

SECTION III

# **HISTORY**



# JACQUES DE BOURGES (c.1630–1714) AND SIAM

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## INTRODUCTION

The Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris was established in 1659, building on the missionary work of the Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes in Tonkin. This was to be the French answer to the decline of missionary work by the Portuguese, who had been accorded the whole of Asia by Pope Alexander VI under the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494. The eclipse of Portugal and the rise of Protestantism in Europe led the French, under the "Most Christian Majesty" Louis XIV, to attempt to seize the mantle of missionary endeavour. Pope Alexander VII tried to avoid the problem of Portuguese objections to French missionaries working in areas in which they considered they had exclusivity by reviving lapsed sees.

François Pallu was created Bishop of Heliopolis (Baalbeck) and apostolic vicar of Tonkin, and Pierre Lambert de la Motte was made titular bishop of Béryte (Beirut) with a see stretching from Cambodia to Jiangxi. Lambert de la Motte set sail from Marseilles on 27 November 1660 with two priests from the Missions Etrangères, Jacques de Bourges and François Deydier. The French bishop and priests arrived in Siamese territory at Mergui on 28 April 1662 and reached the capital of Siam on 22 August, where they stayed one year. Jacques de Bourges was charged with carrying letters from his bishop back to Europe, and left Ayudhya on 14 October 1663. His return journey to Marseilles, mostly overland to avoid Portuguese possessions, took twenty-one months. De Bourges passed through London where he met Charles II, transited through his native Paris and went on to Rome, where he was received by Pope Alexander VII on 1 February 1665. De Bourges on his return to France wrote his *Relation du Voyage de Mgr l'Evêque de Béryte, vicaire apostolique du Royaume de la Cochinchine, par la Turquie, la Perse, les Indes; &c. jusqu'au Royaume de Siam & autres lieux*, publication of which was completed in Paris on 7 January 1666, and then set sail from La Rochelle on 14 March for Siam again with

five other Missionaries, arriving in Ayudhya in February 1669 after numerous adventures.

The importance of this text has been demonstrated by Professor Dirk Van der Cruysse (1992; 1993).<sup>1</sup> Jacques de Bourges produced the first published account of Siam by a Frenchman, and preceded by twenty years the great mass of texts that appeared from the return of the first French embassy to Siam, led by Chaumont and Choisy, in 1686, to long after the collapse of French ambitions in Siam as a consequence of the murder of Phaulkon, the death of King Narai and the assumption of power by the usurper Petracha in 1688.

A translation follows here of the part of Chapter VIII relating to the arrival of the French party in Mergui and the whole of Chapter IX covering the overland journey to Ayudhya. Jacques de Bourges describes this journey in detail; his account is one of the few published records of the arduous route which so many travellers to Ayudhya in the seventeenth century took. An account of the return journey overland, but in much grander circumstances, is given by Céberet, co-envoy extraordinary (with La Loubère) of Louis XIV to King Narai, at the end of his mission in 1687.<sup>2</sup> De Bourges's four general chapters on Siam, Chapters X–XIII, cover its geography, fruits, governance, and (contentiously) its religion, and, if somewhat superficial, are clearly valuable, given their early date. Chapters XIV–XVI covering the stay of the French party in Ayudhya and the departure of Mgr de Béryte for China are summarized, with the relevant sections on Siam translated.

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1. A considerable debt is owed to Professor Van der Cruysse by the author of the present article for making the relevant pages of Jacques de Bourges's text available and for providing other assistance.

2. Céberet's account of this overland journey was first published by Lanier in 1883; the complete narrative of his mission has recently been produced by Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h (1992). An English translation of this journey will appear in the author's *Descriptions of Old Siam* (forthcoming).

## THE TRANSLATIONS

### CHAPTER VIII: THE EMBARKATION AT MASULIPATAM<sup>3</sup> FOR TENASSERIM

... Hardly had we arrived at Mergui<sup>4</sup> than the customs officers established there to oversee the interests of the King of Siam came aboard our vessel, and listed the persons and goods on board, after which they sent an extract of all they had found to the governor and officials of Tenasserim, who issue orders as they see fit. Either the vessel can go as far as Tenasserim, or the goods and persons have to be offloaded onto small boats; one must always have permission, it never being permitted of anyone to travel in the lands of the King of Siam without a *laisser-passer*<sup>5</sup> from the governor and the officials of the place where one lands. The length of time taken by the people in this country being extreme in all their undertakings, our vessel could not arrive at Tenasserim earlier than 19 May. Having received the same day the freedom of our persons, we went to stay in the residence of the Jesuit Father Jean Cardoza, of Portuguese nationality, who in this matter had the charity to send in advance of us his small boat. The following day we were permitted to withdraw our belongings, which had been inspected by the governor and the officials rather casually; they only took note of red-painted horn rosaries, which they took to be coral, and on which they levied the king's tax, at eight per cent, which is always as declared and never estimated by the authorities, as is done elsewhere. No one is searched, and no cash is taken, so it is not difficult for those who are travelling to conceal small curiosities brought from Europe to use as presents which one is obliged to give on many occasions. The curiosities consist in a few watches, small pictures, mathematical works, amber and coral rosaries, things in short which establish the credit of Europeans. The charges for our passage from Masulipatam and our belongings were not great, only costing for the five people in our party some forty-two piastres.<sup>6</sup>

After two days in the house of Father Cardoza, whom we found responsible for two churches until he was sent someone to replace the person who was in charge of one of them, and who had died in the month of January previously, we went to reside in the house of the dead father, and stayed there the whole time we remained in Tenasserim. It was not considered possible nor judged appropriate to hide the rank of Mgr de

3. Masulipatam, also known as Machilipatnam and Bandar, and spelt by de Bourges Masulpatan, is a seaport now in eastern Andhra Pradesh, south India. It was the first British settlement on the Bay of Bengal, established in 1611.

4. On 28 April 1662 (see de Bourges 1666, 126 *et seq.*).

5. De Bourges writes "passe-port" but the meaning has since changed.

6. A piastre was a name for the Spanish *peso duro*, a piece of eight or Spanish dollar. The seventeenth century mixed its currencies and coins with even more abandon than does the late twentieth century.

Béryte. He was requested by this good priest and by the Christians in his charge to administer the holy sacrament of confirmation, which he did on the Wednesday and Saturday of the ember days of Whitsun.<sup>7</sup> However, as we were always desirous of continuing our journey, we had to make much effort to obtain our *laisser-passer*, which we only obtained with difficulty, and by giving ten *écus*<sup>8</sup> to facilitate their issue....<sup>9</sup> The short time we stayed in Tenasserim did not prevent us from enquiring about the conditions necessary for introducing the Faith in these parts. Only a sufficient number of workers is lacking.

All the region of Tenasserim professes paganism and idolatry, and lives in extreme ignorance of things relating to God and eternal salvation. We went to pay a visit to some of their chief priests, whom they call Talapoins. With one of them we entered into conversation on the principles of his belief, by means of an interpreter. We found this poor man full of darkness, contradictions, and absurdities, and with each proposition he gave us, we could not extract any rationale, except that it was written so in their books. But he showed himself ready to hear with satisfaction all that we expounded on the majesty of the Creator, the universal Lord of all things, on the holiness of Christianity, the last judgment, future life and the means of obtaining it. He gave us to understand that he thought highly of the Christians, and he found their religion good, without however condemning his own, and the respect in which in these parts the Christian religion is held is the only reason why those who profess it are allowed complete liberty. In truth, the freedom could not be greater; one can hear bells rung, the churches are open, the holy office is sung therein, one preaches in public, without any obstacle. This assures us that one could readily cultivate this land and make it Christian, by sending some worthy workers, who would be still more inspired as foreigners are well received in these parts, and the journey by land or by sea is not difficult.

### CHAPTER IX: THE JOURNEY FROM TENASSERIM TO SIAM

On 30 June we began our journey for the capital city of Siam, which is called in the language of the country, Ioudia, and which we call Siam.<sup>10</sup> We travelled on the river with three small

7. The ember days were fasting periods of three days (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday) during the four quarters of the year, and the sacraments of confirmation and ordination were usually administered then.

8. An *écu* was originally a gold and later a silver coin worth 60 *sols* or three *livres*.

9. It is interesting to note that corruption to obtain official permission has a long history. A short passage of twelve lines relating to ships lost at sea is omitted here.

10. "We" here means Europeans; it was the Portuguese who started the practice of calling Ayudhya "Siam", possibly by analogy with the other provinces, where the chief towns bear the same name as the province.

boats covered with palm leaves, each of which had three men to man it. These boats are normally made of one piece, of large tall trees hollowed out by fire, and which are a good twenty feet long. They are very appropriate for these rivers, which are swift, and barred by many rapids; that is why the boats, being exposed to rude blows, would be quickly smashed if they were made of several parts. As trees of this thickness are lacking in France, it would be difficult to copy the skill of these boats, which have this convenience that they cost little to construct. We gave for each about twelve *écus*. One has to prepare one's food and sleep in the boats, it being too dangerous to leave them and to stop on land, because they comprise uninterrupted forests full of lions, boars, tigers, and other carnivorous beasts. We went upstream with much difficulty, because of the rapidity of the flow and the waterfalls blocking its passage. Then the boatmen get into the water, to shift the boats by brute strength, some pulling them with ropes, others pushing them with long poles, yet others almost carrying them on their shoulders, so difficult is it to fight the impetuous waters, which pass between the rocks and rush like our millraces.

