



Placide's map of Siam and neighbouring countries, 1686, courtesy of Dr Dawn F. Rooney.

# Seventeenth Century Siam: Its Extent and Urban Centres According to Dutch and French Observers

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The extent of the Kingdom of Siam and its provinces and towns in the seventeenth century was a matter of some disagreement among the principal observers from the Netherlands and France when one compares the texts and maps of the period. This leaves aside local considerations of the conception of a boundary, recently and pertinently discussed by Thongchai Winichakul (1994). An examination is made here of the records of Schouten and Van Vliet, and of de Bourges, Chaumont, Choisy, Tachard, Gervaise and La Loubère, and for comparative purposes, the maps of Placide and that which appeared in La Loubère will be considered. Unfortunately it has not been possible to consult Cornelis van Neijenrode's text, written between 1617 and 1621, and only published in 1871 in Dutch.

## Schouten

Joost Schouten was in Siam, though not continuously, in various capacities for the VOC between 1628 and 1636, and his account, like that of Van Neijenrode, was written for the Governor General in Batavia. It had a happier publishing history than the earlier text though, appearing in Dutch in 1638 and being first translated into English in 1662. From 1663 it appeared in Manley's translation with Caron's account of the Kingdom of Japan, and the 1671 London edition is used here (in the Siam Society facsimile edition of 1986, with an introduction and notes by John Villiers).

Schouten places Siam between Ava, Pegu, Patani and Kedah, Cambodia, Laos, and Chiangmai, "so that the form of this Land is like an half-Moon, and containeth in its circuit four hundred and fifty Dutch miles, one Dutch mile makes six English" (1986:122). If this were so it would make the country some 2,700 English miles "in its circuit". He specifically mentions Iudica or Judica as the capital, and listed eighteen other principal "villages and towns". These are (with, in parentheses, the identifications given in the 1986 edition, in which Dr Villiers cites assistance from Dr Dhiravat na Pombejra): Picelouck (Phitsanulok),

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Sourckelouk (Sawankhalok), Capheng (unlocated, but a possible duplication of Kepinphet which follows), Soutcethay (Sukhothai), Kephinpet (Kamphaengphet), Conseywan (possibly, and we would say certainly, Nakhon Sawan), Pytsyay Pitsidi (Phichai), Lydure (unidentified), Tenou (Tenasserim), Marmelon (Moulmein), Martenayo (Martaban), Lygor (Ligor, or Nakhon Si Thammarat), Bordelong (Phatthalung), Tannassary (Tenasserim, thus repeated), Bancock (Bangkok), Pypry (Phetchaburi), Rapry (Ratchaburi), and Mergy (Mergui) (1986:124).

It is most unlikely that Schouten had visited more than a handful of these towns, so he was undoubtedly relying on information passed on to him by traders in contact with the inner parts of the kingdom. The possible duplication of Kamphaengphet is plausible, and the apparent duplication of Tenasserim can be explained by the Mergui–Tenasserim trading route only assuming importance after the establishment in 1639 of the East India Company post at Fort St. George, Madras, on the other side of the Bay of Bengal. As these towns are listed in no apparent order, it is difficult even to guess the location of Lydure.

Schouten mentions the tributes and presents obtained from subject princes and "Governours of Cities and Provinces" (1986:130), but does not mention any provinces by name.

### Van Vliet

Jeremias van Vliet was in Ayutthaya from 1633, when the VOC office was reopened after a closure of four years, to 1641. His *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, was, like the accounts of his predecessor, written to form an official report, and was first published in Dutch in 1692, undoubtedly as a consequence of the interest about Siam in Europe caused by the events of 1688, the usurpation of the throne by Petracha, the murder of Phaulkon, and the blockade of the French in Bangkok. The translation by L.F. van Ravenswaay, published in *JSS* in 1910, is used here.

Van Vliet knew of Schouten's description and specifically says that Schouten "has accurately described the situation of the country and so well pointed out the most remarkable things at that time that, for his successors, there is hardly anything else to describe but the events which have occurred since he left" (1910:5). He does, though, give a vast amount of supplementary information, notably in relation to trade and the consecration of city gates. He gives similar boundaries of the kingdom, ending it in the south at Pattani, and writes "The whole country has a circumference of about 450 miles and had the shape of a half moon" (1910:9). The phraseology is very similar to that of Schouten, but the size

is by no means the same, and something appears to have gone astray either in this text or, more probably, in Manley's comment on Dutch miles in his translation of Schouten.

Van Vliet also says there are eighteen towns which "are all provincial capitals and residences of the governors of the provinces" (1910:11), and then proceeds to list them, after naming the capital as Judia. They are "Poucelouck, Sorkelouck, Capheyn, Succethay, Kepenpit, Conseywan, Sianclangh, Bonrerongh, Leconsuan, Poucenongh, t'Santebon, Corassima, Lyoure, Thenau, Martenaya, Tanasserey, Lygoor Bordelongh, and Sangora" (*ibid*). Again we have Capheyn (Schouten's Capheng), and the unidentified Lyoure (Schouten's Lydure). "t'Santebon" is clearly Chanthaburi, "Corassima" similarly Korat, formally known as Nakhon Ratchasima; "Lygoor Bordelongh" is obviously a typographical mistake, since one is dealing with two towns, Ligor and Phatthalung, so that, including the capital province, one has a total of twenty provinces. "Bonrerongh" is a mystery ("Ban" something, perhaps), and one wonders if "Sianclangh" might be a duplication of Sangora (Songkhla), "Poucenongh" a repeat of Phitsanulok, and "Leconsuan" a repeat of Conseywan. "Thenau" seems to be Schouten's "Tenou", but if so duplicates Tenasserim. To have one province repeated is unfortunate, but to have done so in four cases seems implausibly careless.

