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Amok and Its Punishment in 17th Century Dutch Batavia through the Eyes of Johann Gottfried Dreyer from Gdańsk

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On 16 January 1685, Gottfried Dreyer from Gdańsk (Danzig) arrived in Dutch Batavia, the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereinigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, VOC) and spent the following two and a half years in the service of the Company. He documented that time in a travelogue in which the colonial city is introduced through a description of public executions of native convicts guilty of running amok. The current article, while drawing attention to a hitherto unexplored subject of travels of the seafarers originating from Gdańsk to Dutch Batavia, discusses Gottfried Dreyer's perception of amok and public executions in the colonial city. The analysis of the text will allow to examine the author's views on criminal and legitimate violence, attitude towards the colonial authorities and the native inhabitants of Java. Dreyer's recount of the executions, giving a rare insight into details of the morbid performances, is also a valuable source from the perspective of the history of Java under the East India Company's rule. While the system of punishment in Batavia has been examined mainly regarding the VOC employees,¹ executions

¹ Pamela McVay, "I am the Devil's Own": Crime, Class, and Identity in the Seventeenth Century Dutch East Indies, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Illinois (1995). The Batavian legal system is discussed by Robert Cribb "Legal pluralism and Criminal Law in the Dutch Colonial Order," *Indonesia* 9 (October 2010): 47–66. For the organisation of the judicial system in Batavia see: Hendrik E. Niemeijer, "The Central Administration of the VOC Government and the Local Institutions of Batavia (1619–1811) – an Introduction" in *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC)*

of native inhabitants of Java, on the other hand, have been given relatively little consideration.²

There are two versions of Dreyer's travelogue written seven years apart, in 1699 and in 1706. The texts are largely overlapping, the 1706 manuscript, however, is extended, partly rearranged, and illustrated. The unsigned 1699 manuscript belongs to the collection of the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk.³ The discussed text, written in Gdańsk in 1706, is in the collection of the University Library in Genoa since at least 1858 (fig. 1).⁴ It consists of 306 pages, measuring 245 × 190 mm. The text is written in black ink in German in practiced *Kurrentschrift*, except for foreign words and names of people and places written in Latin lettering. There are references in the margins and twenty six plates with figures drawn in pen by Gottfried Dreyer.⁵ The manuscript is bound in leather covers decorated with coats of arms embossed in gold: flowery turnip with three stems surmounted by a helmet and crest (fig. 2).

and the Local Institutions in Batavia (Jakarta), eds. Luisa Balk, Frans van Dijk, Diederick Kortland (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 61–69.

² The introduction of impalement, a traditional Javanese form of execution, as a form of punishment for the native inhabitants of the island is mentioned by Frederick de Haan, who also comments on the lack of understanding of the colonial penal process by the indigenous people, Frederick De Haan, *Oud Batavia Gedenkboek uitgegeven door het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen naar aanleiding van het driehonderdjarig bestaan der stad in 1919* (Batavia: G. Kolff, 1919), 291–292. Muhammad Asyraf in his thesis on violent executions in Batavia in the years 1729–1739 refers to executions of indigenous slaves, the group most at risk of capital punishment, and underscores the link between severity of punishment and social status. He also suggests that the Javanese would rarely see the exemplary displayed bodies of their executed compatriots due to spatial segregation in Batavia, p. 75, Muhammad Asyraf, *A Distant Mirror: Violent Public Punishment in the VOC Batavia, 1729–1739*, unpublished MA thesis, Faculty of Humanities Institute for History, University Leiden (2020), 24, 75, <https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2711546/view>, accessed on 20 February 2022.

³ Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung von der Auctore selbst erfahren und gesehen Anno 1684 biß 88*, 1699; Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur. Duiters in dienst van de VOC (1600–1800)* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997), 20, 67, 98, 105, 123, 134, 159, 170, 214, 221, 293, 311, 323. Until now the author of the manuscript was unknown.

⁴ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen nach Ost-Indien Worinnen enthalten die Description des weiterberühmten Castels Batavia Derselben Stadt und Einwohner, dann auch der Eigenschafft und schönen Küste Java Major Wie nicht weniger alles wasz sich bey seiner Zeit daselbst begeben und zugetragen. Alles bisz Authore mit Fleisz aufgeselzet und wie es in der Wahrheit sich verhält, kürztlich entworfen, Geschehen in Dantzig Anno 1706*. I wish to thank prof. dr hab. Marcin Kaleciński for the information about the existence of the manuscript.

⁵ As indicated in the explanatory note on a page preceding the frontispiece: “Godtfr: Dreyher / Inven: & fecit.”



Fig. 1. Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1681 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, frontispiece, phot. Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova



Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1681 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, cover, phot. Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova

The structure of the manuscript is tripartite: it consists of a recount of the outbound journey,⁶ description of Batavia⁷ and account of the return voyage.⁸ While the parts documenting Dreyer's travel are presented in chronological order, the description of Java is divided into thematical sections. These include, besides the below-discussed opening passage on executions, depictions of the Javanese and Chinese in Java, descriptions of Javanese fauna, flora, and the built environment of the city of Batavia. As a soldier, Dreyer was particularly interested in military themes, therefore much attention was given to local conflicts and military exercises. The author was particularly aware of disruptions of social order and included numerous anecdotes which referred mainly to fights, drunken brawls and punishments of disorderly behaviours.

The narrative of the journal is vivid, often embellished with Latin phrases. Like many other authors of travel journals, Dreyer often recalled the authority of more

⁶ *Ibidem*, 1–72.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 72–250.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 250–306.

eminent writers on the subject.⁹ While the analysed passage does not contain references to sources other than the author's own experience, its opening part displays affinities with the description of Java by Wouter Schouten, who visited the island in 1664.¹⁰ Incidents of amok were described by almost all writers on Java.¹¹ It is worth noting, however, that neither the authors mentioned by Dreyer nor Wouter Schouten opened their description of Batavia with a recount of a public execution.

Gottfried Dreyer is the only known Early Modern traveller originating from Gdańsk to write about his journey to Java.¹² It is striking, considering the number of seafarers from the Baltic city who travelled to the East Indies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to the VOC maritime personnel records in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague, as many as 7801 journeys to Batavia were made by men from

⁹ Johann Hugo von Lindschotten, *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huyghen van Linschotten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien, 1579–1592* (Brugghe: Cornelis Claesz. op 't Water, 1596); Edward Lopetz, *Regnum Congo: hoc est, Warhaffte und eigentliche Beschreibung dess Königreichs Congo in Africa und deren angrenzenden Länder* (Franckfort am Mayn: Johan Saur, 1609); Johann von der Behr, *Diarium, oder Tage-Buch, über dasjenige, so sich Zeit einer neun-jährigen Reise zu Wasser und Lande, meistens in Dienst der vereinigten geocroyrten Niederländischen Ost-Indianischen Compagnie, besonders in denselbigen Ländern täglich begeben und zugetragen...* (Jena: Urban Spaltholtz, 1668); Jürgen Andresen, Volquar Iversen, *Orientalische Reise-Beschreibungen* (Schleswig: Johan Holwein, 1669); Albrecht Herport, *Eine kurtze Ost-Indianische Reiß-Beschreibung...* (Bern: Sonneleitner, 1669); Arnold Montanus, *Gedenkwaerdige Gesantschappen der Oost-Indische Maetschappy in't Vereenigde Nederland, aen de Kaisaren van Japan. Getrokken uit de Geschriften en Reiseaenteekeninge der zelve Gesanten* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1669); Johann Jacob Saar, *Ost-Indianische Funfzehen-Jährige Kriegs-Dienste, Und Wahrhafftige Beschreibung, Was sich Zeit solcher funfzehen Jahr, von Anno Christi 1644, biß Anno Christi 1659, zur See, und zu Land... begeben habe, am allermeinsten auff der grossen, und herrlichen, Insul Ceilon* (Nürnberg: Tauber, 1672); Johan Nieuhof, *Gedenkweerdige Brasiliaense Zee- en Lant-Reise und Zee- en Lant-Reize door verscheide Gewesten van Oostindien* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1682); Elias Hesse, *Ost-Indische Reise-Beschreibung Oder Diarium, Was bey der Reise des Churfürstl. Sächs. Raths und Bergk-Commissarii D. Benjamin Olitschens, im Jahr 1680* (Dresden–Leipzig: Günther, 1690).

¹⁰ Wouter Schouten, *Reys-togten naar en door Oost-Indien*, Vol. 1, chapter 15 (3rd edition Amsterdam: Gerrit Tielenburg en Jan 'Tlam, 1740), 151, 152.

¹¹ Donald Lach, Edwin van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Vol. 3: *A Century of Advance*, Book 3: *Southeast Asia* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 1331.

¹² It is notable when compared with the vast body of literature discussing travels to the East Indies written in the Early Modern period by German-speaking authors. In 1932 an edition of several travelogues written by German travellers, 11 of them describing Java, was published by L'Honoré Naber, *Reisebeschreibungen von deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der Niederländischen West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602–1797* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1930–1932), 13 vols.; Heert Terpstra, *Buitenlandse getuigen van onze koloniale geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Van Kampen, 1940); Donald Lach, Edwin van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Vol. 3: *The Printed World*, Book 1: *Trade, Mission, Literature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), chapter VII of this volume is dedicated to German and Danish travel literature, see esp. 525–546; Peter Kirsch, "Deutsche Reiseberichte des 17. Jahrhunderts als Quelle für die niederländische Ostindienfahrt," *Deutsches Schifffahrtsarchiv* 13 (1990): 57–82; Roelof van Gelder, *Naporra's Omweg. Het leven van een VOC-matroos (1731–1793)* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2003).

Gdańsk in that period.¹³ 593 of these records refer to the seventeenth century, including 179 in the 1580s.¹⁴ Some of the men travelled to Batavia more than once. It needs to be noted that the seventeenth-century records are far from complete, and these figures do not paint the full picture.¹⁵

Gottfried Dreyer (Dreier, Drejer, Dieger, Dreher, Dreer) was born in 1662 in Gdańsk, where his family had been recorded since the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁶ He was a son of Hartwich (d. 1683) and his first wife, Barbara Schumacher.¹⁷ Gottfried's uncle, Reinhold Dreyer (d. 1693), was a member of Gdańsk authorities from 1681 as an alderman (1681–1682) and later as a judge (1687).¹⁸ In 1673 Gottfried Dreyer was recorded as a student of the Gdańsk Academic Gymnasium.¹⁹ His profession is unknown, as is the reason for his presence in Cologne in 1683. It was there that Dreyer met two travellers who had returned from the East Indies, and who instilled the spirit of adventure upon him.²⁰ Having decided to set off to the “weit berühmte doch aber fern abgelegene” Batavia’ in May that year,²¹ Dreyer travelled up the Rhine towards Holland. He was enrolled into military service of the VOC by the Head of the Delft Chamber of the VOC and embarked on the VOC-owned ship *Schieland* which left the Dutch shores on 2 August 1684.²² Travelling in the rank of *adelborst*, he was one of 103 soldiers on board.²³ Dreyer

¹³ I wish to thank Dr Lodewijk Petram, Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, for his kind help in obtaining this information. Records on travellers to Batavia are published by the Nationaal Archief in the VOC-opvarenden database: <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00444?activeTab=nt>, accessed on 21 March 2023. Places of origin of sailors on board the ships headed for Asia based on VOC pay ledgers are indicated on maps developed as part of the GLOBALISE project, <https://www.maritimecareers.eu/2018/06/11/where-the-voc-crews-came-from/>, accessed on 21 March 2023.

