

Map Matters



Issue 25

January 2015

Welcome to the Summer 2014-15 edition of *Map Matters*, the newsletter of the Australia on the Map Division of the Australasian Hydrographic Society.

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Dear Readers,

This issue is a combined spring/summer issue. Without contributions from our late co-founder, Rupert Gerritsen, there seems not to be enough material to publish four times a year. Hence last issue was combined autumn/winter and this one spring/summer. If we start receiving more contributions we will return to quarterly publishing but at the moment it looks like it will be only twice a year.

If you have any contributions or suggestions for *Map Matters*, you can email them to me at the address at the bottom of this newsletter, or post them to me at: PO Box 1696, Tuggeranong, 2901.

AOTM now also has a presence on facebook: <http://on.fb.me/1pbripQ>.

Marianne Pietersen
Editor

News

Rupert's Short Stories to be published

In cooperation with the Dutch Embassy in Canberra, the Committee of AOTM is in the process of publishing a small book with stories by our late Chair, Rupert Gerritsen. This booklet aims to introduce people to the early maritime contact history of Australia and will be made available free of charge to libraries and interested individuals. Many of our members will already have seen more scientific versions of these stories over the years, but copies can be obtained by anyone. We anticipate that in the next issue of Map Matters we can inform you how you can obtain a copy.

The VOC and the Genesis of the Corporation



VOC Return fleet leaves Batavia 1674 \ Painting - City Museum Alkmaar

The Dutch United East Indies Company (VOC), a shipping and trading company that charted most of the Australian coast by 1644, was the first modern corporation, as hinted at in much literature⁽¹⁾. But these brief mentions rarely explain how or why this corporate form arose, let alone why it would first occur in a small nation with hardly two million people, and not earlier or in a larger country or empire, such as Rome, Spain or Britain. This article hints at some of the answers to these questions from the reams of published work on the issue,⁽²⁾ and the impacts of the corporation in the world economy since. Interestingly the initiative to set up the company had come from the Government.

The corporate form

The modern corporation, multinational or not, is a commercial enterprise with a separate "legal personality". It is headed by a board of directors, appointed or elected, which hire managers and other personnel who are responsible to the board. The board operates with a high degree of independence from the corporations owners: the shareholders. Shareholders are neither liable for the debts that the board incurs, nor can they dictate decision making. They can cash their investment or part thereof at any time by trading their shares on the stock market. They do not recoup it from the company, meaning the capital is "locked in". The owner-shareholders in the corporation tend to change continuously.

The board of directors represents the company when trading and wherever needed, but individual directors are also themselves shielded from liability for the corporation's obligations. Only the corporation is liable for the decisions made by the board and its managers, including those resulting in debts, such as taxes and import duties. This is known as limited liability for owners and shareholders. The board can decide to pay dividends to shareholders, or refrain from doing so. This corporate structure tends to be more expensive compared to a sole trader or traditional partnership, as these additional board and management structures require the additional costs of salaries and corporate offices. The precise legal details of modern corporations differ from country to country, but the basic corporate form is similar. There is a public perception that the corporate form was created to serve its shareholders better, through greater efficiency. But was it?

This system of the corporation did not exist for private firms until its emergence within the VOC, apart from some small, localised and low-risk "entity shielding" examples in France and Belgium⁽³⁾. Why not?



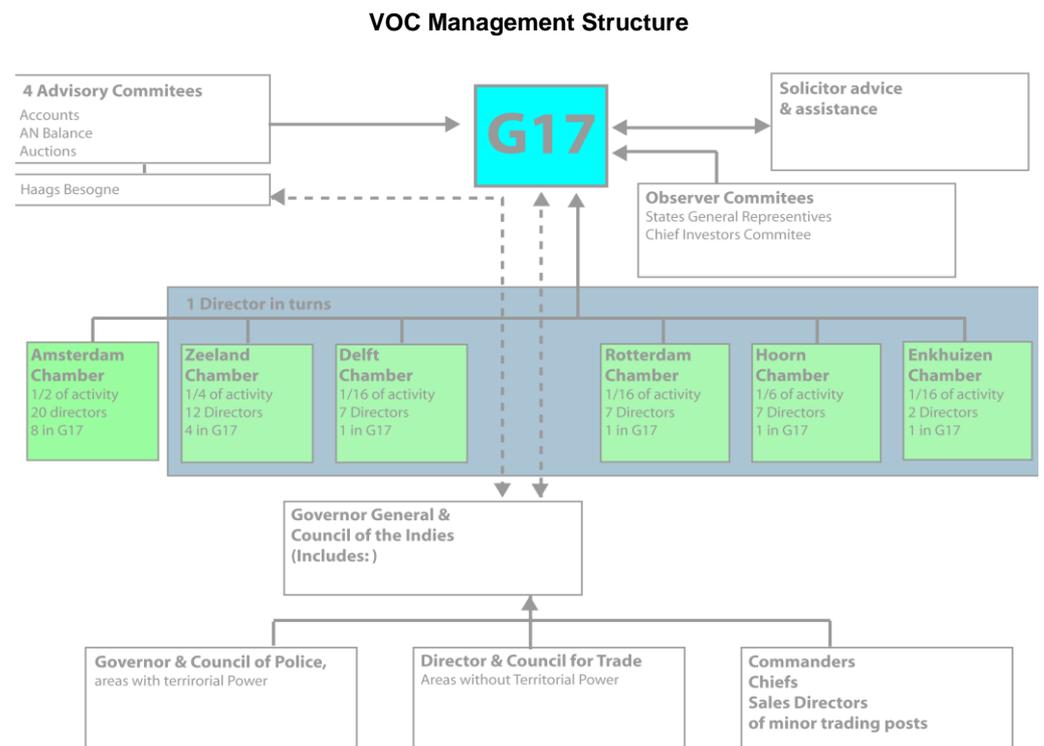
Area of Operation of the VOC's Intra-Asian Trade

The pre-VOC business form

Roman law was the basis for legal systems in Europe well past medieval times, deep into the Renaissance. It did allow partnerships: enterprises based on a private contract for a common purpose, such as to share the profits and the losses between all partners. But Roman law also stipulated that no-one could make an agreement on behalf of someone else: "no representation"; which prevented a management agency from running other people's joint investment. Owners had to be involved and were

directly responsible and liable for decisions taken. This prohibition was occasionally circumvented in some jurisdictions including in later commercial law, but even at the start of the 17th century courts did not always accept this.

So by the beginning of the 17th century individual investors were still jointly liable for transactions of the commercial partnership. Each individual partner could veto commercial decisions because a consensus was required. The death of a single investor caused the whole enterprise to be liquidated, requiring an entirely new partnership to be negotiated for operations to continue. Thus, the size and scope of these Roman law-based partnership-companies was limited, as they required consensus of all shareholders for every decision, with no avenue to provide 'locked in' private capital to a firm for the long term. Legal change would be required to create this.



The first VOC charter

Before 1602, maritime trading investors exclusively formed partnerships for a single voyage only, often for a whole fleet. Not only was then the cargo sold after each voyage, but the ships as well, with the Captains and crews dismissed upon their return. This arrangement made the overall profit of each trip instantly clear, as there was no remaining investment either at home or overseas. The total returns were then distributed to partners. This was referred to as 'default liquidation upon return'.

The VOC's first charter of 1602 is the statutory document that established the company.⁽⁴⁾ While innovative, the charter did not contain all the basic characteristics of the corporate form. But it did provide for a capital lock-in for ten years, paired with the provision that no dividend would be paid until sufficient profits had been generated to repay all investors in full. This no-cash-for-a-decade likelihood was considered to be unattractive to investors in intercontinental business ventures.

