial state of Ceylon and suggestions for improvement by increasing the access to the Indian market (arrack) and the English market (coffee).

[562] On the labour on the public roads, see Munasinghe, *The Colonial Economy on Track,* 11-14, 30-42; Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 279-282. NA (UK), 59/27, ff. 13-55, reports on the duties of the various castes and classes of natives liable to government service. In 1818, Brownrigg sent around a letter to all collectors to ask for lists of the type of labour, coolie labour in particular, to which the inhabitants of the specific districts were liable.

[563] NA (UK), CO 54/93, despatches to London, 1826, f. 69: Barnes speaks of an increase in coffee exports from 209,568 in 1816 to over one million pounds in 1822. However he, like Brownrigg, still had to convince his superiors in London of the desirability of growing coffee in Ceylon. In 1826, the import duty for coffee from Ceylon was still higher than that for coffee from the West Indies.

[564] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Vol. 2, 437-444. Moreover in 1826, 3,000 sprigs of the cinnamon tree were stolen by a Dutchman and brought to Sumatra. NA (UK), CO 54/93, despatch Barnes to London, 22 September 1826, ff. 182-188.

[565] Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon,* 89-90.

[566] G.C. Mendis, *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers*, Vol. 1, ix-lxiv (introduction).

Notes to Chapter Ten

[567] Engerman, "Abolitionism in Comparitive Perspective", 224, 227. Slavery was abolished in Britain in 1834, in the Netherlands in 1863, and in 1865 in the United States.
[568] Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment,* 88-106.
[569] Engerman, "Abolitionism in Comparitive Perspective", 227. The Netherlands abolished the slave trade in 1814, France in 1815. Denmark had abolished the trade already in 1803 and the United States in 1808.
[570] Colley, *Britons Forging the Nation,* 354.
[571] Drescher, "The Long Goodbye", 25-53.
[572] Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, xiii-xix.
[573] See, for example, Dow, *History of Hindostan* (1768); Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings,* xvi; Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind,* 76-77.
[574] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 1-20, and Marshall and Williams, *Great Map of Mankind,* 128-155. Through an analysis of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century publications on India, Kate Teltscher shows how the image of India and its inhabitants changed in the course of these centuries. While in the 1780s the Indian willingness to submit to the good rule of the British is emphasized, in the 1790s and early 1800s it was rather the tyrant-nature of the Indian sultans, Tipu in the first place, that legitimized British expansion. In that way British expansion was seen as the Indians' salvation; Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, 1-10.
[575] Pitts, *A Turn to Empire,* 57.
[576] Ibid., 59-85.
[577] Lawson, *The East India Company,* 128-31.
[578] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 19-23.
[579] Ibid.
[580] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 19-21, and Guha, *A Rule of Property in Bengal,* 160-186.
[581] Marshall, "The Moral Swing to the East", 69-95.
[582] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, 23-25, and Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 63. on criticism and scepticism in London regarding the Cornwallis settlement, especially by Shore, who felt that it was put into practice too quickly. Guha, *A Rule of Propery for Bengal,* 187-201.
[583] Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 63-64.
[584] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, f. 355.
[585] Dirks, "From Little King to Landlord", 314; Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 86: "[...] the Madras government had been instructed by the governor-general, Lord Wellesley, late in 1799, that the Bengal regulations of Cornwallis were to be established in Madras, in 'poligar countries' and elsewhere."
[586] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, instructions for his guidance in administering the government of Ceylon, §10.
[587] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, 386.
[588] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 13 March 1801, §64.
[589] NA (UK), 416/2/A1, ff. 28-32, 62.
[590] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 272-274.
[591] NA (UK), CO 55/62, Edward Cook to Maitland, 11 June 1807, f. 172.
[592] Hullugalle, *British Governors of Ceylon,* 13-14, and Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 257-258.
[593] Dixon, *The Colonial Administrations of Sir Thomas Maitland*, 8-13.
[594] See Section 9.5.
[595] NA (UK), 55/62, Castlereigh to Maitland, 11 June 1807, f. 177. This was a response by Castlereigh to all Maitland's despatches written between October 1805 and November 1806. Castlereigh wrote that upon resumption of his office as Secretary of State, he discovered that his predecessor, Camden, had written very limited responses to Maitland's dispatches, even though Maitland wrote in great detail about the situation on the island. Castlereigh wrote that he did not have much time at the moment to treat all subjects extensively, but that he would limit himself to the chief points of Maitland's letters.
[596] NA (UK), CO 55/62, Edward Cook to Maitland, 11 June 1807, f. 173.

