NOTES

Notes to Introduction

1 Bhaswati Bhattacharya, ‘History is placing a Man in the Context of his Times: An Interview with the Late Ashin Das Gupta (1932–1998)’, Itinerario, 24/1 (2000), 13-20, at 15-6.

2 The Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or the United East India Company, popularly known by its Dutch acronym VOC, was established on 30 March 1602. In the Netherlands, it functioned as a conglomerate of six chambers, namely Amsterdam, Zeeland, Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn, and Enkhuizen. These chambers had their own establishments in the respective cities from where they functioned. Thus, in the Netherlands, the Company was decentralised. The Gentlemen XVII (also called directors) were the representatives of the various chambers. They co-ordinated the workings of the chambers and supervised and sent instructions to Asia. In Asia, the so-called High Government in Batavia was the central organising and administrative authority. It comprised of the Governor-General who was helped, as well as checked by the Councillors of the Indies. So, in Asia, the Company was centralised. Governors, directors, commanders or chiefs were the men on the spot throughout the Dutch overseas empire in Asia and Africa. In total, the VOC had about 300 establishments. These ranged from wooden lodges manned by a few servants to huge forts, or even a town with civil and military servants numbering in thousands, and institutions as varied as inns, gambling and drinking taverns, orphanage, legal court, prisons etc. Femke S. Gaastra, The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003), passim.

3 Between 1602 and 1795, about 973,000 persons left Europe, of which only 322,500 returned. In the second half of the eighteenth century the numbers returning were the lowest. Between 1740 and 1795, 399,700 persons began their Asia-ward voyage and only 112,800 returned, that is, only 27.3 per cent. Dutch–Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries, 3 vols., ed. J. R. Bruijn, F. S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979–1989), I, 170.

4 Situated at 9.58 degrees North and 76.20 degrees East, Cochin is a port town on the Malabar Coast of India. It is one of the main towns in the State of Kerala. The current official name of Cochin is Kochi. Here Cochin has been used, both for historical reasons and for the sake of convenience. Fort Cochin is a small part of Cochin.

5 Mattancheri is also spelled as Mattancherry, which is its modern name. Mattancheri is used because it is a correct transliteration from Malayalam into English.


7 Zheng He, the famous fourteenth-century Chinese explorer, is said to have introduced Chinese style fishing nets to the coast which have now become a popular tourist attraction. A triangular piece of net approximately six meters in length is tied to bamboos and lowered into the sea, during from a wooden pier. Through a combination of weights and balances, six to seven men work the net in lowering it into the water and raising it. The catch is rather small, depending on tide and season, but as the fishing is done on the coast itself, fresh catch gets sold immediately which makes it very popular. Traditionally, the region’s main exports have been pepper, coconut, coir, and coir products. In the twentieth century, the rank of Cochin, as a major port town in India, increased considerably from ninth in 1920 to fourth in 1950. Today, she is ranked next to Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras), and Vishakhapatnam in terms of shipping, tonnage, harbour facilities etc. Atiya Habeeb Kidwai, ‘Concepts and Methodological Issues: Ports, Port Cities and Port-Hinterland’, in Indu Banga (ed.), Ports and their Hinterlands in India, 1700–1970 (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992), 7-43.
8 A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History* (Kottayam: Sahitya Pravarthaka Cooperative Society Ltd., 1967), 209-13. In 1527, the town of Santa Cruz of Cochin, as it was known then, was raised to the juridical status of a city. Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India, 1500–1663* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 77.

9 The Portuguese referred to Mattancheri and adjoining areas as *Cochim de Cima*, meaning higher Cochin. This was the ‘native’ Cochin. The fortified area was referred to as *Cochim de Baixo* literally means lower Cochin. Hugo K. s’Jacob, *The Rajas of Cochin, 1663–1720: Kings, Chiefs and the Dutch East India Company* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2000), 13 and Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin*, 74.

10 The earliest Dutch contact with Malabar is dated as 1603 in Calicut, when Steven van der Hagen visited the coast on an official VOC assignment. In 1604, he signed a treaty with the Zamorin of Cochin for mutual co-operation and trade. The Zamorin was an enemy of the Portuguese. After firmly establishing themselves in the worlds foremost spice centre, Maluku (Ambon 1605, Ternate 1607, and Bandu 1622), and in Batavia (1619), the VOC captured the Portuguese bases of Galle (1640), Malacca (1641), Colombo (1656), and Jaffna (1658). After Ceylon, efforts were focused on coastal South India. Nagappattinam was established in 1660. NA The Hague, HRB 732, Secret memorandum about the Malabar trade by Commander Casparus de Jong, Governor-General J. Mossel, and Councillor L. Hooreman, 1577–1579, fo. 13. Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum: *Versameling van politieke contracten en verdere verdragen door de Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van privilegebrieven aan hen verleend, enz.*, 6 vols., 1-3, ed. J. E. Heeres; vols. 4-6, ed. F. W. Stapel (s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1907–1955), II, 231-2. M. Antoinette P. Roelofsz, *De vesting der Nederlanders ter kuste Malabar* (s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1943), 336-8.


12 With the commemoration in 2002 of the 400th year since the establishment of the VOC in the Netherlands, numerous books were published on the general history of the Dutch company. Some of these are Leo Akveld and Els M. Jacobs (eds.), *De kleurrijke wereld van de VOC: Nationaal jubileumboek VOC 1602/2002* (Bussum: Uitgeverij Thoth, 2002); Leonard Blussé and Ilonka Ooms (eds.), *Kennis en Compagnie: De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de moderne wetenschap* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2002). The most recent and comprehensive work on the VOC is Gaastra, *The Dutch East India Company*. The Ph. D. study of Chris Nierstrasz, ‘In the Shadow of the Company: The VOC (Dutch East India Company) and its Servants in the Period of its Decline (1740–1796)’, (Diss., Leiden University, 2008) gives new insights on relation between the Company and its servants.