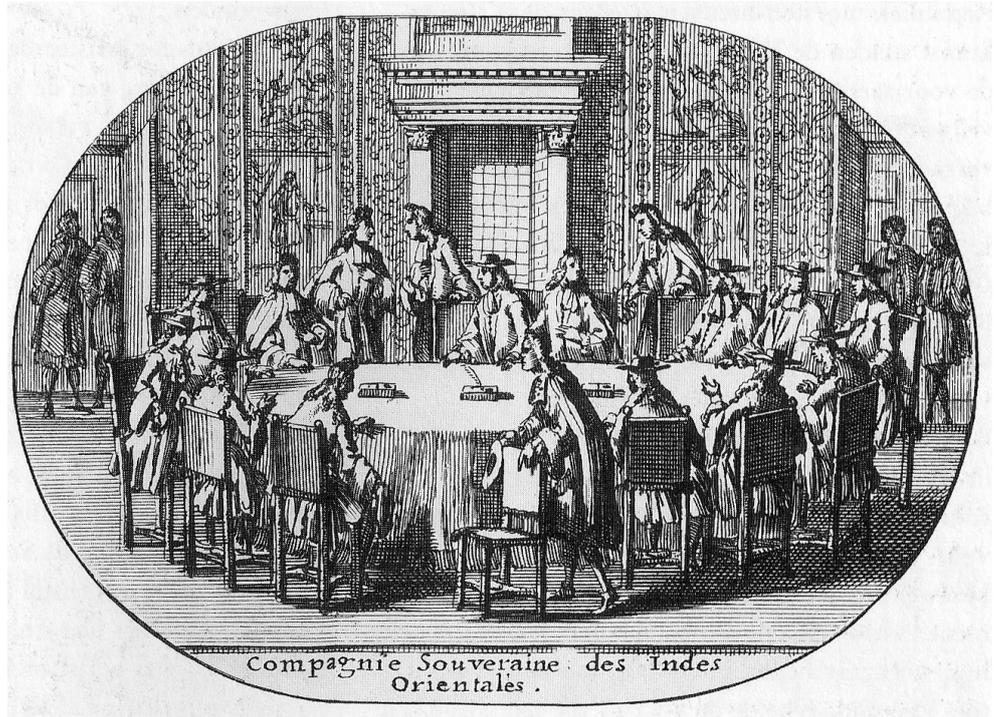
To make investing in the VOC more attractive, the first Charter provided that shares could be traded from the start, which was previously only possible with approval from all investor partners. In turn, this stimulated an active Amsterdam stock market. Personal unlimited liabilities for almost all debts still applied to the seventeen shareholder-directors, but the Charter granted them limited liability for wage arrears until the fleet returned and the cargo was sold.

In Portugal, Spain and England, royal monopolies had been granted to firms trading with Asia which sought to protect traders against competition from fellow nationals, prevent free-riding on military protection, and promote investor confidence. The first

VOC Charter similarly provided a trading monopoly for the Dutch. The Charter gave sovereign rights and obligations to the VOC managers to act on behalf of the National Government in many circumstances and deal with foreign nations.

Short-term trading investments caused problems, as Asia was a year's sailing away, and required "sunk investments" to maximise success, such as overseas military action, protective fortifications, armaments and real estate for trading posts and a mapping agency. By requiring a capital commitment for ten years, the VOC was free from the need to distribute any profits for an extended period, and could accommodate the sunk investments necessary to establish its position in Asia. After ten years, investors could re-invest in the company.

The VOC established itself rather quickly in Asia, particularly at the expense of the Portuguese. But this came at a cost, as the VOC's military actions were far more than planned for, such as sea battles against Spanish and Portuguese fleets and capturing their forts. As a result, funds to send out trading fleets were low, with only eight fleets sent between 1602 and 1609, seeing the VOC share price tumble to 80% of nominal value by 1609.



**The Gentlemen Seventeen at work
Print from "Histoire abrégée des Provinces Unies
des Pays Bas" Amsterdam 1701**

But the VOC had managed to beat planned English expansion in the East Indies as well, by outspending the English East India Company (EIC). The EIC at that stage was working exclusively with short term capital as their King had shown a tendency of breaching their granted monopolies by granting further ones or cancelling monopolies to raise more funds. English investors were also wary that company resources were often expropriated by the Government for war.

Deciding the corporate form

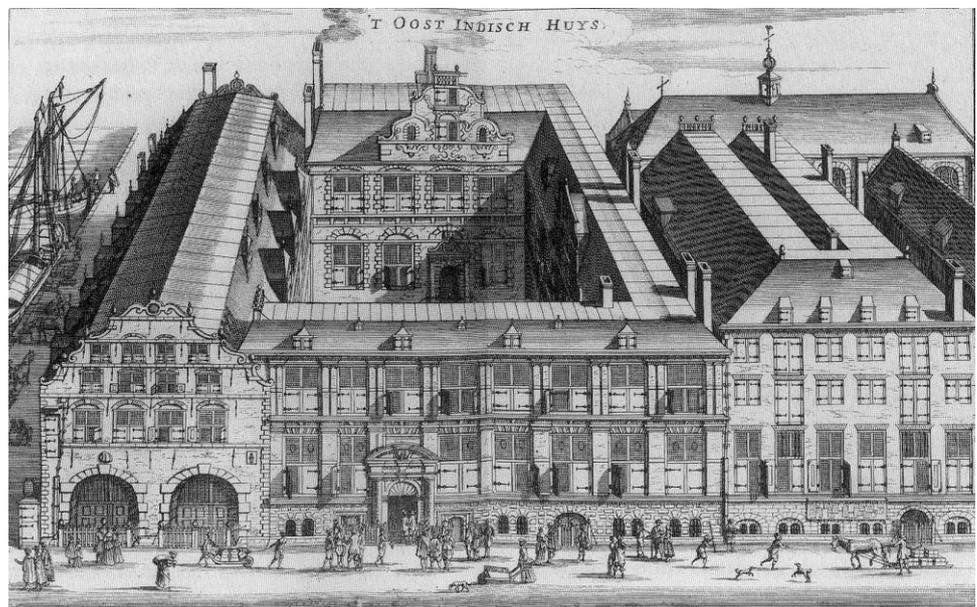
The first Charter, including its monopoly, was granted for twenty years, revealing the intention to continue beyond 1612. But in 1606, it appears, Directors began to see difficulties with the 1612 liquidation and began to promote the idea of lifting it.

Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the Chair of the governing body of the confederate Dutch Republic, the States General, asked the Fleet Commander Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge to prepare a report with his analysis and views on the approaching 1612 liquidation. Matelieff reported that the military investments should not be lost, but should be stepped up, as it would benefit the company for the years after 1612. Liquidation would mean virtually starting afresh. Matelieff advised that the decision to liquidate should not be left to the Directors, as they may liquidate to recoup their investments, contrary to the interests of the fledgling Dutch nation, now at the

beginning of a 12-year truce in its independence war against Spain. Instead, the Asian trade should continue to build upon what had been achieved so far, advised Matelieff.⁽⁵⁾

But this idea was not without its opponents. By 1609, two of the Directors had revolted against aspects of the Charter including the 'no return for 10 years' provision and resigned. One of these, Isaac Le Maire, after resigning in 1606 bought significant numbers of the then cheap shares to force a change. He also actively challenged the VOC's monopoly and launched two vessels to sail around South America to the East Indies, commanded by his son Jacob. The single ship that arrived there was confiscated by VOC authorities for a breach of the monopoly. But Le Maire's passionate and expensive challenge to his loss of authority as an owner in the developing corporate structure stands as testament that the interests of share-holders and governing bodies was in conflict from the beginning.

Soon after, the company received a large rebate on customs duty, whereby the Dutch government admitted it had encouraged the company to wage war on behalf of the nation. From 1610 the Board lobbied hard to have the liquidation lifted, arguing the VOC was not just private enterprise but also pursued State affairs, formalising this request in March 1612. It was clearly contrary to private shareholder rights as specified in the Charter.



Head office of the Amsterdam VOC Chamber, also included an abattoir and a spice warehouse - Print by J. Van Meurs 1662

The Board argued elaborately on a number of fronts. By 1612, the VOC accounts were weak, risking that a renewed investment round would fail to attract sufficient capital; and the company could not continue to represent the Dutch government overseas. They pointed out that competition from the EIC was increasing, as the English had lower military costs and could undercut VOC prices in Europe. Spain and Portugal continued hostilities in the east as the 1609 twelve-year truce with Spain did not cover the East-Indies, and without a continuing military presence the Dutch would lose access to trading ports. In short, they argued that if the liquidation obligation was not lifted, the requested subsidy was not provided and the government failed to start negotiations with the English, trade would stop and high unemployment would result.

Shareholders were threatening court action to enforce the Charter. The VOC argued that shareholder sovereignty was preserved in overturning the liquidation provision, as shareholders could sell their shares on the stock market, and so would not suffer losses. To show good faith, the Board agreed to draw up and present annual accounts that conformed to government specifications.