¹⁴ Compared with 5 records from the 1630s, 24 from the 1640s, 3 from 1660s, 31 from 1670s and 351 from 1690s. There are no records for 1650s, 2 records are not dated.

¹⁵ Tellingly, neither Dreyer's nor any of his 19 Gdańsk compatriots in Batavia who are mentioned in the manuscript feature in these documents.

¹⁶ Dorothea Weichbrodt, *Patrizier, Bürger, Einwohner der Freien und Hansestadt Danzig in Stamm- und Namentafeln vom 14.–18. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 2 (Klausdorf–Schwentine: Danziger Verlagsgesellschaft Paul Rosenberg, 1986), 198.

¹⁷ Whom he married in 1654 in the Calvinist church of SS. Peter and Paul in Gdańsk, *ibidem*, 198.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 198. There is no known link to Johann Benjamin Dreyer, the architect of the Uphagen House (1776).

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 198.

²⁰ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 1.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*, 15.

²³ Ship built in 1674, discussed voyages to and from Batavia commanded by Captain Dirk van der Gaag, Pieter van Dam, *Beschrijvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, Vol. 1 ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1927), 772; Femme S. Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 2002), 164; *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries*, Vol. 2: *Outward-bound voyages from the Netherlands to Asia and the Cape (1595–1794)*, eds. Jaap R. Bruijn, Femme S. Gaastra, Ivo

did not make it clear whether he had any military background. It was not necessary as soldiers were receiving basic training onboard the ship.²⁴ Having passed the English Channel, the ship sailed south towards the Canary Islands. The crew had a stopover on the island St. Jago off Cape Verde,²⁵ and again on the Cape of Good Hope where they encountered the Khoekhoe (referred to as *Hottentoten*).²⁶ Sailing further along the Brouwer route (fig. 3), 34° latitude south into the Roaring Forties and east across the Indian Ocean, before turning northeast for Java,²⁷ the ship passed Sumatra and the island of Krakatoa in December 1684.²⁸ On 14 January 1685 they sailed past Banten (Bantan) town in the West of Java.²⁹ Following five and a half months of perilous journey,³⁰ they reached the port of Batavia on 16 January 1685.³¹

Upon arrival in Batavia, Dreyer became a cavalryman in the service of the East India Company and was stationed in the city itself. He was summoned outside Batavia only occasionally, for example as a member of the guard escorting the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies Johannes Camphuysen in 1686³² and with VOC troops sent to Sampura in Western Java in 1687 to destroy a fort built by the Javanese.³³ Regarding his everyday tasks, Dreyer mainly mentioned the guard duty. It was indeed the principal obligation of the VOC soldiers, alongside a parade taking place every two weeks.³⁴ Soldiers were often incapacitated due to tropical diseases or fatigue caused by the climate difference.³⁵ According to his

Schöffner (Den Haag: Nijhof, 1979), 765; *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries*, Vol. 3: *Homeward-bound voyages from Asia and the Cape to the Netherlands (1597–1795)*, eds. Jaap R. Bruijn, Femme S. Gaastra, Ivo Schöffner (Den Haag: Nijhof, 1979), 626.

²⁴ It very often happened that VOC soldiers received only poor-quality training on board of the ship to Batavia, van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 179.

²⁵ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 20–38.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 63–64.

²⁷ The route was discovered by the Dutch explorer Hendrik Brouwer (c. 1581–1643) in 1611 and halved the sailing time from the Netherlands to the Company's trading stations in southeast Asia.

²⁸ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 71.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 71

³⁰ The journey to Batavia took the lives of 19 men, *ibidem*, 72.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 71.

³² *Ibidem*, 98.

³³ *Ibidem*, 167.

³⁴ Daniel De Jongh, *Het krijgswezen onder de Oostindische Compagnie* ('s Gravenhage: W.P. van Stockum en Zoon, 1950), 79–87.

³⁵ According to Pieter Van Dam, in 1684 only a quarter of the soldiers in Batavia was fit for duty, Pieter Van Dam, *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, ed. Frederik William Stapel, Vol. 3 ('s-Gravenhage: Linnen, 1927–1954), 312; Tristan Mostert, Chain of command. The military system of the Dutch East India Company 1655–1663, unpublished MA thesis, Department of History, Research Master of the History of European Expansion and Global Interaction, Leiden University (2007), 21.



Fig. 3. The Brouwer Route, phot. public domain

recount, Dreyer succumbed to a serious illness only once, falling ill with dysentery (*Rote ruhr*). He noted that he was offered help because as a cavalryman, indicating that he enjoyed a relatively high standing within the 1500 men-strong army stationing in Batavia at the time.³⁶ Dreyer befriended several Gdańsk compatriots in Batavia, amongst which were high-ranking VOC officials, soldiers, sailors and free burghers of Gdańsk origin. Unlike free burghers, most likely soldiers who stayed in Java after their contracts expired, Dreyer returned to Europe. He set off on his journey on 24 December 1687 on a ship *Eenhoorn* and reached the shores of Rotterdam on 10 August 1688.³⁷ On the way back to his native city. Dreyer stayed in Helsingør in Denmark and spent the winter of 1688/1689 in Kristiansand in Norway.³⁸ Despite losing his right hand, he could consider himself lucky to survive two

³⁶ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 93; the number of VOC soldiers in Batavia in the year 1684 according to van Dam, *Beschrijving*, 312.

³⁷ 'De VOC site', <https://www.vocsite.nl/schepen/10300/>, accessed on 18 January 2023.

³⁸ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 301–302; Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 293.

perilous sea journeys, not perishing due to illness, madness or accident. Scarce information about Dreyer after his return to Gdańsk includes records of his two marriages³⁹ and death in Gdańsk in 1724.⁴⁰

Batavia was founded in 1619 on the ruins of the Javanese town of Jaykatra by the Dutch East India Company. It was the key trading post of the Dutch maritime empire in Asia and the seat of the Governor-General who ruled the entire VOC from the Castle of Batavia (fig. 4). The Dutch were a minority in Java, while the Javanese constituted the largest ethnic group. Other ethnicities included, as Dreyer enumerated, "Chineeser, Mohren, Javaner, Malaÿer, Amboneesen, Bandaner, Tarnataner, Ballier, Timoreesen, Makahsaren, so woll der Jenigen so auß Serante und Bengalen, auß Siam, Japan, und von der Küst Karomandell dahin kommen, wie auch die Portugiesen, und andern Indianischen Völcken"⁴¹ (fig. 5). The Dutch authorities divided the inhabitants of Batavia into Europeans, *Inlander* (natives) and *vreemde oosterlingen* (eastern Orientals).⁴² A large proportion of the heterogonous *Inlander* population were slaves, brought into Java by the Dutch Batavians. It was a hierarchical and largely segregated society, with social and racial divisions reinforced by the Dutch ruling class.⁴³ The Dutch East India Company officials formed the city elite, while the Javanese constituted the lowest social rank.⁴⁴

³⁹ Gottfried Dreyer's first wife was the daughter of Noel Olaff. In 1702 he married Anna Maria Klingbeil with whom he had a daughter, Concordia, born in 1703, Weichbrodt, *Patrizier*, 198.

⁴⁰ Although many members of this family, including his brother Hartwich, were christened, married, and buried in St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, there is no information regarding the burial site of Gottfried.

⁴¹ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 132–133. On the Batavian society see for example: Paul W. van der Veur, "The Eurasians of Indonesia: A Problem and Challenge in Colonial History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 9, 2 (1968): 191–207; Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht and Riverton: Foris Publications, 1986); Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia. European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 2004); "The Mardijkers of Batavia: construction of a colonial identity (1619–1650)," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 75 (2014): 901–910; Remco Raben, "Colonial shorthand and historical knowledge: Segregation and localisation in a Dutch colonial society," *Journal of Modern European History* 18/2 (2020): 177–193.

⁴² Cribb, "Legal pluralism": 49; McVay, "I am the Devil's Own", 7.

⁴³ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 4–5; Kehoe, "Dutch Batavia: Exposing the Hierarchy of the Dutch Colonial City," *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 7, 1 (Winter 2015).

⁴⁴ Relatively high status was enjoyed by the Mardijkers, descendants of freed slaves who were predominantly Christian. They were seen as loyal to the colonial authorities and recognised by the Dutch as a separate ethnicity, Choudhury, "The Mardijkers": 901–910. Mestizos, people of mixed Eurasian origin, on the other hand, had a low social status, van der Veur, "The Eurasians": 192. Hierarchy applied also to the Europeans, with the lowest social rank occupied by the soldiers. This multinational group, originating mainly from German lands, included both those destitute prior to their arrival in Batavia and those from wealthier backgrounds, people desperate to leave Europe and individuals travelling out of curiosity; illiterate and well educated.



Fig. 4. Andries Beeckman, *View of the Castle of Batavia*, oil on canvas, ca. 1662, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr SK-A-19, phot. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam



Fig. 5. Andries Beeckman (?), *A market stall in Batavia*, oil on canvas, ca. 1640–1666, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr SK-A-4070, detail, phot. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

The Javanese were not enslaved, as the settlers saw them as potentially treacherous and plotting against them.⁴⁵ They were described as a murderous, lazy, thievish nation and distrusted to the extent that they were largely barred from settling within the city of Batavia.⁴⁶ Despite this ban, there was a substantial Javanese community in the city: in 1673 there were 3000 people from Java and the rest of the archipelago living in Batavia, compared with 2000 Dutch.⁴⁷ Under certain circumstances the natives could be killed by Europeans without consequences, Javanese had also limited access to trading⁴⁸. They were at the same time a source of income. In 1677 the Company gained an opium monopoly for Java, which contributed to the wealth of the Company but also of many private sellers. Because of the increased levels of crime resulting from opium use, smoking opium was prohibited in the city of Batavia. But not outside the city, where it was sold to natives. Opium use by the natives was seen as a cause of amok, but the link was not scrutinised as far as profits were concerned.⁴⁹

There was, however, more to amok than *amphioen*. Amok was a Southeast Asian phenomenon where a person would set on a rampage, injuring or killing as many people as possible, usually with a knife or sword. Before the arrival of the Europeans, amok was perceived in a positive light, associated with honour, war and courage. Indeed in 1602 Portuguese traveller Diogo do Couto wrote that those running amok were “chivalrous men” of great determination.⁵⁰ The word amok could be understood as a call upon someone to kill the caller⁵¹. Amok could therefore be a form of self-sacrifice or honourable suicide. The latter could be caused by life circumstances: it could be triggered by jealousy⁵² or be a reaction to maltreatment,

⁴⁵ Devi Riskianingrum, “The Chinese and crime in the Ommelanden of Batavia 1780–1793,” *Masyarakat Indonesia* 39/1 (Juni 2013): 162; Marsley Kehoe, “Dutch Batavia”: 61.

