



Restoration in Java 1815-1830

A Review

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This essay reviews the historiographical trends and voids in William I's restoration on Java. William I's policy for Java was changeable and swung between liberal and conservative within fifteen years. It is argued that William I's changeable policy can best be understood through the enlightened rhetoric of progress that was *en vogue* among all colonial ideologues at the time, rather than through the more traditional dichotomy of liberalism and conservatism. However, when one wants to understand to what extent restoration implied change in colonial experience historians will have to dig deeper. Ultimately though, the essay argues that it is regrettable that the literature on this crucial period of colonial rule in Java is still fragmented and is often written in isolation from debates on restoration in the Netherlands or colonial experiences elsewhere, and vice versa.

Restauratie op Java 1815-1830. Een overzicht

Dit essay neemt de recente historiografie over de restauratie van de Nederlandse macht op Java onder Willem I in de periode 1815-1830 onder de loep. Historici hebben er moeite mee om het ogenschijnlijk grillige beleid, dat zich in deze jaren bewoog tussen liberale en conservatieve uitersten, te interpreteren. Ze laten zich nog te vaak verleiden tot een reproductie van de liberale en conservatieve tegenstellingen uit de tijd zelf. Dit essay beschouwt zowel de politiek-intellectuele bronnen van dit beleid, als de meer praktische kant van staatsvorming in deze periode. Het betoogt dat Willem I's wisselvallige beleid eigenlijk het best begrepen kan worden vanuit de verlichte vooruitgangsidealen die voor koloniale ideologen binnen en buiten Nederland in de periode gemeengoed waren. Om de impact en dagelijkse praktijk van deze periode van restauratie werkelijk te begrijpen zullen historici echter dieper moeten graven. Dit essay biedt een aantal handreikingen in die richting, geïnspireerd op Brits-Indiase koloniale historiografie en ontwikkelingen in de historiografie over Nederland in deze periode.

In 1819 the state portrait of William I, painted by Joseph Paelinck, was shipped to Batavia. It was a gift from the king to the recently appointed Governor General Baron Godert van der Capellen. This well-known picture is painted in regal style and echoes contemporary imperial portraits. It shows William I in royal attire, with his regalia placed on a side table next to him. With his right hand he points at the map of Java that is draped over this table, indicating the central importance of Java to his empire and his control over the region.¹ In his monumental biography of William I Jeroen Koch treats us to a poem written by the patriotic Hendrik Tollens to celebrate the shipment of the portrait:

Javanese people! Take this image and impress it on your senses.
Accept it! It is a gift of the Father for his children.
Learn to admire your beloved King through his picture:
The love of his heart is imprinted in his eyes.²

The poem now appears rather absurd, when one realises that the situation turned out quite differently in the following decade. After all, between 1825 and 1830, William I found himself engaged in a protracted intensive and destructive war against the Javanese who rejected his sovereignty. Tollens obviously had no real interest in, or knowledge or experience of Java and the poem represents nothing but a patriotic, imperial fantasy.³ When one reads Koch's voluminous biography of William I, one gets the impression that William was not much concerned with Java either. The costly Java War is mentioned only *en passant*, and in general, apart from the episode with the portrait discussed above, Java is rarely mentioned in this otherwise very detailed book.

In contrast, historians of Java generally place great emphasis on the impact of William I's reign on the island because of the Java War and the subsequent establishment of the infamous cultivation system (*Cultuurstelsel*, a policy of agricultural exploitation based on forced labour). In the colonial historiography William I is usually heralded as founder of the modern colonial state because under his authority the Indies governmental institutions and bureaucracy were set on a modern footing after the chaotic

1 For a discussion of the style and symbolism of this portrait, see Susan Legêne, *De bagage van Blomhoff en Van Breugel. Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse cultuur van het imperialisme* (Amsterdam 1998) 134-135.

2 Jeroen Koch, *Koning Willem I, 1772-1843* (Amsterdam 2013) 399-400.

Javanen! Neemt dit beeld en drukt u 't in de zinnen;
Neemt! 't Is des Vaders gift, die hij de kindren
zendt. O Leert den dierbren Vorst reeds in zijn
beeld beminnen: De liefde van zijn hart is in zijn oog
geprent.

