THE FIRST SIAMESE EMBASSY
TO HOLLAND

BY

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The interesting opuscule published by Professor Pelliot elsewhere ¹)
in this number of the *T’oung Pao* throws some fresh light on an
embassy which, considering its very early date, certainly deserves
to be better known. Little has been written on it. The account in
Matelief’s *Journal*, quoted by Pelliot, has been summarised by
Valentyn ²), and a brief mention of it occurs in modern discussions of
the relations of Holland and Siam ³). No new material was added and
some errors slipped in: de Jonge, *op. cit.* erroneously says that the
ambassadors arrived at Bantam on the ship *Erasmus*, instead of
on the *Mauritius* and Muller *op. cit.* asserts that the embassy
“arrived back in Siam in 1609”, which statement ⁴) I shall prove
to be false.

New material was made available by the publication of *Pieter
den Dam, Beschrijvingen van de Oostindische Compagnie* ⁵). Twice he
mentions the Embassy; once in connection with the presents with
which the ambassadors are sent back in 1609 and once in his
regular account of the relations of Holland and Siam ⁶). He sum-
marises the official resolutions with regard to them and gives the

2) *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 1726 III (2nd part), *Beschrijving van Siam*, p. 72.
3) Cf.: *Voorzicht der betrekkingen van de Nederl. O. I. Comp. met Siam* (anony-
mously by J. A. van der Chys) in *Tijdschr. Indische taal- land- en volkenkunde X 1 11*
(1864) pp. 417—416; J. K. J. de Jonge: *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in
*Corpus Diplomaticum* I pp. 284—285 makes no mention of this embassy.
4) No doubt this is a rash conclusion from the note in *Pieter van Dam (see infra)*
which Muller has consulted in *Ms.*
5) *Publ. by Dr. F. W. Stapel* (1927—1932). I may recall that Pieter van Dam (1621—
1707), since 1652 lawyer of the East-India Company, wrote his *History of the East-
India Company* (down to 1700) from 1693—1701. The *Ms.* has been frequently drawn
upon before its publication in recent years.
dates). Since these resolutions are preserved at the Rijksarchief in the Hague I have taken the trouble to look them up and copy them here.

That of the Chamber of Amsterdam (June 4th 1609) reads as follows: “Is geresolveert, dat de Ambassadeurs van Siam zullen mogen gaan na Hoorn en Enckhuyzen om de steden te besien ende dat men d’selve tot reysgelt ende teerkosten zal verstrekken 100 gulden daeroff Evert Dircksz. sal rekening doen” (“Be it resolved that the ambassadors from Siam shall be permitted to go to Hoorn and Enckhuyzen in order to view these cities and that 100 guilders shall be provided for their travelling expenses of which amount Evert Dircksz. shall render an account”). So the cloud of the accusation of theft, under which they had arrived in Holland ten months earlier) seems to have lifted and they were allowed to visit these two small cities on the Zuyderzee which were then important centres for the East-Indian trade, so that they could convince themselves that the Dutch, in spite of the malicious rumours spread by the Portuguese, really had “des villes & habitations en terre ferme”), Whether Evert Dircksz. who evidently is acting as their guide, is by any chance the same as the young interpreter, mentioned in the French account published by Pelliot (4), I have not been able to discover, nor whether he is the “capable employé”, mentioned below, who was to accompany them back to Siam.

The Resolution of the governing Committee of the East-India Company (the Committee of XVII) dated September 5th 1609) reads as follows:

“Is geresolveert dat met deze vloete den Ambassade van de coninck van Siam ende de dry Jongers van Amboynen sal worden

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1) van Dam (II, 1, p. 342) quotes the following resolutions: States-General, March 1st 1609, Committee of XVII, September 5th 1609 and Chamber of Amsterdam, June 4th 1609. There must be an error in the date given for the Resolution of the States-General, for it is not there, and a diligent search has failed to discover it elsewhere.
2) Cf. Pelliot, supra p. 228.
4) Ibid. The interpreter may have been one of Speck’s men; see infra.
5) No. 35 of the resolutions under that date, fol. 68—69.