The Dutch government began considering this controversial and pressing bundle of submissions on 28 July 1612. On the 30th news came that the Spanish were preparing a massive assault on VOC fortresses. On the 31st the States General legislated to suspend the Charter article requiring liquidation.⁵ The other requests took months to deal with, but the VOC's capital had become permanent, de facto, and the VOC the

first private company with a possibly indefinite life. Its likely discontinuation from 1612 had been averted.



Ruins of the former VOC Amsterdam Warehouse, collapsed 14 April 1822.
Print by Van Arum Brothers. Collection Bodel Bijenhuis, Leiden.

Use of the corporate form

The VOC would trade as a modern corporation in inter-continental trade and intra-Asian trade for close to two centuries. Only after many decades would other nations start to copy its corporate structure. First was the EIC after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the role of the previously absolute monarch became largely ceremonial and Parliament held the reins of decision making. Only then did Britain become a large colonial empire. Where other countries' constitutional circumstances allowed, they followed suit.

Eventually the corporate form was adopted on a massive scale around the world, to the point that there are now corporations everywhere, some larger than many countries' economies. If the performance of public and private institutions greatly determine the economy of a nation, the corporate form may be considered the foundation of modern economic organisation. Capital permanence, the privilege of limited liability are its basic ingredients. When we notice or suspect that corporations followed the behaviour of the 1612 VOC to capitalise on their clout with government, to change the law just for them or to prevent law that disadvantages them, we may realise that too is a four centuries' old practice. The recent financial crisis showed some other side effects, which with the issues of to what extent and how the fruits of the corporations are distributed in the nation, are stories by themselves. Interestingly the Corporation was first created by Government and in the public interest, at the expense of the shareholders' interest. One may wonder: should they return to supporting the nation as their primary goal?

The VOC was not to be forever. The Dutch government took over the remains of the VOC around 1800 when it went bankrupt. Its debts imposed a severe financial burden on the public purse until deep into the 19th century. The factors that brought the VOC to an end included: the fourth Anglo-Dutch war and its aftermath; deteriorating management in Holland (where nothing substantial happened without approval of the French who had overthrown the Dutch Republic in 1795); growing management costs; increased 'self trading' by personnel in Asia; and defective funding methods⁽⁶⁾. But its legacy lives on in the ever-expanding role of corporations in the world economy, as does the basic conflict between shareholders rights and the prerogatives of Boards.

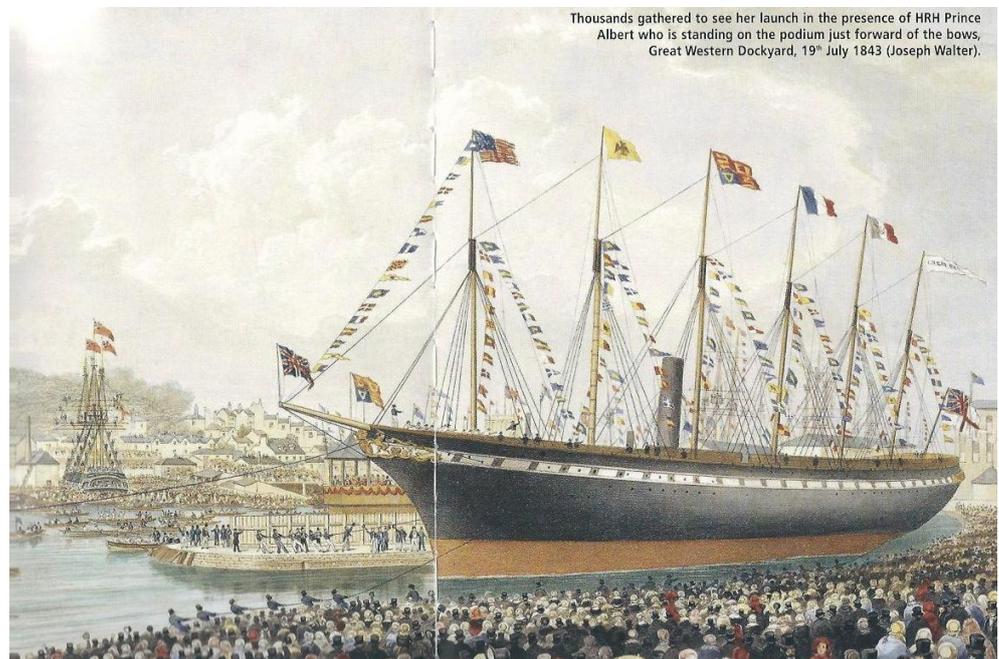
Peter Reynders

- 1) e.g. Gaastra, F. S. *De Geschiedenis van de VOC*, Walburg Pers, Zutphen , 6th imprint 2002
- (2) e.g. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2116137> and <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2223905>; <http://ssrn.com/abstract=874406> ; some points from the papers referred to I used here.
- (3) for an English version see <http://www.australiaonthemap.org.au/voc-charter>
- (4) [Johan van Oldenbarnevelt-Bescheiden 1610-1612 p 320](#)
- (5) see <http://gutenberg.net.au/VOC.html>

SS Great Britain – a part of Australia's Maritime Heritage

One of my last excursions before leaving UK to return to Canberra in October 2014 was to Bristol. I wanted to revisit Isambard Kingdom Brunel's famous iron ship SS Great Britain, a ship I had first seen some 44 years earlier. Britain has many famous heritage ships. Some of my favourites are HMS Victory, Nelson's Flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar; HMS Discovery, Robert Scott's ship on his first Antarctic Expedition; and the tea clipper Cutty Sark whose Australian links I wrote about in an earlier Map Matters.

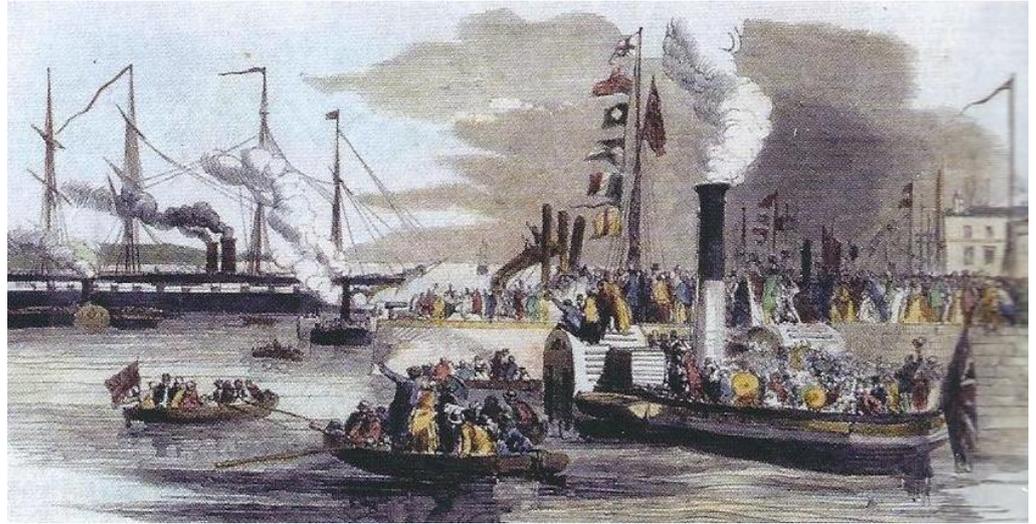
But SS Great Britain is special, it was the first large iron ship, a sail assisted steamship with the world's biggest steam engine afloat, and the biggest ship in the world – the great great grandmother of all modern ships. Launched in 1843, it was acclaimed as 'the greatest experiment since the Creation'. Iron ships are counter intuitive – throw a piece of wood and a piece of iron into a pool of water, the wood floats, the iron sinks – fast. But iron ships needed fewer bulky internal supports than a wooden ship, so they could carry more passengers and cargo, and still have room for coal to power the steam engine which revolutionised shipping by eliminating a ship's dependency on wind.



SS Great Britain launch at Great Western dockyard, 1843.

The ship was the brainchild of Brunel, the brilliant Industrial Revolution engineer who had joined London and Bristol with the Great Western Railway, and flung the iron Clifton Suspension Bridge across Bristol's spectacular Avon Gorge. Nothing seemed impossible. In a dry dock on the River Avon in Bristol in 1839 Brunel's dream of a transatlantic liner, that would take passengers from the railway terminus in Bristol to New York, began to take shape. Wrought iron arrived in barges from the world's first ironworks on the River Severn in Shropshire, while the ship's arrogantly huge 1000 horsepower engine was created in an adjacent and similarly huge stone factory. After 4 years the innovative vessel was ready. Even the paddle wheels of early steamships had been replaced by a new screw propeller, the very latest invention in steam technology.

