

An Anatomy of Commerce and Consumption: Opium and Merchants at Batavia over the Long Eighteenth Century

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Abstract: This essay considers the commerce and consumption of opium at Batavia (modern Jakarta), on Java, and in the Indonesian Archipelago, from the later seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. It is a preliminary examination of the lesser known history of those merchants (Chinese and others) who made their livelihoods from purchasing bulk opium from the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and re-distributing it commercially, and of the consumers who inhaled the opium. It utilizes two valuable new sources: a 1697 stele from the Ci Ji temple in south China, and Dutch debenture bonds (called *obligatien*) that recorded loans for the purchase of opium on credit (held in the Indonesian National Archives). Together they allow an analysis that, for the first time, can accurately identify Hokkien (and other) opium merchants and their closest commercial partners in eighteenth-century Batavia.

Introduction

This essay is an anatomy of the commerce and consumption of opium at Batavia (modern Jakarta), on Java, and throughout the modern Indonesian Archipelago, from the later seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. It is a preliminary examination of the lesser known history of those merchants (indigenous, Muslim, Dutch, and Chinese)—their lives, businesses, interests, positions in local and communal societies—who made their livelihoods from re-distributing and trafficking, and of the consumers that inhaled opium.¹ I differentiate merchants from traders here because, unlike traders, merchants act as intermediaries between producers and consumers.² Non-Dutch merchant groups are categorised according to the identifiers used in the historical records, although those categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. My work is empirically driven. It employs multi-disciplinary approaches and methodologies from anthropology, archaeology, economics, history, and, to a lesser degree, from the sociology that focuses on the social lives of things³—of opium, in this case—and its commodity chain(s),⁴ and merchants, guarantors and their networks. My research questions, hypotheses, arguments, and analysis are firmly anchored in the evidence and articulated, initially, on the basis of what can be observed and statistically measured. At present this permits fewer but better informed qualitative observations.

The primary sources used in this essay all mention merchants and guarantors and their residences at Batavia and throughout the Indonesian Archipelago. While those same

¹ George Bryan Souza is an adjunct associate professor in the history department of the University of Texas, San Antonio. He can be contacted at: georgebryansouza@gmail.com. This essay is part of a larger, tri-partite research project. The first part, which is a historical reconstruction, interpretation, and economic, social and cultural analysis, of merchants and the political economy of commerce and commodities on sea and land at Batavia, has identified the primordial importance of opium and cinnamon for the Dutch East India Company and other intermediaries. The second develops via commodity chain analysis and follows the history and biography of opium from Bengal and the Levant to Batavia, and the Indonesian Archipelago. The third follows the history and biography of cinnamon from Sri Lanka to Batavia, to Europe, and around the globe over the long 18th century.

² For this distinction between merchants and traders, see John Middleton, "Merchants: An Essay in Historical Ethnography", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9:3 (2003): 509-26.

³ See Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value" in *Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 3-63.

⁴ See Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal and Zephyr Frank, "Introduction: Commodity Chains in Theory and in Latin American History" and "Conclusion: Commodity Chains and Globalization in Historical Perspective" in *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500 - 2000*, ed. Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal and Zephyr Frank (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 1-24; and 352-60.

merchants may also have been ship owners and, hence sojourners, it is more probable that they had made the transition to being settlers. Developed initially by sociologists as a deviant type of the stranger, “sojourner”⁵ is used to describe a person who clings to the cultural heritage of his own ethnic group, hindering his assimilation into the society in which he resides, often for many years. He conceives sojourning as a job to be finished in the shortest possible time; but when or if that is not possible, he travels back to his homeland every few years. Sojourners might later become settlers who develop as middle-man minorities whose orientation towards their place of residence is that of a stranger. This affects solidarity and economic activity within the ethnic group and, in turn, arouses the hostility of the host society towards them, thus perpetuating the immigrants’ reluctance to assimilate completely. Since the Chinese in Southeast Asia were and are the quintessential middle-man minority, the sojourner and settler trope has been eloquently embraced and incorporated by historians of Southeast Asia and of overseas Chinese diasporas.⁶

The arguments that are developed in this essay deal primarily with merchants and commerce and the representations of communal identity and ethnicity and, elliptically, with their networks over a long eighteenth century. This is a temporal framework that loosely corresponds to the last quarter of the seventeenth century, after the age of commerce,⁷ into the early nineteenth century to around 1830, when the opium tax farming system was established. It concentrates particularly on the mid-eighteenth century, from 1745 to 1785, roughly the beginning of a period that is currently being called “the Chinese century”.⁸ While geographically concentrating on Batavia, the essay ranges spatially and includes commercial exchanges of opium on Java’s North Coast and throughout the Indonesian Archipelago. To avoid excessive repetition, hereafter, I will use the term “on Java” or “in the archipelago”, as relevant, when referring to activities outside of Batavia.

My essay is organised into five sections. The first recapitulates the history of opium and its commodity chain. The second section discusses the two new primary sources utilized in my reconstruction and interpretation of the commercial worlds of opium and merchants, guarantors, and consumers.⁹ In the third section, my subjects are considered by commercial appearance and presence, as groups and individuals, and by representations of identity, ethnicity, religious affiliation, colonial political and communal

⁵ See Paul C. P. Siu, “The Sojourner,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 58:1 (1952): 34-44; and Edna Bonacich, “A Theory of Middleman Minorities,” *American Sociological Review* 38:5 (1973): 583-94.

⁶ See, for example, Wang Gungwu, “Merchants Without Empire: The Hokkien Sojourning Communities,” in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 400-22; and Leonard Blussé, “Kongkoan and Kongsj: Representations of Chinese Identity and Ethnicity in Early Modern Southeast Asia” in *Shifting Communities and Identity Formation in Early Modern Asia*, eds. Leonard Blussé and Felipe Fernández-Armesto (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2002), pp. 94-105.

⁷ See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988-1993).

⁸ See Anthony Reid, “A New Phase of Commercial Expansion in Southeast Asia, 1760-1850,” in *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies: Responses to Modernity in the Diverse States of Southeast Asia and Korea, 1750-1900*, ed. Anthony Reid (London: MacMillan, 1997), pp. 57-82; and Leonard Blussé, “Chinese Century: The Eighteenth Century in the China Sea Region”, *Archipel* 58 (1999): 107-30.

⁹ Some of my archival materials are found in The Hague at the *Algemeen Rijksarchief* [General State Archives] in the *Koloniale Archieven Oost-Indie: Archieven van de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* [East Indies Colonial Archives: Archives of the Dutch East India Company or VOC] collections [henceforth ARA VOC]. Some printed Dutch records are in *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-General en Raden aan Heren XVII der Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* [Official Letters from the Governors-General and the Committees to the Gentlemen XVII of the United East India Company (VOC)], ed. W.P. Coolhaas, et al., 11 vols. (The Hague: Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatie, 1960-2001) [henceforth GM] and *Dagregisteer gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts India* [Journal kept in Fort Batavia about everything that happened there and throughout the Dutch Indies], ed. Jacobus A. van der Chijs, et al., 31 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, Batavia: Landsdrukkerij; and Batavia: Kolff, 1888-1931) [henceforth DRB].

administrative positions, occupations, and gender. The fourth section looks at changing patterns of opium consumption to identify the consuming markets, to show how demand emerged and grew, and to assess who might have been the consumers, as well as the segments of indigenous, communal, and colonial society from which they emerged. The essay ends with a series of conclusions about the anatomy of the commerce and consumption of opium at Batavia over the long eighteenth century.

Background: Object, Place, Space, and Time

Because of its general properties—inducing euphoria, trance or sleep and relieving pain—the use of opium has ranged widely, from an “exotic” substance for medicinal, sexual, and metaphysical consumption to relief for labourers from physical exertion or tedium to labour-control and recreational purposes. Past and present research on the history of opium in Asia in general, and in Turkey (Anatolia),¹⁰ India¹¹ (Malwa¹² and Bengal¹³), China,¹⁴ and the Indonesian Archipelago¹⁵ in particular, has primarily focused on its role in trade and in financing imperial projects and colonial administration.¹⁶ Many of the recent monographs on states, state formation, trade and diplomacy, and other relationships between local society and the Dutch East India Company (henceforth the Company or VOC) have mentioned opium and its commercialization.¹⁷ From recent research, it is known that revenues from the commercialization of opium by the VOC at Batavia rose significantly and emerged in importance in the Company’s *comptoir* (local factory or establishment) finances during the seventeenth century, much earlier than was hitherto understood.¹⁸ Opium sales retained their dominating commercial role for the Company at Batavia over the entire

¹⁰ For a dated but interesting account, see Richard Millant, *La Culture du Pavot et le Commerce de l’Opium en Turquie* [Poppy Culture and Opium Commerce in Turkey] (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1913); and for its 19th century cultivation and production there, see Ibrahim Ihsan Poroy, “Expansion of Opium Production in Turkey and the State Monopoly of 1828-1839,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13:2 (May, 1981): 191-211.

¹¹ For India see, *Credit, Markets, and the Agrarian Economy of Colonial India*, ed. Sugata Bose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Amar Farooqui, *Smuggling as Subversion: Colonialism, Indian Merchants and the Politics of Opium* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1998); and *Opium City: The Making of Early Victorian Bombay* (New Delhi: Three Essays, 2006).

¹² For Malwa see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707)* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1963; 2nd revised edition, 2000); and Stewart N. Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600-1818, The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹³ For Bengal see Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁴ For China see Martin Heijdra, “The socio-economic development of rural China during the Ming,” in *Cambridge History of China*, VIII, pt. 2, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 417-578; Jonathan D. Spence, “Opium Smoking in Ch’ing China,” in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, ed. Frederick Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 143-73; and Zheng Yangwen, *The Social Life of Opium in China* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁵ For Indonesia see the classic study by J. C. Baud, “Proeve van eene Geschiedenis van het Handel en het Verbruik van Opium in Nederlandsch Indie,” [Notes on the History of the Trade and the Consumption of Opium in the Dutch East Indies], *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indie* [Contributions to the Language, Land, and Ethnology of the Dutch East Indies] 1 (1853): 79-220 [henceforth *BKI*].

¹⁶ For recent scholarship on opium and empires, see Carl A. Trocki, *Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750-1950* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁷ For some of the recent work on the Company, which includes discussions of opium commercialization, see Gerrit J. Knaap, *Shallow Waters, Rising Tide: Shipping and Trade in Java around 1775* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996); Gerrit J. Knaap and Heather Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers, and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004); Kwee Hui Kian, *The Political Economy of Java’s Northeast Coast, c. 1740-1800* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005); Robert van Niel, *Java’s Northeast Coast 1740-1840: A Study in Colonial Encroachment and Dominance* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2005); and Ota Atsushi, *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java: Society, State, and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

¹⁸ See George Bryan Souza, “Opium and the Company: Maritime Trade and Imperial Finances on Java, 1684-1796,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 43:1 (Jan 2009): 113-33 [henceforth *MAS*].

eighteenth century. Opium's premier commercial position at Batavia persisted after the Company's bankruptcy, dissolution, and replacement by Dutch colonial administration in the 1790s and during the interregnum of English occupation in the 1810s. It was subsequently subsumed into the opium tax farming system¹⁹ whose revenues became one of the principal sources financing the Dutch colonial administration from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.²⁰

From its origin in Turkey (Anatolia), opium had spread over the eighth to fifteenth centuries to two areas of production in India, in Malwa and Bihar. As Bihari opium was exported from Bengal it became known as Bengal opium. Recent research has suggested major shifts occurred in opium's historical biography, since it was transformed and became a transformational and global commodity.²¹ The early use of opium, as well as the quantity produced, commercialized, and consumed, was restricted by how it was ingested. When chewed or swallowed, the human stomach physiologically limited the drug's effect and hence the amount of opium demanded and habitually used by consumers. After American tobacco and the habit of smoking disseminated throughout Asia in the sixteenth century,²² however, a practice developed, in particular on Java, of adding small amounts of opium to the tobacco. From there it spread to other parts of Southeast Asia and South China. Linking opium to the habit of smoking was a major transformation in its pattern of use in social, cultural, and commercial terms.