3 For a complete version of the poem, see also Legêne, *De bagage van Blomhoff*, 134-135.

period of the Napoleonic wars and the British Interregnum.⁴ Furthermore William I personally initiated the establishment of the *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (NHM), which was to dominate trade and shipping from the Indies in the nineteenth century. It is for his active role in the foundation of the NHM and the cultivation system that Leonard Blussé recently dubbed William I a ‘colonial king’.⁵ It is significant that William I had direct authority over the colonies and ruled over Java and the other colonies without parliamentary interference.⁶

This essay seeks to review the historiography of this period of restoration on Java and aims at identifying questions for further research. After a brief introduction to the revolutionary period in Java it discusses the Java War and highlights the conservative mentality that inspired both the Javanese and the Dutch in their battle. It will then jump back in time and examine some contributions to the ongoing polemic on the nature of colonial relations that emerged in the late VOC period. It will show that the influential enlightenment rhetoric of progress resulted in an orientalist blueprint regarding Java that was embraced by liberals and conservatives alike. This is a crucial insight necessary to understand the changeable policies of our ‘colonial king’ for Java. The last part returns to the bureaucratic reorganisation under William I that started in 1815 and highlights the importance of the personal factor and patronage networks in colonial politics in Java.

Revolution and the British interregnum

The revolutionary period and the bankruptcy of the VOC had left their traces in Java. After 1799, Java and other possessions in the Indies were placed under the control of a state committee in the Netherlands. From the perspective of the former Company officials who still resided on Java, it was a miserable period in which contact with the Netherlands was irregular and directions of trade unclear. Tensions had developed among the higher echelons of

4 Leonard Blussé, ‘Koning Willem I en de schepping van de koloniale staat’, in: Ido de Haan, Paul den Hoed and Henk te Velde (eds.), *Een nieuwe staat. Het begin van het koninkrijk der Nederlanden* (Amsterdam 2013) 145-173; Wim van den Doel, *Zo ver de wereld strekt. De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee vanaf 1800* (Amsterdam 2011) 44-58; Jan Luiten van Zanden and Daan Marks, *An Economic History of Indonesia, 1800-2012* (London, New York 2012) 29-46; Charles Jeurgens, ‘Op zoek naar betrouwbare informatie. De commissarissen-

generaal en de stichting van de koloniale staat, 1816-1819’, in: J.T.L. Lindblad and A.F. Schrikker (eds.), *Het verre gezicht, politieke en culturele relaties tussen Nederland en Azië, Afrika en Amerika* (Franeker 2011) 266-285.

5 Blussé, ‘Koning Willem I’, in: De Haan et al. (eds.), *Een nieuwe staat*, 145-173, 148.

6 C. Fasseur, *Kultuurstelsel en koloniale baten. De Nederlandse exploitatie van Java, 1840-1860* (Leiden 1978) 1.

the administration in the late VOC period, which played out in the daily administration and new arrivals from the Netherlands were immersed into the competition among these factions. In 1808 Louis Napoleon sent out Marshall Herman Willem Daendels to Java as Governor General to create order in Java's chaos. As a true Napoleonite, Daendels operated rigorously in the three years that he was to hold this post. His most important accomplishment was the construction of the infamous *Grote Postweg*, a road cut across Java designed to improve overland communication and secure the rapid transport of troops. For the actual construction work, Daendels commanded an unprecedented amount of service labour, fuelling his reputation as merciless autocrat.