⁴⁶ Riskianingrum, “The Chinese”: 162. Some slaves were escaping from the city and joining the Bantamense forces on the outskirts of Batavia, Susan Abeyasekere, *Jakarta: A History* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987), 19–20.

⁴⁷ Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 19–20.

⁴⁸ From 1667 the Javanese could be killed by Europeans if found behind the fences of their houses between 4.30p.m. and 5.30 a.m., Cribb, “Legal pluralism”: 55; Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 19–20.

⁴⁹ Johann F. Scheltema, “The opium trade in the Dutch East Indies,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 13/1 (July 1907): 82–83. For the history of Dutch opium trade in Indonesia see; Erwald Vanvugt, *Wettig Opium: 350 Jaar Nederlandse Opiumhandel in de Indische Archipel* (Haarlem: In de Knipscheer, 1985).

⁵⁰ Henry Yule, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (London: William Crooke, 1903), 21.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 21.

⁵² In his manuscript written c. 1690, VOC soldier Reynier Adriaensen remarked that amok was particularly common amongst the Makassarese, and its main cause was jealousy. When a wife was suspected of infidelity, then she, their children and everyone met in the street would be killed by a raging husband, Bert Paasman, “Rijs is ons broot, ende waeter is onsen dranck. Reisverslag van een VOC-soldaat,” *Indische Letteren* 8 (1993): 118.

as a form of resistance of native people against colonial exploitation.⁵³ In all of the above instances, amok had motivation and could be raised by an individual or an organised group of people. It could also be an individual frenzy: irrational and without motivation.⁵⁴ The Batavian government associated amok solely with opium use and madness and wanted to suppress any heroic associations.⁵⁵ Some ethnic groups were perceived by the Dutch authorities as particularly likely to run amok. For that reason, after 1585 Makassarese and Balinese male slave children older than twelve were prohibited from being brought into Batavia.⁵⁶ Amok was seen as particularly dangerous to public order, therefore the Company insisted on capturing amok callers alive and executing them in a spectacular manner.⁵⁷

Judicial proceedings in Batavia were conducted by two bodies: The Court of Justice (*Raad van Justitie*)⁵⁸ and the College of Aldermen (*College van Schepenen, Schepenbank*).⁵⁹ The Court of Justice was the highest judicial body in Asia with the seat in the Castle of Batavia. It heard all civil and criminal cases involving VOC servants.⁶⁰ It had a powerful Advocate-Prosecutor for Asia (*advocaat fiscal van Indië*), public prosecutor and chief of investigation, on its board. The College of Aldermen, which sat in the city hall, was the most important urban board and heard all cases involving free burghers and Asians in Batavia. The police work done on behalf of the *Schepenbank* was conducted by the bailiffs, supervising both the city and *Ommelanden* (Batavia's surrounding area), and sheriffs. They were assisted by *kaffers*: slaves or former slaves of African origins.⁶¹ Criminal cases were tried by both courts, with a noticeably high incidence of murders in the criminal rolls of the aldermen in the seventeenth century. It is also worth noting that opium abuse was amongst

⁵³ Other forms of resistance included slow work, damage to possessions, disobedience, stealing, arson, poisoning owners, assault or physical attacks on masters or bystanders, use of alcohol, drugs, gambling and suicide: "the most tragic form of slave response and the ultimate «theft» of the masters property," Markus Vink, "The World's Oldest Trade: Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of World History* 14 (2003): 172; Matthijs van Oostende, "Amok in Batavia Over Amok in Nederlands-Indische rechtszaken," *Acta Historica: platform voor beginnende historici Instituut voor geschiedenis* 3/4 (2014): 13; Hissei Imai, Yusuke Ogawa, Kiyohito Okumiya, Kozo Matsubayashi, "Amok: a mirror of time and people. A historical review of literature," *History of Psychiatry* 30/1 (2019): 49.

⁵⁴ Two types of amok distinguished in John Spores, *Running Amok: An Historical Inquiry* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), 105–106.

⁵⁵ Imai, Ogawa, Okumiya, Matsubayashi, "Amok": 49.

⁵⁶ Taylor, *The Social World*, 18–19.

⁵⁷ Van Oostende, "Amok": 12.

⁵⁸ Established 1620, presided by a member of the Council of the Indies and consisting of at least nine members (after 1661), Niemeijer, "The Central Administration," 65.

⁵⁹ Established 1620, presided by a member of the High Government. Until 1690 it consisted of two to three Company officials and three to four free burghers consisting of seven members, *ibidem*, 67.

⁶⁰ As well as civil cases appealed from lower courts outside Batavia and reviewed sentences of civil cases, *ibidem*, 65.

⁶¹ Niemeijer, "The Central Administration," 68.

the more common offences dealt with by the College of Aldermen.⁶² In case of a death sentence, a decision made by either of the courts had to be approved by the Governor-General (*Gouverneur General*) and the Council of the Indies (*Raad van Indië*)⁶³, who formed the High Government (*De Hoge Regering*).⁶⁴

In Dutch Batavia, the type of crime did not determine the punishment. The pluralistic legal system contained separate laws for different ethnic groups; the social standing and gender of the offender were also considered.⁶⁵ While the execution process in Batavia was modelled on Dutch examples, the punishments administered in Batavia were more severe, often aggravated, focused on both pre-mortem and post-mortem torments.⁶⁶ Capital punishment was also much more commonly administered in Batavia than in Amsterdam. Executions were taking place once a month,⁶⁷ with several convicts executed at a time. The most common form of capital punishment was hanging (44%), followed by breaking on a cross (36%).⁶⁸ In 1683 the Batavian authorities introduced impalement on a spike. It was adopted from Javanese penal practice which abounded in extreme forms of punishments including slow slicing, stabbing, impaling, cutting, beheading, head crushing and animal fighting.⁶⁹ Impalement, given prominence in Dreyer's recount, is regarded as rare.⁷⁰ Extremely harsh forms of punishment were reserved for the natives, thus reiterating the social and racial divide in Batavia.

The analysed passage of Gottfried Dreyer's manuscript describes capital punishment of native men guilty of running amok (*Amok Spieler*).⁷¹ In his recount of proceedings covering events starting with the capture of an assailant and leading to his execution at the gallows, the author did not follow the chronological sequence of events but structured them according to his subjective order of importance. Here, the proceedings will be presented chronologically and followed by a discussion on the author's remarks on the three actors of the *theatrum poenarum*: the authorities, the convicts and the audience.

According to Dreyer's account, the capture of an alive man accused of running amok was rewarded with 10 Reichsthaler.⁷² It was followed by the interrogation of the suspect by the *fiscal*. Imprisoned in the City Hall (figs. 6, 7), the delinquent

⁶² *Ibidem*, 68.

⁶³ Consisting of nine embers, chaired by the Governor-General, *ibidem*, 62.

⁶⁴ Established in 1609, *ibidem*.

⁶⁵ Cribb, "Legal pluralism": 49; McVay, "I am the Devil's Own", 7.

⁶⁶ Asyraf, *A Distant Mirror*, esp. 74.

⁶⁷ De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 290.

⁶⁸ Asyraf, *A Distant Mirror*, 63.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 7.

⁷⁰ De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 292.

⁷¹ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 73–91, 153–156.

⁷² *Ibidem*, 87.

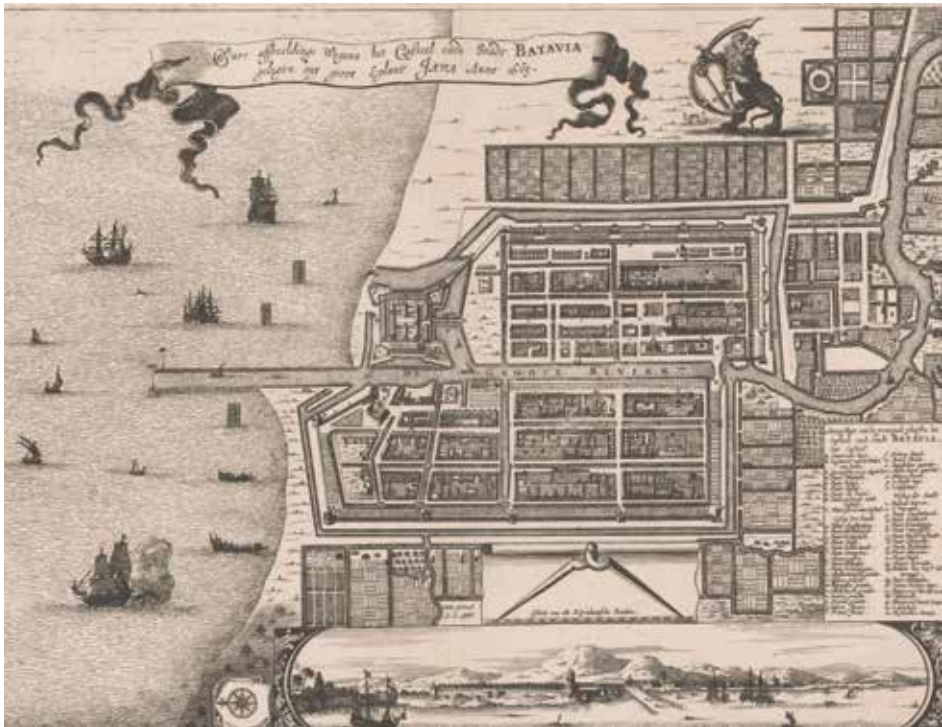


Fig. 6. Unknown engraver after Arnoldus Montanus (attributed to), *Map of Batavia*. *A true representation of the castle and the city of Batavia on the great island of Java in the year 1669, 1669*, etching / engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr RP-P-OB-47.392, phot. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