This was the cause of the overturning of the boat taking Mgr de Béryte and one of his ecclesiastics, with the most important trunks comprising our baggage. The boatmen, being unable to withstand the violence of the water, let it go with the stream, and it crashed into a large uprooted tree blocking the flow of the river. God allowed Mgr de Béryte to meet this tree, and happily save him, and he found himself sitting on it as though on horseback, and with the time to see his boat and everything therein go to the bottom. However, as this tree was big and had its branches hidden below the waterline, most of the baggage was retained there, so that the greater part could be salvaged, principally the coffer in which were important papers. Mgr de Béryte with his ecclesiastic stayed some time suspended on this tree trunk, thrashed on all sides by the impetuosity of the river. But God granted a further grace, in the form of a boat coming downstream from the head of the river; he called the boatmen to come to him, and agreed with them to take him to Ialinga<sup>11</sup> which was only three leagues away. This shipwreck was a clear manifestation of the protection of God, for without meeting this tree, Mgr de Béryte, who could not swim, would have been indubitably lost.

Among the things we were not able to recover were our *laisser-passer*, which obliged the ecclesiastic accompanying Mgr de Béryte to go back on his tracks to Tenasserim, to acquire new ones. Finally we all met at Ialinga, which is a village built in a small fertile and pleasant valley. We rented a rush house covered with leaves; it was enough to provide shelter from the continual rains and to give us the time to repair what had been salvaged from our shipwreck. Our small curiosities were found to be damaged, which leads us to the opinion that one should carry everything one needs to take in strong and well-fastened

11. Ialinga is not identified, though it is probably the same place as Céberet's "Gelingue", from where boats were taken to go down to Tenasserim on a "very dangerous and difficult navigation."

chests which are waterproof, and to put important papers in brass boxes, it being difficult not to overturn, particularly on routes which are often either flooded or traversed by troublesome torrents.

It was at this point that Mgr de Béryte, wishing to settle a difference which had arisen with our interpreter, our carters and other carters from thereabouts who were drunk, received three blows from a stick of one of the drunks, and it was then that he began to realize his calling of a Missionary, since he had the advantage of suffering while satisfying the requirements of his vocation.

We left Ialinga the twenty-seventh day of July, and after three days of walking arrived at the village of Menam,<sup>12</sup> where one has to show one's *laisser-passer* obtained in Tenasserim, as well as that of the governor of Ialinga. One does not have to pay anything if one is not a merchant. We found some new difficulties in this overland route, and more troublesome than those we had experienced on water.

We had to walk nearly always on foot, the carts which we had procured being better at tormenting travellers than providing them with comfort. They were more like biers than carts, because at their widest these contrivances were only three feet, and rather less at their narrowest. One has to squeeze oneself inside, and they rest on the axle which passes through two large wheels, which frequently happen to overturn because of the uneven path, so the cart is not drawn by the circumference of the wheel, but by the extremity of the hub. But something is always breaking down with this wretched contraption, so we preferred to go on foot through the mud and the streams. Our carts served as hostels for the night, and as we often camped in the middle of water, the rough war waged against leeches can be imagined; they thrive in great numbers in these hot and humid lands, and we were continually assailed by them with much impunity. They were ever taking our blood, all our efforts being unable to rid ourselves of them completely.

We also had suffer from wild beasts, which frightened us by day, and fought with us at night. To defend ourselves we built every evening a fortress, composed of our carts drawn up in a circle or in a triangle; the oxen<sup>13</sup> pulling them and our baggage were placed in the middle. Often we had to fortify our camp with some thorn hedges; we never ceased to hear prowling around us lions, boars, rhinoceros and above all cruel tigers, who conducted a savage war with the oxen, so that these animals were absolutely terrified at the approach of these tigers. We fired our arquebuses and lit fires all night to keep them at bay. Each of us had to act as guard in turn; we slept nonetheless easily in our small portable tombs, without moving much for want of space, and so we became accustomed

12. Menam is not identified, though it is certainly Céberet's "Meunam", four leagues from Gelingue, seventeen and a half leagues (approximately seventy km) from Kuiburi, and on what is now the Burmese side of the mountains.

13. "Buffles" in the text, which may possibly mean water buffaloes here, though oxen are more likely.

little by little to the fatigues and inconveniences attached to our calling.

In the daytime we were not completely exempt from the war against the animals. Elephants are frequently met with in the Kingdom of Siam and caused us continual alarms, for these beasts are afraid of nothing. When one meets one, one must not oppose it nor try to escape; one stays quiet, or one moves to one side of the path, as though out of respect due to this noble animal, which often, taking no notice of persons, continues its way, breaking with its trunk the ends of the branches of trees. If one comes straight at you, the custom is to offer it something like a hat, a cloak, or some linen, which it seizes with its trunk, plays with, and as though content with this apparent homage offered it, continues on its way. But if it is aroused, the only thing to do is to turn at once behind it on the left side, as it never normally turns on that side, but to the right; and the time it is moving around, on account of its weight, gives one enough to climb up some tall tree, to leap into a ditch, to mount some steep outcrop. If all else fails, one holds onto its tail, and turns with it, until it tires and allows you the means to escape.

The land of Siam is crossed with rivers and large streams which the rains cause to overflow, so that often, finding no crossing, no bridges, and no boats, we were constrained to wash in spite of ourselves, and to cross unknown fords without a guide.

On leaving the village of Menam, after taking some days to come down from a mountain so steep that we had to tie the wheels of our carts, we entered a very pleasant region and which, in comparison with that which we left, seemed like a new world, so pure was the air, so level the land, so well cultivated and fertile. This climate seemed to us so temperate even though we had the sun right above our heads, so that to know if it was midday we only had to note if the shadow of our hats covered our feet; all the same, the heat did not trouble us at all, even though we were travelling on foot. Perhaps we were already beginning to become accustomed to the heat of the torrid zone in which we had spent nine months.

Six days later we arrived at Kuiburi,<sup>14</sup> a small town, square in plan; the walls are made of wood and it has at least two hundred houses. We were asked to show our *laissez-passer*, without having to pay anything. Our intermediary was a Muslim and thought he would give pleasure to the governor by alerting him that being Christians and priests, we would give whatever was asked of us. This governor asked for three *taels*<sup>15</sup> which are worth twenty-two *livres*<sup>16</sup> and ten *sols*.<sup>17</sup> We did not hesitate to depart of our own accord, without paying anything, and no one followed us. Two days later we arrived at Pranburi,<sup>18</sup>

where we again had to show our *laissez-passer*. There is some trade in this town, because of the river which is large and it being close to the sea. From Pranburi we reached Petchaburi<sup>19</sup> in five days on 13 August. This is a large town, and has brick walls. We walked almost all the time in water, and our carts floated more than they rolled; we sometimes sank up to the waist in potholes caused by the rains, which in these parts descend with such an incredible force to penetrate and soak the earth and make it so fertile. As soon as we arrived at Petchaburi our first concern, after finding somewhere to stay, was to set up an altar, to say the holy mass on the day of the Assumption of the glorious Virgin. This blessing was so great for us, that it easily allowed us to forget all our fatigues and all our difficulties which are only in name, which indeed are true subjects of extreme consolation.

The following day we embarked on a boat, taken specially to lead us to Siam, the capital of the Kingdom; for the passage we had to pay fifteen *écus*. We travelled about a whole day to the sea, then travelled close to land for about twenty-four hours, when we came to the mouth of the great and fine river of Siam, which we went up until the day of our arrival, on the twenty-second of the same month. We did not feel any of the external sufferings of this small journey, other than the persecution of certain small flies which bite mightily, which appear as soon as the sun has set and do not disappear until seven or eight in the morning. Throughout all this time it is not possible for a man to sleep because one is perpetually occupied in defending oneself in the war waged by these small animals, whose number is infinite.

#### CHAPTER X: SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF THE KINGDOM OF SIAM

The period of one year which we were obliged to spend in Siam<sup>20</sup> gave us the time to learn the particularities of the country; this is why we are giving a more exact description of it than the other places which we only passed through.

The Kingdom of Siam is more than 300 leagues<sup>21</sup> long from north to south, but it is narrower from west to east. On the northern side it is bordered by Pegu, on the west by the Ganges Sea,<sup>22</sup> on the south by the small state of Malacca, which was first taken from the King of Siam by one of his vassals,<sup>23</sup> who, being

19. Pipili in the text.

20. Siam here is Ayudhya, the capital. As indicated earlier, de Bourges was in Siam the country from 28 April 1662, but did not reach the capital until 22 August. While he left Ayudhya on 14 October 1663, the date he left Siamese territory is unclear; he was in Malacca en route to Madras on 27 November.

21. One league is approximately four km.

22. The Andaman Sea; at this period Siamese territory included Martaban and Tenasserim, now in Burma.

23. Mahmud, who reigned from 1488 to 1511, was a great-great-grandson of Malacca's first ruler, Paramesvara (Megat Iskandar Shah after his conversion at the age of seventy-two), who reigned 1403–1424.