[597] Van Goor, "Continuity and Change in the Dutch Position in Asia between 1750 and 1850", 186; Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 2, 347; Wickremeratne, *The Conservative Nature of the British Rule of Sri Lanka*, 51; and Dixon, *The Colonial Administrations,* 55.

[598] NA (UK), CO 54/20, general despatch, 31 January 1806, f. 19

[599] SLNA, 2/2, minutes of the executive council, 22 December 1806, f. 8.

[600] SLNA, 2/2, minutes of the executive council, 22 December 1806, f. 90.

[601] Ibid., f. 92.

[602] Up to 3 months labour and hundred lashes and fines up to 100 rixdollars, civil up to cases of 200 rixdollars.

[603] SLNA, 2/2, 10 February 1807, f. 121.

[604] SLNA, 2/2, 22 December 1806, f. 99: "But I imagine independent of the benefit you will derive from a strict and vigilant superintendence over the headmen of the cutcherry and the various churches, that there are means in that district of Jaffna, if providently made use of, of very materially strengthening the hands of government which is principally the effect by forming an intimate connexion between the government and one of the temples of that place."

[605] See Section 9.4.

[606] NA (UK), CO 416/4/A31, letter of Alexander Johnstone to the Commissioners of Enquiry, accompanying the papers given by him to the committee, 3 October 1831.

[607] Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 124-138.

[608] Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 104-117, 121-138; Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj,* 24-27; Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India,* 8-22.

[609] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj,* 26-27: "The officials of the romantic generation in India shared a great deal with those of the Cornwallis era. To be sure, as Munro wrote with exasperation, 'it is too much regulation that ruins everything'. Yet these men were in fact themselves committed to the fundamental values of the rule of law, of property and of 'improvement'. In similar fashion, though they might accuse Cornwallis of 'rash innovation', neither they nor their Whig predecessors were prepared to restore the India that existed before Plassey."

[610] Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj,* 27: "By 1820 much that was to endure the framework of the Raj had been set firmly in place. The British had convinced themselves of the righteousness of their conquest of India, and, after the agonies of Hastings' trial, of their own moral superiority over the Indian subjects."

[611] He could not accept the fact that he had to share his power over the inhabitants with them. In 1809 Maitland expressed his worries about the continuous power of the headmen in the southwest, despite his efforts to diminish it, when he discussed the increase in paddy production. His policies had only been successful in the peripheral districts, where he had successfully replaced the native headmen with government agents: "This enourmous encrease has taken place in those districts where the government reached the cultivator himself and could see his own measure carried in full effect." NA (UK), CO 54/31, January 1809, f. 6.

[612] Perhaps his moderate approach was explained by his experiences when he served as a military officer on San Domingo in the 1790s, just after the slave revolts. The failure of the experiment on San Domingo, and the violent situation there, which he ascribed more to the French colonist than to the slaves, must have influenced him. Dixon, *The Colonial Administrations,* 8-10.

[613] Emmer, "The Ideology of Free Labor", 207.

Notes to Chapter Eleven

[614] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 225.

[615] BL add 13865 and 13866.

[616] NA (UK), CO 55/61, Dundas to North, 31 March 1801, ff. 135-213 (136 sections).

[617] Rasanayagam, "Tamil Documents", 29-53.

[618] Tammita-Delgoda, "The English East India Company and Sri Lanka 1760-1796";

V.L.B. Mendis, *The Advent of the British*.

[619] Lewis, "Andrew's Embassies to Kandy in 1795 and 1796".

[620] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation,* Vol. 1, 54-62.

[621] For source publications of these embassies see Lewis, "Andrew's Embassies", and "Macdowall's Embassy to Kandy".

[622] Wickremeratne, "Lord North and the Kandyan Kingdom", 30-42.

[623] Ibid.

[624] Bayly, *The Imperial Meridian*, 100-209.

[625] Perera, "The Douglas Papers", 65-78.

[626] He succeeded Nicolaas Dias in 1794 and retained this position after the British takeover.

[627] Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Vol. 1, 95-97.

[628] NA (UK), CO 55/62, 21 February 1805, Hobart to North, f. 111; ibid., Hobart's Instructions to Maitland, ff. 114-128 (reference is made to a paper on the subject of Kandy which Maitland wrote after consulting North's dispatches).