In 1811 the British invaded the island, after which the Dutch territories fell under the EIC administration of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles. Inspired by ongoing discussions in Bengal and Madras on effective and just systems of rule, Raffles made it a point of distancing British colonial rule from the way the island had been administered under the VOC. Instead he ruled under a motto of free labour and free entrepreneurship and thus did away with traditions of serfdom and service labour and instead introduced a direct tax on the land, albeit half-heartedly. When Java was restored to the Dutch crown in 1815, the Dutch and Javanese administrators had to come to terms with the legacy of this period of unstable rule and changeable policies. In line with the spirit of the time, William I and his advisors initially set out to create a colonial government on liberal lines. This implied abolition of the monopoly system, and they too followed the liberal adage that fiscal stimuli, rather than force, would enhance labour productivity and that indigenous bureaucrats should be paid directly for their work, rather than being allowed to take a cut from the tax-revenue. Thus, in line with British liberal principles, the idea prevailed that if Java was ruled through a modern set of rules, society would also develop in that direction. However, within fifteen years William I completely changed course and adopted a colonial policy that Jur van Goor labelled as one of 'quasi-mercantilist exploitation'. It was the Java War that triggered, but did not cause, this complete policy reversal.

War in Java and inspiration from the past

In the historiography of Java, the Java War is conceived as the first anti-colonial war that fostered the rise of Indonesian nationalism.⁷ The historian and Javanist Peter Carey has written a voluminous biography of the war's protagonist, Prince Dipanegara. He explains the broad popular support that

7 Merle Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200* (Fourth edition; New York 2008) 142.



The surrender of Diepo Negoro (Diponegara) to
Lieutenant-General Baron De Kock.
Nicolaas Pieneman, ca. 1830-ca. 1835.
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

Dipanegara received for his war against the Dutch by citing a cluster of factors ranging from the global revolutionary spirit, developments in international Islam and consequences of natural disasters. Ultimately though, Carey argues that it was the changing economic (revenue) policies under William I and his predecessors that had impoverished the countryside and generated the rural support for this revolt. In his battle against the Dutch, Dipanegara's ultimate aim was to restore traditional courtly power over Java. He sought inspiration in the glorious Javanese past and saw himself as the *ratu adil*, the just king who would restore a morally superior royal power on the island.⁸

Dipanegara's plans never materialised as by 1830 his troops were crushed and he was tricked into custody. He spent the remainder of his life, until 1855, in exile in Menado and Makassar. It was now time for William I's administration to make a move, as the colony's finances were deeply in the red, as were those in the Netherlands after the simultaneous secession of Belgium. It is a generally accepted view that these financial considerations led William I to install the cultivation system (*cultuurstelsel*) designed by Johannes van den Bosch. While Dipanegara's aim for restoration was of a political-cultural nature, restoration under William I was first and foremost economic in character.

The cultivation system was not something entirely new. It was essentially an elaboration of the successful system of agricultural exploitation based on forced labour and indigenous authority that had developed in the Preanger (highland region to the Southeast of Batavia) under the VOC in the eighteenth century. The installation of the cultivation system was not the only restorative move of William I. In 1824 he had already founded the *Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij*, or NHM, with the aim of restoring the Dutch position in world trade. For Java this meant that the trade in and shipping of the island's commercial crops was once more in the hands of one company, a situation not unlike the one that had prevailed under the VOC.⁹ So, paradoxically, the Javanese pursuit of the restoration of traditional power resulted in a restoration under William I of economic relations between state and society to those that had developed over the eighteenth century under the VOC, which in turn relied in many ways on traditional structures in Javanese society.

How could the colonial government that had set out to liberalise the colonial economy and society and distance itself from the VOC period, change its course so drastically? Some historians have judged this ideological u-turn

8 Peter Carey, *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanegara and the End of an Old Order in Java, 1785-1855* (Leiden 2007) 431-504.

9 Ton de Graaf, *Voor handel en maatschappij. Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij, 1824-1964* (Amsterdam 2012) 37-46.