While consumers elsewhere continued to ingest the drug only through chewing and swallowing, smoking—and thus inhaling—opium meant that the lungs, with their greater physiological capacity to deliver the drug's narcotic properties, produced an enhanced reaction for users. The doses that could be consumed also increased. Consumer demand for opium thus rose wherever tobacco smoking included opium (especially on Java, and in parts of Southeast Asia and South China). In the last half or quarter of the seventeenth and into the first half of the eighteenth century, the Company, and merchants who were attuned to identifying commercial opportunities, began to supply and intermediate opium sales to markets and consumers in some of those regions.

The first opium transformation produced steady and increased sales' growth with good profit margins for the Company and merchants at Batavia, as well as for other merchants who competed with them in the Indonesian Archipelago and elsewhere, especially in China.²³ The second such transformation, which may be considered one transformation in two stages, occurred in the last half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. First, producers reacted to merchant and market complaints, direct or indirect via colonial administrative intervention, about the quality and presentation of their product, and improved their handling and processing of raw opium in a way that meant the alkaloid properties of processed pure opium became stronger, or possibly less diluted. Second, consumer experiments in smoking pure opium had earlier established that pure opium required more intense heat than a normal pipe bowl could withstand.

¹⁹ See Anthony Reid, "The Origins of Revenue Farming in Southeast Asia," in *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia*, ed. John Butcher and Howard Dick (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), pp. 67-79.

²⁰ See James R. Rush, *Opium to Java: Revenue Farming and Chinese Enterprise in Colonial Indonesia, 1800-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

²¹ For a discussion of these developments, see George Bryan Souza, "Developing Habits: Opium and Tobacco in the Indonesian Archipelago, c. 1619-c. 1794," in *Drugs and Empires: Essays in Modern Imperialism and Intoxication 1500-1930*, ed. James H. Mills and Patricia Barton (London: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 39-56.

²² See Berthold Laufer, *Tobacco and its Use in Asia* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1924); and Thomas O. Höllman, *Tabak in Südostasien: Ein ethnographisch-historischer Überblick* [Tobacco in Southeast Asia: An Ethnographic-Historical Survey] (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1988).

²³ Opium traffic to China grew more than twenty-fold between 1729 and 1800. See Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik, *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400-the Present* (Armonk, New York and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), p. 103.

Experimentation with pipe designs and bowls subsequently produced pipes with metal bowls that permitted the smoking of pure opium.

This second transformation had an even more dramatic direct impact than the first on the use, or abuse, of the drug by enhancing potential dependency, increasing consumer demand, and fuelling the commercial growth of Indian and Turkish²⁴ opium to astronomical figures and levels to China.²⁵ It also permitted the establishment of opium tax farms that provided substantial revenues for Dutch, British, French, and Spanish colonial administrations in Southeast Asia.

Returning to our primary focus, the Company's opium supply over the last half of the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century mainly came from Patna in Bihar (India) via export from Bengal. After briefly selling the commodity on the Malabar Coast, the Company decided to concentrate on commercializing the drug almost exclusively at Batavia. In 1688, the Company estimated Bihar normally produced annually 8700 Bengali *maunds*, or 595,950 Dutch *ponden*, which they reported using a standardized format, the chest (4350).²⁶ At this time, the Company's market share was about 1000 maunds (500 chests) or, about 11.5 percent of total output.²⁷ The quantity of opium produced in Bihar apparently expanded significantly over the long eighteenth century.

Despite the Company's ability to source, export, and sell some 67,831 chests of Bengal opium at Batavia from 1659 to 1771, it still had to manage various political and economic difficulties in Bengal long before the 1757 battle of Plassey and the 1773 implementation of the English East India Company's monopsonistic²⁸ policies towards the procurement of opium by others. One of its foremost problems was competition. The quantity of Bengal opium that the Company wanted each year was determined at Batavia, and these orders may be interpreted as indicating the demand for opium there and throughout consuming markets in the Indonesian Archipelago.²⁹ But on average the Company could only ever secure about one-quarter of the amount requested by Batavia.³⁰ Indigenous³¹ and other European private merchants, including Portuguese,³² Danes,³³ and

²⁴ Small quantities of opium were delivered from the Levant via Amsterdam to Batavia in 1753 and 1778 (90 chests in both years) and sold by the Company to the *Amfioen Sociëteit* for re-sale and redistribution by local merchants. See Baud, "Proeve van eene Geschiedenis, p. 151.

²⁵ For the diffusion and expansion of opium cultivation in China, see David Anthony Bello, *Opium and the Limits of Empire: Drug Prohibition in the Chinese Interior, 1729-1850* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005).

²⁶ Prakash, *Dutch East India Company*, p. 57 says one Bengali *maund* was 68½ *ponden*; one Dutch *pond* was equal to 1.09 imperial pounds or 0.4 kilos; and the weight of each chest, including its contents, was standardized at 145 *ponden*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁸ Monopsony is often referred to as a buyer monopoly. In the case of the English East India Company (EIC) and Bengal opium, after 1773 indigenous producers had to sell all they produced to the EIC. The VOC could only source opium from the EIC, via the channels of distribution or the intermediaries like British country traders, whom the EIC favoured.

²⁹ For a discussion of the *eisch* (or order reports) in general and their role in the Company's trade to Japan, see Minoru Omori, "The *Eisch Boek* in Dutch-Japanese Trade," in *Asian Trade Routes: Continental and Maritime*, ed. Karl Reinhold Haellquist (London: Curzon Press, 1991), pp. 199-208.

³⁰ Prakash's pioneering work examined the Company's order records for opium from 1659 to 1717. See Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company*, pp. 150-51; for the 1719 to 1771 order records, see ARA, VOC 13575 to 13620, "Kopie-eisen van gouverneur-generaal en raden aan de factorijen, met aantekeningen betreffende hetgeen naar Batavia is verzonden, 1719-1771" [Copies of Orders from the Governor General and Council to the Factories, with notes concerning what was destined for Batavia, 1719-1771].

³¹ For the incorporation of Bengal opium in Mughal trading activities with neighbouring Arracan in the 1660s, see *GM*, III, 547; for details on indigenous and European traders activities involving purchases of Bengal and sales at Bantam in the late 1670s and early 1680s prior to the Company's occupation of that port-city, see *GM*, IV, 18, 389, and 402 and *De Opkomst van het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indië* [The Rise of Dutch Power in the East Indies] compilers Johan Karel Jacob de Jonge and Marinus Lodewijk van Deventer, 13 vols. (The Hague-Amsterdam: Nijhoff, 1862-1888), VII, 9-10. For VOC complaints of Malay involvement in trafficking opium to Andragieri, Jambi, Palembang, Borneo, and the ports of the Java north coast in the 1700s, see *GM*, VI, 431.

other European companies, especially the English and French,³⁴ competed with the VOC in procuring opium in Bihar and Bengal and selling it throughout Asia.

Officially, VOC opium purchases were transported in Company ships which generally sailed from Bengal and delivered opium to Batavia from November to March. The VOC unsuccessfully tried to claim a monopoly on opium trading at Batavia, on Java and elsewhere in the archipelago and Malay Peninsula; but its “monopoly” claims were contested internally, via corrupt practices by Company employees, and externally by other indigenous and European merchants, who ignored VOC-negotiated exclusive rights agreements³⁵ or simply evaded Company controls.³⁶ The Company considered the latter practices as smuggling and the opium as contraband.³⁷

From 1659 to the late 1680s, the Company varied its opium distribution practices on Java and throughout the archipelago. Occasionally it would load opium, either in Bengal or Batavia, and trade it directly to ports on Java’s North Coast. It would also sell opium by public auction at Batavia. By the late 1680s, the Company desisted from direct voyages and sales in favour of regular sales at public auction or on credit to indigenous, Muslim, Chinese, and other merchants at Batavia.³⁸ These methods remained the Company’s exclusive channels of distribution for Bengal opium until 1745, when a major shift occurred in its commercial policy. To diminish price volatility, the VOC transferred a set of its commercial and administrative functions to a new organisation, the *Amfioen Sociëteit* (Opium Society, henceforth AS) at Batavia. In exchange for a guaranteed price for opium delivered to the AS, the Company ceded the AS its responsibility for developing and financing opium sales. The AS then sold opium to other merchant intermediaries who re-distributed the commodity to end markets and consumers. When the VOC folded in the 1790s, the AS went too (1794). The new Dutch colonial administration replaced it with the *Amfioen Directie* (Opium Directorate, henceforth AD), with the same functional responsibilities. The AD continued to commercialize opium on behalf of the colonial administration until superseded by the tax farming system of the early nineteenth century.

Company sales of opium reached their apogee in the decades just before and after the VOC decided to shift its primary channels of distribution at Batavia from public auction and sales on credit to the AS. Opium sales subsequently declined because of supply

³² For an example of Portuguese involvement in exporting Bengal opium to the Malabar Coast in the 1690s, see George Bryan Souza, “Portuguese Colonial Administrators and Inter-Asian Maritime Trade: Manuel de Sousa de Meneses and the *Fateh Moola* Affair,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 12:2 (2004-2005): 25-62.

³³ See *GM*, V, 758-761.

³⁴ In specific years, English and French exports of Bengal opium were significant or superior to the VOC. In 1711, the English exported 850 chests and the Company 800 chests; in 1714, the French exported 400-500 chests and the Company 1165 chests, see *GM*, VI, 719 and VII, 105-106.

³⁵ See *Corpus-Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, [Corpus of Dutch-Indonesian Diplomatic Agreements], ed. J.E. Heeres and F.W. Stapel, 6 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1907-1953); for the agreements granting the VOC the exclusive right to import Indian textiles and opium into, for example, Mataram (1677), Palembang (1678), and Cheribon (1681), see *Corpus* III, 74-79, 140-42, 233-40 and 267-70; for a similar treaty with Jambi (1684), see *GM*, IV, 724. Despite a treaty with Palembang, the Company reported indigenous shipping laden with textiles and opium in 1684; see *GM*, IV, 719.

³⁶ The Company used *plakkaaten* (ordinances; literally, placards or posters) to announce its controls over opium. See *Nederlandsch-Indisch plakkaatboek, 1602-1811* [Dutch-Indies Ordinance Book, 1602-1811] ed. Jacobus A. van der Chijs, 17 vols. (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1885-1900), III, pp. 229, 535-6; IV, pp. 317-19, 423-4; and V, pp. 103, 323.