14. Kuiburi is written in the text "Coüir"; Céberet spells it Qouy.

15. A *tael* according to La Loubère was worth four *ticals*, and a *tical* weighed half an *écu*.

16. A *livre* was originally one pound of silver (though by 1789 it was only five grammes).

17. A *sol* or *sou* was originally gold or silver, later copper or bronze, and worth one-twelfth of a *livre*.

18. Pram in the text.

weak, could not defend it against the Portuguese, and who held it for more than sixty years;<sup>24</sup> the Dutch today hold the main fortress which they took from the Portuguese at the time of their wars with the Dutch.<sup>25</sup> On the east, the country is bounded in part by the sea, and elsewhere by the mountains which separate it from Cambodia and Laos.<sup>26</sup>

The situation of this kingdom is advantageous because of the great extent of its coasts, located as though between two seas and opening for it a passage to all neighbouring countries. These coasts are 500 or 600 leagues around, and can be reached on all sides, from Japan, China, the Philippine Islands, Champa, Cambodia, the islands of Java and Sumatra, Golconda, Bengal and all the Coromandel coast. For this reason the Dutch have their warehouses there, and the English re-established theirs in 1662.<sup>27</sup>

The kingdom is divided into eleven provinces, to wit Siam, Martaban, Tenasserim, Junk Ceylon [Phuket], Kedah, Perak, Johor, Pahang, Pattani, Ligor [Nakhon Sri Thammaraj] and Chaiya.<sup>28</sup>

These provinces formerly ranked as [independent] kingdoms but today are under the domination of the King of Siam, who appoints their governors whom he removes at his pleasure.

Siam is the principal province and gives its name to the whole kingdom; the capital city is situated at fourteen and a half degrees latitude<sup>29</sup> on a remarkably fine river which can take fully laden boats up to the gates of the city, even though it is more than sixty leagues from the sea.

The province of Martaban is situated to the north-west of that of Siam and its main town is found on the sixteenth degree; it has the same name as the whole province, which is the case with all the other provinces. Tenasserim follows Martaban

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Mahmud was held to be a figurehead, real power being held by the successors of Tun Perak (died about 1498), the bendahara, chief minister or treasurer. The Portuguese claimed Mahmud was an opium addict and he was held to be chiefly interested in mysticism (Hall 1968, 221–2). Siamese suzerainty over Malacca was at best nominal.

24. The Portuguese in fact held Malacca from 1511–1641.

25. The Dutch had tried to take Malacca in 1606 and 1615; they blockaded the port from 1633 and the two countries were in open war from 1638.

26. The text has *Camboje* and *Laros*.

27. The East India Company first established a warehouse or factory in Ayudhya in 1612, but relations between the Company and King Songtham (r. 1610–1628) were not good and in 1622 the English warehouses at both Ayudhya and Pattani were closed. Hall (1968, 362) notes "In 1659 the English factors of the East India Company's Cambodian factory, established at Louvek in 1654, were forced by an Annamite invasion to flee the country. They took refuge in Ayut'ia, where they were so warmly welcomed by Narai that in 1661 the Company re-opened its factory there."

28. These are actually given as Martavan, Ternacerim, Iansalom, Keda, Pera, Ior, Paam, Parana (a misprint for Patana), Ligor, and Siara.

29. The latitudes given are reasonably accurate. Longitude was much more difficult to calculate, and it was not until the eighteenth century that an accurate method was devised to do so.

going to the south and south-west of Siam, and is located on the eleventh degree.

Junk Ceylon is situated on the eighth degree, Kedah on the sixth, Perak, which ends with the state of Malacca, is on the fourth and the province of Johor follows, the capital of which, with the same name, is located on the second degree and a few minutes; and finally turning up the coast and going back to Siam come the provinces of Pahang, Pattani, Ligor, and Chaiya. These four last can still retain the name of principalities, the more so as their governors do not depend absolutely on the King of Siam, but only render him some tribute, so that what properly constitutes the state of Siam only extends from the seventh degree to the eighteenth and only comprises 275 leagues from south to north.

All the kingdom enjoys a passingly agreeable climate, foreigners easily accustom themselves to it, and are reasonably at ease there, and although it is hot in some seasons, the heat is not unhealthy as elsewhere. The coastal areas are fairly populated; many villages and towns can be seen which have grown important through trade, the land is not only fertile, but in addition well cultivated, because of the ease of the inhabitants to trade their produce with foreigners who come to buy it in different places. Fishing provides the main source of food in the country and fish are incredibly abundant. What contributes to the fertility of the country are the floods of the rivers caused by the rains which last for three or four months a year, and which cover the countryside, which is fairly flat, with water. It is a general rule that the greater the flood, the more abundant and satisfactory the harvests of the Siamese, who only complain about prolonged drought.

Rice is their principal food and their wheat. It is never sufficiently watered; it grows in the middle of the water, and the countryside where it is cultivated looks more like marshes and not lands which are turned by the plough. Rice has the advantage that even if it is under six or seven feet of water the tip still rises above it, the stalk which supports it rises and grows in proportion to the height of the water in the field. It is also for this reason that no wheat is grown in this country, since that requires well-drained and moderately watered land.

Although the whole of Siam is fertile, there is nonetheless much land left fallow and neglected for want of inhabitants, who have been much reduced by earlier wars;<sup>30</sup> apart from the fact that the Siamese are hostile to work and only like things to be easy, leaving uncultivated very attractive countryside which we passed through, which would produce wonders and would be capable of sustaining a large population if brought into productivity. These abandoned plains and thick forests to be seen on the mountains are the lair of elephants, tigers, wild bulls and cows, deer, does, rhinoceros and other animals found there in herds.

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30. Ayudhya fell to the Burmese in 1569 and the Burmese made repeated invasions in 1585–6 and 1586–7. In the battle of Nong Sarai in 1593 King Naresuan routed the Burmese, but the continual warfare over such a long period took a serious toll on the population.

The Kingdom of Siam being rich in so many things granted by the Author of nature invites foreign merchants to come and visit it to take part in its wealth. There are few cities in the whole of the East where one can see so many different nationalities as in Siam,<sup>31</sup> and more than twenty different languages are spoken there.

Much gold is found in Siam, but it is of poor alloy; silver, tin, lead, steel, saltpetre, very good ivory which is much traded, leather and well-prepared deerskins, and the forests are full of indigo and sappanwood for dyers. Pepper, benzoin, gum lacquer, rice and a variety of fruit which is truly excellent can be bought there. This abundance of goods attracts commerce, and they do not lack the things which grow elsewhere and which are brought by vessels from outside, for the Siamese are not great navigators, and hardly ever venture onto the high seas.

They can easily do without the trade of their neighbours, since finding in their own country all that they need, they do not trouble much with the rest, which is but an importunate superfluity in their eyes. They are only desirous of possessing fine silks, which they wear on feast days and special occasions.

#### CHAPTER XI: THE FRUITS OF THE KINGDOM OF SIAM

Nothing shows more the excellence of a country than the variety, delicacy and abundance of fruits found there; so I shall enumerate the main ones which I saw and tasted in the Kingdom of Siam.

I shall start by the most appreciated, the durian. This fruit is of the size and shape of an ordinary melon, the skin is thick and tough; it grows at the top of the tree trunk beneath its branches, and because it would be difficult to open it on account of its hard husk, when it is ripe, Nature causes it to open by itself at the bottom in three or four places, and one can finish off its opening with brute strength. Inside this fruit are segments of a soft, delicate flesh enclosed within small compartments. The flesh is as white as snow, exceeds in delicacy of taste all our best European fruits, and none of ours can approach it. Each durian has five, six, seven or eight of these segments of white flesh, the shape of which is like a green almond, but four or five times bigger. What is extraordinary about this marvellous fruit is that its smell is most disagreeable and even, at first, unbearable when one distinguishes it, being similar to a rotten apple. This fruit is extremely hot, and Europeans who eat too much of it are obliged to moderate the ardour it causes by going incontinently to wash.

Another fruit not less appreciated is the jackfruit; its size is like a pumpkin which is why it only grows on the tree trunk. It encloses in its skin a firm yellow flesh with a very pleasant slightly sharp taste. The flesh surrounds a thumb-sized nut.

31. All visitors in the reign of King Narai comment on the large number of different "nations" resident in the capital.

When the fruit is opened with a knife, a milky substance so sticky comes from it that the knife can only be cleaned with oil and the whetstone. The fruit is only eaten already prepared; when too much is eaten it causes a purgative diarrhoea which could be injurious to one's health if one did not quickly desist. But Nature is always wise in its ordinances, and puts the remedy for this drawback in the very fruit which causes it. These are the seeds to which the flesh clings; they can be eaten roasted and are excellent for this effect; a jackfruit sometimes has up to a hundred of these small nuts.

The mangosteens are of the size of an ordinary small orange. The skin is deep red on the outside, but lighter inside; it is smooth, soft, and encloses a liquid and a flesh similar to that of an orange, but much more pleasant. The oranges of Siam surpass in excellence those we have in Europe, even the oranges we call Portuguese do not equal them; they are eaten like apples, but with less fear that an excessive quantity would have untoward effects. They are available six months in the year.

There are also bananas,<sup>32</sup> but different from those of Europe. This fruit would be the most appreciated if it were not so common throughout the state of Siam, where there are so many varieties and in such abundance that they are available almost for nothing. They come in different sizes, some are as long as half a hand, some a full hand; they are three inches in circumference and their taste likewise varies greatly. They are as sweet as sugarcane, and their smell is very agreeable, though there are some bananas which have no smell.

The tree bearing this fruit has this curious characteristic: it has no branches other than great leaves coming from the end of the trunk, which are often an ell<sup>33</sup> and a half in length. The leaf comes out of the trunk and is attached to it by a tendon which is strong, green and thick, which is why it has many uses, like wrapping everything found in the market, and often serves as tablecloths and table napkins. Each leaf coming from this tree is like a branch, and some have thought that these leaves must be those that Adam used to cover himself. This tree has another very remarkable property, in that it only produces fruit once, which is why it grows every year at its foot a shoot to follow it, and which grows so promptly that in less than a year it becomes a full tree producing its own fruit in the quantity and perfection appropriate to it. So this tree renews itself each year and as it soon dies, Nature has provided that the one to follow it grows in a very short time.