For an analysis of the continuities between the eighteenth century VOC practice in the Preanger and the nineteenth century cultivation system see: Jan Breman, *Koloniaal profijt van onvrije arbeid. Het Preanger stelsel van gedwongen koffieteel op Java* (Amsterdam 2010).

as an inevitable choice under the circumstances of war and commercial competition with British trading houses.¹⁰ Others have pointed to the robust character of Javanese society, to which William I's government could not but adapt. This argument draws on the ongoing intellectual discussions of the time regarding the character of Javanese society that will be dealt with below.¹¹

In the literature it is sometimes taken for granted that William I had extreme financial ambitions with regard to Java. Economic historians Van Zanden and Marks have pointed out that Java was doing alright until the early 1820s, at least in that it yielded enough income to pay for government expenses. Later in the 1820s the world market for colonial products collapsed, which, along with the costly Java War, had a dire influence on the colony. The global economic recovery went hand in hand with the installation of the cultivation system and this partly explains its immediate success.¹² William I therefore did not simply seek healthy colonial finances but was looking to implement a system whereby the colony would directly contribute to the Dutch treasury. This is a completely different 'business model' from those that emerged in comparable British agricultural colonies in the region such as Sri Lanka. The source for William I's extreme ambitions lay in the orientalist writings on Java that were published starting in the late eighteenth century.

Continuing repertoires of dilemmas and solutions

A story that runs crisscross through this history of revolution, regime change and restoration, is that of the influence of liberalism and enlightenment on colonial policy and planning. This is a history that is difficult to disentangle from the state-formation process itself, although historians Jean Kommers and Jur van Goor have both dealt insightfully with this topic. Jur van Goor has stressed that the period 1780-1830 should be understood as one of continuity rather than change. The continuity was found in terms of both the dilemmas that colonial administrators faced in this period and the solutions they formulated. Even before the colonial state was formally founded, the *voc* had started operating as a state in certain regions in Java, the Moluccas and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The colonial transition took place unequally in different areas and through different measures, but on Java a continuous encroachment into the interior took place certainly from the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Colonial statecraft was a different game from the trade, war and diplomacy in which the *voc* had excelled in the seventeenth century. The nature of colonial governance was heavily debated from the mid-eighteenth

10 Van den Doel, *Zo ver de wereld strekt*, 44-58.

11 *Ibid.* See also: Blussé, 'Koning Willem I', in: De Haan et al. (eds.), *Een nieuwe staat*, 145-173.

12 Van Zanden and Marks, *An Economic History of Indonesia*, 29-46.

century and these discussions form the key to understanding the worldview of the early nineteenth-century colonial policymakers and administrators.¹³ The cause for their concern was that many of the Dutch posts in the Indian Ocean were not profitable enough, while at the same time, in regions where Dutch territorial power became more direct, competition with indigenous power-holders over resources grew. One could say that over the course of the eighteenth century the VOC had come to operate more and more as a colonial state in areas on Java and elsewhere and that it had to come to terms with this new position – and this in a period when ideas and ideals about statecraft in Europe were changing.¹⁴ This predicament was not exclusive to the world of the VOC; the British for example, faced comparable issues. The debates among the Dutchmen were actually fed by British experiences in India, where land-revenue provided an important financial basis for the EIC. By the 1780s India policy became part of a public debate in London and stimulated political intellectual discussions about what the nature of government should be in these colonies.¹⁵ French philosophers such as l'Abbé Raynal had also written about the Indies and had criticised its mode of government, both morally and financially, and to be sure the words of such critics were read by the VOC officials.¹⁶

These debates that were thrashed out among high-level officials, combined with the ongoing pressure of decline of the VOC, resulted in a polemic among a number of VOC and early colonial officials that lasted well into the nineteenth century.¹⁷ The major protagonists in this debate were