³⁷ See Om Prakash, “Opium Monopoly in India and Indonesia in the Eighteenth Century,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 24:1(1987): 63-80 [henceforth *IESHR*]. For the legacy of smuggling from the later 19th into the 20th centuries, see Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades of the Straits: Smuggling and State-Formation along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1870-1910* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

³⁸ These sales appear to have been to merchants generally residing at or near Batavia, on Java or in other Indonesian ports, but a low percentage of the sales may have been to traders who resided elsewhere. This occurred, for example, when a Portuguese from Macao bought a small quantity of opium at Batavia to export to China in 1720.

difficulties in Bengal, with the English East India Company eventually excluding the VOC from the Bengal opium market because of the war between England and the Netherlands (1775 to 1781). From 1769 to 1792, for example, the Company purchased 5850 chests of opium, mostly from Bengal, from British private traders at Batavia.³⁹ Interruptions in Bengal opium deliveries to Batavia by British private traders occurred in 1770–71 and between 1775 and 1781, with the latter due to Dutch support for the colonists in the American Revolutionary War. The Company and the AS obtained an annual average of 156 chests from 1769 to 1774, which increased substantially to 541 chests from 1782 to 1787 before falling, from 1788 to 1789, to 294 chests. For the remainder of our period and beyond, the Company or the Dutch colonial administration bought Bengali, and increasingly Levantine, opium from diverse suppliers, including Danish, American, and other private traders.⁴⁰ The AS and its successor then sold the drug to merchants at Batavia.

In general, descriptions of the spatial relationships between the communal and commercial worlds of VOC-era merchants have been divided between examinations of separate groups occupying and changing the morphology of community spaces or residential quarters in the same urban space at the same time. The colonial port city⁴¹ world of the Company at Batavia⁴² and at other colonial centres with its burgers, Eurasian or Creole, has been alternatively examined as a Chinese colonial town⁴³ or a port-city, but the two have rarely been connected. Examining the anatomy of opium commerce at Batavia and elsewhere, however, reveals a surprisingly high degree of contact, communication, and connections between multi-cultural groups and individuals, as the next section discusses.

Sources and Evidence: Attributes, Limitations, and Importance

The two main sources for this article, both new, are of fundamental importance. They require a precise exposition and discussion, to avoid any misunderstanding or risk of overstatement in the later arguments and analysis they support. Furthermore, the information found in one of them is currently unique in historiography: it provides a vital link between the tonally transliterated names and identities of indigenous merchants, as rendered in Dutch sources, with their actual names and identities in the indigenous context and, in the case of the Chinese after 1785, in their written communal records in Jakarta,⁴⁴

³⁹ See ARA VOC 3252-3971. In total, 57 ships were involved (51 English, 3 Portuguese, 1 French, 1 Prussian, and 1 Armenian).

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the 19th and early 20th century Levant opium trade, see Jan Schmidt, *From Anatolia to Indonesia: Opium Trade and the Dutch Community of Izmir, 1820-1940* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1998).

⁴¹ Defined as a gateway “through which European power and influence, economic dominance and technological modernization (to which could be added disease and health care) flowed from overseas to the furthest corners of the continent and as primate cities controlling their hinterlands and acting as vital lynchpins in the development of the world economic system” and for a discussion of the colonial port-city typology, see Frank Broeze, “Introduction: Brides of the Sea,” in *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Frank Broeze (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), p. 4.

⁴² See Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); and Remco Raben, “Batavia and Colombo: The Ethnic and Spatial Order of Two Colonial Cities, 1600-1800,” Ph. D. dissertation, Leiden University, 1996. For a fascinating recent work using notarial materials from the ANRI, see Hendrik E. Niemeijer, *Batavia: Een Koloniale Samenleving in the 17^{de} Eeuw*, [Batavia: A Colonial Society in the Seventeenth Century] (Amsterdam: Balans, 2005) and Ulbe Bosma, *Being “Dutch” in the Indies: A History of Creolization and Empire, 1500-1920* (Singapore: National University Press, 2007).

⁴³ See Leonard Blussé, “Batavia 1619-1740: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Colonial Town”, in *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1986), pp. 73-96.

⁴⁴ For an outline and a discussion of the *Kong Koan* (Chinese Council) records that have survived (beginning from 1785 and into the 20th century), see *The Archives of the Kong Koan of Batavia*, ed. Leonard Blussé and Chen Menghong (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 1-7.

and perhaps elsewhere. This remarkable evidence morphs from a key source to support my arguments and it becomes, in itself, a guide towards shaping, developing, and advancing further research on the social, political, and economic identities of individuals, groups, and communities, and the networks of indigenous, Muslim, Dutch, and Chinese commercial elites (or a significant portion of them) at Batavia and elsewhere in the archipelago. Since one of the sources contextualizes the significance of the other, and because I advance such a broad claim for the historiographic importance of the second source, a detailed exposition of the merits of both is warranted.

The two new primary sources under examination are epigraphic and archival: a 1697 stele from the Ci Ji temple at Qing Jiao, near Xiamen in Fujian province in South China, and the records of the AS and the AD that are included in the Dutch materials in the Indonesian national archives in Jakarta.⁴⁵ Their contents have been translated and published in tabular form in an on-line CSCSD data paper,⁴⁶ which can be accessed at the following address: <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/cscsd/publications.php>.



Figure 1. The Ci Ji Temple (courtesy of James K. Chin)

It should not come as any surprise that one of these new sources is epigraphic, since the use and importance of epigraphic materials for the study of the Chinese southern diaspora has long been recognized.⁴⁷ It is from the study of written matter recorded on durable materials in a myriad of diverse sites, especially tombs⁴⁸ and temples,⁴⁹ that we

⁴⁵ Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia [henceforth ANRI], AS 1-36. While all the records in these collections (journals, resolutions or decrees, ordinances, memorandum or statements, as well as different accounts) were examined, this essay focuses on a detailed discussion of the obligations from 1745 to 1785 [see ANRI, AS 6-9]. For an overview and guide to the ANRI's holdings, see *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Local Institutions in Batavia (Jakarta)*, compilers and contributors, G.L. Balk, F. van Dijk, D.J. Kortlang, F.S. Gaastra, Hendrik E. Niemeijer, P. Koenders (Leiden: Brill, 2007), which surpasses *Inventaris van 'sLands Archief te Batavia (1602–1816)* [Inventory of the Government Archive at Batavia (1602-1816)], compiler Jacobus A. van der Chijs (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1882); and my review of Balk et al in *Itinerario* 33, 1: 126-28 (forthcoming).

⁴⁶ George Souza and Geoffrey Wade, "Identifying Hokkien (and Other) Merchants in VOC-ruled Batavia: The Ci Ji Stele (1697) and the Financial Records of the Amfioen Sociëteit, 1745–85", CSCSD Occasional Paper No. 2 (2009), on-line at: http://rspas.anu.edu.au/cscsd/occasional_papers/

⁴⁷ See, for example, Wolfgang Franke, Claudine Salmon, and Anthony K.C. Siu, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, 3 vols. (Singapore: South Seas Society, 1988-1997).

⁴⁸ See Claudine Salmon, "A propos de quelques tombs chinoises d'Indonesie des XVIIeme et XVIIIeme Siècles" [On some Chinese tombs in 17th and 18th Century Indonesia], *Archipel* 12 (1976): 207-18.

have formed our knowledge and thinking about early overseas Chinese sojourners and settlers, their descendents and their communities, in archipelagic and mainland Southeast Asia. There is still much to be learned from a comprehensive comparison of all these pre-1785 epigraphic materials with the two new sources examined here. What may be surprising, however, is that the stele concerned is not located in Southeast Asia but in the Fujianese Buddhist temple known as Ci Ji (Figure 1 above).

The Ci Ji stele (Figure 2),⁵⁰ whose historical importance was first discussed by James K. Chin,⁵¹ is a veritable Hokkien communal “who’s who” in space and time on Java. By identifying 119 Chinese (Hokkien) captains and loyal Buddhist followers there (from thirty-



Figure 2. The Ci Ji stele (image courtesy of J. K. Chin)

⁴⁹ See Claudine Salmon and Denys Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta: temples et vie collective/The Chinese of Jakarta: Temples and communal life* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1977), especially pp. xiii-lxxviii.

⁵⁰ This stele, dated in the reign year of Kangxi 36 nian or 1697, is transcribed without any further comment in Zheng Zhengman and Kenneth Dean, *Epigraphical Materials on the History of Religion in Fujian: The Quanzhou Region*, 3 vols. (Fuzhou: Fujian Peoples' Publishing House Press, 2004), III, pp. 1025-26 [郑振满、丁荷生编纂:《福建宗教碑铭汇编》,泉州府分册,福州,福建人民出版社 2003年] I am most grateful to Geoff Wade, who transcribed and translated the material into English from this photograph. Later Dr. Hui Kian Kwee informed us that the Ci Ji stele had been published in pinyin, so Dr Wade compared that transcription with his own before producing the English translation that appears as Table 1 in “Identifying Hokkien (and Other) Merchants in VOC-ruled Batavia”. It is also the basis for my brief comments about the document.

⁵¹ See James K. Chin (Qian Jiang), “Merchants and Other Sojourners: The Hokkiens Overseas, 1570-1760,” Ph. D. dissertation, The University of Hong Kong, 1998, pp. 231-32. Claudine Salmon has also recently discussed this stele in “Cultural Links between Insulindian Chinese and Fujian as Reflected in Two Late 17th Century Epigraphs,” *Archipel* 73 (2007): 167-194. I thank her for bringing this valuable study to my attention.

nine families or lineages) who donated over 751 *taels* (with individual donations ranging from sixty down to slightly over one tael) to repair and restore the Ci Ji temple in China in 1697, the source goes beyond a simple commemoration of this communal act. For historians of the Chinese in eighteenth-century Java, the Ci Ji stele is of inestimable value. Hitherto, we were unable accurately to identify historical individuals and merchants from indigenous, Muslim, and Chinese backgrounds because, in the Chinese case, we lacked the spelling, characters, and rendering of their Chinese family or lineage names, in either a local or Mandarin language. This was a major limitation for our study of those communities and their activities. But now we have a source that gives the names and characters for a series of Hokkien communal and commercial leaders who were present, active, and prominent on Java, but whom the Dutch only generically referred to as “Chinese”, and whose names, like those of other Chinese figures, they routinely transcribed according to the Hokkien or Min dialect pronunciation they heard.⁵² Now the stele can act as a “baseline” in time that establishes which Hokkien family or lineage names were present or prominent on Java before or around 1697, when the immigrant population was relatively low. While Chinese people with the same surnames can, of course, belong to lineages of quite different descent, so that one can never simply equate lineage and family name, migrant populations to Java at this time tended to come from specific and highly concentrated geographical sub-regions of south China. This suggests that a comparatively small number of families were likely to be involved. Future research may confirm this hypothesis. For the moment, this evidence still permits a far more informed discussion about continuity and change in migratory patterns at the time, and about the presence and participation of individuals, groups, and networks of Hokkien merchants at Batavia and elsewhere, than has hitherto been possible.