By 1845 the Great Britain was plying the Atlantic but, like the Cutty Sark, would see many changes in use. Sold to new owners in 1850, they converted her to a migrant ship able to carry 700 passengers. She made her first voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne in 1852, continuing in this role until 1875. Fuelled by the Victorian Gold Rush, there were plenty of passengers for the 60 day voyage. In 1861 the ship carried the first England cricket team to tour Australia. In 1873 the fares to Melbourne included 'Steward's Fees, the attendance of an experienced surgeon, and all Provisions of the best quality' and ranged from £15-£16 Steerage to 60-70 Guineas First Class. The ship also went on to Brisbane and New Zealand. Today, hundreds of thousands of Australians are descended from immigrants who arrived on the SS Great Britain.



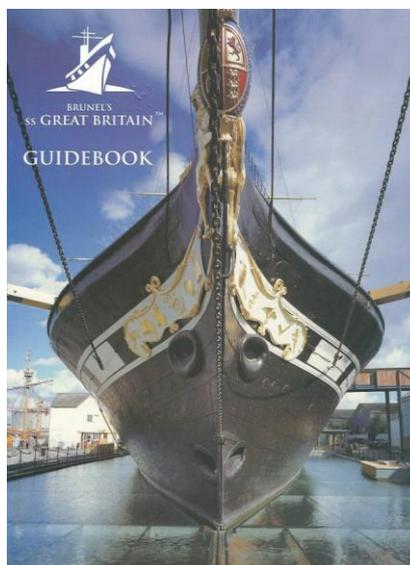
The SS Great Britain leaves Liverpool on her first voyage to Melbourne in 1852.

After 1875 the ship had a varied career as a cargo vessel carrying Welsh coal to San Francisco and returning with wheat from the USA prairies and South American seabird guano to fertilise European gardens. In 1886 storms off Cape Horn forced the battered ship to shelter in the Falkland Islands. Here the ship became a floating warehouse for coal and wool. By 1933 she was declared unsafe, towed to a remote windswept bay and scuttled in shallow water.

But Ewan Corlett, a far-sighted naval architect, refused to let her die. A salvage team refloated her early in 1970 and strapped her to a huge floating pontoon which was towed 8000 miles across the Atlantic to her Bristol birthplace.

By chance, I was there in Bristol on that momentous day in July 1970, one of many thousands of people who lined the Avon as she was towed to the dry dock where she was built, 127 years to the day after her launch. I went back to see her in 1975 while visiting Australian friends in Bristol. She was in the dry dock, her battered neglected hull slowly being repaired and preserved against its mighty enemy, rust.

Nothing had prepared me for my 2014 visit, an off the cuff decision en route to London from Wales with a few hours to kill. SS Great Britain lives again! From a bare hull the entire ship has been lovingly recreated and furnished as she was when an emigrant ship plying the Australian route in the 1850s. You can climb down narrow ladders through the ship into another world, visit the steerage cabins and see the tiny spaces occupied by early Australian migrants (almost as small as those now allocated to economy air travellers on the same route). Their trunks, bedding and clothes are there, notices on the walls, food (and rats) in the galleys, and sounds and smells of the era further enhance the realism of the experience.



So why not make your next trip to UK an Australasian maritime heritage experience? Visit Greenwich in London to see Cutty Sark, which carried beer and other cargo to Australia and brought back wool. Greenwich and its National Maritime Museum has a wealth of wonders for anyone interested in maritime history, including paintings by Hodges and Webber from Cook's second and third voyages. Take Brunel's Great Western Railway to Bristol to see SS Great Britain. Perhaps also make the trip north to Dundee to see Scott's ship RRS Discovery, used by Scott and Shackleton on the 1901 Discovery Expedition to Antarctica, and later by Douglas Mawson's 1929-31 British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition which established the sites of what became the Australian Antarctic Territory. You will be totally captivated.

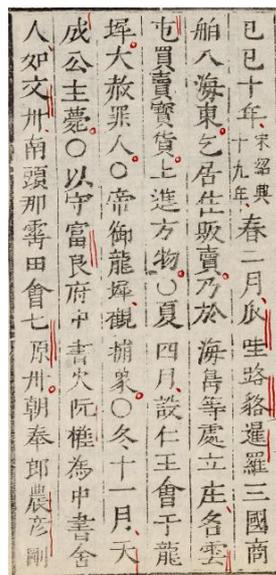
Trevor Lipscombe

Marco Polo and the Question of Locach

The *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (Complete History of Đại Việt), the oldest Vietnamese dynastic history, records that in the year 1149, merchant ships from the three countries Tráo Oa, Lộ Hạc and Xiêm La entered the Hải Đông and requested permission to trade on the Vân Đồn islands.¹ The same work further records that in the year 1360, merchant ships belonging to the countries of Lộ Hạc, Tráo Oa and Xiêm La came to the island of Vân Đồn carrying foreign goods to trade.

These passages elucidate what has been called by the historian of the early cartography of Southeast Asia, Thomas Suarez, "one of the great riddles" of Marco Polo's text, the location his province of *Locach*.² Locach appears as *LVCACH* on the 1570 world map of Abraham Ortelius, *Typus Orbis Terrarum*, as the northern part of the southern continent, the *Terra Australis*.

Suarez pointed out that mapmakers had placed Locach in locations as diverse as southern Thailand and Borneo, as well as in the Terra Australis. He noted that modern scholars had argued over the identity of Locach based on etymological analysis, and scrutinized Marco's description of the realm and its position in his itinerary in relation to known places such as Pulo Condore and the island of Bintang at the entrance to the Straits of Singapore. But, as Suarez says, Marco's statement that Locach was on *terra firma* meant either that it lay on the Asian continent or that there was another landmass of major proportions lying in the China Sea.



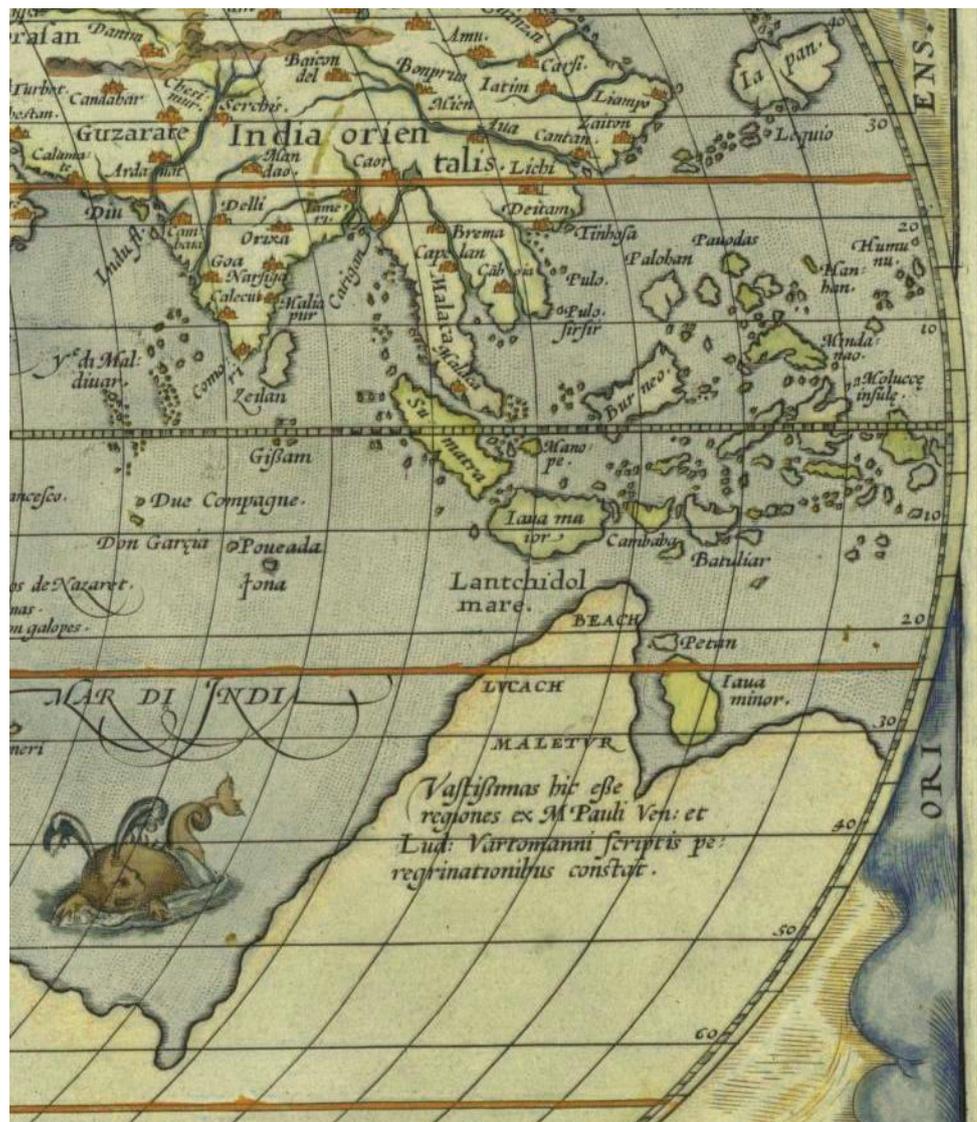
Kỷ Ty era, 10th year [1149 AD], (Song Dynasty Shaoxing 19th year). In the second month of spring, three merchant ships, from Java, Lộ Hạc, and Siam came into the Eastern Sea [Gulf of Tonking], requested permission to trade, went to set up on the islands known as Van Don and exchanged valuable merchandise for local produce.

