CHAPTER VII

The end of the beginning
The last months of the Franco-Dutch government and the British rape of Yogyakarta, 1811-1812

Introduction

In the eighteen months which elapsed between Radèn Rongga’s death on 17 December 1810 and the fall of the Yogya kraton to British-Indian troops on 20 June 1812 ‘the beginning of the ruin of the Land of Java’ prophesied to Dipanagara at Parangkusuma in circa 1805 would reach its fruition. This would see the effective evisceration of the military and political power of the south-central Javanese courts through the imposition of a series of treaties and land annexations which would make it impossible for the rulers ever again to challenge the power of the European government. Although they retained some residual capacity to mount resistance through their patron-client networks, which were part of the traditional Javanese apanage system, by the time of the Java War (1825-1830) the limits of these kraton-based power arrangements would be all too evident. Dipanagara’s struggle would thus have to draw on a much broader social and political base and would use the mobilising force of Javanese-Islam and Javanese national identity in ways unimaginable to his royal-born and noble predecessors, men such as Sultan Mangkubumi, Radèn Mas Said (Mangkunagara I) and Radèn Rongga. This process of evisceration will be the subject of this chapter. It would complete the Parangkusuma prophecy and would bring to Java’s shores a new and far better resourced enemy than the threadbare Franco-Dutch administration of Marshal Daendels and his luckless successor, Lieutenant-General Jan Willem Janssens. The Javanese elite would now experience the full force of Britain at its imperial zenith, what historian C.A. Bayly has termed the island nation’s ‘imperial meridian’ (1780-1830; Bayly 1989). They would also find that they had exchanged one form of colonial tyranny for another, no longer a Napoleonic Marshal this time but a ‘virtual Napoleonic philosopher’ and instinctive authoritarian, Thomas Stamford Raffles, a man ‘who had a strong distrust of the [native] chiefs and a desire to rule autocratically’ (Bastin 1957:xx, quoting C.Th. Elout).
The reckoning

Even before Rongga’s death, Daendels had decided on a radical alteration to Yogya’s governance. Following his arrival in Semarang on 10 December, he had summoned Pieter Engelhard and Willem Nicolaas Servatius, acting Resident of Surakarta, to a meeting to hear what he had in mind. The *patih* of both courts were also bidden to Semarang. In Danureja II’s case, he was specifically informed that he should not come as a representative of the sultan but rather in his capacity as an appointee of the European government. He was also ordered to send his large ceremonial retinue back from Ungaran and proceed on to Semarang with only the smallest personal escort.1 When the conference eventually took place,2 the two chief ministers were informed that the marshal had resolved to force the sultan to resign his throne in favour of the Crown Prince who would henceforth rule as Prince Regent.3 On 26 December, Daendels marched on Yogya with a force of 3,200 men. He had already travelled as far as the old Mataram tollgate at Kemlaka between Tempèl and Pisangan on the main Yogya-Magelang highway4 when news reached him of Rongga’s death. Although there was now no necessity to continue on with such a large military force to Yogya, especially given the sultan’s cooperation in the period leading up to the killing of the rebellious *bupati wedana*, the marshal persisted in order to provide substantial prize money for his officers and men from the sultan’s treasury at a time when his army was haemorrhaging at the rate of 70 desertions a day because of lack of pay.5 Some of the prize hand-outs were substantial: Daendels’ deputy, Van Braam, for example, received 10,000 Spanish dollars ‘to indemnify him for the third visit he had made at his own expense to Yogya’,6 while Pieter Engelhard and the former Resident, Inspector-General of Forests Gustaf Wilhelm Wiese, both of whom were tasked along with Van Braam with drawing up the new boundary demarcation between the *pasisir* and the Principalities, were allocated some 5,000 Spanish dollars each. The

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1 Dj.Br. 39, H.W. Gezelschap (Yogyakarta) to Kyai Tumenggung Sindunagara (Yogyakarta), 22 Dulkangidah AJ 1737 (AD 20-12-1810).
2 No specific date is available, but the conference appears to have taken place around 22-23 December 1810.
3 Daendels 1814: Bijlage 2, additionele stukken 18-19; Dj.Br. 46, H.W. Daendels (Kemlaka) to Hamengkubuwana II (Yogyakarta), 27-12-1810, Hamengkubuwana II (Yogyakarta) to H.W. Daendels (Yogyakarta), 1 Besar AJ 1737 (AD 28-12-1810).
4 Daendels 1814: Bijlage 2, additionele stukken 17. On the location of Kemlaka, see S.Br. 170, map of old Mataram tollgates; Carey 1984:44; Map 1; and Map 1 in this volume.
5 Bataviasche Koloniale Courant 6, 8-2-1811; Daendels 1814: Bijlage 2, additionele stukken 24, gives the breakdown of the distribution of the 196,320 Spanish dollars; Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909, I:33, reference to desertions amongst Indonesian – especially Javanese – troops on Daendels’ Yogya expedition. See also Chapter VI.
6 Bataviasche Koloniale Courant 6, 8-2-1811. Van Braam had come to Yogya twice on commission in circa July 1810 (Chapter VI note 87) and 10-13 November 1810 (pp. 236-9), so this late December visit with Daendels was his third in under six months.