Since the fundamental importance of VOC archival records for the study of Chinese southern diasporas, and related topics, has long been recognized, it should come as no surprise that my second new source was discovered in the Company’s voluminous archives. Although the AS and AD operated over slightly different time frames that ranged from the mid-eighteenth into the early nineteenth centuries, their accounting and administrative records contain highly pertinent materials, particularly the *obligatien* (obligations or debenture bonds) that appear as financial and commercial instruments in the records of both organizations.⁵³ Similar to a promissory note (IOU), *obligatien* acknowledged a commercial debt and constituted a guarantee for its repayment. They are a unique source for the history of opium and of Batavian merchant communities, especially the Chinese or those of Chinese origin.

Their importance lies in how the records sequentially enumerated and registered the total number of credit transactions and provided specimens of all legible copies of the AS’ obligations or sales of opium on credit, from 2 November 1745 to 5 September 1785. The registers have all survived and are complete, although not all individual registered obligations have survived nor are they all in a legible or consultable condition. In total, 1832

⁵² My point is not about the quality of the scholarship based on transliterated Chinese names from Dutch sources but rather about the difficulties that emerge without precise identification of actual individuals, families or lineages. For examples from some of the fine scholarship on early Chinese leaders and the history of the Chinese at Batavia, see B. Hoetink, “So Bing Kong, het eerste hofdd der Chineezzen te Batavia, 1619–1636” [So Bing Kong, the first headman of the Chinese at Batavia, 1619–1636], *BKI* 73 (1917): 342-415 and 79 (1923): 1-44; “Ni Hoekong, kapiten der Chineezzen te Batavia in 1740” [Ni Hoekong, captain of the Chinese at Batavia in 1740], *BKI* 74 (1918): 447-518; and, a heterogeneous and not always reliable source, according to Salmon and Lombard, Hsü Yun-tsiao [許雲樵], ed. and annotator, [開吧歷代史紀按註本弁言] *Kaiba Lidai Shiji* [A Chronicle of the Chinese of Batavia], *Nanyang Xuebao* 南洋學報 [Journal of the South Seas Society, Singapore], 9:1 (1953): 1-63.

⁵³ The available AS (1745 to 1785) obligations, as discussed in this essay, are quite extensive and complete [See ANRI, AS 6-9]; whereas, by contrast, the surviving AD obligations provide information for only 4 years (1798-1802). See ANRI, AS 27.

obligations were registered between the AS and civil society at Batavia. I use the term civil society because, while the near totality of these obligations were for financing the purchases of opium from the AS on credit terms, a very small number (eleven) were between the AS and individuals or colonial institutions that were not related to the sale of opium. One example was loans to the Company and to the Bank van Leening in the credit and liquidity crunch of the late 1770s and early 1780s.

Roughly half (968) of all registered individual obligations (1832) originally found in the records are available and in consultable condition. Unfortunately, the rest (864) are missing or so badly damaged that they cannot be used. There are 957 legible and consultable obligations that involve opium. They are unequally distributed over the period from 1745 to 1785: 711 (or 74 percent) for 1745–1751; 100 for 1755–1756; and 146 for 1772–1785. Despite gaps caused by missing data, and the statistical skewing caused by the preponderance of early data, these records remain significant. They provide a clear quantitative and qualitative vision of trends as well as vital information about the merchants and guarantors involved in the commerce of this commodity.

Figures 3 and 4 (below and over page) show the *recto* (front) and *verso* (back) of two different obligations, from 22 and 23 April 1749.⁵⁴ Together, these two documents typify all the available obligations.

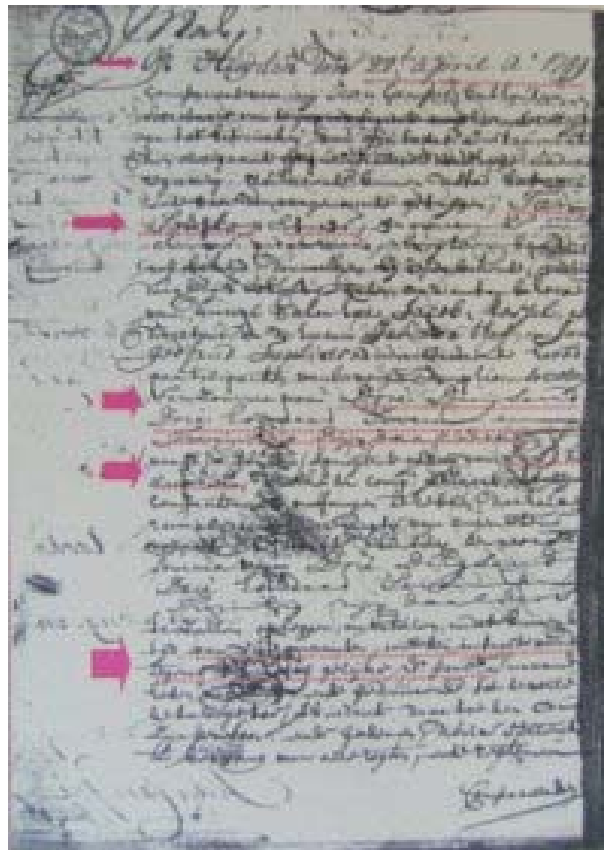


Figure 3. Front of a typical obligation (courtesy of Indonesian National Archives)

⁵⁴ ANRI, AS 6, # 425, Tan Tsouwko (Chen Zu Ge 陳祖哥), 22 April 1749; and # 426, I-Liongko (Yu Long Ge 余隆哥), 23 April 1749.



Figure 4. Back of a typical obligation (courtesy of Indonesian National Archives)

The first thing to notice about these documents is their origins and purpose. Obligations were a commercial and financial instrument prepared by a European colonial—rather than an Asian—institution. This is very important to remember because it meant that the AS collected and collated data on a given date concerning its opium transactions. It sold on extended credit terms to buyers—many of them non-European—who, in return, provided the European institution with an additional surety, or guarantors, to ensure the timely repayment of the principal and accrued monthly interest. The buyer or buyers signed the document, and their signature(s) were usually accompanied by two, and exceptionally, three guarantors as co-signatories.

Obligations were numbered sequentially and the data they contain coincided with corresponding numbers in the AS registers of these documents. (Neither of the two specimens in Figures 3 and 4 shows these respective numbers (425 or 426) because the information was cropped when the originals were electronically reproduced.) Obligations employed a highly standardized language in a two page format. On the front page there clearly appeared the date of the document, as indicated by the arrows and underlining in Figure 3 and the name (or names) of the opium buyer. Other information about the buyer included an ethnic or religious marker, the occupation, (possibly) the social, colonial or communal administrative position, and the address. The amount of opium purchased on credit from the AS was usually expressed as a number of chests, while the value of the

opium being financed was always included in *rijksdaalders* (*rsd*)⁵⁵ at least once, if not twice. The duration of the obligation was stipulated (usually four months) as well as the monthly interest rate (half a percent from 1745 to 1775, thence $\frac{3}{8}$ of a percent) that was accepted by both buyer and guarantors. On the back page came the names of the guarantors, as are indicated by the arrows and underlining in Figure 4. Their ethnic or religious markers, occupations, (possibly) the social, colonial or communal administrative positions, and addresses also generally appeared. The document was signed by all parties, the buyer(s), guarantors, AS officials, and witnesses. The illiterate might make their marks, and, occasionally, company seals (or chops) were also used.

As important as they are, obligations have some limitations as a source. First, as mentioned above, we lack a perfectly distributed sample since the great majority of legible extant obligations come from the earliest period. Further, the total sales of opium on credit probably did not exceed half of all AS sales over the period. Of this probable half, it was possible to examine only roughly half of all AS opium sales over the period, meaning surviving records from this source statistically document around 20-25 percent of the AS' opium sales between 1745 and 1785.⁵⁶ Despite these limitations, statistically speaking the sample remains significant, especially for the earliest decade, while historically the information it provides is invaluable.

First, sales on credit constituted the largest volumes and values of opium transacted by the AS. Simply put, merchants who could purchase opium on credit had commercial clout and credibility. Second, the information contained in the obligations about these merchants and their guarantors suggests they constituted the *crème de la crème* of commercial, political, and communal elites at Batavia and throughout the archipelago. *Omvragen* (requests or applications) for credit from interested merchants were lodged with the AS which scrutinized them via a credit and risk management evaluation process: some requests appear to have been denied, while for others the solicited amount of credit was lowered.⁵⁷ Third, given that opium was essential to Batavia's commercial prosperity, these records identify the amounts and values of opium bought and re-distributed from the AS, while the fundamental information they provide about group and individual identities of buyers and guarantors, and of their lives and livelihoods, gives insights into their networks. These are all aspects of the social history of Batavia and the wider Indonesian trading world of which we know relatively little.

Given all these considerations, in my view the evidence in the Ci Ji stele and the AS *obligatien* is sufficient, both here and in future research, to ask and answer historical questions that can take our study of individuals, groups, and networks of merchants on Java to a whole new level of understanding. The next section begins this process with a more detailed investigation of the evidence that allows an analytical interpretation of the groups (indigenous, Muslim, Dutch, and Chinese), individual merchants, their financial guarantors, and their networks over the long eighteenth century.

Merchants, Guarantors, and their Networks

Overall, there were 957 registered AS operations for which legible evidence survives from this period, with a total value of 3,202,362 *rsd*. Since merchants made repeat purchases, the number of individuals (304) involved was smaller than the number of registered operations. The background of the broad merchant groups at Batavia that made their

⁵⁵ The *rijksdaalder* or rix-dollar was a silver coin worth 2.5 *guilders* or *florins*, and approximately equal to one *tael*.

⁵⁶ This is a very conservative estimate: sales of opium by the AD, for example, in the late 1790s and early 1800s, suggest it was increasingly difficult to sell opium without providing credit to buyers and the ratio of credit to cash sales (3:1 or greater) clearly and dramatically exceeded this earlier estimate.