- 13 Robert van Niel, *Java's Northeast Coast 1740-1840: A Study in Colonial Encroachment and Dominance* (Leiden 2005); Alicia Schrikker, *Dutch and British Colonial Intervention in Sri Lanka 1780-1815: Expansion and Reform* (Leiden 2007) 78-112; Jos Gommans and Piet Emmer, *Rijk aan de rand van de wereld. De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee, 1600-1800* (Amsterdam 2012).
- 14 Gommans and Emmer, *Rijk aan de rand van de wereld*, 281-332.
- 15 Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge 1994). On the influence of discussions on Bengal on Dirk van Hogendorp see: Robert van Niel, 'Dutch Views and Uses of British Policy in India around 1800', in: Peter Marshall and Robert van Niel (eds.), *India and Indonesia during the Ancient Regime* (Leiden 1989) 17-33.
- 16 Schrikker, *Dutch and British Colonial Intervention in Sri Lanka*. For a recent analysis of visions of colonialism of Raynal and other Enlightenment philosophers, see: Johnathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton 2010) 413-633; and on Dutch colonialism in Asia 535-558.
- 17 See for example: Sebastiaan Cornelis Nederburgh, *Verhandeling over de vragen: of, en in hoe verre, het nuttig en noodzakelijk zijn zoude, de Oost Indische bezittingen van dezeren staat, ofte sommigen derzelve, te brengen op den voet der West Indische volkplantingen, [...]* (S.l. 1802); Dirk van Hogendorp, *Uitlegging en ontwikkeling van het stelsel van D. van Hogendorp benevens een schets of de hoofdtrekken van een ontwerp voor het toekomstig bestuur over de Bataafsche bezittingen in Oost-Indiën en den handel op dezelve [...]* (Delft 1799).

Sebastiaan Cornelis Nederburgh, Dirk van Hogendorp, Herman Willem Daendels, Nicolaus Engelhard and Johannes van den Bosch. Each of them published lengthy arguments about the best forms of government, in which they did not hesitate to discredit directly the work of their political opponents. So, when in 1815 Java was reaffirmed under the Dutch crown, William I could draw on a spectrum of views of what the relationship between the Netherlands and Java should be, what Java could produce and how it should be ruled.

These texts all carry developmental visions of Javanese society, but some are of a more liberal and universalist character, while others are conservative and take Java's uniqueness as a starting point. The texts are powerful in their appeal, and for the twenty-first century reader many of the typical problems in the sphere of development economics are presented here. They contain moral and political components that have appealed to colonial historians, but it is precisely the moral character of the texts that prevented these historians from observing them with the distance they deserve. Jean Kommers noticed this phenomenon in 1979, when critically analysing the knowledge and arguments on the basis of which Johannes van den Bosch designed his plea for the cultivation system. This knowledge, he warns his readers, should not be mistaken for ethnography, as it was highly political and manipulative.¹⁸ More recently, Jur van Goor rightfully labelled the publications of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century authors as typical orientalist constructions of Java, in contrast with the more empathic and what might be called 'spontaneous' seventeenth century publications on the region.¹⁹

The pioneering work of Kommers and Van Goor allows us to place these texts in a broader context of orientalist knowledge production that is well described for the British Empire in this period. What characterises all these texts is that they were written with an intention of achieving change, or progress in contemporary terms, in Javanese society. Van Goor used these texts to make the point that it was not only specific events such as the Napoleonic wars or the British interregnum that characterised colonial policies of the period. He describes the period as a continuous search from the 1780s onwards for the kind of society Java was and what it could be and, crucially, what it could yield for the Dutch. It was a shift in thinking about colonial statecraft that found its roots in both the Enlightenment and the practical problems in VOC times.²⁰ Despite the explorative work of Van Goor

18 J.H.M. Kommers, *Besturen in een onbekende wereld. Het Europese binnenlands bestuur in Nederlands-Indië: 1800-1830. Een antropologische studie* (Meppel 1979).

19 Jur van Goor, 'Imperialism and Orientalism', in: Jur van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism, the Dutch in Asia*

(Hilversum 2004) 99-114. For a broader analysis of the emergence of an imperialist, orientalist culture in the Netherlands see Legêne, *De bagage van Blomhoff*.

20 Jur van Goor, 'From Company to State', in: Van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism*, 83-98.

and Kammers, this crucial body of texts from the period c. 1780 to 1830 awaits proper analysis to see exactly what registers of knowledge they relate to and to what extent they reinforced ossified narratives about Java and the archipelago.