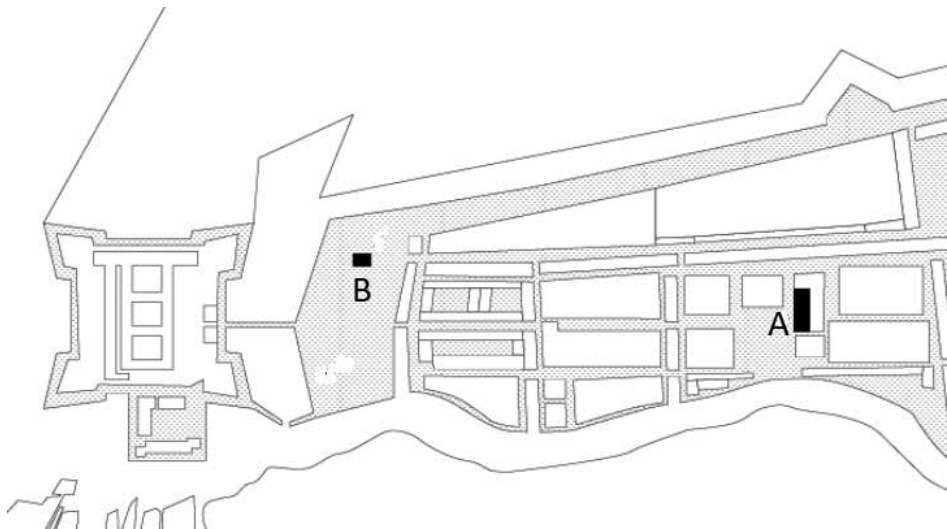


Fig. 7. Sites of punishment in Batavia. A – City Hall; B – the scaffold, based on map 2 in Muhammad Asyraf, *A Distant Mirror: Violent Public Punishment in the VOC Batavia, 1729–1739*, unpublished MA thesis, Faculty of Humanities Institute for History, University Leiden (2020), p. 52

was kept chained and under guard.⁷³ It was in the courtyard of the City Hall that the *fiscal* accompanied by two members of the Court of Justice would announce to the convict that the following day he would be publicly executed.⁷⁴ At that stage, noted Dreyer, the Governor-General had already agreed to send soldiers to guard the condemned day and night. Next, the *kaffers* transferred a chained convict into a so-called mourning room (*Trauer Stube*)⁷⁵ where he was tied to a table at which he was seated.⁷⁶ There, a pastor would attempt to convert the offender.⁷⁷ In the evening before the execution, the convict was led under heavy guards through the city towards the gallows. The guards were armed with loaded weapons and formed a ring the convict to prevent natives from interfering with the proceedings and the prisoner from running away. The executions could take place in front of the City Hall (fig. 8), on a specially erected scaffold⁷⁸ or on the site of the crime.⁷⁹ The main execution site, however, was located on a field between the Castle and the city of Batavia, in front of the Company's stables (*Galgenfeldt*). Here stood a scaffold built of limestone, "auf Italiänische art gebauet,"⁸⁰ with a passage and a gallery at the top. On an elevated surface stood gallows, pillories and whipping posts. One of them, the so-called *Schmauch Pfahl* was blackened from smoke. It had a perforation at the top, allowing for a rope to be tied around the convict's neck and had a small bench for the convict to stand on before he was hanged.⁸¹ In front of the gallows stood a lever and a spike.⁸² Under the scaffold was a vault, in which the convict would spend his last night. The following morning, amongst the sound of drums

⁷³ *Ibidem*, 78.

⁷⁴ Location noted by Dreyer is also provided by De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 290. Dreyer adds, that there was a well which was similar, though smaller, to one named the Yellow Anne (*Gelbe Anne*) in the Fish Market (Fischmarkt) in Gdańsk, Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 79.

⁷⁵ It was presumably one of the cellars under City Hall, see: De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 290.

⁷⁶ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 80.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, 85. According to the church order of 1643, the condemned, including Muslims and the Chinese, were assisted by sick visitors through their time in prison, in an effort to save everyone's souls, De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 290.

⁷⁸ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 90.

⁷⁹ Biblioteca Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung...*, 1699, 205; Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 231.

⁸⁰ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bis Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 76.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, 76

⁸² *Ibidem*, 155.



Fig. 8. Johannes Nieuhof, *City hall in Batavia*, engraving in: idem, *Gedenkweerdige Brasiliaense Zee- en Lant-Reise*, Amsterdam 1682, phot. Columbia University, New York

coming from the castle, the soldiers in their full armament came towards the scaffold.⁸³ Accompanied by the sound of bells (*Sunder glocken*),⁸⁴ they formed three rows around the scaffold, first the musqueteers, then the pikemen, last those armed with flints, while cavalry patrolled the city in order to prevent riots.⁸⁵

Simultaneously, the members of the Court of Justice (*Iustitiae Råhte*) would arrive at the scaffold escorted by guards. Upon entering a room within a scaffold, they sat on red velvet cushions, and each of the members of the court could be seen by the audience in a separate window. The central seat belonged to the prosecutor acting as a judge, while the last was occupied by a writing clerk (*Blutt-Schreiber*) in charge of the Book of Sentences (*Sententiae Boeck*) containing information

⁸³ *Ibidem*, 81.

⁸⁴ According to De Haan, as the clock started to chime, the names of the condemned, dressed in white, were read. When the clock chimed for the second time, they were led to the scaffold. On the third chime, the judges went to their seats, De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 291.

⁸⁵ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 81–82.

about offences and punishments. The convict, clad in white robes, was led in front of the windows by the executioner. There he listened to the announcement about his crime and punishments read out by the Blood writer.⁸⁶ Next, the pastor was given one of the councillors' velvet cushions to kneel on. The convict was to join the prayer, after which he was handed over to the executioner.⁸⁷

Assailants, Dreyer explained, were crucified alive, with hands and feet outstretched, and had their bodies torn with red hot tongs and broken on the wheel "bottom-up" (starting with legs). Next, they were taken off the cross and impaled on a spike, where they remained alive for further three to four hours.⁸⁸ Elsewhere in the manuscript he added that those of the accused of running amok who were sentenced to be put on a spike would first be tied to a so-called Fool's cart (*Mall wagen*), rode around the city and have their bodies burned with hot tongs.⁸⁹ Some of the convicts had their right hands burned inside a device known as *glüende Pfannen*.⁹⁰ In case convicts were hanged, the punishment was aggravated by an executioner who was waving a smoking damp straw of rice in front of the convict's nose.⁹¹ After the hanged convict's death, the executioner's assistant took the body down and carried it through the city on a cart "wie ein Hundt,"⁹² for the others to see as an example. Dead convicts had their limbs outstretched on the cart and their bodies were torn with hot tongs. Next, they were brought back to the gallows and hung again.⁹³ Other types of punishment for amok-induced murder included, according to Dreyer, burning on a cross, quartering and breaking on a wheel.⁹⁴ Not only running amok but also helping an assailant was severely punished. Such was a case of a native Lieutenant witnessed by Dreyer shortly before his return to Europe. The aide was quartered, his head, heart and hand displayed on the scaffold, while other parts of the body were skewered on poles beside four gates leading to the city.⁹⁵

The detailed description of the events is consistent with existing information regarding different stages of the proceedings and their locations and can therefore be regarded as a reliable recount of the proceedings. What calls for caution,

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 83–84; see also: De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 291.

⁸⁷ Pastor prayed for every condemned man, if possible, in their own language, *ibidem*, 291.

⁸⁸ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 74. See also: Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung...*, 1699, 69–70, 133–135.

⁸⁹ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 155.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 154; Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung...*, 1699, 134.

⁹¹ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 77.

⁹² *Ibidem*, 78.

⁹³ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 90, 92.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, 132.

however, is the fact that Dreyer only referred to the Court of Justice as the instance trying the convicts. He noted that the victims came from all backgrounds and mentions *Ommelanden*, an area populated mainly by the native Javanese or representatives of other Asian ethnic groups. These imply that *Schepenbank* should be mentioned. Whether Dreyer was only summoned to guard those convicts who were tried by the Court of Justice (i.e., who attacked a VOC employee) or is it an omission, remains impossible to assess.

Dreyer's recount is illuminated by three detailed, albeit rather crude, illustrations drawn by one hand. The first of the drawings, placed between pages



Fig. 9. Gottfried Dreyer, *An impaled Javanese convict guilty of running amok*, black ink on paper, in: Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1681 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706,

74 and 75, depicts a naked Javanese man impaled on a spike completed by an inscription elucidating the subject⁹⁶ (fig. 9). The punished assailant is placed on one of three such instruments of torture, two of which are seen to his sides. The tortured Javanese, dying on a metal spike, turns his head calmly towards the viewer, bearing no hint of suffering.

The subsequent drawing, placed between pages 76 and 77, depicts the scaffold built in front of the Castle of Batavia (fig. 10). The building consists of an elevated platform and a cubic building adjoining from the back. On the stage-like front part of the scaffold is the gallows, shown in the centre, with a ladder set against it. Beside the gallows stands a pillory, to both sides are whipping posts and a small bench to the right. There is a door opening to the stage, leading from the cell beneath. Another door is in the side wall of the adjoining building. The building has its front

wall pierced by a row of windows, while the flat roof is bordered with a baluster. Above the gallows is a plaque with an inscription *Justitia*, standing for the figure of Justice described in the text. There is a gallery at the top and side doors depicting an ambulatory mentioned in the manuscript. In front of the building is a lever, as

⁹⁶ "Der Amock Spieler // Straffe auff // Batavia."



Fig. 10. Gottfried Dreyer, *The scaffold*, black ink on paper, in: Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1681 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, illustration between pages 76 and 77, phot. Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova

described in the text, and a spike. The front wall of the building bears an inscription identifying the structure as a scaffold in front of the Castle of Batavia.⁹⁷

Further in the text, between pages 154 and 155, is a drawing depicting various instruments of torture, each with an inscription providing the name and use of the device (fig. 11). These are a wagon on which a convict was pulled around the town,⁹⁸ hot tongs,⁹⁹ two swords with which convicts were struck and burned¹⁰⁰ and a pillory.¹⁰¹

The drawings are a noteworthy iconographic reference. The image of the impaled convict is the only known representation of this form of torture in Dutch Batavia.

⁹⁷ "Schaffott // auf dem Galgenfeld // vor dem Castell // Batavia."

⁹⁸ "Mall wagen auff welchen Übelthäter // zum spectacul herum geführet werden."

⁹⁹ "Glüende Zangen."

¹⁰⁰ "Zwey Schwerdt so denen straßen // Schändern (auf dem Schaffot) glü= // end, nach dem sie mit ruten ge= // strichen, auff dem rucken ge= // brennet warden."

¹⁰¹ "[...] die bügen oder eysen da die Gefangene in // Geschoßen warden."