⁵⁷ See ANRI, AS 10 and 11. My thanks go to one of the ANRI's archivists for sharing her transcripts of these *omvragen* with me.

livelihoods from purchasing opium on credit, then re-distributing and trafficking it, and of the guarantors who provided the necessary surety for their commercial success over the period from 1745 to 1785, are represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Total Value of Opium Purchased on Credit from the Amfioen Sociëteet, 1745-85

My assessment of the social identity of a merchant, and his or her group affiliation, is based on specific information within individual obligations and their registers of particular opium purchasers and their guarantors. These identity markers make it possible to categorize these people into four major groups: indigenous, Muslim, Dutch, and Chinese, plus two Armenians. The indigenous group includes all individuals identified as Balinese, Javanese or Malay. The Muslim group includes all those identified as being *Moor* (an imprecise term for South or West Asian individuals, all of whom were practicing Muslims), who were probably *Chulias*,⁵⁸ or Tamil Muslims from the southern Coromandel Coast, although some may also have originated from other regions of the sub-continent.⁵⁹ The Dutch group includes all individuals identified as burgers. Finally, the Chinese group includes all those identified as being Chinese, Chinese-Moor,⁶⁰ *peranakan*⁶¹ (of mixed Chinese and Javanese backgrounds) or affiliated with Chinese as, for instance, the Balinese wives of Chinese merchants. While some questions might arise about the disaggregation of this evidence, such as a preference for sharper distinctions and sub-categorizations within the Chinese group, at this stage such an initial analytical sorting of individuals and operations usefully provides a general overview of the merchants and their guarantors. The data from this source both supports our analyses and interpretations and can help stimulate further research on these men and women.⁶²

Before delving further into the different merchant groups and individuals, it is worthwhile to explore the guarantee, the role of guarantors, and their relationships to individual merchants and other groups a little further. At present, virtually no explicit evidence or reflective observations exists about the relationships and practices between

⁵⁸ For the Chulias, see Sinnappah Arasaratnam, "Trade and Political Dominion in South India, 1750-1790: Changing British-Indian Relationships," *MAS* 13:1 (1979): 19-40; David K. Bassett, "British 'Country' Trade and Local Trade Networks in the Thai and Malay States, c. 1680-1770," *MAS* 23:4 (1989): 625-43; and Claude Markovits, "Indian Merchant Networks outside India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Preliminary Survey," *MAS* 33:4 (1999): 883-911.

⁵⁹ Some may possibly have been very early members of the Hadhrami community from Yemen. For more on them, see *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997); and Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

⁶⁰ For a discussion of Chinese Muslims, see Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, "Islam and Chineseness," *Indonesia* 57 (1993): 115-31.

⁶¹ For the *peranakan* and the shifting perceptions of Javanese towards Chinese, see Peter Carey, "Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java, 1755-1825," *Indonesia* 37 (1984): 1-47; and Mason C. Hoadley, "Javanese, *Peranakan*, and Chinese Elites in Cirebon: Changing Ethnic Boundaries," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47:3 (1988): 503-17.

⁶² For instance, with these sources and evidence future researchers might be able to identify and explore multi-generational family histories for Chinese in Batavia and the Indonesian world, along the lines of Stephanie Po-Yin Chung's "The Transformation of an Overseas Chinese Family: Three Generations of the Eu Tong Sen Family," *MAS* 15:2 (1981): 261-285, or analyze the relevance of multiple ethnicities, alternative Chinese categories, and social and commercial alignment patterns, along the lines of Mak Lau Fong's work ["Rigidity of System Boundary among Major Chinese Dialect Groups in Nineteenth-Century Singapore: A Study of Inscription Data," *MAS* 14:3 (1980): 465-88; "Sub-communal Participation and Leadership Cohesiveness of the Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Singapore," *MAS* 17:3 (1983): 437-53; "The Social Alignment Patterns of the Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Penang," *MAS* 23:2 (1989): 259-76] and that of Judith Strauch, "Multiple Ethnicities in Malaysia: The Shifting Relevance of Alternative Chinese Categories," *MAS* 15:2 (1981): 235-60. For the full data on-line, go to: http://rspas.anu.edu.au/cscsd.occasional_papers/cscsd_op2_4_Appendices_2a_2b.xls

merchants and guarantors, and none may ever emerge, given the paucity of contemporary writing on such issues by colonial administrators, observers,⁶³ communal leaders, and merchants. (As men and women of commerce, the latter in particular were highly unlikely to provide explicit explanations about this important practice.) So we can only infer how much the different multi-cultural agents (the indigenous, Muslim, Dutch, and Chinese merchants and guarantors) actually understood about the legal, commercial and social significance of guaranteeing the commercial performance of a second party, and how they perceived such a practice. Similarly, we will never know precisely why two (or three) specific individuals were approached to provide a surety for any individual merchant, what negotiations ensued and what the merchant might have had to offer in return, although the evidence does allow some general inferences here as well. Fortunately, historical evidence related to different commercial practices and concepts, such as trusts, does suggest some useful approaches to understanding the guarantor relationship between merchants and their backers.

The Dutch term *borgen* (security or guarantee) appears in the obligation. Dutch burgers, or citizens, who were merchants and guarantors for purchasers of opium on credit, would have fully understood the significance and implications of the term. In essence, it meant that, should the merchant default in repayment, the AS had legal recourse to the guarantor's assets to secure payment, if necessary by a judicial process allowing the seizure of those assets against the debt. It is likely that, initially, indigenous, Muslim, and Chinese merchants and guarantors for opium purchases might not have fully appreciated the implications and potential mechanics of compliance involved in standing as a guarantor. While differences existed in cultural and commercial practices involving holding certain individuals responsible for the actions of another individual, the concept of holding a group accountable for an individual's actions was not alien to indigenous or Chinese merchants and buyers. Similar concepts and practices existed from a very early date in Islamic maritime and admiralty law in the Eastern Mediterranean,⁶⁴ which were then utilized throughout the Indian Ocean by Muslim merchants. Since Dutch colonial and local Chinese society⁶⁵ was highly litigious, many non-Dutch merchants residing at Batavia would probably have had some knowledge, however indirect, of how a guarantee was perceived officially and of the possible consequences for merchant or guarantors if an obligation was not fulfilled.

As we have 957 registered operations, each of which usually required two guarantors, a simple calculation suggest a maximum of 1914 guarantors could be recorded in the documentation. But because guarantors could and did stand surety for repeat purchases, their actual number was a significantly smaller 453. The vast majority, or 312 individuals, were Chinese, representing nearly 70 percent of the total. The rest were divided between: two Armenians: four indigenous; nineteen Muslims; and 113 Dutch. Cross-referencing the personal names of purchasers with those of guarantors in registered opium operations reveals that roughly one-third (152) of all guarantors were also primary purchasers of

⁶³ Wang Dahai's perceptive observations about Java for a slightly later period are an important exception to this general statement. See Ong-tae-hae, trans. W.H. Medhurst, *The Chinaman Abroad, or, A desultory account of the Malayan archipelago, particularly of Java* (Shanghai: Printed at the Mission Press, 1849) and for a discussion about its author, see Claudine Salmon, "Wang Dahai et sa vision des contrées insulaires (1791)" [Wang Dahai and his vision of the island lands (1791)] *Etudes Chinoises* 13:1-2 (1994): 221-57.

⁶⁴ See Hassan S. Khalilieh, *Admiralty and Maritime Laws in the Mediterranean Sea (ca. 800-1050): The "Kitāb al-Sufun" vis-à-vis the "Nomos Rhodion Nautikos"* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

⁶⁵ For commercial complaints and efforts seeking redress, including over opium, by individuals to the Kong Koan at Batavia, see Geoffrey Wade, "Chinese Economic Activities in Java in the Late Eighteenth Century as Reflected in the Batavian Kong Koan," *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 1 (2007): 116-37, available on-line at: http://csds.anu.edu.au/volume_1/wade.pdf, consulted July 2009.

opium. Table 2 shows the guarantors (by group) who were and were not also listed as purchasers in these accounts.

Table 2. Purchasers who were also Guarantors

If the 301 individuals, or roughly two-thirds of all guarantors, were not listed as primary purchasers of opium, who were they? The evidence allows some broadly generalised answers to this question. Like the opium purchasers, they were prominent men and women who held positions of authority in colonial society and in their local communities and were thus perceived as trustworthy in commercial affairs. Their general relationships with opium purchasers appear to be based on consanguine links (whether direct or indirect and possibly via adoption), marriage or friendship, as well as on de facto and, possibly, de jure business associations or partnerships within ethnic, religious, and lineage group or sub-group categories, and also in cross-communal and cross-lineage relationships. Some additional comments regarding their identities and relationships with specific merchant groups and individuals will also be made below.

Based on the vetting of applicants to secure AS opium on credit, all purchasers were “portfolio capitalists”,⁶⁶ meaning here that the AS considered them and their peers as people of sufficient property and wealth (whether perceived or real) and of sufficient commercial acumen to warrant extending them credit to buy opium. It is equally likely that the AS held a similar view of their guarantors. In my view, the guarantors of these credit operations were most likely the associates of the named purchasers in the opium business. Faced with having to repay an obligation if the principal defaulted, it is improbable that guarantors were disinterested second parties in such transactions. And if guarantors were business associates, as I argue, then the AS records provide fundamental evidence that suggests links between key merchant and guarantor identities that provide insights into the formation and composition of commercial networks.

Indigenous Merchants

The names and ethnicity of the four individuals that comprised the indigenous merchant category were: Sang-lan (Balinese), Maas Damang Manta Nagara (Javan, literally, “Mr. From the Land”), Abdul Rackman and Abdul Rauop (both reportedly Malay and most probably practicing Muslims). They accounted for eleven operations out of 957, worth 22,507 rsd from a total of 3,202,362 rsd, or less than one percent of the registered total over the period. Consequently, this group was insignificant statistically. Despite the gaps in the serial data, my sample suggests it is most likely that indigenous merchants were only active as buyers in the commercial re-distribution of opium in the decade from 1745 to 1754.

The ethnic, social or religious composition and origins of the guarantors of the four merchants in this category were: for Sang-lan (Balinese), guarantors were Dutch and Muslim; for Maas Damang Manta Nagara (Javan), they were both Javanese; and for the Malays Abdul Rackman and Abdul Rauop,⁶⁷ they were respectively Dutch and Chinese, and Dutch and Muslim.

⁶⁶ See Sanjay Subrahmanyam and C.A. Bayly, “Portfolio capitalists and the economy of early modern India” in *Merchants, Markets and the State in Early Modern India*, ed. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 242-65.

⁶⁷ For the contemporaneous Malay community on Makassar, who may or may not have had commercial contacts with the Malay community at Batavia, see Heather Sutherland, “The Makassar Malays: Adaptation and Identity, c. 1660-1790,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, 3 (2001): 397-421.

Muslim Merchants

The Muslim merchant category comprised eleven individuals who were, in descending order of importance of the total value of their individual obligations: Tambij Beijtenade, Oemar Sedelebe, Assan Niena Dauot, Djenal Alidin Sedelebe, Aloe Bakker Fackira, Tambij Samioen, Aboe Boeker Dauot, Tsinina Abdulla, Ibrahim Fackier, Abdulla Gafaer Tangok, and Mochamed Miera Dauot. There is no question that they were practicing Muslims, but their geographic origins are still not entirely clear. A number of them signed their obligations in Arabic, and this may provide further information to clarify this issue. At present, based upon some expert analysis of the transliterated Dutch versions of their names, significance, and possible origin,⁶⁸ it seems highly unlikely that any of these men were Hadharim from Yemen.