[629] NA (UK), CO 54/43, Brownrigg to Secretary of State, 29 March 1812, f. 3. Last received letter from Davie: "[…] For heavens sake please send Laudanum and opium, my torture is indurable […]." Davie died in early 1813: NA (UK), CO 54/47, despatch Brownrigg to London, 13 March 1813.

[630] P.E. Pieris, *Tri Sinhala*, 158-161; Granville, "Deportation of Sri Vrikama Rajasinha".

[631] NA (UK), CO 55/63, 10 May 1815, ff. 71-73: "he [His Royal Highness] has […] commanded me to inculcate upon you the necessity of abstaining from hostilities with Kandy / not only under the present circumstances of provocation, but under any short of an actual invasion and attack upon his majesty's territory. It is impossible for his Royal Highness to forget that the immediate consequence of a war would be the loss of a very large proportion of the European force employed in a climate which has proved particularly obnoxious to European constitutions and an immense increase of expenditure beyond what the colony could ever have a chance of defraying." BL add 38739, Huskisson to Brownrigg, 12 December 1814, f. 306: "On the subject of expenditure, and particularly of military expenditure, I cannot help stating to you, in the confidence of *old friendship*, that there exist an impression at home, that it is carried on much beyond what is absolutely necessary. This is supposed to be the effect not of any eagerness for patronage, nor of any want of zeal of checking any abuses; but rather from your military habits, and from you being supposed to look at matters rather too much with a soldier's eye."

[632] NA (UK), CO 55/63, Bathurst to Brownrigg, 28 August 1815, f. 83: "[…] The succes of your enterprize has been so complete and immediate that you must have yourself anticipated the lively satisfaction with which his royal highness received the intelligence. Had it been confined to the mere liberation of a people from a foreign despotism / as sanguinary and cruel as that under which the inhabitants of Kandy so long groaned / it could not but have been grateful to the feelings of His Royal Highness: but as the overthrow of that tyranny has given encreased security to His Majesty's possessions, and has been followed by an annexation of territory voluntarily and animously made by its inhabitants, the satisfaction which His Royal Highness would in any case have felt derives considerable accession from these circumstances, and from the proofs which they afford on the part of a whole people of confidence in the British name and character."

[633] Marshall, *Ceylon*, 110-111 and 127-128.

[634] Wickremeratne, "Lord North and the Kandyan Kingdom"; K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka*, 220-239.

[635] Teltscher, *India Inscribed,* 229-59. Teltscher uses British descriptions of Tipu Sultan of Mysore, who was increasingly depicted as an oriental tyrant, to legitimize British military action against Mysore.

[636] NA (UK), CO 54/55, 15 February 1815, f. 103, Brownrigg to Bathhurst: "I shall […] conclude the present [despatch], with soliciting your lordship to me the honor of presenting to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent the expression of my humble congratulations, in being enabled by the speedy and happy issue of a campaign ending with the unparalelled good fortune of not loosing a single life, to tender for his Royal highness's acceptance, the duties of a new and *industrious hardy race of people, and the possession of a*

territory bountifully endowed with natural gifts, and requiring only the blessing of a just government […].” (My italics.)

[637] Certainly the strategic argument, the constant fear that the Kandyans would ally themselves with a foreign enemy, was another motive for a more aggressive policy towards Kandy. However, one could say that in Brownrigg’s time, this fear was less realistic than in the days of Van de Graaff. Other factors such as personality and background could have played a role. Both men did have a military background and would therefore have been more eager to make use of their experiences. In the case of Van de Graaff, one may wonder whether he was reinforced in his decisions by the arrival of the military commission in 1789, and whether the presence of the professional regiments made him more eager for war.

[638] For an elaboration on this subject, see Section 11.6.