Đại Việt Sử Ký Bản Kỷ Toàn Thư (大越史記本紀全書 The Complete History of Đại Việt), 1697, Quyển IV (四卷 vol. 4), "Anh Tông Hoàng Đế 李英宗皇帝 The Emperor Anh Tong [1136–1175]". Reprinted Hanoi, 1993.

Ngô Đức Thọ, author of the annotations to the text in the 1983 modern Vietnamese edition of the *Complete History of Đại Việt*, opts for southern Thailand. He says: "Lộ Hạc is Lavo in Lopburi province, Thailand. Lộ Hạc is likely to be the country of Locac mentioned in Marco Polo's *Travels*".³

The other locations mentioned in the Dai Viet history are easily recognizable for modern Vietnamese, as the names are still in use. The Hải Đông, or East Sea, is the Gulf of Tonking. The Van Don islands are about 50 kilometres from Hai Phong, and are currently being developed as an international free trade zone by the present government of Vietnam. Ngô's textual notes identify *Trảo Oa* as Java, and *Xiêm La* as Siam (modern Thailand). *Lộ Hạc* is not a familiar name to modern Vietnamese, and requires some explanation, for which recourse may be had to Chinese records.

Ngô Đức Thọ notes that the *Ming History* records that in the Zhi Zheng era of the Yuan Dynasty (1341-1368), Luo-hu (Lộ Hạc = Lavo) was conquered by Xian (Xiêm = Siam), the two countries being then united to form the new Xianluo (Xiêm-La). Xianluo/Xiêm-La thenceforward became the Chinese/Vietnamese name for Siam.



BEACH, LVCACH, MALETVR: Vastissimas hic esse regionem ex M Pauli Ven: et Lud: Vartomanni scripsit peregrinationibus constat (the writings of M. Polo the Venetian and Ludovico de Varthema describe the vastness of these regions). Abraham Ortelius, *Typus Orbis Terrarium*, 1570. NLA10001.

But what did Luo-hu / Lộ Hạc signify in Marco Polo's time?

A Chinese work published in 1621, the *Wubei Zhi* (Treatise on Military Matters) contains a chapter describing the Kingdom of Xianluo. Like the *Ming History*, it explains that Xianluo was originally the two states of Xian and Luohu, in the upper and lower parts respectively of the Chao Phraya (Menam) valley. During the Zhi Zheng era of the

Yuan Dynasty (1341-1368), Luo-hu was conquered by Xian (Siam), the two countries being then united to form the new kingdom of Xianluo (Siam).⁴ A map included in the *Wubei Zhi* identifies *Jiaowa* (Java), *Xianluo* (Siam) and *Zhenla* (Kamboja).

The *Zhu-fan-zhi* (Records of Foreign Countries) written in 1225 by Zhao Rukuo, the superintendent of merchant shipping for the Chinese coastal province of Fukien (Fujian), records that Luohu was a dependency of Zhenla (Kamboja, or Cambodia).⁵ It also records that the capital of Zhenla was Luwu.

"Zhenla" was the Chinese name for Kamboja, the kingdom of Angkor. Zhenla (also written "Chenla"), was the name of an ancient state that ceased to exist in the seventh century, which occupied the eastern part of the later kingdom of Kamboja.

According to *A Pronouncing Dictionary of Chinese Characters in Archaic & Ancient Chinese, Mandarin & Cantonese*, "Luo-hu" was pronounced in Marco Polo's time similarly to the modern Cantonese "Lo-huk".⁶ The Vietnamese pronunciation is closer to the ancient Chinese.

"Lo-huk" was the Chinese pronunciation of *Lavo* or *Lvo*, the first syllable of *Lavo-pura*, the "city of Lavo", now Lopburi in southern Thailand, named after *Lavo*, the son of Rama in Hindu mythology.⁷ The Thai scholar, Dhida Saraya, has noted that in the 12th century Lavo (Lavapura) became the most prominent trading state in Southeast Asia.⁸

The earliest confirmed occurrence of the name Lavapura, or "Lavapura", is on several silver coins recovered in 1966 from a hoard found in the town of U Thong. They are inscribed *Lava* on the obverse and *Pura* on the reverse in a Pallava-derived script of the seventh or eighth century. They constitute evidence that in the lower Chao Phraya delta of present-day Thailand, there was a city called Lavapura as early as about the 7th century AD.⁹



Silver coin from Uthong, Thailand, showing *lava* and *pura* (*lavapura*) in so-called Pallava script.

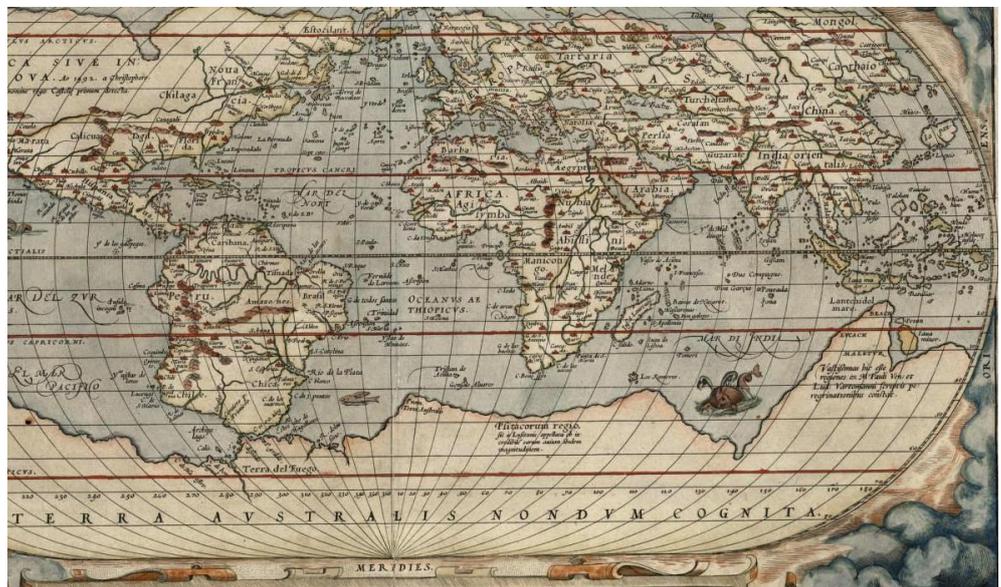
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The *Ming History* records that Lavapura was incorporated into the empire of Kamboja in 1022 during the reign of Suryavarman I (1011-1150).¹⁰ Its merchants thenceforth figure increasingly in the Khmer inscriptions.¹¹

In Marco Polo's day, Lavapura was the western part of Kamboja, the Khmer empire.¹² The names Luohu and Zhenla also seem to have been used interchangeably by the Chinese of that time to refer to Cambodia. The *Zhu-fan-zhi* (Records of Foreign Countries, 1225) even states that the capital of Zhenla (Kamboja) was Luwu (Lvo, or Lavo).¹³ An inscribed stele found in Lopburi called that city Lvo corroborates the Chinese texts. The French scholar, Paul Pelliot, noted: "It is very probable that this country Lvo is none other than Lopburi, the former Siamese name of which is Lavo".¹⁴ Pelliot also noted that the stele inscription described the soldiers of Lvo as being dressed like those of Cambodia and concluded that they "could in fact be Cambodian".