What is certain is that a good number of their names (whether family or personal) appear to be generically Islamic: Abdullah; Aloe Bakker or Aboe Boeker meaning Abu Bakar; Assan meaning Hassan; Dauot meaning Dawood, Davoud, Daud, or David; Fackier meaning Fakir; Mochamed meaning Mohammed; and Oemar meaning Omar). However, it is difficult to identify whether they were Tamil or other South Asian Muslims. "Mochamed Miera Dauot" or Mohammad Mira Dawood, for example, certainly suggests a South Asian origin but, as it is not a distinctively Chulia name, he might have been from western India. Two names are distinctly Tamil. Tambij (or Tamby or Tambi), meaning younger brother in Tamil, appears as a name in later Tamil diasporas in Southeast Asia, like Penang (Malaysia) and Singapore. A portion of the surnames of Oemar Sedelebe and Djenal Alidin Sedelebe—the syllable "lebe" meaning lebe, leves, or lebbais—also clearly identifies them as Tamil Muslims, since it is the name of one of the three groups or two branches of Tamil Muslims (Marakkayar, Rawther, and/or Lebbais) from southern Coromandel in present-day Tamilnadu.⁶⁹ Niena and Gafaer meaning Gaffour are names that also appeared in later South Asian Muslim and Tamil diasporas in mainland Southeast Asia (Vietnam and Cambodia) but, at present, neither name can be definitively linked to a Tamil origin. Because of its direct articulation with Tambij (meaning Tamby or Tambi), Tambij Samioen was also clearly a Tamil. The specific origin of the word "Samioen" may come from the common shortened form of the Tamil name Sinnassamy, along with a few others rendered normally as Samy or as Sami in the obligation, with the transliterated "-oen" added. (This may possibly be a common Bahasa or Indonesian suffix, as is discussed further in regard to the "-nio" suffix in the Chinese sub-section below.) Similarly, Tsinina may equally be the tonal, transliterated rendering of a portion—Sinnas—of the Tamil name Sinnassamy.

Muslim merchants' operations in total accounted for fifty-nine out of 957 transactions, and the total value of the opium they purchased on credit was 169,122 rsd (from 3,202,362 rsd), or 5 percent of the known total over the period. As a group, they were very active as buyers and re-sellers of relatively large quantities of opium during a short time span, in the decade following the formation of the AS. Thereafter, their large-scale commercial involvement with opium appears to have declined since they do not appear as purchasers in extant AS records after 1756.

Although the AS accounts show eleven individual Muslim buyers and fifty-nine operations to the value of 169,122 rsd from 1745 to 1756, the trade was concentrated in the hands of only three families (in declining order of importance, Beijtenade, Dauot (or Dawood or David), and Sedelebe). They accounted for 87 percent of the opium purchased

⁶⁸ I am not a trained Islamist, and wish to thank Professor William Gervase Clarence-Smith, and the team of experts (Dr. Sunil Amrith and Dr. Natasha Pairaudeau) whom he put together, for their time and valuable comments on these names and the merchants' backgrounds.

⁶⁹ See Mattison Mines, "Muslim Social Stratification in India: The Basis for Variation", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 28: 4 (1972): 333-49. However, experts disagree about where "Lebbais" fit in with the others, and whether all three variations did or do form a hierarchy.

on credit from the AS by Muslim merchants in these twelve years. The guarantors of the eleven Muslim merchants had quite different origins from the other opium purchasing groups. Muslim opium buyers were hermetic, meaning that their commercial guarantors only came from within their own group. The emergence of such a concentration of business obviously indicates greater commercial success for particular merchants and their families; but while the trend towards such concentration of commercial power is important, what strikes me as more important is the collective cohesion of the group. Clearly, their provision of guarantees for each other's activities indicates an extremely well consolidated and tight social group whose members knew and respected each other, and believed in each other's integrity and probity. Although it is not possible to conclusively determine the individual origins of all its members, their pattern of behaviour as guarantors suggests that a significant number (possibly all) of these Muslim merchants and guarantors were probably Tamils, whether Chulias or other Indians like Marakkayars, Rawther, or Lebbais from southern Coromandel, and especially from the Madras (modern Chennai) region.⁷⁰

Dutch Merchants

As a group, Dutch burgers or merchants who were active in the opium trade were a more visible presence in comparison with indigenous and Muslim merchants. With the exception of their near absence in the late 1770s, they were active buyers on credit for nearly the entire period from 1745 to 1785. They accounted for 164 from 957 operations, at a total value of 834,383 rsd from 3,202,362 rsd, or 26 percent of the registered total over the period. While the group contained eighty-four individuals who undertook 164 registered purchases of opium, the top twelve buyers in this group (Michel Doornik, Anthonij Boresloskij, Simon Joseph, Iesebrandus Faber, Francois Jacob Berg, Pieter Garden, Cornelis Van Der Hoop, Willem Jacob Meurs, Urbanus Bresijn, Jan Van Oorst, Christiaan Louis Arnold, and Johanna Maria Lanckhorst) accounted for 45 percent of Dutch credit purchases from the AS. The guarantors who provided personal sureties for these eighty-four Dutch merchants were, in order of declining frequency: Dutch (alone); Chinese (alone); Dutch and Chinese; and Malay (alone).

Chinese Merchants

The Chinese were the dominant commercial group involved in purchasing and re-distributing opium at Batavia and on Java over the long eighteenth century. They accounted for 723 operations out of 957 in the period under review, with the combined value of their opium purchased on credit reaching 2,176,350 rsd from 3,202,362 rsd, or 68 percent of the registered total over the period. It is possible to distinguish 205 individual Chinese buyers involved in these 723 operations. This figure arises from a scrutiny of our transcription and standardization of the spellings of names combined with careful attention to the handling of aliases (which were internally identified as they occurred), the use of honorifics (see Table 3 below) and of gender identifiers ('-nio', a suffix indicating the person in question was a woman). Where the same family and given names concur but a different honorific was used to sign different obligations during the same operational time frame, for example in the case of the merchant whose transcribed name was Tan Hoelo and whose signature varied from Chen Fu Ge 陳富哥 to Chen Fu Lao 陳富老, only a single individual was counted.

⁷⁰ For Muslim merchants in China at the time who may possibly have had commercial contacts with their contemporaries in Southeast Asia, see Carl T. Smith and Paul Van Dyke, "Muslims in the Pearl River Delta, 1700 to 1930," *Review of Culture*, International Edition, 10 (2004): 6-15.

**Table 3. Honorifics Used in the AS Obligations for Some Chinese Merchants
(tentative merchant and/or communal ranking)**

There were thirty-four family or lineage names among these 205 individual Chinese buyers. In descending order of the total value of operations by family or lineage name, they were: the Chen, Lin, Wang, Yang, Huang, Cai, Zhuang, Wu, Shi, Xu, Lu, Kang, Zhang, Zhou, Li, Su, Pu, Ke, Gao, Xie, Guo, Wen, Ye, Yong, Zhu, You(?), Yu, Dai, Tang, Lian, Liu, Zeng, Zheng, and Deng. The top ten buyers by family or lineage sub-grouping (the Chen, Lin, Wang, Yang, Huang, Cai, Zhuang, Wu, Shi, and Xu) accounted for 79 percent or 1,713,410 rsd worth of business from the Chinese merchants category. All the family or lineage names of this elite sub-group were commercially active in opium over the entire period. The remaining twenty-four transactions by Chinese buyers, rated in terms of family or lineage names, accounted for a comparatively small percentage (21 percent) of the value of registered operations (456,880 rsd) and occurred sporadically over the period. Within the Chinese group there was also a marked concentration of individual buyers. A small 11 percent, or twenty-two Chinese or affiliated people (as named in Table 4 below) from the 205 individuals who comprised this group, accounted for 42 percent of the (sub-) total value of the Chinese group's operations.

Turning to the ethnic, social or religious composition and origins of the 312 guarantors of the 205 individual Chinese merchants registered in AS records, we can observe the following patterns regarding the ethnic, social or religious composition and origins of the individuals involved in the transaction. In diminishing importance, we find the following situations. The most common was for all individuals involved to share the same Chinese lineage name. Next was the situation in which the buyer and one guarantor shared the same lineage name, while the other guarantor came from a different Chinese lineage. The third situation involved a Chinese buyer who appeared with a Dutch guarantor and one Chinese guarantor who might or might not be from the same lineage as the buyer. Finally, there were a few cases in which a Chinese buyer provided one guarantor identified as Muslim plus another Chinese one. In this rare situation, the Chinese buyer and guarantor were also most probably Muslim. These patterns suggest a trend: while a Chinese merchant preferred to deal commercially within his or her own lineage, he or she was not averse to working with other lineage, ethnic, or religious affiliates, should the opportunity exist, in contrast to Muslim merchants or buyers whom the records show obtained commercial backing exclusively from within their own communal or religious group.

**Table 4. Top 22 Individual Chinese Buyers of Opium on Credit from the AS, 1745-1785
(in descending order of the magnitude of their purchases)**

Having provided a general overview of the members of this group of mid-eighteenth century Chinese opium merchants in Batavia and Java, I would now like to demonstrate how this detailed new material can deepen our existing knowledge of this era. My first example concerns the Hokkien-speaking Yan 顏 and Lin 顏 lineages from Minnan (southern Fujian).

In the early 1990s, Dr. Wang Lianmao proposed a number of interesting arguments and hypotheses about the Ming and Qing era migration patterns of these two seemingly contrasting lineages:⁷¹ the Yan from Anhai, formerly part of the major commercial centre of Quanzhou prefecture, were heavily involved in commerce while the Lin from Pushan,

⁷¹ What follows is my synthesis based upon a translation by a research assistant of Wang Lianmao 王连茂 "Migration in Two Minnan Lineages in the Ming and Qing periods" 《明清时期两个家族的人口移动》, in *Research into China's Overseas Communications History* 《海交史研究》 19:1 (1991): 1-22.

formerly part of Zhangzhou prefecture about thirty kilometres from the important Ming port of Yuegang (Haicheng), were more traditionally oriented towards farming. Like other Fujianese families, Yan and Lin migrated internally within China, especially to Guangzhou⁷² and Taiwan, and externally to Southeast Asia.⁷³ Wang calculated that the largest number of Yan migrants went to Guangzhou, then to Taiwan, with Batavia in third place. From the 1520s and 1570s, Yan Hongkui, Yan Yilan, Yan Jiaxu, Yan Jiahai, Yan Jiayun and Yan Yihun (around 1551) migrated to Batavia. Two centuries later, in 1745, Yan Shifang migrated to Batavia where he died and was buried in 1756. Despite a lineage background in commerce, Wang inferred that most of these Yan migrants to Batavia would have been labourers. Turning to the Lin, Wang found that fewer of them went to Guangdong than did the Yan, with a larger number preferring Taiwan, Batavia, Semarang⁷⁴ on Java and Luzon in the Philippines.⁷⁵ Numerically and proportionately (114 people, or 34 percent), the largest cohort of Lin migrants went to Batavia, Java and parts of the Indonesian Archipelago that the VOC claimed to control. Some 105 people arrived between 1662 and 1774, particularly after the 1680s. Indeed, Lin migration as a whole surged dramatically from the 1680s to the 1730s, in a way not seen in the Yan case.

Wang believed this sudden post-1680s leap in Lin migration resulted from the ending of the Qing coastal evacuation policy that had previously forced individuals from coastal communities to move inland or overseas for the sake of their livelihoods. Part of that relaxation followed the 1683 Qing conquest of Taiwan, which opened that island to more migration, and the 1684 renewal of official Chinese maritime trade that encouraged even more outflows. At the same time, on Java the Company was increasingly consolidating its control over the northern and northeast coast, creating greater political stability for burgeoning cash-crop production, of sugar in particular,⁷⁶ which in turn was generating a large demand for Chinese labour (as well as creating many opportunities for Chinese entrepreneurs). Wang believes most of the Lin who migrated to Batavia at this time would have come as labourers in the sugar industry and not as merchants since, he argues, they were less active in commerce than the Yan. The Dutch massacre of up to 10,000 Chinese settlers in Batavia over a few days in October 1740,⁷⁷ and their subsequent persecution by Dutch authorities, not only killed one Lin migrant (Lin Guizhen) but also no doubt triggered the sharp decline in Lin migrants to Batavia in the 1740s and 1750s that Wang noted.