I would like to write about the marvels of coconuts if I did not know that the authors who speak of the Indies have carefully described all its properties. There is not a tree in the whole of nature<sup>34</sup> which is so useful in so many ways and which serves so many purposes. Its trunk is used to build houses, its leaves to cover them, ropes are made from its bark, drinking vessels and liquid containers are made from the husk sur-

32. De Bourges actually writes "figs"; La Loubère (1693, 23) gives us an alternative name of bananas "Indian figs."

33. An ell equals 1.188 m.

34. Nature is not capitalized in the text here.

rounding its fruit, which provides a pleasant white liquid for drinking and for eating a firm and tasty flesh similar to nuts, from which a very good oil is extracted. Finally its leaves can be woven to make quite strong and handy baskets which can even be used to contain water, and this tree alone is an epitome of marvels and conveniences for the lives of men.

The areca is a fruit the size and shape of a big plum, its skin encloses several filaments in which a fairly hard nut similar to a nutmeg is found; its taste is very bitter but it fortifies the stomach. From this fruit, together with a betel leaf, a mixture is made with lime obtained from burnt oyster shells, and as soon as one has chewed a little one's lips take on a vermilion colour. The Siamese and other people in these regions use this areca almost all the time, which they consider excellent for the health because it aids the digestion, fortifies the body's natural heat, and counterbalances the humidity of the foods they normally consume, which are rice, that is cold and humid, fish, fruits, and plain water, which is their drink.<sup>35</sup> You see both rich and poor from morning to night occupied in chewing this fruit; and when they greet each other, the first act of civility is to present each other with some areca and to chew it at once.

The mango is one of the most tasty fruits to be found in Siam; it is the size of a decent pear, its colour on the outside is yellow, and red inside. We have no fruit like it. I have not spoken about pineapples, which are very common in these parts. All these fruits are very hot for the stomach, which needs to be fortified in these lands more than in cold climates, which is why Nature has provided them with this great diversity of fruits which are excellent for this fortifying quality.

## CHAPTER XII:

### THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE SIAMESE

The peoples of Siam are very well built, they are olive coloured and not black, although they inhabit the torrid zone. They have shorter noses than Europeans. Their character is gentle, pleasing to strangers whom they respect rather than despise, even though they are unknown to them. They like repose and only work when obliged; workers are despised among them, and only their slaves labour. Their great concern is to have little combined with rest, a gentle poverty being more agreeable than an abundance of goods accompanied by worries, and one can in truth say that they follow the maxim of those who say in the words of the prophet of the fourth chapter of *Ecclesiastes*: *Melior est pugillus cum requie, quam plena utraque manus cum labore*.<sup>36</sup> Their dress, their furniture, their houses, and their food reflect this poverty. They always go barefoot and bareheaded, the important and wealthier people travelling on land by elephants and on water by very comfortable barges. They also

cover their heads with parasols made of waxed cotton cloth which are not costly, the same goes for their dress, which only consists of a completely plain fine white cloth, or one covered with brilliantly coloured flowers, which they wrap around their body, and takes on the form of a costume, as if one were wrapping a towel around one's head. They only cover their shoulders with a cloak of light and transparent cloth which comes down to their knees, the sleeves are short but broad, and they only wear this cloak in the city. The women wear similar garments to the men. They shave their heads and pull out the hairs of their beard. They are very particular about cleanliness, and frequently wash in perfumed water. On ceremonial occasions they wear silk embroidered with gold and silver.

The houses of the ordinary people are fairly comfortable for their needs, and they are easy to build, being only made of wood and leaves. The walls are canes joined together and bound with foliage. They hardly have any windows. The houses are built on high piles which protect them from floods that normally cover the country each year. Rich persons have solid brick buildings covered with tiles. As for their furniture, it consists of a few carpets and cushions. They do not use chairs, tables, beds, tapestries, cabinets, or paintings; but as much as they do without many things, so one should consider them richer. Their houses are quite clean, their ordinary food consists of rice and fruits, which the country has in abundance. They do not lack chickens, oxen, venison or game, but they believe that it is a sin to take the life of an animal, so they do not normally eat any; they do not think it a sin to eat the flesh of an animal which has already died, but to kill it in order to eat it. But as in the Kingdom of Siam there are enough persons who scorn this superstition, or who do not fear to load themselves with the sin of killing animals, it happens that there is enough meat on sale, and the Siamese do not refuse to eat it, profiting thus by the sins of their kind.

They have fewer scruples over eating fish, the more so as their lives are not taken from them in a cruel manner as with animals, which is done with much bloodshed, heart-rending cries and by means of a barbarous iron which they plunge into the beast's entrails. Fish, on the contrary, are taken in nets and die as though naturally; thus reason the Siamese.

Fish according to their principles constitute their most ordinary dish. They have plenty of them and they are very good, because of the multitude and size of the rivers watering the country.

Their drink is plain water, but they nevertheless make a brandy from rice which they leave to ferment in water with a leaf they call nipa;<sup>37</sup> this is very strong and intoxicates like wine.

During our stay in Siam our meals ordinarily comprised fish. We took tea, which is drunk very hot with a little sugar. We found it very good, and compared to the effects of wine, those

35. This conception of the need to balance the heat and humidity inside the body is typical of the period.

36. King James version: "Better is a handful with quietness, than both hands full with travail."

37. "Nipre" in the text; presumably the nipa palm. The Malay word *nipah* entered European languages through Portuguese. The coconut palm or the sugar palm are more often used for making toddy.

caused by tea when one drinks it in this country, where the stomach is weakened by the heat, and its strength contends with the quality of the food, one cannot doubt which of the two has preference, the more so as this leaf, the use of which is so common in these countries, has excellent properties, the most remarkable of which is that of intoxication. In this it is very different from other beverages which men use, which taken to excess, remove or enfeeble their reason, whereas tea fortifies it and frees it from the vapours which prevent its functioning.

As one lives cheaply in Siam, as the people are gentle, as one knows their inclination to repose, and as there is much freedom both for religion and for commerce, so many foreigners come there, some as artisans, others for trade, others still for the ease of living. This made me think that if our Frenchmen who are interested in commerce wished to set up in Siam, they would do well to send a number of artisans of all kinds, who would bring credit to the nation, and would be able to earn a lot of money for themselves, provided that these people were well-ordered and not impertinent.

The Siamese have no exercises for the skills of bearing arms, riding horses, or dancing; they study neither philosophy, medicine, nor mathematics. Their theology consists of a few fables. All their knowledge lies in writing and knowing the laws concerning government and justice. Instead of scientific medicine they have the experience of various remedies which they use to cure ordinary illnesses with some success. They are inclined to have recourse to magic when their remedies do not succeed, and without understanding what is this magic, they used mysterious agreements, letters, figures and words. They are very curious to know what the future will bring, and are equally credulous in allowing themselves to be swindled by impostors who proclaim their skills in divination.

Their writing is quite similar to ours, both for the characters, for the number of letters and the way of arranging the words, which is from left to right. They only write using a pencil on soft paper, which has to be glued to one or two other sheets to be strong enough. A big book is often only a single sheet of paper several ells in length, folded and folded again, rather like the screens found in our bedrooms.

The entire state is monarchical and perfectly well governed. The King is absolute, and if he has some officials to conduct his affairs, it is only to consult them or to signify his intentions so that they carry them out, in which they are very punctual and faithful.

The advantage of their government consists principally in the subordination which exists between the King and his subjects. The King indicates his intentions to the officials of his council; these convey them to the governors of the provinces; the governors convey them to lesser officials, and these repeat them to other lords whom they call *nai*;<sup>38</sup> each *nai* is like a prefect placed above a certain group of people of greater or lesser number according to the favour the *nai* enjoys; he has to answer for the people who are under him and who accord him

marked respect. The government appears well regulated and represents quite well the true use of royal power, everyone does his duty, nothing is done with violence, and the faults of the lower chiefs are made up for or corrected by the diligence of the superiors.

In a word, the dependence which exists between people is carefully respected; all those under one particular obey like slaves; each gives account at a certain time to the superior officials and by degrees everything comes back to the King. Two things contribute most to the good administration of the country. One is that all the officials can be removed according to the wish of the ruler who has placed them there, and he deposes them as it suits him; this means that each desires to conduct his duties correctly. The other thing is that in the distribution of offices, consideration is principally given to merit, the posts held and services rendered, and not at all to birth. This means that each tries to make himself worthy of the favour of the monarch, by the recommendation of his personal merit. The respect which is shown to the King is considerable, exceeding the bounds that a human should receive, and honouring him like a god. In this they show their blindness; they only speak to the King on their knees, their hands joined above their heads, the sign of the greatest respect, and bent down to the ground without daring to look on him. They call him the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the master of the waters, the most powerful on earth, the ruler of the sea, the arbiter of happiness and misfortune of his subjects. This is the kind of flattery men attribute to the great, qualities which belong only to God. The Christian religion teaches more modest sentiments, and commands on the part of God that subjects obey their rulers, but it also teaches the same rulers to fear God and to recognize that they are human, and have only received from Him the power which raises them, for the benefit of their subjects who are placed beneath them.