Fig. 11. Gottfried Dreyer, *Justice apparatus*, in: Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1681 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, illustration between pages 154 and 155, phot. Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova

The drawing of the limestone scaffold, coupled with its description, sheds light on the structure whose location was indicated by two maps dating to the 1620s,¹⁰² but whose details were hitherto unknown. Dreyer's written and visual account allows for the identification of the scaffold in a painting depicting the castle of Batavia seen from the city by Andries Beekman of 1661 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). Shown in the lower left part of the composition, behind a cavalry unit, it is a white cubic building with an elevated proscenium on which gallows and two poles can be identified (fig. 12). In accordance with the analysed text, the building has a row of rectangular windows in the upper stage and a figure set centrally at the top. Beside the scaffold is a tall lever. According to Dreyer, the scaffold was built "auf dem vierkandt" on the initiative of Governor-General Cornelis Speelman (1681–1684)

¹⁰² On a map attributed to Frans Floriszoon van Berckenrodee, c. 1627 and a map by Venant of 1629, Asyraf, *A Distant Mirror*, 47.

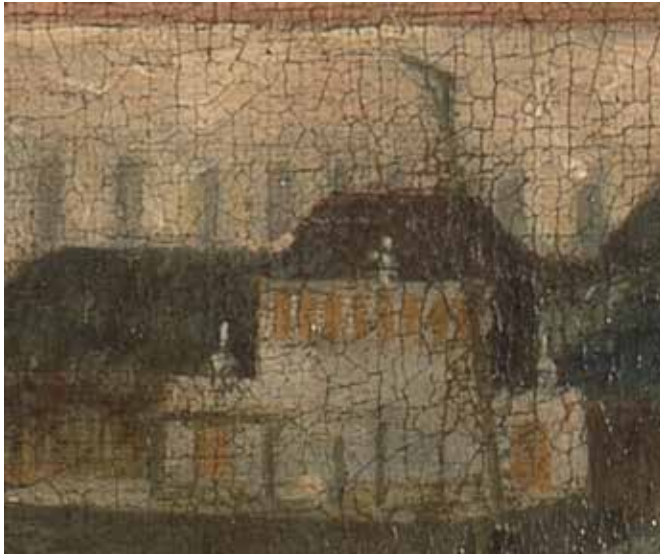


Fig. 12. Andries Beeckman, *View of the Castle of Batavia*, oil on canvas, ca. 1662, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr SK-A-19, detail, phot. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

to accommodate executions of criminals who committed knife crimes, particularly rife in Batavia at the time.¹⁰³ In the light of the above identification this information, referring to the time before Dreyer's arrival, appears to be inaccurate. It is worth mentioning, that in Europe stone scaffolds were replaced by wooden ones with removable equipment of justice due to a change of sensibilities occurring in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁴ As Dreyer's recount demonstrates, in the final decades of the seventeenth century the scaffold in Batavia was still a stone structure with all the apparatus permanently visible.¹⁰⁵

Regarding the documentary value of the third illustration, it is worth noting that the executioner's double-edged swords bear a close resemblance to an executioner's sword reproduced in De Haan's *Oud Batavia*¹⁰⁶ (fig. 13).

In order to explore Dreyer's choice to introduce the island of Java through this morbid imagery, it is informative to recall a seventeenth-century Dutch anecdote

¹⁰³ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 232.

¹⁰⁴ Petrus Cornelis Spierenburg, *The spectacle of suffering. Executions and the evolution of repression: from a preindustrial metropolis to the European experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 186.

¹⁰⁵ It was replaced by wooden scaffolds which were burned down with the bodies of the convicts in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, see: Asyraf, *A Distant Mirror*, 52.

¹⁰⁶ De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, fig. D2.



Fig. 13. Batavian executioner's sword, after: De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, fig. D2

about travellers on a lonely road who, upon the sight of gallows exclaimed: "Ah, civilisation at last."¹⁰⁷ Gallows, located at the cities' liminal space, were a deterrent for potential criminals, as well as a marker of safety, law and order.¹⁰⁸ They were greeted by travellers as the first sign of a soon-to-be-approached destination. The limestone gallows described by Dreyer were located in an open field south of the Castle of Batavia, at the level of Bastion Ruby (Punte Rubijn). They were among the first sights appearing to those arriving in the city and were also visible to its inhabitants as a constant warning and reminder of the authority of the government.

By beginning with a description of an execution, Dreyer indeed introduced the workings of colonial rule and the members of authorities, from the Governor-General to an executioner and a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, who also remained in the service of the Company.¹⁰⁹ He set the events against the backdrop of two seats of power in the colonial city: the

City Hall and the Castle of Batavia. Dreyer devoted much attention to describing rituals asserting colonial power performed around executions; both proceedings taking place within the confinements of the City Hall and the vault within the scaffold, known to him as an insider, and the public part of the spectacle with a procession, public proclamation of convicts' deeds, gruesome execution, carrying of the tormented bodies through the streets of Batavia and the final exposure of corpses at the gallows. He paid attention to symbolic assertions of the Company's authority: the use of velvet cushions, golden ink or the physical separation of the members of the court, seated in a room within a scaffold, from the convicts.

An important role in the spectacle of power was played by the VOC soldiers, who asserted the safety of its actors. The presence of soldiers during executions

¹⁰⁷ Anuradha Gobin, *Representing the Criminal Body in the City: Knowledge, Publics and Power in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic*, unpublished PhD thesis, McGill University (Montreal 2013), 140.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 135; P. Spierenburg, *The spectacle*, 57.

¹⁰⁹ McVay, "I am the Devil's Own", 7; Kelly Ward, *Networks of empire, forced migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 102.

was common in Europe, as such events were always carrying a risk of being disturbed by rioters.¹¹⁰ This preventative measure was not always sufficient in Batavia, as witnessed by Dreyer during a mass execution of amok assailants outside the Batavian city hall. It was interrupted by another group of aggressors who caused a blood bath among the audience.¹¹¹ For the same reasons soldiers were present during, for example, Christian religious services in Batavia,¹¹² as well as processions being part of the funerals of more prominent VOC members.¹¹³ The author of the manuscript conceded that some of the soldiers were horrified by men running amok. Any display of the soldier's fear however was severely punished by the authorities through corporeal punishment and public humiliation.¹¹⁴

The second actor of the *theatrum poenarum*, the native convicts guilty of attempting mass murders were introduced as barbarians who smoked opium and "run like frenzied dogs, shout like donkeys and murder everything that comes their way."¹¹⁵ In the opening lines, Dreyer referred to all Javanese as slayers. Only further did he explain that he meant armed men threatening the inhabitants of the Javanese villages as well as the dwellers of the city of Batavia.¹¹⁶ Along the line of colonial narrative, he understood amok as "anger, murder and shouting" resulting from the "pagan custom of smoking opium."¹¹⁷ The cases he recalled in detail, however, include instances of organised group amok – one of them being the above-mentioned interruption of mass execution and the other a part of an exposed conspiracy aimed at the destruction of the city of Batavia, apparently well-planned and involving some of native VOC personnel.¹¹⁸

Dreyer remarked with astonishment, that the pastor's efforts to convert the natives to Christianity were going to naught, as the Javanese were adamant about their beliefs and concepts of the afterlife.¹¹⁹ Further, he recalled some of the local extraordinary and shocking¹²⁰ "Aberglauben und närrische Phantasey."¹²¹ According to one of them, after a person was executed as a result of a trial, the spirit embarked on a journey towards a split road. An individual who led a good life

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 100, 102.

¹¹¹ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 90.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, 73.

¹¹³ Guarded by 49 soldiers, *ibidem*, 89.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 87–90.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 73.

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*; Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung...*, 1699, 68.

¹¹⁷ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 155.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 233.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 85.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, 86.

would choose the path on the right, which led towards a gate guarded by a devil. If, after a seven-day struggle, the spirit persevered, it was let through the gate. Behind the gate, unlike in Christian paradise, the usual hustle and bustle was coming about, and the spirit would find the company of friends or family members.¹²² Not only did the local beliefs, but also the convicts' demeanour cause Dreyer's astonishment. He mentioned a significant change brought upon the delinquents by a night spent under the scaffold.¹²³ What astounded him, however, was how little emotion they expressed at the scaffold, remaining calm, talking little and not crying, while often chewing pinang leaves.¹²⁴ It was unexpected to the eyes of the European not only because of the horrors of the ordeal, but also because it defied the exemplary effect of capital punishment, which was supposed "to be suffered humbly and dutifully."¹²⁵ This perceived inability to feel as well as presumption of the offenders' lack of morals underscore Dreyer's distance from the convicts. It is clear in animalistic similes, in a way the detailed enumerations of physical tortures are interwoven with equally precise references to the built environment and in the depiction of a placid-looking native on a spike.

The audience is given relatively little attention in Dreyer's recount. The spectators were numerous, as executions were a popular occasion to attend.¹²⁶ They were arriving at the gallows from early morning.¹²⁷ The presence of the indigenous population during these proceedings was expected and was perceived as a source of a potential threat of disturbance. The Javanese community in Batavia actively participated in the spectacle during carrying of the convict on a cart through the streets. Dreyer evoked a custom where the Javanese would close their doors and houses while the condemned was pulled along and throw burning straws of rice after him. The author recalled asking a local Javanese man about the purpose of the ritual, which was explained as a way of preventing the spirit of the condemned from haunting the houses.¹²⁸

The Batavian theatre of punishment and its supposed effect on the community was based on the Christian understanding of the judicial system and a presumption that punishment by earthly authorities signalled eternal damnation. As Dreyer noted, "die Holländer aber herrschen daselbst, und schreiben Gesteze und Schräncke für es wird auch daselbst die Reformirte Lehre wie in Holland

¹²² *Ibidem*.

¹²³ *Ibidem*, 78.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, 74; Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung...*, 1699, 70.

¹²⁵ Spierenburg, *The spectacle*, 54.

¹²⁶ Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms.E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen...*, 1706, 90.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, 82.

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*, 86, 87.

unterhalten und fort gepflantzet.”¹²⁹ While stressing the importance of a moral lesson for the natives, Dreyer was aware that the Javanese understood the executions along the lines of their own faith and moral codes. As indicated by the beliefs about the afterlife journey, in the eyes of the Javanese the execution *per se* did not damn the convict. Rather, it was life as a whole that determined the further journey of the spirit. Nevertheless, the rituals surrounding execution stigmatised the condemned. Proceedings to which a convict was subjected were believed to affect his spirit, turning him into a potential threat to the Javanese on a spiritual level.

Dreyer's recount has a diametric structure, where chaotic murders are set against ritualised executions, the Javanese assailants against the Europeans, faithless against Christians, others against us.¹³⁰ The Javanese convicts did not behave in a way that was expected by the Europeans, threatened the safety of the proceedings, and performed their own rites outside of the scenario of rituals of control and deterrence meticulously planned by the colonial rulers.