I have expounded Wang's views at length in order to demonstrate the value of the Ci Ji stele and the AS records for providing some answers, and raising more questions, about Minnan lineages that migrated to Batavia and the Indonesian Archipelago in the Ming–Qing periods. First, as the information on the Ci Ji stele shows, ten Lin individuals (five of whom are identified as captains) made significant donations to the temple, compared to two donors with Yan surnames. The Yan were also minor contributors who did not figure

⁷² Paul Van Dyke's work shows a number of the most important hong or hang merchants at Canton (the Yan, Ye, and Cai) were Hokkien. See "The Yan Family: Merchants of Canton, 1734-1780s," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 9 (2004): 30-85; "The Ye Merchants of Canton, 1720-1804," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 13 (2005): 6-47; and "Cai and Qiu Enterprises: Merchants of Canton 1730-1784," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 15 (2005): 60-101.

⁷³ For the sake of brevity, I exclude the later migratory patterns of these lineages (and others) to other parts of the globe from the 19th century and do not mention total numbers or the exact distribution of all of these patterns.

⁷⁴ For a history of the Chinese community at Semarang, see Liem Tian Joe, *Riwajat Semarang, 1416-1931* [History of Semarang] (Semarang: Boekhandel Ho Kim Yoe, 1933).

⁷⁵ Thirty-one Lin men and one woman went to Semarang compared to 7 Yan men and one woman while 32 Lin men went to Luzon compared to 18 Yan men.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Claude Guillot, Lukman Nurhakim, and Claudine Salmon, "Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua, Banten, XVIIe siècle. Textes et vestiges" [The Chinese sugar growers of Kelapadua, Bantam, 17th century, texts and traces] *Archipel* 39 (1990): 139-58.

⁷⁷ See Blussé, "Batavia 1619-1740: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Colonial Town", in *Strange Company*, pp. 73-96; and Johannes Th. Vermeulen, "De Chineezten te Batavia en de troebelen van 1740" [The Chinese at Batavia and the riots of 1740], Ph. D. dissertation, Leiden University, 1938.

among the upper levels of those 119 Fujianese captains and loyal Buddhists on Java who donated money to the temple in 1697. The Ci Ji stele evidence confirms Wang's observations about the dates of their migration and the presence of the Yan and Lin lineages; but it also suggests his ideas about the relative commercial importance of the lineages on Java should be inverted. The AS records also support this position: while both lineages appear in them, analysing the sub-group of opium buyers by lineage name, individuals, occupations, and political and administrative positions held in communal and colonial society shows the Lin were far more prominent than the Yan.

Let us now move beyond Wang's two lineages to broader questions about southern Chinese lineages whose members migrated to Batavia and Java in the early-to-mid Qing periods. Our new material makes it possible to begin a comparative examination of all Hokkien and other lineage names among the Chinese buyers and guarantors in the AS records. Table 5 takes an initial step in this direction by cross-referencing the Hokkien donors in the Ci Ji stele with the Chinese buyers in the AS records by family names. Column I lists the 39 Hokkien family names mentioned in the 1697 Ci Ji stele. Column II lists the thirty-four surnames of the Chinese opium buyers mentioned in the AS records. Column III lists the twenty Hokkien family names from the Ci Ji stele list that did not appear among AS opium buyers between 1745 and 1785. Finally, Column IV lists the ten Chinese family or lineage names of AS opium buyers that were not among the Hokkien surnames on the Ci Ji stele.

Table 5. A Comparison of Family Names of Hokkiens on Java (Ci Ji stele, 1697) and Chinese Buyers of Opium on Credit from AS (1745-1785)

Such a comparison helps to identify whether, and to what extent, continuity or change occurred in the physical composition of the Hokkien (and other Chinese) merchant presence in the region, and in the commercialization of opium from the late seventeenth through much of the eighteenth centuries. Some interesting trends emerge. First, nine of the top ten AS opium purchasers by family or lineage name (the Cai 蔡 Chen 陳 Huang 黃 Lin 林 Shi 施 Wang 王 Wu 吳 Xu 許 and Yang 楊 but not the Zhuang 張) are also recorded on the Ci Ji stele. This result suggests a Hokkien commercial hegemony existed over the group of Chinese opium merchants active in Batavia and the archipelago, with more continuity than change in the Hokkien lineage names present in the region. Second, Column III, which lists the twenty Hokkien surnames from the Ci Ji stele that did not appear in AS records as opium buyers from 1745 to 1785, confirms that those surnames in general, and the Han⁷⁸ lineage which had migrated prior to 1697, were, by the mid eighteenth century, either not sufficiently interested or sufficiently established to engage in opium commerce. Third, the Column IV list of ten Chinese family or lineage names from the AS records that were not among the Hokkien surnames on the Ci Ji stele suggests that these people were either not Hokkien or, if Hokkien, that they had probably migrated after 1697.

The AS records also provide information about the colonial administrative and communal positions held by individual Chinese merchants, and about their occupations. Nineteen merchants were identified as having held colonial administrative or communal political positions (Table 6). The total value of the registered operations of this cohort of buyers was 478,127 rsd, or 22 percent of all Chinese transactions carried out by only 9 percent of merchants. However, it is impossible to say from AS information whether their

⁷⁸ See Claudine Salmon, "The Han Family of East Java. Entrepreneurship and Politics (18th-19th Centuries)," *Archipel* 41 (1991): 53-87.

involvement in the commercialization of opium facilitated their rise to public office or whether their office holding facilitated later involvement in the opium trade.

Table 6. Communal and Administrative Positions held by Chinese Buyers of Opium on Credit from the AS, 1745-1785
(in descending order of magnitude of purchases)

The AS records only identify the occupations of nine individual Chinese buyers: eight were sugar millers and one was a brandy producer. The registered operations of this cohort totalled 247,159 rsd (meaning just over 11 percent per value of the opium business was in the hands of fewer than 5 percent of the Chinese merchant cohort). I list their names in descending order of importance of their registered operations, with the Dutch transliteration followed by the Pinyin and Chinese characters in brackets. They were: Lim Tsoenko (Lin Chun Ge, 林春哥); Lim Theeko (Lin Tie Ge, 林鐵哥); Oeij Sinlo (Huang ??, 黃??); the brandy producer Lim Sieuwko (Lin ??, 林??); Lim Giko (Lin Yu Ge, 林語哥); Lim Tjeeko (Lin ??, 林??); Lim Poatko (Lin Ba Ge, 林拔哥); Tan Beengko (Chen ??, 陳??); and Tsoa Djemko (Cai ??, 蔡??). Their role in opium commerce may have been a diversification designed to increase their wealth, beyond their primary activities in the sugar industry or in distilling brandy. However, it seems more likely to me that what we have here is early evidence of the well-documented nineteenth-century practice of employers using opium as a form of labour control via the provision or sale of opium to their workers.

For producers in a time of labour shortage, it made economic sense to create conditions that made labourers indebted to their employers for food and other necessities: it gave them stability and control over labour supply, however disadvantageous and pernicious it might be for the workers. Purchases of opium by these sugar refiners and the alcohol distiller primarily occurred in the latter years of the AS records, very probably indicating that opium commercialization was evolving by then from a simple commercial arbitrage transaction to include the imputed cost of labour control or of production in the sugar growing industry, and perhaps in others. If opium provision was being integrated into the labour cost of commodity production in mid-to-later eighteenth century Java, it would help explain why the market accepted the high and relative inelastic price of opium that the Company and the AS were able to command over the period, and also the distinct qualities of the opium that was supplied and consumed. In this regard, there are some suggestive parallels with the way opium was consumed by Hokkien labourers, and used by Hokkien merchants to control labour in the sugar industry on Java, with how opium was consumed by Hakka labourers (although the evidence suggests they primarily chewed and swallowed the drug rather than smoked it) and the way Hakka merchants used opium to control labour in the Bangka tin mines and the Chinese gold mines in Borneo (modern West Kalimantan).⁷⁹

Finally, the AS documents can shed some light on the role of women in this commerce. Although very few instances of women's involvement in opium commercialization exist, there are a number of exceptional though minor examples of

⁷⁹ For the Hakka community's proclivity to operate between core and peripheries in south China, see Sow Theong Leong, *Migration and Ethnicity in Chinese History: Hakkas, Pengmin, and Their Neighbors*, ed. Tim Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). For the same pattern on Bangka and Borneo, for Hakka mining operations and the use of opium for labour relief and labour control via indebtedness, see Mary F. Somers Heidhues, *Bangka Tin and Mentok Pepper: Chinese Settlement on an Indonesian Island* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992), pp. 18, 71-73, 84, 136, and notes 89 and 90; and, *Goldiggers, Farmers, and Traders in Pontianak and the "Chinese Districts" of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 2003), pp. 67, 69, 75, and 78.

Dutch, Creole, and Balinese women buying opium on credit from the AS. In all extant instances, they were widows of prominent colonial or communal officials, or the mothers of leading merchants. At present I have identified three female opium purchasers on credit in the AS records. Two had Dutch names, Johanna Maria Lanckhorst, the widow of Jacob Cool, who had been an AS administrator from its inception, and Abigel Plache, the widow of Jacob Trantrouw (although the internal documentary evidence suggests Plache was Creole). The total value of their transactions was around 18,000 and 2,000 rsd respectively. Their involvement was dwarfed by that of Nieij Bantam, also known as Tan Tjenio or Soenio, the Balinese wife of Lim Beengko (Lin Ming Guang 林明光), the Chinese Captain at Batavia in 1743. Categorized because of her marriage as a Chinese, she was one of the dominant buyers of opium on credit in the late 1740s and early 1750s. Her son, Lim Thoenko (Lin Chun She 林椿舍), also became a prominent merchant and opium purchaser as well as a Chinese community official in 1758, a *Boedelmeester* (literally, an estate master or a person in charge of probate for a will or deceased estate). Along with these three merchants, other women also acted as guarantors for a relatively small number of operations. Since I argue that guarantors were in fact business associates of the purchasers involved, their involvement increases the number of women involved in commercializing opium, not dramatically at this point but additional names still remain to be investigated.

Consumption and Consumers

As noted previously, transformations in the method of ingesting opium, from chewing to smoking with tobacco to smoking pure opium, significantly changed the demand for and consumption of the drug over the long eighteenth century. Chewing and swallowing opium, which induces nausea when consumed to excess, naturally limits the amount used to below an addictive level. When smoked with tobacco, the lungs distribute the drug more rapidly and acutely throughout the body, but again in limited quantities that do not necessarily produce habitual or addictive use. When smoked pure, however, the effect is even more rapid, and potent enough to create a large group of habitual or addictive users among the consuming population.

