CHAPTER XI

The last stand of the old order
Reflections on the Java War, 1825-1830

Introduction

The past ten chapters have described the history of south-central Java from Dipanagara's birth in 1785 through his upbringing at Tegalreja to the outbreak of the Java War. They have drawn on the detailed official testimony of the Residency archives as well as the rich and often idiosyncratic Javanese babad, in particular Dipanagara's own autobiography. With the outbreak of the Java War, however, we enter new territory. Instead of the daily reports of Dutch Residents and their staff on the economic and political developments in south-central Java, the post-July 1825 record is dominated by the military dispatches between the Netherlands Indies army commander, Hendrik Merkus de Kock, and his senior officers in the field. These military archives, in particular the records of the Dutch East Indies general staff, have been the subject of much detailed study by Dutch historians. P.J.F. Louw and E.S. de Klerck, both serving officers of the Nederlands Oost-Indisch Leger (Netherlands East Indies Army), are the undisputed authorities here. Their magisterial six-volume history of the Java War (Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909) covers the conflict from the Dutch and the Javanese side, drawing extensively on Dipanagara's babad in Dutch and Malay translation.1 In addition, there are a number of works which deal with aspects of the war by other former members of the Dutch colonial army (De Stuers 1833; Weitzel 1852-53; Lagordt Dillié 1863; Kielstra 1885, 1896a, 1896b; Schoemaker 1893; Hooyer 1895-97; Booms 1902, 1911; Aukes 1935), as well as amateur historians and littérature (Hageman 1856; Van der Kemp 1896a, 1896b; Somer 1938; Van Praag 1947), former Indies officials (Nahuys van Burgst 1835-36, 1852, 1858; Van Nes 1844), not to speak of

1 Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909, II:345 note 1; Carey 1981a:xxv-xxvi, lxi note 85. For a good description of the rather chaotic and much delayed process of preparing the Dutch and Malay translations of the BD (Manado) in the 1864-1874 decade under the aegis of the Batavian Society (Bataviasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen), see Van Praag 1947:20-3. Of the two authors, Louw (1856-1924) was much more sympathetic to Dipanagara and his babad than his younger colleague De Klerck (1869-?), who wrote the last three volumes covering the period 1828-1830.
The power of prophecy

more recent Indonesian studies (Yamin 1950; Sagimun 1965; Iskandar 1970; Djamhari 2003). So it would serve no purpose to go over the same ground here. Instead this chapter will adopt a thematic approach looking in turn at aspects of Dipanagara’s war effort. The first section will consider Dipanagara’s methods of mobilization, armaments and taxation. The second and third will deal with the role of women in the conflict, and Javanese cultural and linguistic issues as seen both in the prince’s treatment of Dutch prisoners and in his attitudes towards the Chinese. Two further sections will consider leadership and regional loyalties, and the support received by Dipanagara from the santri communities. The core of the chapter focuses on the breakdown in the prince’s relationship with two of his key supporters, namely Kyai Maja and Senthot, both of whom decided to make their own peace with the Dutch in November 1828 and October 1829 respectively. It will seek to probe the origins of the conflict between Dipanagara’s kraton and santri followers and assess the impact of the prince’s disastrous concession to Senthot over tax revenues. This, it will be argued, allowed Senthot’s commanders to exercise a form of wartime ‘dual function’ as a military and civilian administrative force leading to the alienation of the local population from the prince’s cause. Dipanagara’s own decision to enter into negotiations with the Dutch four months after Senthot’s defection in October 1829 must be looked at in the context of this loss of popular support. Given that there are no readily accessible accounts in English of the Java War, a brief synopsis of the main events will be included in the penultimate section dealing with Dutch military and political tactics.

The next chapter (XII) will consider the prince’s decision to meet with the Dutch army commander, De Kock, and gives a description of his capture at Magelang on 28 March 1830, his subsequent journey into exile (28 March-12 June 1830) and his period of incarceration first in Manado (13 June 1830-20 June 1833) and then in Makassar (11 July 1833-8 January 1855), ending with his death. Much of the material used here has previously appeared in print in the present author’s journal articles and his edition of the Surakarta version of the Babad Dipanagara (Carey 1981a).

Mobilization for war: finance, peasant manpower and armaments

By the time Dipanagara and Mangkubumi set up the standard of revolt at Selarong on 21 July 1825, a number of preparations had already been made to mobilize the prince’s peasantry and retainers for war. We have seen in the previous chapter how a good three months before the Dutch attack on Tegalreja, the prince had begun to remit the Puwasa taxes on his estates and to gather

---

2 Dipanagara’s personal standard is described in Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909, I:208. See also plate 65.