The extreme harshness of punishments is striking when compared to penal practices in his native Gdańsk at the time. Quartering and impalement, witnessed by Dreyer in Java, although present in the city's legislation, were never practised there,¹³¹ while the last burning alive at the stake happened in 1626.¹³² Gdańsk citizens would witness hanging, beheading and breaking on the wheel, with the horrors of the last two punishments reserved for murderers.¹³³ Aggravated forms of punishment included murderers being pulled around the city on bull's skin, having a hand cut off before the execution or post-mortem torments including impaled head or body wrapped into a wheel.¹³⁴ But these were a minority of cases and were rarely witnessed by the Gdańsk audience. Moreover, throughout the seventeenth century, death penalties were becoming less and less frequent.¹³⁵ This shift was reflecting a more general change on the European level, resulting from a growing unease around public torments amongst the seventeenth-century European elites. The necessity of executions, however, was not contested.¹³⁶ Similarly, Dreyer expressed his shock at the sight of horrifying (*erschrecklich, grausam*) tortures but is assumed the Company's monopoly on legitimate physical violence. He stressed that it was necessary on the part of the Company to exemplarily execute

¹²⁹ *Ibidem*, 133.

¹³⁰ For further accounts of cross-cultural diametric spatial processes as us-them othering see: Paul Downes, *Reconstructing agency in developmental and educational psychology, inclusion of the other* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

¹³¹ Dariusz Kaczor, *Przestępczość kryminalna i wymiar sprawiedliwości w Gdańsku w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Gdańsk: Oficyna Ferberiana, 2005), 275.

¹³² *Ibidem*, 275, 284.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, 275, 293.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, 278, 291.

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, 281–283, 383.

¹³⁶ See: Spierenburg, *The Spectacle*, 187.

the assailants. In an attempt to further validate the violence of executions, he added that such punishments were conducted not only in Batavia but everywhere under the Dutch rule in Asia.¹³⁷

The image of Batavia that emerges from the analysed section of the journal as well as from parts of the manuscript which are beyond the scope of this study, is that of a place where violence was rife. The Batavian theatre of punishment is presented within the colonial narrative, as an assertion of the Company's power. Dreyer described the amok-runners as faithless rogues. At the same time, he perceived their torments as a horrifying form of deterrence and was aware of the ineffectiveness of these extreme measures. He conceded that, despite the court's efforts, the levels of crime in the outskirts of the city of Batavia were growing,¹³⁸ thus exposing the Company's weakness.

The text gives a distinctive insight into the workings of the system of public repression in Batavia. The introduction of the colonial city through the lens of public executions conveys a picture of Batavia that is shaped in the first place not by the physical environment, but by how it functioned: how the colonial rule was manifested and enforced. At the centre of this rule, according to Dreyer's account, lay public executions.

Annex

Description of executions of Javanese men accused of running amok, Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Ms E.III.20, Gottfried Dreyer, *Beschreibung seiner von Anno 1684 bisz Anno 1688. gethanen Reisen nach Ost-Indien Worinnen enthalten die Description des weilterühmten Castels Batavia Derselben Stadt und Einwohner, dann auch der Eigenschafft und schönen Küste Java Major wie nicht weniger alles wasz sich bey seiner Zeit daselbst begeben und zugetragen. Alles von dem Authore mit Fleiss aufgesetzt und Wie es in der Wahrheit sich verhält, kürztlich entworfen, Geschehen in Dantzig Anno 1706*, pp. 72–92.

p. 72 [on the margin: Java Major.] Batavia lieget auf groß Java oder Java // Major, auf dieser Insull wohnen die Javanen // welche den nahmen von der Insull Java

¹³⁷ It is worth noting that severe punishments of amok were still practiced in Batavia in the early nineteenth century, with very high incidence of amok in Batavia and the rest of the island of Java. In Sumatra, on the contrary, executions were very simple and cases of amok rare, Spores, *Running Amok*, 76.

¹³⁸ *Ibidem*, 155. In 1699 Dreyer noted that "[...] und obgleich die Justitia Rätthe auf Batavia diese Mörder anderen Zum Exempel [...] grausahm abstraffen laßen, so vernimbt mann doch daß sie ich wenig dran stoßen oder sich beßeren, sondern man höhret so woll in alß außerhalb der Stadt Batavia mehr alß zuviel von dergleichen Mißethaten und Mördereyen," Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Uphagen Quarto 77, Gottfried Dreyer, *Ost-Indische Reise Beschreibung...*, 1699, 135–136.

ha= // ben, und werden genennet Javanen, sie sind // mehrentheils mittelmäßig
 lang, breit von // Angesicht, mit erhobenen Backen, Platten // Nasen, großen
 Augenliedern, kleinen Augen, // sind mehrentheils schwartz oder zum wenig-
 sten // braunlicht, sie fraßen den Amphioen und // lauffen alß denn wie ein rasender
 Hund ü= // ber die Gaßen ruffende Amock Amock // [on the margin: Amok
 Spieler.] ist bey uns in Europa als wie ein zetter ge= // schrey :/ und ermordet alles
 was ihn begegnet [p. 73] schonet weder der Weiber, noch kleinen unmündi-
 gen // kinder, durchstoßet auch offte die Tapffersten Män= // ner, dieses treibet er
 so lange, biß dieser wütten= // de Hund und Amock Spieler dan mit diesem
 nach= // men werden solche Leute genennet, durch vielheit // der menschen gefan-
 gen oder durchstochen wird, welches // offte geschicht. Ja nicht allein in den Java-
 nischen // Städten sondern auch in der Stadt Batavia trä= // get sich dergleichen
 Tyrannisches wütten und mor= // den zu, deßwegen die Holländische Regie-
 ung // daselbst genöthiget worden dergleichen Amok Spie= // ler auf eine erschreck-
 liche weise zu straffen, wie // den zu meiner zeit vielmahl geschehen ist.
 Und // obgleich solche harte strafe auf dergleichen frewe= // le Übelthäter gesetzt
 ist, so ist man doch nicht sicher // fur solchen Amok Spielern, weil auch die Hol-
 ländi= // [on the margin: Holländische Kirche // mit Soldaten besetzt // für der
 Amok Spie= // ler] sche Kirchen mit Holländischen Soldaten müssen be= // ster-
 maßen versichert seyn, damit sie also ihren // Gottesdienst ohne einige Gefahr
 und letzung // verrichten und solchen frewelen Leuten die Spitze // darbieten, und
 mit Pulver und Kugeln abweisen // und ihren Lebens fadem damit abschneiden
 kön= // nen, wann aber solche frewele Übelthäter, oder [p. 74.] barbarische men-
 schen lebendig gefangen und er= // grieffen, als den würden selbige ins gemein
 le= // [on the margin: Schwere Straffe // der Amok Spieler.] bendig auf ein Kreutz
 mit händen und füßen // außgestreckt und außgedöhnet, und also mit // dem
 Rucken auf dem Kreutze liegende, ihre // Brüste und die rechter Handt und Beine
 mit // glüenden zangen zerpfetzet, folgendts von un= // ten auf gerädert, und end-
 lich noch so lebende vom // Kreutz abgenommen und gespießet, leben ins // gemein
 drey, vier oder mehr Stunden auf dem // Spieße, welches Spieß ungefahr Ein und
 einhalb // Mann hoch über der erden stehet eingegraben. // Man findet geringe
 veränderung und bestürtzung // bey solchen Leuten, wenn sie zum tode gefüh-
 ret // werden, laßen nicht einen zähren oder trähnen // fallen, reden vielweniger,
 sondern kaum meh= // rentheils den Betel oder pynang biß in die // letzte stunde,
 wie ich solches mit fleiß und ver= // wunderung in dergleichen Straffen
 gemer= // cket habe.[on the margin: Beschreibung des // gewöhnlichen
 Gericht= // platzes] der gewöhnliche Gerichts Platz // auf welchem dergleichen
 Übelthäter durch Ur= / theil und Recht abgethan und hingerichtet wer= // den,
 lieget zwischen dem Castel und Stadt Ba= [p. 75] tavia, und wird das Galgenfeldt
 genandt // wie es den auch in der that so ist, dieser Galgen= // feldt lieget recht
 vor und neben dem Castel und // gleich über der Punte Rubin und ist nur mit // ein
 wenig Land und dem Revier oder Waßer= // graben von dem Castell entschieden,

auf beyden // seiten ist dieses feldt mit Waßergraben ver= // sehen, hinter diesem Galgenfeldt stehet der // Holländischen Regierung Reutt Stall, welcher [on the margin: Reutt=Stall] // mit stattlichen Pferden und Karoßen oder Kut= // schen, wie nicht weniger wackeren Reutt Knech= // ten und mit allem waß dazu gehörig bester= // maßen und reichlich dazu versehen ist, die Pfer= // de daselbst werden mit Reiß gefuttert und // müssen die Schwartzen oder die Indianer wel= // che im Pferdt Stall aufwahrten selbige futte= // ren, die Guarden so dem Gouverneur Gene= // rall auf Batavia aufwahrten, muß auch // ihre Pferde auß diesem Reutt Stall nehmen. // Waß nun der Gerichts Platz betrifft so ist // selbiges wie gemeldet das erwahrte Gal= // genfeldt auf welchem an ende dieses Feldes // nach dem Reutt Stall hin ein Schaffot von Kalck [p. 76] und Steine ins Vierkant hoch aufgebaut und auf= // [on the margin: Das Schaffot.] gemauret, auf diesem Schaffott ist ein Hauß auf // Italiänische art gebauet, oben Platt, mit einem // umbgang und Gallerey, deßes Hauses hinter= // theil nach [written above: dem] Reitt=Stall blind oder ohne fenster, das // fordertheil aber nach dem Castell und Stadt zu // gerichtet mit acht oder mehr nach der reihe gleich // neben einander stehenden fenstern gezieret ist, // Über diese fenster stehet die Justitia in ge= // stalt eines Weibesbildes mit geblendeten // Augen, in der einen Handt ein Zweyschneidiges // Schwerdt, in der andern Handt eine gleich han= // gende Waagschale führende, vor diesem Hause // aber auf dem gemauertem Schaffott stehet der // [on the margin: Galgen.] Galgen auf beyden seiten deßelben ein Geis= // sel Pfahl oder Pranger, an diesen werden diejeni= // ge so ein Staubbesem verwircket, außgestrichen, // auf der einen seiten des Schaffotes stehet ein // [on the margin: Schmauch=Pfahl.] Blacker oder Schmauch Pfahl, diejenige aber so // an diesem Pfahl geschmauchet werden, die wer= // den an diesem Pfahl auf eine kleine Böncke ge= // stellet, oben in dem Pfahl aber ist ein Loch recht [p. 77] hinter dem Genicke des auf der Banck stehen= // den Übelthäters, durch selbiges ziehet der Hen= // cker einen Strick selbigen schlenget er dem Übel= // thäter umb den Halß und Wiebelt den Strick // hinter ihm zu, daß er also mit dem Rücken an // diesem Pfahl und in dem Stricke stehet, fol= // gendts ziehet der Hencker ihme die Banck un= // ter den füßen weg, daß er also in dem Stri= // cke an dem Pfahl hänget, da er den große quahl // auß stehet, indem er keine lufft schöpfen kan // sondern also würgende sich quälen muß, wel= // che quahl aber der Hencker ihme mit rauch und // dampf vermehret und vergrößert, indem er // ihme ein Bündlein Reiß Stroh, so brennende // vor die Naasen hält, und weil der am Pfahl // hangende noch leben in sich hatt und statts nach // lufft schnappet, so ziehet er den dampf von dem // Brennenden Stroh nach sich, daß er also davon // ersticken muß, die aber so gehangen werden // die werden zwar in diesem Galgen auf dem // Schaffott gehangen, allein wann sie todt, so // werden sie durch die Henckers Knechte abgenom= // men, und durch die Stadt durch allen Unflatt [p. 78] und unlust wie ein Hundt durch geschlappet an= // dern zum Exempel, und an der Seekant noch ein= // [on the margin: Zweymahl ge= // hangen.] mahl in den Galgen gehangen, da er den han= // gen bleibet,