What further contributes to augment the religious respect which the people of Siam show their sovereign is the practice he has of only showing himself occasionally to the public, and only on certain festivals, with the greatest brilliance and pomp possible. He normally only goes forth twice a year, once on land and once on water. All the court, magnificently attired, accompanies him. When he goes by land he is carried on an elephant in a howdah<sup>39</sup> resplendent in precious stones and the number of his suite reaches 10,000 persons. But the procession still more grand is that which is made on water, because of the great throng of galleys which accompany him, numbering more than 300 or 400. They are all gilded inside and out, and each carries thirty or forty oarsmen, some of whom also have their arms and shoulders gilded. These oarsmen cut through the waters with extraordinary speed, and the banks of the river of Siam echo with the sound of the waves caused by the passage of the oars.

The King's galley sparkles with very fine gold which goes even down below the waterline; above it is a magnificent

38. De Bourges actually writes "Naja".

39. "Tower" in the original.

throne. The King appears there dressed in precious robes, covered with a crown of solid gold decorated with fine diamonds. Two golden wings hang from this crown onto the King's shoulders. All the lords and officials of the crown follow the King in their covered barges, each decorated according to their power, their means and their offices. The banks are lined up with great crowds of people who fill the air with shouts of joy. The ruler, in order to appear no less pious than powerful, does not omit on such ceremonial occasions to visit some famous temple and make magnificent presents to the priests who officiate the devotions. The object of these ceremonies and their justification is to keep the people in a state of veneration of Royal Majesty, being certain that he needs to have their eyes dazzled by external magnificence, to retain the respect and submission of his subjects.

A word about the coins. There is a lot of silver in Siam, and that of the most important coin is very pure and almost round in shape, marked with the die of the sovereign, which they call *ticals*, which are worth 37 *sols* of our French money. There is another coin called a *mayon*, worth half a *tical*;<sup>40</sup> they also have *fuang*<sup>41</sup> worth half a *mayon* and a *sampaye*<sup>42</sup> which is worth half a *fuang*. The silver of these coins is very pure.

We have already remarked that foreigners have easy access to all the Kingdom, either to set up there and to live there according to their laws,<sup>43</sup> or to trade or practice the arts in which they excel. I would only add that they are not hindered in any respect, providing they do nothing contrary to the state and the authority of the sovereign. To forestall disorders which the foreigners could cause, they are careful to appoint for each nation there in any numbers a chief among them, who must reply for all those from his country. Furthermore, the King names a noble at the court or one of his officials to be as the protector and special patron of this nation. The chief must turn to this noble either to learn the decision of the King in respect of any requests he has made, or for his interests and the affairs which concern his nation.

In addition to that, as the city of Siam is divided into several islands by canals forming the river, care is taken to place each nation on an island or in a separate quarter, so that there are few quarrels which are often caused by the mixture of nationalities who have natural antipathies.

They also require all the foreigners who live in Siam to renew each year on a certain solemn day the oath of allegiance sworn to the King. This ceremony is carefully observed; all the officials of the crown and all the foreigners must take part in it. The King seated on a throne receives the oath, which each swears according to his rank, after which he is given some water to drink which they call the water of the oath of alle-

giance. This is considered sacred by them, and for this effect has been prepared by the sacerdotaly of the idols, with ceremonies full of superstition. The priests hold the tip of a sword in this water and issue many curses against perjurers in the belief that all those who do not genuinely promise their fidelity to the King will die instantly, suffocated by this holy water. One can thus conclude that they are all either very sincere or that this water has few qualities, since one never sees anyone die after the ceremony.

### CHAPTER XIII: THE RELIGION OF SIAM

I do not believe there is a country in the world where there are more religions and where their practice is more [freely] permitted than in Siam. The Gentiles, Christians, Mahometans, who are all divided into different sects, have complete liberty to follow whichever cult they think best. The Portuguese, the English, the Dutch, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Peguans, the people of Cambodia, Malacca, Cochinchina, Champa<sup>44</sup> and several other places along the north coast<sup>45</sup> have their establishments in Siam. There are nearly 2,000 Catholics, mostly Portuguese, who come from various parts of the Indies, from where they have been expelled, and have taken refuge in Siam, where they have a separate quarter which is a suburb of the city.<sup>46</sup> They have two public churches: one is under the direction of the Jesuits and the other is governed by the Dominicans. They have as much liberty for their religion as if they were in Goa.<sup>47</sup> The holy office is conducted, they preach, the most Holy Sacrament is carried in procession, the pagans themselves would not find anything to reproach them with. In our time someone was sufficiently poorly advised to insult the Christians who were taking part in a ceremony, which not being understood by this man, caused him to laugh, at which a zealous Portuguese took offence and rained blows upon him. This man went to complain to the court for the insolence of the Portuguese and wanted to make a political issue out of it, thinking that being a subject of the King his cause would be taken against the foreigner. He received no other reply than that he had learn to live [properly], and he should not another time be so insolent as to trouble whomsoever in the practice of his religion.

I sometimes enquired why the King of Siam made himself so lenient in permitting in his realm and in his capital city so many religions, since it is a received maxim of the most esteemed politics<sup>48</sup> that only one should be permitted, for fear

40. La Loubère (1693, 164) maintains "The *Tical* is a Silver Coin and is worth four *Mayons*."

41. "Fouants" in the original.

42. La Loubère (1693, 164) says the *paye* is not a coin, but "the *Song-Paye*, that is to say the two *Payes*, are a Silver Coin, which is worth half a *Fouang*."

43. Presumably meaning the laws of the Siamese.

44. Spelt here, as in the entry for Chapter X, "Ciampa".

45. That is, the coast of the South China Sea going north from Siam.

46. The Portuguese village, *mooban portuges*, was located on the right bank of the Chao Phraya River below Ayudhya.

47. Goa was the seat of the Portuguese archbishop with nominal authority throughout the Indies. It was a Portuguese colony from 1510 to 1961.

48. Most esteemed, one takes it, by Louis XIV and his advisors.

that, should they multiply, the diversity of beliefs would cause spiritual friction, and so lead to conflict.

I was informed that this sovereign follows another political maxim; for as he derives great profit from the sojourn of foreigners in his states, in the arts, in the flow of the goods produced in the country, in the arrival of those from abroad, that he invites them, with the liberty he accords everyone, to establish themselves in his realm and to continue their commerce. There is another reason for this conduct; this is the view which is held by the Siamese that all religions are good, which is why they show themselves hostile to none, provided that it is not in conflict with the laws of the governing of the country.

They say that heaven is like a great palace to which several paths lead, some are shorter, some more frequented, some more difficult, but that all in the end arrive at the palace of bliss which men seek; that it would be something too difficult to determine in deciding which of these paths is the best, the more so that the number of religions being great, the examination of them all would be very irksome, and all one's life would be consumed in this research before being able to decide. And given that they believe in the plurality of gods, they add that as they are all great lords, they require of men different forms of worship and desire to be honoured in divers fashions.

Those who have observed more carefully the opinions of the Siamese concerning religion maintain that their indifference on this point is one of the most established maxims and the most approved by their learned men. The gentleness of their character, the presence and frequentation of so many foreigners, the prudent affability that they are obliged to show them, has committed them in this pernicious opinion, which means that despairing of finding the truth, they do not concern themselves with seeking it. This indifference is one of the greatest obstacles to their conversion, for when learned Christians expound our holy faith to them, and explain the reasons which prove its truth, they do not contradict; and, agreeing that the Christian religion is good, they merely maintain that it is bold to dismiss other religions, and since they have the object of adoring the gods, one must believe that the gods are happy with this state. This is the way the Siamese reason, in which they reveal their blindness; since their indifference to religion only proceeds from the ignorance of the unity of God, who cannot be worshipped by contrary and opposing forms.<sup>49</sup>

This indifference is the cause that, not given to deep reflection about anything, they demonstrate a great lack of response to the very things they profess to believe in, about which they do not seem clearly convinced. This is why it is difficult to state clearly what are the principles of their religion; even their priests only speak hesitatingly about them, and prefer to send you to their books, rather than undertake a reply.

The Siamese are idolaters. They have a great number of idols and their multiplicity is no less strange than their appear-

ance and size. You can see on an altar up to fifty or sixty idols more than forty feet high; they are made of brick and stone, and gilded on the outside. In the houses of the priests can be seen galleries where there are 300 or 400 idols of different shapes and sizes, all gilded and shining brightly.

The temples they build for these idols are most sumptuous. One could say that the Siamese only have skill and wealth for these constructions, and as much as they are moderate in their expenditure in that it concerns them, so they are extravagant in the accommodation of their temples. These buildings are solid, and constructed rather like our churches. They have a main entrance, the doors of which are gilded, and the inside of the temple is painted; the light comes in from long narrow windows built into the thickness of the wall, so that hardly any daylight penetrates. At the end of the temple in the part furthest from the door is the altar, which one reaches by climbing several steps, as though in an amphitheatre, and on which are the idols. Near these temples are the monasteries of the priests, who are usually housed the best in the country. They have their dormitories and cells where they live communally; they also have cloisters similar to those of our monks, all around which are arranged statues of humans. In the middle of the cloister is a pyramid<sup>50</sup> of great height, brilliantly gilded, so well applied to the brick that the inclemency of the weather never diminishes its sparkle. The custom is to enclose beneath these pyramids the ashes of some great lord.

The ordinary people and the talapoins<sup>51</sup> (who are the priests) assemble on certain feast days in the temples to render homage to their idols. As they believe it is a sin to kill animals, they sacrifice nothing which has life, but only present and lay before the idols the products of the land, rice, and cloth, which, after they have been exposed some time in front of the idols, are used by the talapoins. It is indeed a matter of compassion to see these deluded people render so much honour to masses of stone. I was surprised to see their outward devotion, the signs of respect they display and the religious confidence they attribute to these idols.