A Chinese encyclopedia the *Yuhai* (Jade Ocean), compiled by Wang Yinglin (d.1296), records the presentation of two elephants from Zhenla-Luohu as tribute in 1155, during the reign of the Angkor king Dharanindravarman II.¹⁵ Another compilation of the period, the *Song hui-yao ji-gao* (Institutes of the Song Empire) also records the presentation of a tame elephant from “Zhenla-Luohu”.¹⁶

In 1292 Marco Polo was commissioned by the Great Khan and Emperor of China, Kublai Khan, to escort his niece, Koko-beki, to Iran, whose Mongol ruler she was to marry. Book III of the *Travels* described this journey. Marco's ship probably sailed in company, as far as Champa, with the fleet sent that year by Kublai to subdue Java (an attempt which failed).¹⁷ Champa was then occupied by a Mongol army trying to subdue it and the neighbouring kingdom of Dai Viet. After a chapter describing the kingdom of Champa there follows a chapter describing Java, which Marco called *Java Major* but which he did not visit.¹⁸ The narrative then resumes, describing the route southward from Champa toward Sumatra, but in most manuscripts “Java Major” was substituted for “Champa” as the point of departure, locating Java Minor (Sumatra) 1,300 miles to the south of Java instead of Champa. Due to this error, the locations of the places subsequently mentioned, *Sondur* and *Condur* (Pulo Condore, the Con Son Islands), *Locach*, *Peutan* (Bintan, at the mouth of the Straits of Singapore), *Maletur* (a province of Sumatra) and *Java Minor* (Sumatra), were mistakenly displaced far to the south.¹⁹ Marco's description of Locach is as follows:



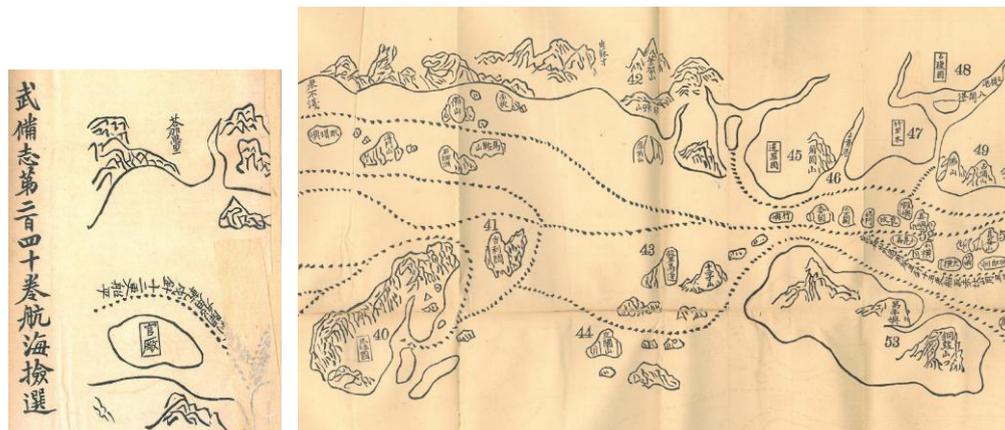
LVCACH a part of *TERRA AUSTRALIS NONDUM COGNITA* (the not yet known South Land).
Abraham Ortelius, *Typus Orbis Terrarum*, 1570. NLA10001.

Leaving the island of Java, he went south by west seven hundred miles and came to the two islands which they call *Sandur* and *Candur* [the Pulo Condor islands], six hundred miles beyond which is the province of *Laach* [Locach] which is great and very wealthy; it has its own king and own language; to none does it render tribute save to its own king. It is also very strong and no one can invade it. The inhabitants of the province are idolaters.... And there are many elephants there. To this province few from other countries come, for it is not a country of civilized people.²⁰

Although the name of Marco's Locach was derived from Lohuk (Lavopura), his description of Locach most closely matched Cambodia. The golden spires of Angkor, the capital of the empire of Kamboja, would have been a more likely inspiration of Marco's comment on the gold of Locach than the Lavopura of his time. As Zhou Daguan, the ambassador sent by the Mongol Yuan court to Kamboja in 1296 commented: “These [golden towers] are the monuments that have caused merchant mariners to speak freely in praise of *Fagui Zhenla* [Zhenla the rich and noble]”.²¹

Marco Polo remarked on the incivility of the people of Locach. He also noted the abundance of elephants in Locach, a thing for which the country was known in China from the elephants sent from thence as tribute. At his accession in 1260 as Emperor of China, Kublai Khan invited all the border states that had been tributary to the Song

empire to make their submission to him. In 1267 he declared to the King of Annam his expectation that Zhenla (Kamboja) would make its submission to him: "If they resist my orders, it will be necessary to punish them; for that I have troops in Yunnan".²² In 1268 the Mongol governor of Yunnan, Hügechi, was ordered to conquer "Zhan" (Champa) and "Zhenla" (Kamboja) in concert with the King of Dai Viet.²³ Zhou Daguan, sent as ambassador to Kamboja by Kublai Khan's successor, records that in 1283, Sögetü, the commander of the Mongol army then in Champa, sent an emissary to the Khmer ruler Jayavarman VIII, demanding his acknowledgement of the Great Khan as his overlord. Jayavarman refused submission and imprisoned the Mongol envoy.²⁴ This would have been ample justification for the comment by Marco, who was himself a servant of the Great Khan, on the incivility of the people of Locach.²⁵



Jiawa (40) 爪哇 (Java), Xianluo (45) 暹羅 (Siam) and Zhenla (48) 占臘 (Cambodia) on the map of the South Sea lands, Epitome of Navigation (*Hanghai Jianxuan* 航海檢選) in the *Wu Bei Zhi* 武備志 (Treatise on Military Matters, 1621), chapter 240. The text explains: "Xianluo 暹羅 (Siam-Lvo) was originally the two states of Xian 暹 (Siam) and Luohu 羅斛 (Lopburi) in the South Sea 暹羅、本暹與羅斛二國、在南海中".

As mentioned above, in 1350, fifty-eight years after Marco's voyage, Lavopura was united with Siam and thenceforth was known by the Thai pronunciation of its name, "Lopburi".²⁶

Ngô Đức Thọ was therefore correct in identifying the Lộ Hạc mentioned in the *Complete History of Dai Viet* with Lopburi in Thailand, and to identify Lộ Hạc as the country of Locac mentioned in Marco Polo's *Travels*. But he was mistaken in identifying Marco Polo's Locach with Lopburi, as by "Locach" Marco seems to have meant Kamboja in accordance with contemporary Chinese usage.

Robert J. King

Footnotes:

¹. 吳士連 [Ngô Sĩ Liên], 大越史記全書, [*Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* - The Complete History of Đại Việt], 正和 第十八年 [*khắc năm Chính Hòa thứ 18* - 18th year of Chính Hòa - 1697], 本紀 [*Bản Kỷ* - Primary Chronicle], 四卷 [Quyển IV - vol. 4], 李英宗皇帝 [*Anh Tông Hoàng Đế*: "Primary Chronicle of the Emperor Anh Tong (1136–1175)"]; Hà Văn Tấn (ed.), *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư: dịch theo bản khắc năm Chính Hòa thứ 18 (1697)* [The Complete History of Đại Việt, translated from the edition printed in the 18th year of Chính Hòa 1697], translation and annotations by Ngô Đức Thọ, Tập 1, Hà Nội, Nhà xuất bản Khoa học Xã hội, 1983, [Hanoi, Social Sciences Publishing House, Volume I, 1983], pp.337-338.

². Thomas Suarez, *Early Mapping of Southeast Asia*, Hong Kong, Periplus, 1999, p.106.

³. The same identification was made by Conrad Malte-Brun (*Précis de la Géographie Universelle*, Paris, 1813, T.IV, pp.214-15).

⁴. *Wubei Zhi* (武備志 Military Records) edited by Mao Yüan-yi 茅元儀 in 1621 but based on records dating from the Yuan Dynasty (chapter 236, "Examination of All Countries Beyond the Seas: Kingdom of Xianluo", pp.10256-8).