In 1815 William I and his advisors in the Netherlands could fall back on a repertoire of knowledge of what Java was and could be. The moral debate on the need for liberal or conservative colonial governance in Java has distracted historians from the fact that all publications on Java in the period shared an absolute attachment to the enlightenment ideal of progress. Koch emphasises that William I too looked at the world around him in terms of progress and that he used two means to achieve this: progress was to be measured through bureaucracy and problems were to be solved through projects, such as canals and the ten communities, set up for improvement of 'urban paupers'. Johannes van den Bosch had designed the urban pauper project in the 1810s; it was no coincidence that over a decade later William I opted for his design to 'improve' Java. It is in the light of the rhetoric of progress, rather than the dichotomy between liberal and conservative that we might better understand the policy changes in the years 1815-1830.

Bureaucracy, people and public morale

The quest to measure progress resulted in bureaucratic innovations in the Indies, and perhaps this is one of the most important legacies of the early period of restoration. Unlike in VOC times when bureaucracy was in the first place geared to controlling trade, colonial bureaucracy was now designed to control society and in the long run to measure the 'progress of society'. This deviation from VOC bureaucratic practices makes the colonial state appear new, and on paper it indeed represents a break with the past. In that spirit, in 1815 William I appointed the three *commissarissen-generaal* who were to build that new stable and profitable bureaucracy and he kept his advisors at home busy with the stipulation of new regulatory orders for the government institutions in the Indies that were revised four times between 1815 and 1830. The legacy of bureaucratic renewal under William I has persisted in a rich historiography of Indonesian economic history that tends to take 1815 as starting point. Because it could tap statistical information from the relatively uniform bureaucracy, it has, unintentionally perhaps, reinforced the idea that 1815 restoration represents a new order.²¹ When viewed from the Netherlands, the Indies perhaps looked modern and well organised by 1820, but the question is, whether the situation on the ground merits such unambiguously positive

21 For example: Howard Dick et al., *The Emergence of a National Economy, and Economic History of Indonesia* (St. Leonards, Leiden 2002). An

important exception is the socio-demographic work of Peter Boomgaard and the output from the environmental history EDEN Project.

qualifications. Recently, Charles Jeurgens has assessed critically the pursuit of information among the committee members. He discusses the bureaucratic innovations that took place in the general bureau of the governor general and at the residences and has analysed the official travel reports made by the committee members. He points to the limited quality of the information on society that was collected in these early years, something about which the committee members complained even at the time.²²

In the recent historiography on the revolutionary period and restoration in the Netherlands historians have tended to bring to the fore the personal factor in politics and have analysed how certain persons and families survived the sequence of regime change and continued to influence politics.²³ Both Kommers and Blussé have pointed out the importance of this personal factor in understanding colonial policies and practice in the period 1780-1830. Leonard Blussé has narrated how men like Daendels, Van Hogendorp and Van den Bosch courted William I for positions in the colonies. It is no coincidence that these were also the men involved in the polemic described above. Blussé sees the political writings of Van den Bosch and others not simply as ideological elaborations on colonialism, but convincingly connects them to the careers and attempts at career-making of the authors. Blussé ingeniously suggests that we can understand the publications as résumés and indirect letters of application as they formed a showcase of what the author would have to offer. This digression has laid bare an important void in the colonial historiography of this period and that is the analysis of networks of patronage in office holding. Here too the question of continuity and change is relevant. Officials such as Ch. van Angelbeek and H.J. van de Graaff who were sent by Willem I to Java after 1815 and who are often seen by historians as representative of a new order, were actually scions of old Orangist *voc* families.²⁴

Such research into colonial networks and appointments is important as it guides us away from the contemporary rhetoric and self-fashioning of the colonial policy makers. Despite the matters discussed above, the

22 Jeurgens, 'Op zoek naar betrouwbare informatie', in: Lindblad and Schrikker (eds.), *Het verre gezicht*, 266-285.

23 Matthijs Lok, *Windvanen. Napoleontische bestuurders in de Nederlandse en Franse Restauratie (1813-1820)* (Amsterdam 2009).