I know that some of them wish to justify the crime of idolatry, saying that they recognize and honour one God, the supreme Lord of all things; and that if they have images, it is to keep the likeness and memory of great persons who have lived holily in accordance with their law, so that, in considering their portraits, they are stimulated to imitate their virtues by the memory of these persons.

This indeed is what some Siamese priests say in reply to Christians who attack them for the impiety of their idolatry, pretending to be no more idolatrous than they in the use they make of these images, which they exhibit to the worship of the people.

50. All the French in the second half of the seventeenth century were to refer to stupas as "pyramids".

51. Talapoins again is the common term used by Europeans (in the first instance by the Portuguese, as de Bourges himself says a little further on) to designate Siamese monks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; its etymology is disputed, but may derive from *Mon tala*, meaning "lord" and *poe*, meaning "we".

49. No attempt will be made here to disprove de Bourges's narrow viewpoints or to decide where he picked up some of his opinions.

It is however certain that this reply, which they have borrowed from Christians, cannot justify their idolatry, for in the first instance it is patent that these people are very uncertain in their belief in the unity of God, they have no fixed form of worship for this Supreme Being, their books make no exact mention of Him; furthermore, the divine tribute which they render these idols stops with the idol itself, without it being carried by them to another subject apart from the idol. And when they invoke the idol, they ask of it without any reference whatever to God things depending on His good will, concerning life, health, and success in their affairs. And on the occasions when it might be true that they honour these statues not as idols, but as images of illustrious persons, they are still inexcusable, rendering divine honours to those they know have not recognized the true God, the unique Creator and Lord of all things, so indeed the Siamese blinded by their idolatry continue to render Him no particular and determined honour.

This is what we have reasonably divined by means of our Christian intermediaries on the occasions when we sought to enter into discussion with the talapoins. I shall introduce here an example. When the Right Reverend Bishop of Béryste was in Tenasserim, he went to visit one of the chief priests of that place, with a Portuguese to serve as an interpreter. After having saluted him in the manner of the country, in order not to surprise the old man, he questioned him as though he wished to learn about his faith from him. This man began his discourse by telling us that it was necessary to start with the principle that there were seven gods, that their dwelling was in heaven, which was a delightful place full of pleasures which one inevitably reached after death. Mgr de Béryste gave for his part the articles of his belief, without bothering to refute his extravagances, and he appeared to listen with satisfaction, confessing in the end that he believed the Christian religion was very good, and that the God of the Christians and his were brothers, that his was older and more powerful than the younger; this was seen, he said, in the difference they had together, which having obliged them to take arms against each other, the younger had been overcome, seized and put to death for his revolt. This is the musing which this learned man recounted to us, which shows clearly how much these people are removed from the knowledge of the real God.

We were persuaded that the basis of this outrageous story could be that he had heard that the God of the Christians was put on the cross and had died there. They are certainly aware of this since they see on our altars the image of the holy crucifix. Mgr de Béryste seized the occasion to speak of the resurrection, proposing an objection which was this: that he was surprised how he could believe the Christian religion was good as he declared and that nevertheless the God which this religion worships was dead, it being difficult to believe that a religion could be good which had no God; and that if the God of the Christians were dead, he no longer existed, or he must have been resuscitated if he still lives.

This objection was not raised other than with the object of entering into a discourse on the incarnation of the Eternal Word, and to get him to understand that the God of the

Christians had been both mortal and immortal according to the two natures which He conjoined in His divine person; this objection, I must record, so embarrassed him<sup>52</sup> that he did not know what to say, and himself concluded the interview, directing us to read some books dealing with their religion. Yet this priest was one of the most important in the country, he was the abbot of several talapoins, and ruled over a famous temple; we were advised to consult him as a person of learning who could satisfy our enquiries and resolve our doubts. We also consulted some others, and when one asked them their opinion about the number of gods, none replied that there is only one, but some replied seven, others nine, yet others another number. This proves what we have postulated, that the Siamese are idolaters, since they transfer the worship due to the true God to idols which are the work of their own hands, and to mortal humans who are the work of this same sovereign and unique God to whom glory and honour are forever due.

The Siamese being so little decided in their own religion do not have particular views concerning the future life; one cannot say that they believe in the immortality of the soul, because they affirm nothing in this respect. They also do not say that it finishes with the body; on the contrary, they are of the opinion that it survives it. This is why in their lifetime they are careful to prepare themselves for the needs of another life; they accumulate money, they save all they can and hide it in some concealed place with as much secrecy as possible, so that the husband does not tell his wife, the father does not tell his children, and a friend does not inform his most trustworthy companion. One cannot say how much money this aberrant opinion causes to be hidden every day, with the result that it must reach immense sums, and to prevent people hunting for it, they fortify this first opinion with another no less ridiculous, that the greatest sacrilege a man can commit is to steal money from the dead.

They could nevertheless lose their illusions concerning this view, which inconveniences them in their lifetime, and serves no purpose after their death, if they noted the date of the period when they hid under the earth these reserve amounts destined for the use of poor wandering souls, for they would see, either that they had no need of it, or that they forgot the places where these treasures were concealed, since the souls never come back to claim them. This opinion is not only held by the ordinary people; the great lords and princes are also concerned with providing for the future, but they do not hide their treasures in concealed places, they construct large beautiful pyramids at the foot of which they bury money they set aside for themselves, and the talapoins watch over these pyramids, which have this convenience for the souls of these illustrious dead, in that they serve as a sign and place more easily to find the location of their treasures. One can see from this that the Siamese believe that after death there is another life, but since they believe in the need of money to provide for necessities in

52. Unsurprisingly, given that casuistry is little appreciated or understood in Siam.

their future condition, they do not think that the soul is of a spiritual nature after it is separated from the body and has no need of provisions of the kind of those which are only used for sustenance of the life which we have in common with animals.

The precepts which the religion of the Siamese prescribes for moral conduct are in conformity with the natural law which God has implanted in men's being for the conduct of their actions. These precepts can be reduced to two which subsume all the others: to avoid evil and practice good deeds. As for the observation of the first, the Siamese detest injustice, and are neither malicious, nor cruel, nor deceitful; and for the second they are very much inclined to observe it, displaying charity to everyone, especially to strangers, passers-by, animals and the dead.

They are indeed superstitious in what concerns animals, they never do them any harm, they do not kill them, they take care to feed them, and some have the habit before eating of always setting aside a portion which is destined to serve as food for animals, which they serve at a table correctly prepared from which birds can feed with absolute freedom.

The talapoins who are their priests benefit by their charity more than all others. Although they are poor by profession, they are the best provided in the abundance of alms which are daily given them. They are rarely given money, but they receive liberally of things that grow in the country so that there remains enough to give others; and myself, when passing before a house of the talapoins in Tenasserim on my journey from Siam, benefited from their charity. They housed me and provided me with their usual presents, which are rice, fruits and other refreshments. To gather alms they send into the town the young talapoins, who go seeking them from door to door. There are festivals when the devout people have the piety to take them themselves [to the temple], especially when they go on a pilgrimage.

During a flood which covered the city we withdrew to a league from Siam on a rise where there was a famous pagoda. We saw a great crowd of pilgrims bringing many presents to enrich the temple, the idol and the talapoins, who are never forgotten. Among the things which these good pilgrims revered in this temple was the image of a human foot, of extraordinary dimensions; it was at least three feet long and fifteen inches wide.<sup>53</sup> They say that this is the form of the footprint of the first man which was implanted on a stone kept in this temple, and in one stride he took his other foot to a high mountain which is in the Island of Ceylon.<sup>54</sup> One should not be surprised that they

53. One would be inclined to think this could be the temple at Phraphuttaht, famous for its footprint of the Buddha, but this is considerably more than "one league" away from Ayudhya; however, de Bourges's memory of the distance (he wrote his text in Europe two years after leaving Siam) may have contracted.

54. Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka is a conical mountain 2,245 m high on the south-west ridge of the Kandayan hills. An excavation at its summit is held by Buddhists to be a footprint of the Buddha. It is also a place of pilgrimage for Muslims, who believe Adam stood there for a thousand years after being driven from paradise.

have temples forty feet high since they believe a man was able to put at the same time his two feet on two mountains more than a thousand leagues' distant from each other.<sup>55</sup> We had plenty of time to watch these pilgrims bring their gifts to this footprint of the first man, which after being sanctified by the offering which they made to it, immediately passed into the hands of the talapoins to be used for their purposes.

The Siamese also practice charity to the dead, and are most ostentatious in the celebration of their funerals; this is what they spend most on. They sometimes take a whole year in preparation, deciding on a convenient place to receive the ashes of the dead person, and they have a particular skill in embalming bodies.

The pyres are surrounded by many square towers, made of cypress wood<sup>56</sup> and decorated with sheets of rough paper painted in many colours contrived with art and pleasing to behold. They place many fireworks on the top of the towers. When everything is ready, some of the talapoins who take part in the ceremony go to the location of the funeral, and some go to collect the body from its resting place; it is closed in a bier or gilded coffin over which is raised a pyramid decorated with a variety of ornamental carpentrywork similarly gilded. Sometimes they make coffins with different shapes. We saw that of a famous talapoin whose body had been kept for a whole year; his coffin was in the shape of a dragon of huge dimensions, so big that a man could enter its mouth to open or close the device. When the body arrives, the coffin is removed to be placed on the pyre, the talapoins go around the body several times while it is being consumed by the flames, the fireworks are set off, to which noise is added that of several musical instruments. After the body is burnt the ashes are interred beneath a pyramid. Thus these people have learned to remove from funerals their lugubrious aspect, and by the pomp of the ceremonies which accompany them, they are less an occasion of mourning than an agreeable spectacle to diminish the horror of death and entertain the participants.<sup>57</sup>

Before concluding this chapter I shall add a few remarks concerning their priests, their customs and their singularities.