vor dem Schaffott unten auf glei= // cher erden stehet die Wippe, unter diesem Schaf= // fott aber und unter diesem Hause ist ein Ge= // wölbe, nach art eines Gefängnüßes gebauet // da hinein bringen sie den Übelthäter den Abend // vor seinem tode, daß er also die letzte nacht in // diesem Gewölbe und unten dem Schaffott // zu bringen muß, da man den große verände= // rungen an solchen Leuten siehet, selbige sind // geschlossen mit den füßen damit sie nicht ent= // weichen und entwischen können; Wann nun je= [on the margin: Fiscal.] // mandt wie gemeldet daselbsten ins Welt= // liche Gerichte verfallen und das leben verbre= // chen, so wird derjenige erstlich dem Fiscal // überlieffert, ist wie bey uns gesaget wird // den Gerichten übergeben, und ins Stadt= // hauß in einem der Gefängnüßer geleget, // von welchen ein jedes seine Nummer hatt, diese Gefängnüße werden überauß wohl [p. 79] bewahret und verschloßen, daß niemand entkom= // men kan, den man durch 2 starcke verschloßene thü= // ren gehen muß ehe man auf den Platz kommet da // man alle Gefängnüße herumb zahlen kan, in der mitte dieses Platzes unter freyen Himmel ist // [on the margin: Die Brunne im // Rathause.] ein Brunnen fast auf die ohrt wie in dantzig auf // dem fishmarckt die Gelbe Anne ist mit sol= // chen hohen Gegitter allein nicht vollkommen // so groß, an diesem Brunnen werden diejenigen // so sterben sollen mit dem rücken angestellet, // da den der Fiscal mit zweyen der Justitiae // Rähten ihme den todt ankündiget, daß er als // morgen umb diese zeit seinen todt würde für // augen sehen, den tag aber zuvor wird im Castel // durch den Fiscal bey dem Gouverneur Generall, // angehalten umb einige Soldaten, welche den tag // und nacht über die Wache bey Maleficanten // halten müssen, biß auf angestellten Gerichts= // tag, da den einige Soldaten mit ihrem Officier // dazu commendiret werden, selbige werden [on the margin: Sipir.] // durch den Sipir oder Stockmeister des Stadt= // hauses und derer Gefängnüße eingelaßen, // da den die Maleficanten dieser Wache durch [p. 80] den Fiscal anbefohlen werden, damit sie die= // selbige so lange in verwahrung halten und die // selbige auf angestellten Gerichts Tag dem Ge= // richte wiederum darstellen und übergeben könd= // ten, nach diesem werden die Maleficanten // [on the margin: Kaffer.] durch die Kaffer oder durch des Gewaltigers // Knechte in die dazu verordnete Trauer Stube // geführt, so auch auf diesem Platz ist und wer= // den mit den füßen an den Tisch da sie beysitzen // angefeßelt, wann dieses geschehen, so tritt die // Wache an, und stellet eine Schildt wache mit blos= // [on the margin: Trauer=Stu= // be.] degen in der thüre der Trauer Stuben, damit // frey oder nach belieben ein und außgehen kann, // solches wehret von des morgends biß des abends // zwischen zweyen lichten, da den mit anbrechenden // [on the margin: Capitein gewal= // tiger.] Abend der Capitein gewaltiger mit seinen // Knechten herankommet und nehmen die Ma= // leficanten binden selbige mit Stricke die Hän= // de zusammen vorwärts vor dem Leib, wie man // an selbigen Ohrte solchen Leuten zu thun // pfleget, wenn es nun fast tunckel, führet // der Capitein Gewaltiger solche Übelthäter [p. 81] auß dem Stadthause nach dem Schaffott in vor= // gemeldtes Gewölbe, die Wache aber gehet

von // beyden seyten, daß also die Maleficanten gantz // umbschloßen sind, in dem vorwerts und hinter= // werts der Capitein Gewaltiger mit seinen // Knechten, welche sie gebunden mit sich führen, die // die Wache aber auf beyden seiten mit scharf ge= // ladenen Gewehren gehet, damit niemand von // den Indianern so ihres gleichen möchten sein, // einfallen und selbige rauben, oder aber auch die // Maleficanten nicht entlauffen können; So // bald nun der Tag anbricht, höret man die Trum= // mel im Castell schlagen, und wird ein anstalt // zur Justitia gemacht, die Soldaten werden // gewaffnet mit Harnische, Picquen, Mußquet= // ten, Flinten und mit Sturm hauben, und Mar= // schiren also mit dem ersten Geleutte der Sun= // der Glocken auß dem Castell nach dem Schaf= // fot zu, und schlagen einen Kräyß umb das Schaf= // fot, welchen drey duppelt ist, den erstlich stehen // die Mußquetierer mit ihren scharf geladenen [on the margin: Soldaten schlagen ei= // nen Kreyß umb das // Schaffot.] // Gewehren, die Fronte inwendig des Kreyses // haltende, nach diesen kommen die Picquenierer [p. 82] ihre Fronte außwärts wendende, mit gefloch= // tenen Piquen, letztlich kommen die Schnaphanen // mit ihren Flinten und stellen ihre Fronte auch // außwärts, und formiren also diese drey Ba= // taillons einen ansehnlichen und fästen Kreiß, die // ansehnliche und beharnischte Cavallerie welche schon // des morgends mit anbrechendem tage die Stadt // Batavia auf und nieder patrolliret, allem // auflauf Tumult und zusammen rottiung // der Indianer zusteuren und zu verhindern, // stellet sich mit dem letzten Geleute der Sün= // der Glocken auch auf dem Gerichts Platz, und // theilet sich in zwey theile, die pointe der Ru= // bin genandt auf dem Castell Batavia wel= // cher gegen dem Gerichts Platz oder Galgenfelde // über ist, und mit großen Stücken alß 1/2 und 1/4 // Karthaunen reichlich versehen ist, selbige werden // auch auf den Gerichts Platz gerichtet, ob etwo // möchte vonnöthen seyn, der Indianer Boßheit zu // straffen, folgendts kommen die Iustitiae // Rächte auch mit dem letzten oder dritten gelautte // welche auch mit Soldaten convoijret werden [p. 83] biß an den Gerichts Platz, welche mit sich führen // einige derjenigen Verbreher oder Übelthäter so // nicht zum tode verurtheilet, sondern mit einem // Staub=besem oder einen andern straffe angesehen // worden, so bald diese Iustitiae Rächte auf das // Schaffott kommen occupiret ein jeder seinen // Locum des Fensters in diesem Gerichts Hau= // se, da den in jedem Fenster ein Sammetes rothes // Küssen lieget, da die Iustitiae Rächte die Ar= // me und den Leib auflegen, wan sie der Execu= // tion beywohnen und zu sehen, in der mitte die= // ser fenster befindet sich der Fiscal als ein Rich= // ter in dem letzten und untersten Fenster ste= // het der Bluttschreiber, selbiger hatt ein Buch // vor sich liegend, auf deßelben Umbschlag mit // güldenen Buchstaben geschrieben stehet Sen= // tentiae Boeck, auß diesem lieset er öffent= // lich das verbrechen der Übelthäter, wie auch der= // selben darauf folgende Straffe; So bald nun // diese Herren oder Iustitiae Rächte sich in die= // sen Fenstern des Gerichts Hauses sehen las= // sen, wird dem Hencker anbefohlen, die Übelthäter // darzustellen, welche alß dan so da sterben sollen, [p. 84] und zum tode verurtheilet

gantz weiß erscheinen // und vor diese fenster in welchen die Gerichts Herr= // ren sind, sich darstellen müssen, da sie als den ih= // ren übel geführten Lebenslauff, verbrechen und // darauf folgende harte straffe anhören müssen // wan selbiges geschehen und sie also zum tode // verurtheilet, oder ihr Leben ihnen durch Urtheil // und Recht ihnen abgesprochen, so wirfft einer // der Iustitiae Rächte sein Küßen herrunter zum // fenster herauß aufs Schaffott, welches dem // Reformirten Priester /: oder Domine :/ für= // geleget wird, welcher darauf niederkniet, und // alle die da sterben sollen müssen auch nieder= // knien, da den der Priester zum letzten mit de= // nen als die da anjetzo unter der Pforten des // Todes stehen betet, nach verrichtetem Gebeht // werden sie dem Hencker übergeben, welcher an // ihnen erfüllet, waß ihnen durch Urtheil und // Recht ihrem verbrechen nach zu erkant, so aber // einige gespießet werden, die werden mit dem // Spieß Pfahl vor diesem Schaffott ein und ein= // halb Mann hoch über der erden eingegraben auf // welchen sie sterben müssen. [p. 85] Merckwürdig ist von diesen Indianern oder // Heyden, daß wann sie ihrem verbrechen nach zum // tode verurtheilet, so wird ein Reformirter= // Domine oder Priester zu ihnen gesandt welcher // sie bekehren und auf den rechten weg der Seelig= // keit bringen soll, wie ich nun einsmahl bey sol= // cher gelegenheit auch die wache hatte, bey der= // gleichen Maleficanen in dieser Trauer Stu= // ben, hab ich mit höchster verwunderung ange= // höret und zu gesehen, wie sie dem Reformir= // ten Priester widerstanden, sie haben zwar // geglaubet daß sie nach diesem in ein ander // leben kommen und gelangen würden, allein [on the margin: Wunderliche Glaube // der Indianer.] // auf eine wunderliche und erschreckliche weise, // indem sie fürgaben, daß so bald sie hingerich= // tet und sie also des zeitlichen Lebens berau= // bet müste ihr Geist auf die Wanderschafft, // wan selbiger nun lang genug herum termini= // ret, käme er an einen Scheide weg, da sich aus // einem wege zwey erstrecketen, hie sagten sie // stünde er stille und wüste nicht welchen er er= // wehlen solle, hätte er nun gutt in dieser welt ge= // lebet, so würde er schon auf den rechten weg ge= // langen, und auf diesem wege würde er zu einer // Pforten gelangen bey welcher Pforten der Teuffel [p. 86] die Schildtwache hielte, wolte er nun hindurch so // müßte er sich Sieben Tage mit dem Teuffel schla= // gen, wann er nun solches überstanden, würde er // durch die Pforte gelaßen, da er den in eine ande= // re welt kommen würde, nicht aber als wir Chri= // sten glauben zum freudigen anschawen unseres // Gottes und deßen allerheyligsten Nahmen // mit einem stetts wehrendem Triumph Liedt // zu verehren und zu preisen sondern sie gaben // vor daß sie in eine andere irdische welt kommen, // in welche sie wie hie in dieser welt geschehen, han= // del und wandel treiben würden, auch würden // sie daselbsten ihre gutte freunde und verwan= // ten antreffen und finden und waß des nār= // rischen aberglaubens mehr wahr. // [on the margin: Narrische Phanta= // sey der Indianer.] Noch haben sie einen Aberglauben und nārrische // Phantasey, den so jemandt vor der Execution // geschleiffet wird durch die Gaßen der Stadt // Batavia, so machen alle Indianer ihre Thü= // ren und Hauser zu, und so bald der