24 Blussé, 'Koning Willem I', in: De Haan et al. (eds.), *Een nieuwe staat*, 145-172. Jeurgens, 'Op zoek naar betrouwbare informatie', in: Lindblad and Schrikker (eds.), *Het verre gezicht*, 266-285; M. Bloembergen and M. Eickhoff,

'A Wind of Change on Java's Ruined Temples: Archaeological Activities, Imperial Circuits and Heritage Awareness in Java and the Netherlands (1800-1850)', *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 128:1 (2013) 81-104, DOI: 10.18352/bmgn-lchr.8356. The connections between families rooted in the Indies and the Netherlands and the influence of this Dutch connection have been topic of investigation by historians Remco Raben, Ulbe Bosma and Roger Knight.

historiography is still infused with the idea that the transition from Company to state rule went hand in hand with a change in normative ideas about good government. The recent detailed analysis by Kees Briët of a high-profile local corruption case of the early 1820s is revealing in this respect. The case was brought forward by a Javanese nobleman and revolves around practices of a high official, Rijck van Prehn and his advisor Johannes Wilhelmus Winter, who were accused of taking bribes for appointments from indigenous officials. Such practices of course, did not suit a modern colonial state. Kees Briët carefully shows how the newly installed High Court (*Hooggerichtshof*) of Batavia took up the case seriously and prosecuted both men.²⁵ However, when examined closely, this particular case also revealed that for defining a penalty the High Court relied on legislation from the VOC period and thereby it followed the VOC's normative order.²⁶ Such continuities in institutional practices and normative orders would require further analysis, and comparison of corruption cases in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries could be a fruitful path that can easily be connected to the growing literature on corruption, scandal and public morality in the Netherlands.

Finally, two groups that have been mostly overlooked in the literature are the Javanese and Chinese families who participated in this colonial state-formation process. Through analysis of civil cases and petitions we might get an idea of the institutional engagement of local inhabitants and get a more concrete view of the way that legitimacy of the colonial state was negotiated on the ground. The focus on constitutional, administrative and economic history has created a blind spot among historians, obscuring the fact that there were families of Javanese nobles and Chinese businessmen who had a long history of collaboration with the Dutch that can be traced back far into the eighteenth century. It would be a praiseworthy challenge to write a history of restoration from the viewpoint of these Javanese and Chinese families who were entangled in William I's colonial web. Peter Carey's very detailed study of Dipanegara and the Java war serves as a guide.²⁷

25 Kees Briët, *Het proces van Rijck van Prehn en Johannes Wilhelmus Winter. Een bijzondere zaak voor het Hooggerichtshof van Nederlands-Indië in 1820* (Hilversum 2012).

26 *Ibid.*, 64. For two inspiring examples of research into legal practice as a means to understand colonial relations and morality see Sanne Ravensbergen's PhD project 'Crime and Punishment in the Dutch East Indies 1816-

1918'. And Nadeera Rupesinghe, 'Negotiating Custom: Colonial Lawmaking in the Galle Landraad' (PhD thesis Leiden, to be defended January 2016).

27 Carey, *The Power of Prophecy*. For a nice example see Maarten Manse, 'Shared Authority: Local Cooperation in the Construction of Colonial Governance on Java in the Early 1830s' (MA thesis; Leiden 2014) 47.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to review the historiographical trends and voids regarding William I's restoration on Java. For William I Java represented an imperial fantasy, but his imagination of Java was inspired by orientalist representations of the island by men who had worked on the spot. This essay has argued that it is through an enlightened rhetoric of progress that William I's changing policy can best be understood, rather than through the more traditional dichotomy of liberalism and conservatism. However when one wants to understand to what extent restoration implied change in colonial experience, historians will have to dig deeper. An analysis of scandals over a longer period could help pinpoint a possible shift in public morals over colonial affairs in Java and the Netherlands. A long-term analysis of Dutch and indigenous networks of patronage would provide insight into political continuities and legitimacy. The essay has highlighted but a few of many possible research directions. Ultimately though, it is regrettable that the literature on this formative period of colonial rule in Java is still fragmented and often written in isolation from debates on restoration in the Netherlands or colonial experiences elsewhere, and vice versa.

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