⁵. 趙汝适, 李調元, 諸蕃志, 東京, 民友社, Zhao Rukuo and Li Tiaoyuan, *Zhu fan zhi*, postface in English by W.W. Rockhill, Tokyo, Minyu Sha, 1914; Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St. Petersburg, Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911; reprinted Taipei, Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1967, p.53.

- ⁶. Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, Vol.II, pp.768-9, note 8. See also Chou Fa-Kao, et al. (editors), *A Pronouncing Dictionary of Chinese Characters in Archaic & Ancient Chinese, Mandarin & Cantonese—周法高(主編), 漢字古今音彙*, (Han zi gu jin yin hui), Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong—香港中文大學, (Xianggang zhong wen da xue), 1973, pp.129, 259.
- ⁷. G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's geography of Eastern Asia (further India and Indo-Malay archipelago)*, London, Royal Asiatic Society, Asiatic Society Monographs vol.1, 1909, p.180. Paul Pelliot, «Deux Itinéraires de Chine en Inde», *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient (BEFEO)*, Tome IV, 1904, p.236.
- ⁸. Dhida Saraya, "Lavo — a Coastal State in the 11th Century" [Thai and English], *Muang Boran*, vol.11, no.2, April-June 1985, 33-51.
- ⁹. J.J. Boeles, "A Note on the Ancient City called Lavapura", *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol.55, no.1, 1967, pp.113-14.
- ¹⁰. *Ming Shi*, Wai Guo, 5, Xianluo 明史, 外國, 五, 暹羅 (Ming History, "Foreign Kingdoms", chapter 5, Siam).
- ¹¹. David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2008), pp. 50-1. See also Coedès, *The Indianized states of Southeast Asia*, pp. 136-7.
- ¹². Lopbhuri is written លុបហ្គុរី in Khmer, and ลพบุรี in Thai.
- ¹³. 趙汝适, 李調元, 諸蕃志, 東京, 民友社, Zhao Rukuo and Li Tiaoyuan, *Zhu fan zhi*, postface in English by W.W. Rockhill, Tokyo, Minyu Sha, 1914; Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St. Petersburg, Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911; reprinted Taipei, Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1967, p.53.
- ¹⁴. Paul Pelliot, «Deux Itinéraires de Chine en Inde», *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient (BEFEO)*, Tome IV, 1904, p.236.
- ¹⁵. 紹興二十五年十一月十九日 真臘羅斛貢象二 25th year of Shao-xing eleventh month, 19th day, Zhenla-Luohu presented two elephants; Wang Yinglin, *Yu Hai*, Taipei Hua wen shu ju, Minguo 王應麟, 玉海, 台北: 華文書局, 民國, 53, 1964; reprint of 1343 edn., vol.6, cap.154, 33.
- ¹⁶. *Sung hui-yao chi-kao*, 宋會要輯稿, 番夷, 7, 47a: 真臘國羅斛國貢馴象 (Zhenlaguo-Luohuguo [Cambodia-Lopburi] presented a tame elephant); quoted in O.W. Wolters, "Tambralinga", *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol.21, 1958, pp.587-607, nb p.605; reprinted in Vladimir Braginsky (ed.), *Classical Civilisations of South East Asia: An Anthology of Articles Published in The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London, Routledge, 2002, p.102.
- ¹⁷. Jonathan Clements, *A Brief History of Khubilai Khan*, London, Running Press, 2010, p.216; John Man, *Xanadu: Marco Polo and Europe's Discovery of the East*, London, Bantam Press, 2009, p.243.
- ¹⁸. Gabriella Ponchi (ed.), *Milione: il Milione nelle redazioni toscana e franco-italiana, Le Divisament dou Monde*, Milano, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1982, p.540: cap. clxiii, "La grant isle de Java".
- ¹⁹. Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, Vol.II, p.769.
- ²⁰. "Dimissa insula lava itur inter meridiem et garbinum per miliaria vii^c et pervenit ad insulas duas quem dicunt sandur et candur ultra quas ad ccccc miliaria est provincia laach que grandis est et ditissima valde. regem propriam & linguam propriam habet; nulli tributum reddens nisi soli proprio regi. Est enim fortis valde et nemine potet invadi. Incole provincie ydolatre sunt. In hac provincia crescunt birci quae domestici sunt et magni ut limones qui valde boni sunt. Et sunt ibi elephantentes multi. Et ibi porcellana que per moneta expenditur de qua dicemus est supra. Ad hanc prouinciam pauci de aliis regionibus confluunt qua regio non est hominem domestica "; Marco Polo, *Itinerarium*, Antwerp, 1485, Shinobu Iwamura (ed.), Tokyo, National Diet Library, 1949, cap.10, Liber III, cap. x-xi "De insula magna iaua; De provincia laach".
- ²¹. 當國之中有金塔一座，國主之廬也，其寢室又有金塔一座焉。所以 舶商自來有「富貴真臘」之褒者，想為 此也。 陳正祥, 真臘風土記的研究, 香港, 地理研究中心, 香港中文大學研究院地理研究中心研究報告; 第22號 Chen Cheng-siang, *A Study of Chin la feng t'u chi*, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Geographical Research Centre, *Research Report*, Issue 22, 1969, p.43. Chou Ta-kuan 周達觀 (Zhou Daguan, fl.1297), *Customs of Cambodia 真臘風土記*, transl. Paul Pelliot and J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul, Bangkok, Siam Society, 1993, p.2.
- ²². Edict of Khubilai Khan, 1267, in Camille Sainson, *Mémoires sur l'Annam*, Peking, 1896, pp. 101-103.
- ²³. Camille Sainson, *Histoire Particulière du Nan-Tchao: Traduction d'une Histoire de l'ancien Yun-Nan*, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1904, p.114.
- ²⁴. Chou Ta-kuan 周達觀 (Zhou Daguan, fl.1297), *Customs of Cambodia 真臘風土記*, transl. Paul Pelliot and J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul, Bangkok, Siam Society, 1993, pp.xviii-xix. Also Zhou Daguan, *Aufzeichnungen über die Gebräuche Kambodschas*, transl. Walter Aschmonei, Berlin, Osnabrück, 2006, S.71. Karl-Heinz Golzio, *Geschichte Kambodscha: von Funan bis Angkor und von Angkor bis zur Modern*, Berlin, EB-Verlag, 2011, p.121; George Coedès, *Les Peuples de la Péninsule Indochinoise; Histoire—Civilisations*, Paris, Dunod, 1962, pp.123, 181; George Coedès *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*; translated by Susan Brown Cowing, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1968, pp.192, 347 (n.16). It must be noted that an alternative construction has been put by Peter Harris in his recent translation of Zhou's memoir. He has argued that the country referred to by Zhou, which he simply called "this country", was not Cambodia but Champa, which the *Yuan Shi* (History of the Yuan or Mongol dynasty) records

as having captured two commanders just as Zhou describes them. Zhou Daguan, *A Record of Cambodia: the Land and its People*, translated with an introduction and notes by Peter Harris, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2007, p.92. But the order to Hugeschi cited in the previous endnote reinforces the construction put on Zhou Daguan's statement by translators and commentators that he was referring to Cambodia, and that a demand for submission to the Great Khan was sent in 1283.

²⁵ Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, Vol.II, p.554, note 2. Paul Wheatley, "Lochac Revisited", *Oriens Extremus*, vol.16, 1969, pp.85- 110.

²⁶ 至正間暹始降於羅斛，其後羅斛 強併有暹地 *Ming Shi* (明史 Ming History), 324, p.6v; Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, Vol.II, pp.221, 768-9; Paul Pelliot, «Deux Itinéraires de Chine en Inde», *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient (BEFEO)*, Tome IV, 1904, p.235. George Phillips, "The Seaports of India and Ceylon, Described by Chinese Voyagers of the Fifteenth Century, together with an Account of Chinese Navigation", *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. XX (1885), Article IX, Shanghai, 1886; Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1963, Vol.II.

Translating ships' names



The reconstructed Batavia (1995)

An interesting discussion with some of our members occurred about whether we should translate the names of ships we mention in our writings. and add that translation as a matter of routine. Interestingly opinions differ. I like to explore alternative reasonings with you. The focus was of course on non-English names.

For and against

One view was that the translation of ships' names should always be researched and added in English. The other view is not to add a translation as the meanings of the ships' names are usually not very relevant to the narrative of the historic event relayed. They are trivia in the modern sense of the word: non-essential. There is no academic nor journalistic protocol about adding translations.