The Portuguese gave them the name of talapoins. They only wear cotton cloth dyed yellow, their dress is like that of the people except that instead of a cloak they wear a sort of shoulder-belt of red cloth, which goes from the left shoulder to the right side and covers the stomach. They walk barefoot and bareheaded, carrying in their hands a palm leaf fan with which they protect their heads from the heat of the sun.

They live communally under the leadership of a head, their food is poor and austere, and they only have one meal a day, it only being permitted them to eat fruit in the evening.

55. The logic of this sentence is curious.

56. There is no cypress wood in Siam; de Bourges presumably means a rare and costly wood.

57. For once de Bourges sees something to praise in the practice of religion in Siam, comparing the European funeral tradition unfavourably.

Although this continual fasting is severe for them, it is somewhat abated by the use they make of the concoction of areca, which we have described above. This gives much strength to those who use it. Among the doctrinal matters which these talapoins inculcate most frequently in the people is that which teaches that the shortest and most certain way of reaching a state of happiness in the next life is to be benefactors of the talapoins. Indeed, this precept is found inserted into the articles of faith, of which they are the interpreters, the people being persuaded that according to the degree of liberality they accord these impostors they will possess in the next world more or less felicity, so they take care to provide them with as much as they can according to their wealth.

These priests are required to remain continent and to stay unmarried for as long as they wear the robes of their calling; but as they are free to remove them, they can also marry when they tire of living in obedience, and on doffing their yellow robes, they are freed of all their obligations, so that in this country the robe forms the talapoins.

They also have communal devotions; at daybreak and at nightfall they assemble at the sound of the bell to say their prayers, in the middle of which and in different postures they often repeat the important principles of their doctrine, the first of which is not to kill animals, the second to do good to the talapoins to find their benefaction one day increased and multiplied by their virtue in another life. As they maintain that people always do good to them, they are careful in this point in that they also wish to do good to others; to this end they provide hospitality to all those who come before them, and have in front of their dwellings vaulted rooms<sup>58</sup> agreeably set out where they receive people, and share with them in a modest and religious fashion of the best they have.

The people, who normally admire things which have outward show, hold them in great veneration, considering them among those who after their death could be sure to come into the possession of very great wealth; and the respect they have of them prevents them from remarking the secret disorders which exist among them and which are a necessary consequence of the idle life they lead. This also results in their leaving these good people in very great ignorance; so that mixing all religions, they go indifferently to say their prayers in the temples of the idols, or in the Christian churches.

Among the talapoins, some live alone, others have some public duties, yet others have care of the temples and conduct the ceremonies; these are known as *sancrats*,<sup>59</sup> who are the most noble rank of all, and are beneath the jurisdiction of a *sancrat*, a much esteemed person; it is he who presides at the King's pagoda which is two leagues away from Siam,<sup>60</sup> and on account

of this he is greatly respected by this monarch,<sup>61</sup> so that he has the honour to be seated beside him when he speaks with him and contents himself with a slight inclination of the head. This is a privilege of his eminent rank, for all the great lords of the realm never speak to the King except on their knees and with their heads bowed to the ground. Although the Siamese, both the talapoins and the people, are not particularly zealous in respect of their religion, which is an inveterate superstition and to which they accustomed from birth, one cannot all the same deny, in a sense, that they are very attached to it, it being difficult to get them to abandon it to follow a better one. This is not, as I said, that they greatly esteem the cult they profess, or that they believe it to be more holy or more certain than those proposed to them, but because they are ever convinced that one devotion can be better than another, without one being obliged to adhere to it, having, as I said, for maxim that several religions, although different and opposed, can be equally good, and if they give some preference to theirs, it is principally because of its modesty, in that it does not direct the condemnation and rejection of others. Conversely if they conceive an aversion to the Christian religion, it is mainly for this reason, that it establishes principles, which are nevertheless most certain, that as there is only one God there can only be one true religion.

Those who are in contact with the Siamese to attract them to our faith adopt this approach, of not acting disputatiously with them, and of not directly attacking their opinions, but of accommodating to their disposition, only proposing the advantages of the Christian religion over all other sects known to them. They are told of the excellence of the end which it proposes, the holiness of its laws, the miracles which accompanied its propagation throughout the world, and all the proofs which clearly show to those persons who seek the truth, that it is the work of the true God, who alone could have given man so perfect a religion. In a word, the Siamese listen with satisfaction to the discourses given them about the majesty of the Creator, but they do not easily accept that they be disabused of their superstitions, and when they notice that you seek to raise scruples about what they believe in, they no longer wish to listen to you. May it please the Lord to enlighten them with His Grace, so that being converted, they abandon the vanity of the idols, and attach themselves to the service and worship of the living God.

## IN AYUDHYA

Chapters XIV, XV, and XVI, respectively entitled "The sojourn of the Bishop of Béryste in Siam, and the beginning of his mission," "The continuation of our occupations in Siam until the departure of Mgr de Béryste for the town of Canton, the

58. *Sala*.

59. While the *sankarat* is generally translated as the Supreme Patriarch, de Bourges's idea that he has particular followers with the same name is, like many other of his comments concerning religion in Siam, erroneous.

60. It is difficult to establish which temple this might be, some 8–9 km from Ayudhya; it might be a reference to Bang Pa-in, which had a royal temple and palace at the time.

61. King Narai, reigned 26 October 1656 – 11 July 1688.

premier port of China," and "The departure from Siam and the embarkation of Mgr de Béryte for China," are more promising in name than in reality. The bishop's mission was to evangelize Cochin-China, and he spent all his time in Ayudhya seeking out Cochin-Chinese, baptizing them and preaching to them. There is no mention of being received at court nor indeed any mention of any Siamese in these chapters.

However, there are references to the Portuguese, not all of them flattering. It was to the Portuguese captain or head of settlement that the bishop and his party first addressed themselves on their arrival. They were "well received by him and he took pains to find a dwelling close to his; having informed all the priests and religious persons in the town of his arrival, most of them came to pay visits, following the custom of the country." De Bourges, in his agonizingly detailed account of their missionary activities, later notes "We were strangers in Siam, and even badly regarded by some Christians, who through over-zealous nationalism scarcely took any notice of us."

The French party received news from "several Christian merchants coming from Tenasserim who had left Masulipatam in September that they had left there some French ecclesiastics, and that a bishop had died there, and that they were about to embark for Tenasserim." Jacques de Bourges was consequently sent to Tenasserim to enquire about the party, which he presumed to be the Bishop of Heliopolis<sup>62</sup> and seven or eight Missionaries. He did the journey in record time, taking only twenty days, compared to the three months it had taken him and his episcopal party to travel from Tenasserim to Ayudhya. Though he is not explicit, he makes no mention of meeting any French Missionaries. He did have problems with a Portuguese, though, "who tried to prevent the Oranta (who is the person who acts as interpreter for foreigners) from issuing me with my *laisser-passer*, his intention being that I should not be able to join the Bishop of Béryte in time to accompany him in his embarkation for Canton, the premier port of China; however, I obtained what I required, and obliged this Portuguese to give me some letters addressed to Mgr de Béryte which he wished to retain."

The bishop decided that, since no other letters had been received in the three years they had been gone from France, fearing those sent in both directions had been intercepted, and since many questions related to the establishment of the new sees had to be decided by the Pope and the Sacred Congregation, he would send one of his party to Europe. Jacques de Bourges was selected for the duty. Before leaving for Canton the bishop wrote letters to the Governor-General of the Philippines, the Governor-General of the Dutch East India Company and the Vice-Principal of the Jesuits in Macao, seeking their assistance and informing them of the duties given to the Apostolic Vicars by the Pope. De Bourges notes that "It is a subject of consolation to see the great esteem our French Jesuits are accorded in these parts; this is proof that our nation can be usefully employed in these missions. The Portuguese who are

not great admirers of other people, and who only give praise to those who have truly merited it, say the nicest things possible of the French fathers..."

De Bourges concludes his Chapter XV with some pieces of advice. The first is moral. "When one enters the Indies, it is good to remember that one is entering lands where the air has a marvellous power to corrupt minds, by the contagion of poor example, but it is all the same useful to adapt early on to giving up many things which custom has made banal, such as taking frequent baths, walking through the streets in one's finery to visit the great accompanied by a group of slaves, spending much of one's time inhaling tobacco in order not to be bored, taking at all hours of the day tea with preserves, chewing at all times in the manner of secular persons the leaf or composition of areca, and finally indulging in other things, the use of which being not sufficiently regulated, diminishes the credit and esteem which an evangelical worker should maintain." Cleanliness was not apparently close to godliness in his mind; no wonder Choisy records King Narai's questioning of Phaulkon about the cleanliness of the French embassy in 1685, and asking if they brushed their teeth (Choisy 1687, entry for 15 October 1685).