Consequently, until the latter part of the eighteenth century, when the practice of smoking pure opium emerged as the preferred method of ingestion, an observable symbiotic marketing and consuming relationship existed between tobacco and opium. Although indigenous and local people in the Indonesian and Malay world consumed tobacco in the same way as Europeans, pipe smokers also experimented with adding opium to their tobacco. The use of this mixture, known as *madat*, was first reported by the Dutch on Ternate in 1610.⁸⁰ The first VOC *plakaaten* (ordinance) prohibiting and heavily fining both sellers and consumers of *madat* was promulgated on 22 December, 1671. It was repeated, and the fines doubled, on 28 December 1729.⁸¹ Neither ordinance successfully eradicated the practice.

In the early 1680s, the Company characterized consumer demand for opium at Semarang (Java) as good, because "it appear[ed] that the Javanese cannot live without it."⁸² The VOC was convinced that the strong demand for opium on Java in the early 1680s

⁸⁰ Baud, "Proeve van eene Geschiedenis ...", 88, citing François Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* [Old and New in the East Indies], 5 vols in 8, (Dordrecht: Joannes van Braam and Amsterdam: Gerard onder de Linden, 1724-1726; reprint Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, 2002-2004), I, 239.

⁸¹ See Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch plakaatboek*, IV, 317-19, 423-24. In 1671, the fines for first offenders were 20 rsd for sellers and 10 rsd for buyers, which doubled for the second offence. A third offence went to the colonial authorities for adjudication.

⁸² *GM*, IV, 473. For more on opium use at the time, see M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200*, 3rd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 87, 99, 101, 104-06, 112, 118, 159, 162-63, and 173-76; *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief*, ed. Anthony Reid (Ithaca: Cornell

was caused by the Mataram War,⁸³ so it may be that opium was being supplied to soldiers, either as part of their pay, part of their provisions, medicinally or perhaps to be smoked recreationally as *madat*. Apart from this Dutch report from the 1680s, only a scattering of primary sources existed to help identify the early and growing number of opium consumers. To those eyewitness accounts and secondary literature, however, we can now add the sources and evidence discussed in this essay. They strongly suggest that the eighteenth century saw the beginning of a whole new economic function for opium, as a mechanism for attracting and retaining a workforce during a time of high labour demand.

Given the symbiotic market relationship between Bengal opium and tobacco, particularly Chinese tobacco, VOC records allow us to identify the destinations outside the Batavia area where AS-supplied opium merchants shipped and re-sold the drug, as well as areas where they or their associates very likely also employed it as a means of attracting and controlling an adequate labour supply for cash-crops like sugar or in industrial refineries. After Batavia and its environs, those destinations constituted the primary markets and centres of opium consumption organized by the official opium marketing system and its commercial intermediaries. From 1668 to 1745, the Company registered the movement of all arriving and departing vessels. The information recorded included the stated port of origin, the cargoes of departing vessels (including Chinese tobacco, Bengal opium, etc), their value in rijksdaalders, and their destinations. All this was logged once a month in the *dagregisteer* (journal or diary).⁸⁴ This meticulous record keeping allows us to reconstruct the distribution channels for Chinese tobacco and Bengal opium, and the consuming markets for which they were destined.⁸⁵ By 1690, the value of Bengal opium re-distributed from Batavia throughout the Indonesian world eclipsed the value of imported Indian cotton cloth, and it retained this commercial supremacy for the rest of our period. Around 90 percent of this opium was destined for the Java North Coast, in descending order of value to Semarang, Rimbang, Cirebon, Gresik and Surabaya. A further 5 percent went, in descending order of value, to Borneo (Banjarmasin), Sumatra (Palembang and Jambi), Sulawesi (Macassar), Lesser Sunda Islands (Timor), Moluccas (Ambon), China (Macao),⁸⁶ Siam, and one Malay sultanate (Johor). (Damage to the archival evidence makes it impossible to trace the last 5 percent.) While a concentration on Java was predictable from secondary sources, it is still striking how little of this opium was re-distributed to the Malay world, a finding which probably indicates how competitive the British and other merchants were in those markets.

Unfortunately, but logically after the 1745 establishment of the AS, the VOC ceased recording this type of information. Extant legible AS records suggest extensive serial evidence does not exist that would allow a similar post-1745 trend analysis, although some late 1740s materials have survived. We can speculate from other sources, however, that post-1745 opium use probably intensified and amplified the pre-1745 sales and consuming trends on the Java North Coast, if only because of the continued importance of this region in the nineteenth century colonial opium revenue farming system.

University Press, 1993), pp. 112, 115, 134; and Leonard Y. Andaya and Barbara W. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 2nd ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 92 and 103-04.

⁸³ See *GM*, IV, 673 and Jonge, *De Opkomst*, VIII, pp. v-vi.

⁸⁴ Beginning in 1668, this "Vessels' Report" appeared at the end of each calendar month for the years 1668 to 1683, see *DRB*; and for the post-1683 records, see *ANRI*, *DRB*, *Vessels' Report*. The originals of the Batavia *dagregisteers* are in Jakarta, with a microfiche copy in the General State Archives.

⁸⁵ For a more complete discussion of this source and issue, see Souza, "Developing Habits", pp. 39-56.

⁸⁶ As mentioned earlier, there is some evidence that, prior to 1745, merchant/buyers of opium at Batavia were also occasionally trader/buyers as, for example, when a Portuguese trader from Macao purchased a small quantity of opium at Batavia to export to China in 1720. However, AS records strongly suggest that post-1745 opium sales on credit involved merchants who generally resided locally or in the Indonesian archipelago. Any sales outside this group were statistically negligible.

Conclusions

Beyond being a catalogue of numbers and percentages, names and evidence, this preliminary investigation of the anatomy of opium commerce and consumption at Batavia and in Java over the long eighteenth century has produced a number of conclusions about commodities, merchants, and guarantors, as well as about these new sources and the future research directions that they may facilitate.

If much has been discovered by connecting the social, economic and cultural biography of a commodity such as opium, and following it through its commercial intermediaries to its final consumers via a chain analysis that identifies the agency of sellers and consumers, much still remains to be discovered. While such a broad approach can sometimes be unwieldy, its use here has located opium and its commercialization by particular groups, especially merchants of Chinese origin or extraction, as central to their individual and communal livelihoods and to their commercial prosperity. Intermediation in other commodities certainly offered good commercial opportunities in the long eighteenth century, but the size and scope of opium commerce made it central to both the Dutch colonial administration and to sizeable segments of the commercial communities at Batavia, on Java and throughout the archipelago.

Taken collectively, the merchants involved in the commercialization of opium at Batavia were “portfolio capitalists” who represented the commercial, political, and, most likely, social elites in Dutch colonial society and, especially where the Chinese are concerned, within their respective communal societies. As expected, the sources confirm Chinese merchant dominance generally, while underlining Hokkien hegemony in particular. By identifying individual merchants and their guarantors it becomes possible to begin to build up discrete individual and group biographies, and even to sketch out probable networks by tracing the contractual relationships between “hands on” merchant opium purchasers and their “hands off” guarantors, who are viewed here as *de facto* associates or silent partners of the primary opium purchasers. A greater depth of analysis might be possible in this respect by future research that combines AS evidence with other materials dealing, for instance, with cases of insolvency among individual merchants or guarantors.

Although the sample analysed is necessarily based on a limited set of extant documents, where opium commercialization is concerned the analysis has identified marketing trends that, for Java, are well supported by eyewitness accounts and in the secondary literature. While the recreational, medicinal, and social consumption patterns of opium were maintained during the period under review, the analysis has also uncovered the likely development of a new economic function for the drug at this time of expanding and labour-intensive cash-cropping and Chinese mining. Opium provided a means of attracting and retaining scarce labour, so opium commerce began to evolve from a simple arbitrage transaction to include control of labour and cost of production functions, first seen in the cultivation and refining of sugar and of spirits (brandy).

This essay has tested the value of the two new primary sources it introduced and utilized to reconstruct and interpret the commercial worlds of opium and merchants, guarantors, and consumers in the long eighteenth century. On the whole, the result confirms that the historical usefulness of these sources transcends their limitations. The AS records provide a unique and vital link between the tonally transliterated names and identities found in Dutch sources with the actual names and identities of those indigenous, Muslim, and Chinese merchants and guarantors who were required to sign opium purchasing contracts. Using this evidence like a Rosetta stone, researchers can now look again at Dutch sources to identify more accurately the most probable communal identities, and possibly even differing sub-group affiliations, of the indigenous, Muslim, and Chinese people mentioned in those sources. Where Chinese are concerned, by combining the AS records with the Ci Ji stele evidence, it becomes possible to determine the likelihood of any

family name being Hokkien and the approximate era of migration to Java. Another useful avenue for future research would be to examine the pre-AS Company records for sales of opium on credit to Chinese merchants from the 1720s until 1745. These sources also only identify Chinese by their tonally transliterated names but, by cross-checking with the Ci Ji stele and later AS records, it is very likely that a good number of the lineages involved, and other aspects of their backgrounds, would be revealed. Such an approach might be very useful, for instance, for exploring in more depth the 1740 massacre of the Batavia Chinese community. Lastly, it should also be possible to take the Ci Ji stele data and AS records about lineages and individuals from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and connect them and their histories with later lineage names and prominent individuals in two important bodies of primary material: on the Dutch side, the Council of Justice, Municipal, Board of the Chinese Estate Masters and other collections in the ANRI, all of which have been catalogued to varying degrees but which use transliterated Chinese names and identities; and on the Chinese side to the genealogical, marriage, and other written evidence in the *Kong Koan* (Chinese council) records in Jakarta.

These represent very exciting research projects that would advance our knowledge of Chinese diasporic commercial and communal identities, formations, and networks in Indonesia and beyond. Similarly, to the extent that such work can be done in detail for the Chinese of Batavia, then this type of data may perhaps be further developed, cross-referenced, and connected to the same communal groups or to those sharing the same lineage names in different locations and communal groups. The goal should be to historicize migratory movements by dialect groups—Hokkien, Hakka, Teochiu, Cantonese, and, possibly, Hainanese—to specify particular places in time, to relate these movements to commercial and political opportunities and objectives, to identify the sort of impetus from within and without that prompted different groups to migrate, and to tease out connections within and between lineages, and across dialect and ethnic groups.⁸⁷

The time frame of this essay partially overlaps the migration and expansion of various Chinese dialect groups, merchants, and their commercial activities during the “Chinese century” in Southeast Asia. Its material and findings offer a sound empirical base upon which the informal imperial nature of that expansion may be analysed to illuminate whether, and to what degree, it was connected to the Hokkien commercial hegemony on Java and throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Such prospects ably defend my advocacy for these primary materials which have morphed from being a key source for my arguments into the means of opening up new research directions for exploring the social, political, and economic identities of individuals, groups, communities, and networks at Batavia and in Java over the long eighteenth century.

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⁸⁷ An analysis of this sort for 19th century Penang appears in Yeetuan Wong, “The Big Five Hokkien Families in Penang, 1830s-1890s”, *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, Vol 1 (2007): 106-15. On-line at: http://csds.anu.edu.au/volume_1_2007/wong.pdf, consulted July 2009.

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