One argument supporting the inclusion of the name's meaning is that it often reflects how the original crew may have related to the ship. They definitely knew the meaning.

The ship was the sailor's home while at sea for many months and frequently in danger. It still is. "She" was more than that: the sailors' whole territory that they could not leave, where they were stuck for long periods, and that protected them against wild storms. So there was a relationship with the ship personified by the meaning of the name. Was there?

The crew would often change a ship's name completely, by giving it a nickname or using an endearment form. Such changes occasionally may be found in primary

sources rather than the official name. Columbus's *La Niña* was in that category, the official name being the *Santa Clara*. It could even have been the case with *Duyfken*.



Old drawing of the Duyfken

Translators will have a problem with Columbus's *La Pinta* as a number of translations are possible, including "The Pint", "The Look", or "The Spotted One", "The Dot" and who knows what else in 15th century Spanish. Where the name is of a patron saint, an aristocrat or a town, it may relay religious, worldly or geographic relationships, so the argument goes. Then of course, translations would not be required, even though, real fanatics will even translate those, as an example below will show.

Where it is of interest to know what ships were named after in history, and I recently discovered that some people do (even paid) research on such things, readers could research that for themselves. That the name of La Pérouse's ship the *Boussole* means compass, may not add much to his story, nor that Antoine de Bougainville's *Boudeuse* was named after an unusual piece of furniture. However, the German minesweeper's name *Frauenlob*, meaning women's praise, did have a ring to it in its day, given the function of the ship. So there are some cases where a translation can add information or literary value.

We grasp that the name of the ship is an important part of the story being told. The ship's name becomes part of the ship's story. It gives the history a tag, as often does the name of the ship's master. Its meaning usually added some symbolism or sentiment, often cryptic and understood only by its owners.

Only occasionally is there a relationship between the voyage that made the ship of historical interest and the meaning of its name e.g. Flinders' *Investigator* was renamed for his expedition, the ship being then already at the end of her days. Some names were very popular and many ships with the same name turn up in the same period. For instance Schouten and LeMaire's *Eendracht*, generating so much disunity to be sorted out in court years later, was not the same ship as Hartog's *Eendracht* (= unity, concord, harmony), but both Eendrachts may have been moored side by side in 1616, after sailing half way around the world each in a different direction. Many Dutch vessels were named Eendracht. This is still the case today.

The name of the ship being important to the story would mean that it is THAT name that should go with the story, not some modern day translation. I have noted that translated names often replace the real names. Examples include the *Halve Maen*, Hudson's ship, which is in New York invariably referred to as the Half Moon. *Den Vergulde Draeck* (also recorded as the *Gulden Draeck*, *Vergulde Draak*, meaning gilded dragon) is often just referred to as the Gilt Dragon in WA, including by researchers and authorities. This is changing history itself, which is worse where the translation is wrong. Indeed those who like adding the translation of the name of a historical ship, regularly get it wrong or can actually not be sure.

Changing language

Translating a ship's name of a number of centuries ago, when the language was quite different, is full of traps. The word can have changed its meaning or had several meanings, some of which may not exist in the current language and only one of which was of course intended. Translating Tasman's ship the *Zeehaen* for example, provides

such puzzles, as does the name of the ship *Buys*, that was trying to get here in 1756, where half a dozen meanings must be considered. The following example is illustrative of the sort of things that may go wrong.

The writer of a book about the changing of a name (!) - that of Tasmania - could not solve this puzzle and provided two alternative translations for Tasman's ship *Zeehaen*: "a sea bird or a gurnard", he advises. So a bird or a fish. In doing so he gives the reader a puzzle rather than information. Trying to solve that puzzle provided me initially with even more options: a Greek mythical creature also used in European heraldry i.e. a coq with a fishtail, the 17th century Dutch word for the quintessential sailor, a cormorant as was provided by another author, or a "sea rooster" - from literally translating the two-syllable word. And in the end gurnard (genus *Tiglia*) was - without doubt - the correct translation.

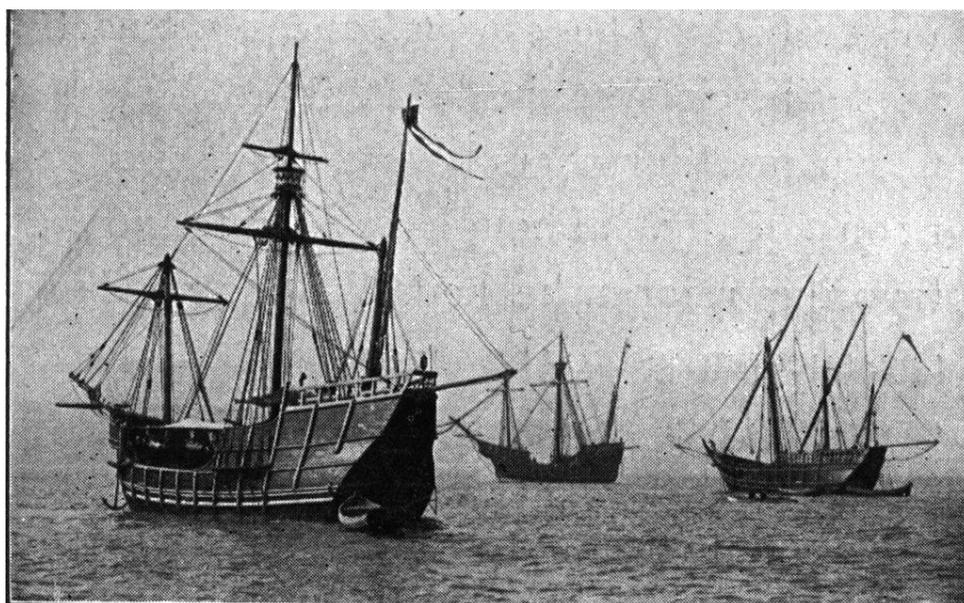
For the other of Tasman's ships on that voyage, the *Heemskerck*, which the writer misspelled as Heemskirk, following Bass and Flinders use of the name, he picked the wrong one of the two possibilities for the origin of the name. I found that it was named after the urban settlement of that name, where the writer presented it as having been named after another explorer i.e. Jacob van Heemskerck. This Jacob did not make his name in the service of the VOC. Naming ships after people, such as kings and dukes, was more an English and German custom, and the VOC did so rarely. I found that not only was the *Heemskerck* built at the same time as three other sister ships, but also that all four ships were named after urban settlements, a common practice of the VOC. But, yes, when translating the word Heemskerck, the author does indeed supply "home church". It was however one step too far from the origin of the ship's name, which was a town, not a church and not a man. ⁽¹⁾

Stuck with a wrong name

Where a translation is printed, it is copied by others. It gets a life of its own. So too with a wrong translation. The story of the ship may become known under a tag that was not the correct meaning of the ship's name, and the more it is copied the more it is accepted as correct and we are stuck with it.

Where a translation of a ship's name is wrong, however, someone will know ultimately. Some reader may own a dictionary of the words of the relevant century, and have read the proper translation or find old records that report the reason for the naming.

So, considering the above conundrums, is it really worth the bother of all the research that is often required to get a name translation right?



Replicas of the *Santa Maria*, the *Nina* and the *Pinta* from 1893

A prudent conclusion is that one embarks on a translation of a ship's name only if there is a clear point to it, i.e. it is meaningful in the narrative. And only if one is absolutely certain the translation is correct, indeed then a reference may be added. On little aspects like this, one will generally do as one sees fit, of course. If the text targets an

educated audience, the reader may not appreciate a translation. Just imagine reading "Santa Maria (= Holy Mary)". You, like me perhaps also not fluent in Spanish, might still ponder: does the writer think I am stupid?

Peter Reynders

1. Newman T. 2005, *Becoming Tasmania*, Parliament of Tasmania, p 3.

A window on Australia



The Flinders year may be over but here is part of a map of South Australia by his hand, dated 1802. This is the last of the map photos I took at the South Australian State Library in November 2012. The features are easy enough to recognise, in spite of the fact that I took this photo at an angle. (This was to avoid more reflection in the glass than is visible now).

Marianne Pietersen

AOTM Division Monthly Meetings

Members welcome

Meetings of the Australia on the Map Division Council are open to all AOTM members who can and would like to attend.

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month, at 2.00pm in a meeting room on the 4th floor of the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

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