[639] NA (NL), VOC 3975, despatch to Batavia, 31 December 1792, f. 274: “*Dat het daarentegen zeer bekend is, dat den tweeden adigaar is een zeer listig en kwaadaardig man, van geheel tegengestelde principes, welke met de hofsgrooten van zijn partij, onder anderen Doembere en Leuwke, zedert lang heeft gewoeld om het hof, met de komp over hoop te helpen, en dat het bovendien uit de geintercepteerde Korrespondentie met de Franschen gebleeken is, dat hij is een der voornaamse hoofd belijderen daar van.”*

[640] P.E. Pieris, *Sinhale and the Patriots,* Appendix B, 591: The treaty of March 1815 “art. 1: By inflicting bodily torture and the pains of death unrestrainedly arbitrarily and mercilessly without making inquiry, in some instances without even a complaint, and also in matters where there was not even the opportunity for performing any wrongful act, and by infringing the law with great contempt, the cruelties and violent acts of the Demala [Tamil] Raja have become so extremely great and widespread as to be beyond endurance [...] art. 3: It is hereby announced that all males bearing kinship to the late Raja Sri Vikrama Raja Simha whether by marriage or otherwise, or of that family in any other manner whatsoever, or claiming kinship by deceitful stratagem, are not only enemies of the Government of the Simhala Rata, but they may not enter the said Rata for any purpose whatever without the warrant of the English government […]. All Demala males now expelled from this rata are prohibited from coming back thereto […].”

[641] Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom*, 29-45.

[642] Dharmadasa, “The Sinhala Buddhist Identity and the Nayakker Dynasty”, 79-105.

[643] Roberts, *Sinhala Consciousness in the Kandyan Period 1590s to 1815*, 109-131.

[644] Roberts bases his argument on the idea that people in the villages would have sung the war poems and thereby passed on the anti-Tamil message to all levels of society. He underlines this by a lengthy discussion of oral poetry in Sri Lanka, but he does not substantiate his central point, that the war poems were enthusiastically received and widespread in this manner.

[645] Gunawardana, “Colonialism, Ethnicity and the Construction of the Past”, 198-221; Goonewardene, “Sri Vijaya Rajasimha (1739-1747)”, 441-496; Rogers, “Historical Images in the British Period”, 87-106.

[646] Holt, *The Religious World of Kirti Sri*, 100; Duncan, *The City as Text*, 182-183; Seneviratne, “The Alien King”, 55-61.

[647] SLNA, 7/39, Governor’s secret diary, November 26, 1798.

[648] This “last stand of Kandyan autonomy” has been dealt with extensively by P.E. Pieris in his *Sinhale and the Patriots 1815-1818*. 195-246, including references to the new king-to-be, Dore Swami. The rebellion inspired Sinhalese nationalists in their resistance to colonial regimes in the twentieth century.

[649] NA (NL), VOC 3975, despatch 31 December 1792.

[650] NA (NL), Collectie Nederburgh 442, §10: *“*[…] *dat den eersten Rijks Adigaar van wien ik meen te moogen vertrouwen, dat hij bij voortduuring wel gezind tegens de kompenie is* [...]*”*

[651] Rasanayagam, “Tamil Documents”, 25-28.

[652] OIOC, G/11/1, f. 478. Boyd refers here to the dessāva of Matala, this office was at that point occupied by Erevvala.

[653] Rasanayagam, “Tamil Documents”, 35-36; Lewis, “Andrew’s Embassies”, 70-76.

[654] Rasanayagam, “Tamil Documents”, 4. Reference is made here of a letter written by

Meduma Vederala, who also carried the Sinhalese name Rajakaruna Rajapaksa Gopala Mudaliyar.

[655] It is understandable that in these times of ethnic troubles in Sri Lanka, historians search for early manifestations of ethnic consciousness. However, I do not think that this can serve as an explanation for the fall of the Kingdom. More generally, I have not come across forms of communal strive among the various ethnic groups on the island. Competition between the castes was a more urgent problem, but even that was limited. In any case, a better explanation for the Kingdom's fall is its fragile political power structure. That is not to say that there cannot have been any relationship at all between the rise of Sinhalese ethnic consciousness and the fall of the Kingdom: but Kandy's demise seems to have triggered the rise of Sinhalese ethnic consciousness, rather than the other way around.

Note to Chapter Twelve

[656] This topic is dealt with more extensively by Nirmal Ranjith Devasiri in his upcoming thesis, written under the auspices of the TANAP programme, on the relations between the colonial government and peasant in the southwest in the mid-eighteenth century.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF KINGS OF KANDY, DUTCH AND BRITISH GOVERNORS

Kings of Kandy 1591-1815

Vimaladharmasuriya I	1591 – 1604
Senarat	1604 – 1635
Rajasinha II	1635 – 1687
Vimaladharmasuriya II	1687 – 1707
Narendrasinha	1707 – 1739
Vijaya Rajasinha	1739 – 1747
Kirti Sri Rajasinha	1747 – 1782
Rajadhi Rajasinha	1782 – 1798
Sri Vikrama Rajasinha	1798 – 1815