Übelthäter // ihre Häuser vorbey geschleiffet worden, kam // ein jeder mit ein püschlein ausgedroschener oder // außgestampfter Reiß Pagie oder Reißstroh [p. 87] steckte selbiges in den Brandt, und warf das // brennende reiß stroh auf den weg, da dieser // Überhälter geschleiffet worden, und wie ich ei= // nen gefraget, warumb sie dieses thaten, ward // mir diese antwohrt, es geschehe darumb, damit // der Geist des vorbey geschleiffeten Überhä= // ters nachdem er abgeleibet worden, sie nicht in // ihren Häusern molestiren und beunruhigen // können.

Es ist nicht ohne das auf Batavia wie // auch in jedem Gubernament so die Holländer // besitzen und possession haben, solche und der= // geiche verbrechere auf eine scharffe und erschro= // ckliche weise gestraffet werden, und zu mah= // len die Amok Spieler welchen so hefftig nach= // getrachtet und gestellet wird, daß auch dem // jenigen so einen solchen schreyenden Amok ruf= // fer lebendig aufbringen kann zehn Reichs= // thaler zum recompens verehret wird, noch [on the margin: 10 Rthl. auf einen A= // mok Spieler gestellet.] // dennoch siehet und erfähret man, daß auf // großer Herren Begräbnüße ins gemein der // Holländer Soldates [...] nicht weit davon son= // dern vielmehr nahe bey der Hand seyn und ne= // benst dem Sarcke von beyden seiten gehen müs= [p. 88] sen, bloß allein darumb weil sie sich solcher ver= // zweiffelter Amok ruffer befürchteten, wie // ich deßen zum beweiß ein Exempel hiebey se= // tzen will, so sich bey meiner zeit daselbst zu= // getragen und begeben: Es hatt sich begeben // umb die zeit da Johannes Camphuysen // Gouverneur Generall, Isaacq St =Martijn // Sergiant Majoor und Cornelis Nuijts Ca= // pitein im Castell war Anno 1686. daß ei= // ne Leiche auf der Tijgers Grafft solte auß= // getragen werden, auf diesem Begräbnüße // war der Oberste Stadthalter welcher wahr Jo= // hannes Camphuysen auch gebehten, welcher // [on the margin: Amok Spieler verhin=// dert auff Batavia // ein Begräbniß.] mit 50 Mann Soldaten erschiene und der Lei= // che nebst anderen nachfolgte und begleitete, // da ist ein solcher Amok Spieler uns entgegen ge= // lauffen, und weil die Soldaten nehmlich die // Fünfftzig Mann so mit dem Generall gekom= // men und bey den seiten des Sarckes giengen // dabey wahren, ward bald commendiret durch // den Sergiant Majoor St =Martijn vor // dem Sarck zu treten, sich in reihen und glieden // zu stellen und auf einen halben Mann anzu= [p. 89] legen, wodurch das Volck das in solchen Begeben= // heiten erschrocklich zuläufft in etwas abgehalten // ward, weil ein jeder nach uns zulieffe der meinung // nach schutz zu finden, da ist ein Soldat der gebuhrt nach // von Amsterdam mit unter gewesen, welcher auß [on the margin: Ein Soldat lauffet auß // dem Trop und springet ins // Waßer.] // dem Trop heraus gelauffen, und mit vollem Ober und // Untergewehr ins Waßer hinein gesprungen und // fast biß an den Halß darein gestanden, auß furcht // für diesen Amok ruffer, da den bald dieser Be= // hertzte Soldat in arrest gezogen und nach dem Ca= // stel in verhafft gebracht worden, wie dieser Tu= // mult gestillet und der Amok Spieler sich ver= // lauffen, ward die Leiche zur erden bestättiget, // convoijrten also unsern Gouverneur Generall // wieder nach dem Castell zu, dieser Soldatt

aber // welcher sich so tapffer gehalten, ward nachdem er [on the margin: Selbiger seiner versag= // heit [...] abgestrafet // und an Bort verreichen.] // vier Wochen im dunkelen Galt in Verhafft gehal= // ten, dem Krieges=Raht übergeben, welcher andern // zum exempel durch die Neun und Viertzig Mann // so damahls mit ihm gewesen jämmerlich zuge= // richtet in dem er von jedem zehn streiche auf // seinen Hintern mit der Kolbe des Gewehrs emp= // fangen, so daß er kaum von der Städte gehen kön= // nen, ward folgendes zum Schelm gemacht alles ge= [p. 90] =wehr abgenommen und auf ein Schif gestezet Matroo= // sen dienste zu verrichten; Ja es sind diese Amok=ruf= // fer so kühn und verwogen, daß sie auch die Executi= // on da solche böse Leute andern zum Exempel es // sey durch Strang, Feuer und Schwerdt und dergleichen // Straffe hingerichtet werden suchen zu stöhren und // zu verhindern, den wie auf eine zeit vor dem Stadt= // hause etliche zum tode verurtheilet worden, von // welchen die halffte gerädert und die halffte gevier= // theilet worden, haben sich einige dergleichen Amok= // Spieler zusammen rottieret, und unter die Leute // gelauffen so vor dem Stadthause /: vor welchem ein // Schaffott aufgerichtet : / der gewohnheit nach gestan // [on the margin: Amok Spieler [...] // einer Execution zu // hindern.] =den in meinung die Execution anzusehen, selbige mit ihren Krüßen zu morden und nieder zu stoßen // angefangen, da den ein großer auflauf hierauß // entstanden mit einem großem geschrey, auch so das // den Herren so auf dem Stadthause sich befanden und // der Execution beywohneten nicht woll hiebey zu // muthe war indem sie ein groß Bluttbadt besorge= // ten, und den Capitein so damahls den Kreyß umb // das Schaffott geschlossen, deswegen zu rede stelle= // ten, worumb er nicht einen anstalt machte oder sich // bemühet diesen Tumult zu steuern und vorzu= // kommen, welcher sich hiemit entschuligte, er könnte [p. 91] wegen des großen geschreyes so diese Amok=Spieler // veruhrsachten nicht commendiren, worauf die auf // dem Stadthause wie auch von dem Schaffott denen // drunten zu geruffen ward, sie solten in etwas stil= // le seyn und dem bevorstehendem Commando gehor= // samen und nachkommen, worauf es in etwas stil= // len geworden; Hierauf ward commandiret, daß // die Soldaten so den Kreyß geschlossen, welcher bestun= [on the margin: Gutte Anstalt eines // Capiteins auff Bata= // via bey einer gefährli= // che Execution.] // de in Mußsquetierren, Piquenierren und Schnaphah= // nen, solten sich fertig machen, und ihre Gewehre auf // einen halben Mann anlegen, die Piquenierren eben= // falls müsten ihre Piquen auf einen halben Mann // füllen, wie solches geschehen, ward commandiret, die // vor dem Kreyß und Schaffott stehende so gutt Hol= // ländisch wahren, solten sich platt auf ihren Bauch nie= // der werffen, welches auf geschehen, und weil die A= // mok=Spieler in ihrer tollender raserey begreifen // nicht acht hatten, drauf waß commandiret worden, // auch vielleicht solches nicht verstehen konten, als ge= // schahe es daß nachdem sich die jenige so gutt Hollän= // disch niedergeworffen, die Amok=Spieler alle auf= // gericht stehen geblieben, und wan sie sich gleich nieder= // werffen wolten, ward solches von denen so gutt Hol= // ländisch waren nicht zugelassen

sondern ergreifen, // den Soldaten aber ward anbefohlen feuer zu geben, [p. 92] und weil die so gutt Holländisch waren sich niedergele= // get, als geschahe es daß die Soldaten über sie hinschoßen, // [on the margin: 13. Amok Spieler // eingezogen.] der Amok=Spieler aber dreytzehn geschoßen und gefan= // gen worden, auch kurtz darauf diese dreytzehn auf sel= // bigen Schaffott gleich den vorigen auf ein Kreutz ge= // bunden, und gerädet worden, diese Execution aber // gewann ohngehindert ihren fortgang; So aber jemand // [on the margin: Verbrennung der // Übelthätter.] verbrennet worden, selbiger ward vor dem Schaffott // auf einen großen Scheutterhauffen geführt, auf ein // Kreutz gebunden, und das Kreutz in die mitte des scheu= // ter hauffens gesetzt /: welches Kreutz vier Stollen // oder füße hatt da es aufstehet, ungefahr einer ellen // hoch oder etwas drüber :/ und also angestecket und ver= // brennet, solche Kreutze werden auch gebraucht so jemand // geradert oder geviertheilet wird, da der jenige so ge= // radert oder geviertheilet soll werden, mit den rücken // auf das Kreutz gelegt wird, die hände /: oder die Ar= // me:/ und füße außgedröhert und gerecket.

SUMMARY

In the years 1685–1687 Gottfried Dreyer from Gdańsk stayed in Batavia (Jakarta) as a soldier in the service of the Dutch East India Company. Back in his native city, Dreyer wrote down memories of his travels. His description of Batavia in the travelogue written in 1706 is opened by an account of public executions of native men guilty of running amok. The analysis of this fragment of the journal will provide insight into the author's mentality: his perception of public executions, as well as criminal and legitimate violence, his attitude towards the colonial authorities and the indigenous inhabitants of Java. Gottfried Dreyer's detailed recount of the Batavian spectacle of power and accompanying drawings are shedding light on the details of the proceedings. Moreover, Dreyer recalled beliefs of the Javanese which were underpinning their understanding of the punishment. The text gives a distinctive insight into the workings of the judicial system in Batavia and includes information previously not discussed in the literature on penal practices in seventeenth-century Java.