The other two pieces of advice offered by Jacques de Bourges are more worldly. Like modern travellers desirous of getting the best rates of exchange, he is concerned that future visitors to the Indies get their money's worth. "The exchange of gold at thirty *sols* a Spanish pistole is lower in the Kingdom of Siam than in all the Indies. It is said with good foundation that the more one proceeds to Cochin-China or Tonkin, the rate becomes ever lower because of what is brought from China and Manila to Siam and from those other places. So one should dispose of all one has in gold in the Indies, and exchange it for coinage of the realm, which is as fine as that assayed in Paris, so that when one wishes to have some silver- or goldsmith's work done, one gives the weight in coins for that which one wants executed, and so there is only the workmanship to pay. At Masulipatam, Siamese silver has the same alloy as that of the Indies, without costing anything for its exchange. It is definitely advantageous not to miss this occasion, because ordinarily one pays five per cent in Siam just for the exchange of silver from the Indies, which is as fine as that of Siam."

The other practical piece of advice concerns the means of reaching the Indies, when ships were few. "The second suggestion concerns the journey which can be made here by passing through England, which sends each year ships directly to Banten<sup>63</sup> and which then go to Cambodia, where in 1662 they re-established a godown. In the latter place one finds sufficient occasions to go to Cochin-China and various other places; but if English ships cannot be found going to Bantem, some can always be found going to Aceh,<sup>64</sup> from where there is no lack of

63. Banten, Bantem, Bantan, on the north-west point of Java, was an important British trading post until 1682, when it was taken over by the Dutch.

64. Aceh, at the northern end of Sumatra, was another independent state conducting a vigorous trade in the region.

62. The Bishop of Heliopolis, François Pallu (1624-1684), finally arrived in Ayudhya on 27 January 1664.

occasion for passing over to Cambodia, which is now a province of Cochín–China, and also for other ports on this coast of Asia. Ships can also often be found in Bantem going directly to China. One could also seek out Dutch ships, and could hope for this grace of civility on the part of the gentlemen of that country, providing one can persuade them that there are people sufficiently disinterested in wishing to go to China not to trade in anything and become rich, but rather to make oneself poor there, by using one's own money and giving one's life to the salvation of souls, and simply out of love of our Lord."

## COMMENT

Jacques de Bourges's account of Siam is interesting both by what it includes and what it omits. No mention is made of the inner provinces, as it were, listed by later commentators: Choisy, for example, listed twelve, namely Sri Ayudhya, Bangkok, Phitsanulok, Petchaburi, Phichai, Kamphaeng Phet, Ratchaburi, Tenasserim, Ligor [Nakhon Sri Thammaraj], Kanchanaburi, Korat [Nakhon Ratchasima] and Nakorn Sawan, and in addition named Junk Ceylon [Phuket] as a main town, along with Tenasserim, Ligor, Petchaburi, Bangkok, Phitsanulok, Kanchanaburi and Korat (Choisy 1687, entry for 18 January 1686). No other commentators appear to have listed Kedah, Perak, Johor, and Pahang as Siamese provinces, but rather Siamese dependencies.

The large number of non-Siamese resident in the capital in particular, where they lived in their own quarters, struck most visitors to the kingdom. Most commented too on the fertility of the land and the disinclination of the Siamese to hard work, perhaps without understanding that the tropics do not necessarily require labour in the same way as in the colder climates of Europe. De Bourges makes no mention of the six months' obligation for the *corvée*, to which, coupled with the fact that all lands were in theory the possession of the king and could be taken away by him at any time, many attributed a disinclination to labour on the part of the men, and the greater diligence of the women, left to provide for their families unaided for six months a year.

Among the trade items listed by de Bourges, missing is a commodity much appreciated by most other traders, and that is eagle-wood (which also went under the names of *agalloch*, *aloes-wood*, and *callambac*), an aromatic wood, which Schouten mentions as "one of the principal commodities" traded (Schouten 1671, 148).

There are several fruits missing from the list presented by de Bourges (the rambutan, the pomelo among others) and it is surprising to find him listing the areca nut as a fruit; still more surprising is the obvious favour with which he views the durian. His remarks on the merits of tea were in advance of the fashion of tea drinking which became widespread in Europe rather later, but he makes no mention of imported ginseng, which Tachard and Choisy were to describe at length.

His remarks relating to the government of the country are on the whole very flattering though perhaps not always accurate. Schouten, who had a much better knowledge of the country and its ways, is far more detailed, though his comments related to an earlier reign. The taking of the water of the oath of allegiance obviously struck de Bourges, as with many other commentators, as a curious custom.

There is perhaps little point in detailing all his errors of judgment in relation to the Siamese practice of religion (his long chapter on this is often more concerned with inculcating Christianity than understanding the Siamese viewpoint). He clearly failed to appreciate that the images in the temples were of the Buddha, and manages to describe (by his lights) Buddhism without mentioning the Buddha at all. He simply saw the Siamese as idolaters. He appears to know nothing about the Siamese views on metempsychosis, which fascinated later French clerics. Since de Bourges and his party did not speak Siamese, they were dependent on what they could learn from Portuguese speakers, and one presumes that much of this information came through the Portuguese clerics established in Ayudhya. If so, they appear to have tried but little to understand the religious practices of the Siamese. De Bourges does, however, find four things to praise: firstly the great religious tolerance in the country (certainly not to be found in his own), the widespread practice of charity, the belief in "natural law" of doing good and avoiding evil, and the practice of making funerals joyous rather than lugubrious occasions. His idea that vast sums of money were buried all over the place for use in the afterlife appears to be built on the practice of depositing precious objects at the base of *chedi* (his "pyramids").

De Bourges's published text of 1666 had a certain success. It had a second edition in 1668, and a third in 1683, both in Paris. It was twice translated into Dutch, in 1669 and 1683 (both printed in Amsterdam), and was translated into German in 1671 (in Leipzig). It should be noted that little else published was available on Siam: of the Portuguese sources, Camôens<sup>65</sup> was considered poetically fanciful, Mendez Pinto<sup>66</sup> a liar, the *Decadas*<sup>67</sup> were largely unknown, like de Coutre's *Vida*,<sup>68</sup> and

65. Luis de Camôens (1524–1580), who mentions the Chao Phraya and was shipwrecked off the mouth of the Mekong, published his epic poem *Os Lusíadas* in 1572.

66. The *Peregrinação* of Fernão Mendez Pinto (d. 1583) was published in 1614 and translated into French in 1645, but much of what he wrote was (sometimes erroneously) considered fanciful; Mendez Pinto spent some time in Siam in the 1540s.

67. The *Decadas* were started by João de Barros and continued by Diogo do Couto (1542–1616).

68. Jacques de Coutre (b. Bruges 1577 d. Saragossa 1640) had his son Esteban publish his memoirs in Madrid in 1640 in Spanish under the title *Vida de Jaques de Covitre, Natural de la Ciudad de Brogas*; he spent eight months in Siam in 1596. The importance of his text has only recently been appreciated.

on the Dutch side van Neijenrode<sup>69</sup> and Van Vliet<sup>70</sup> were not published until much later, leaving only Schouten<sup>71</sup> as likely to be available, but perhaps not to de Bourges, since all editions from 1638 were in Dutch until the appearance of the English and German translations in 1663, and the French translation did not appear until 1672.

## EPILOGUE

Jacques de Bourges's one year stay in Ayudhya in 1662–63 was not to be the end of his association with Siam. After returning from Europe in 1669 and staying very briefly, he went on to Tonkin, where he established himself at Hean, together with Father Deydier, some fifty km south-east of Hanoi; he was twice arrested for proselytizing and once imprisoned and

beaten. As with all the Missionaries from the Rue du Bac, he soon ran into conflicts with the Jesuits (he maintained nineteen propositions they upheld were contrary to good theology and discipline, and requested Rome to condemn them). In 1679 he was named Bishop of Auren and apostolic vicar of western Tonkin. As there was no bishop in the vicinity other than Mgr Laneau (the Bishop of Metellopolis, apostolic vicar in Siam from 1679–1696), de Bourges returned to Ayudhya and was consecrated on 17 May 1682. Launay (1920, 40) writes that the religious ceremony attracted a fairly large number of pagans who asked permission to witness the occasion, and that all due ceremony was observed.

De Bourges returned at once to Tonkin and consecrated Deydier who had been named Bishop of Ascalon and apostolic vicar of eastern Tonkin. While the missionary work continued, so did conflicts with the Jesuits; Pope Innocent XII in 1689 had to order all Christians to submit to the apostolic vicars, and again in 1696 felt it necessary to order the Archbishop of Goa and the Bishops of Malacca and Macao to respect the jurisdiction of the apostolic vicars.

De Bourges endured some further persecution in 1705 and again in 1712. He was expelled from Tonkin in 1713 and took refuge in Siam, with twenty-two seminarians, and funds to support the impoverished and almost extinct Ayudhya mission (Launay 1920, 110). In his short time there, he persuaded the apostolic vicar of Siam, Mgr de Ciccé, to return the seminary from the capital to its original site in Mahapram, slightly to the north of Ayudhya, the land being restored to the mission. Jacques de Bourges died in Ayudhya on 9 August 1714, aged about eighty-four years, and was presumably buried in the grounds of the church of St Joseph.

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69. Cornelius van Neijenrode's *Account of the Kingdom of Siam* was probably written in 1621 but not published until 1871, according to Han ten Brummelhuis (1987, 16).

70. Jeremias van Vliet was working in the Dutch factory in Ayudhya from 1633 to 1641; it was probably about 1641, when he returned to Batavia, that he wrote his *Description of the Kingdom of Siam* and his *Short History of the Kings of Siam*. These works were not widely known until the twentieth century, according to Han ten Brummelhuis (1987, 32).

71. Joost Schouten's account appeared in the VOC registers in 1636 and was first published in The Hague in 1638. Cordier lists six other editions in Dutch between 1652 and 1662.

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