Dutch Governors 1640-1796

Willem J. Coster	1640
Jan Thyszoon	1640 – 1646
Jan Maatzuyker	1646 – 1650
Jacob van Kittensteyn	1650 – 1653
Adriaan van der Meijden	1653 – 1660
Rijcklof van Goens	1660 – 1661
Adriaan van der Meijden	1661 – 1663
Rijcklof van Goens	1663
Jacob Hustaart	1663 – 1664
Rijcklof van Goens	1664 – 1675
Rijcklof van Goens jr.	1675 – 1680
Laurens Pijl	1680 – 1692
Thomas van Rhee	1693 – 1697
Gerrit de Heere	1697 – 1703
Cornelis Jan Simons	1703 – 1707
Hendrik Becker	1707 – 1716
Isaac Augusteijn Rumpf	1716 – 1723
Johannes Hertenberg	1723 – 1726
Petrus Vuyst	1726 – 1729
Stephanus Versluys	1729 – 1732
Jacob Christiaan Pielat	1732 – 1734
Diederik van Domburg	1734 – 1736
Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff	1736 – 1739
Willem Maurits Bruyninck	1739 – 1742
Daniel Overbeek	1742 – 1743
Julius V.S. van Gollenesse	1743 – 1751
Gerard Jan Vreelandt	1751 – 1752
Johan Gideon Loten	1752 – 1757
Jan Schreuder	1757 – 1761
Lubbert Jan Baron van Eck	1762 – 1765
Iman Willem Falck	1765 – 1785
Willem Jacob van de Graaff	1785 – 1794
Johan Gerard van Angelbeek	1794 – 1796

British Governors 1798-1830

Frederick North	1798 – 1805
Sir Thomas Maitland	1805 – 1811
Sir Robert Brownrigg	1811 – 1820
Sir Edward Barnes	1820 – 1822
Sir Edward Paget	1822 – 1824
Sir Edward Barnes	1824 – 1831

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British period:

Lot 2: Minutes of the Executive Council
2, 3

Lot 6: Papers of the Central government, incoming correspondence
45a, 69, 84, 101-104, 128, 143

Lot 7: Papers of the Central government, public and secret diaries of Governor North
35, 36, 47

Lot 10: Miscellaneous papers of the central government
38, 201-202

Lot 25.1: Johnstone papers; Christie collection
34-36

Nationaal Archief, Den Haag (NA (NL))

VOC: Archieven van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren
3571, 3573, 3664, 3665, 3689, 3691, 3692, 3726, 3799, 3838, 3837, 3689, 3693; 3840; 3841, 3842, 3843, 3878, 3975

Com. tot OI handel: Archieven betreffende Comité tot de zaken van de Oost Indische handel en bezittingen (1791, 1796-1800)
128, 129, 130

HR.: Archivalia afkomstig van de Hoge Regering te Batavia
532, 537, 585, 586, 596, 597

Collectie Nederburgh
141, 440, 442, 444, 446, 448, 727, 757
Collectie Alting
72, 82, 83, 93
Collectie Van Braam
115, 199
Collectie Brugmans
118

National Archives, Kew (NA (UK))
CO 54: Colonial Office and predecessors: Ceylon, original correspondence
2, 18, 20, 31, 42, 44, 47, 55, 93, 123-126
CO 55: Colonial Office and predecessors: Ceylon entry books
1, 2, 61-63
CO 59: War and Colonial department and Colonial Office: Ceylon miscellanea
27
CO 416: Commisisoners of Eastern Enquiry, Ceylon
2/A1, 4/A17, 4/A21, 4/A31, 22/H8, 22/H10, 24, 26/5, 26/J10, 27/J12
WO 1: War department in-letters and papers, 1. of the French Wars period
361, 362

British Library, London (BL)
Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC)
G/11: Factory records Ceylon 1, 2, 54
P/254: Madras Military and political proceedings 12, 13
P/275: Proceedings of the Madras revenue board 8
Western manuscripts collection
Add: additional manuscripts 13865-13867, 38739, 40737

Universiteitsbiliotheek Leiden (UB)
Westerse handschriften
LTK: Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde 732

Arsip Nasional Republic Indonesia, Jakarta (ANRI)
HR: Archief van de gouverneurs-generaal en raden van Indië (Hoge Regering) van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en taakopvolgers (verkort: Hoge Regering)
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