If Van Vliet's list of provincial capitals poses problems, his list of smaller towns raises still more questions. He lists "the Island Mirgy" (Mergui), Cuy (Kuiburi), t'Siaya (Chaiya), Pyperi (Pripi, or Phetchaburi), Pitsiaboury (which seems to be the Thai version of Pyperi, namely Phetchaburi, and thus a repeat), Batsjabonay (which may be Ratchaburi), Melongh (Maeklong), Taatsyn (Thachin), Bannae (possibly Ban Na near present-day Nakhon Nayok), Paranthongh (unidentified, but phonologically close to Battamabang), Bion (also unidentified), and Bancock (1910:11). He adds, rather despairingly, "Further there are in the whole country many more towns, villages and populated places, all the names of which we cannot possibly ascertain" (*ibid*).

Having said that, in the course of his text he does indeed list a few more places, and adds details about their defences and relative importance. He mentions the "small unwalled towns" of Parathou and Rion to the "east of the river [Chao Phraya]" (1910:66). Bannae he tells us "is close to the frontier and the mountains of Cambodia" (1910:67), which makes the identification of Ban Na more likely. He repeats the separate identification of "Capheyn" and "Kepenpit" (*ibid*) and lists Meclongh, Pypri, Rappry, Pitsjeboury, Ratsjebeury and Cuy as all being "west of the river not far from the sea" (1910:68). The duplication of Pypri/Pitsjeboury, Rappry/Ratsejeboury is quite clear. He then details as

separate places Lygoor (Ligor), Sangora (Songkhla), and Berdelongh (Phatthalung) (*ibid*). For all Van Vliet's painstaking research in his other volume concerning Siam, *The Short History of the Kings of Siam*, his listing of towns and provincial centres here appears disordered and duplicative in the extreme.

## de Bourges

The earliest French text of the seventeenth century, the *Relation du Voyage de Mgr l'Evèque de Béryte, Vicaire Apostolique, de Royaume de la Cochinchine, par la Turquie, la Perse, les Indes; etc. jusqu'au Royaume de Siam et autres lieux* by Jacques de Bourges, a priest of the French Foreign Missions, was published in Paris in 1666 as a result of de Bourges' stay in Siam from 1662 to 1663. The relevant chapters were published in JSS in 82/2 (1994). Bourges gives the southernmost point of the kingdom as "the small state of Malacca" (1666:140), and says that it is "more than 300 leagues [approximately 1,200 km] long from north to south, but it is narrower from west to east" (*ibid*).

He adds, "The kingdom is divided into eleven provinces, to wit Siam, Martavan [Martaban], Tenacerim [Tenasserim], Iansalom [Junk Ceylon, alias Phuket], Keda [Kedah], Pera [Perak], Ior [Johor], Paam [Pahang], Parana [a misprint for Patana, namely Pattani], Ligor [Nakhon Si Thammarat], and Siara [Chaiya]" (1666:141). The provinces, he tells us, formerly ranked as independent kingdoms but now come under the rule of the King of Siam who appoints and removes his governors at will. He then contradicts himself by saying that Pahang, Pattani, Ligor and Chaiya "do not depend absolutely on the King of Siam, but only render him some tribute" (1666:142-3), so that the kingdom proper "only extends from the seventh degree to the eighteenth and only comprises 275 leagues [approximately 1,100 km] from south to north" (*ibid*).

De Bourges had, however, first-hand information about the journey from Mergui to Ayutthaya, since he twice made the arduous return trip overland in a period of eighteen months. He gives practical information about the customs procedures at Mergui (1666:126), tells us about Fr Cardoza, presumably Portuguese, looking after two churches in Tenasserim (1666:128), but otherwise says little about the place except that it had a governor. He then proceeded to "Ialianga" (unidentified, but with a governor), and the village of "Menam", to a community of some 200 hearths with wooden defences called "Coüir" (Kuiburi) (1666:138); thence to the trading community of "Pram" (Pranburi) and to the large town of "Pipeli" (Phetchaburi) which had brick walls (*ibid*). From there he and his episcopal party travelled by sea to "Ioudia, which we call Siam" (1666:131). He mentions no other towns.

## Chaumont

The Chevalier Alexandre de Chaumont was appointed by Louis XIV to lead the first French embassy to Siam in 1685, and being a devout convert from Protestantism, was thought to be a suitable person to inspire King Narai in his supposed desire to apostatize. His account of his embassy, *Relation de l'Ambassade de Mr le Chevalier de Chaumont à la Cour du Roi de Siam* was published in the year of his return to Paris, 1686. It is, in comparison to the four other contemporary accounts (by Choisy, Tachard, Bouvet and Forbin), a rather slight affair, though it does contain some details not in the other texts, particularly in relation to Siam's imports and exports, and the persons in the embassy left behind in Siam.

Chaumont lists eleven provinces: Siam, Matavin, Tanaserin, Josalam, Reda, Pra, Ior, Paam, Parana, Ligor and Siama (1686:160). A glance at de Bourges' list shows his source. He even keeps the same typographical error for Pattani, and adds a few of his own, notably Reda for Kedah and Pra for Perak. As an ambassador he seems curiously uninterested in modifying information already thirty-two years old. He mentions Cambodia, Gehor (Johor), Patavi (Pattani) and Queda (the last three of which he managed to spell a little better) as tributary kingdoms (1686:158), among others, which are dismissed with "etc.". He also gives approximately 300 leagues as the length of the country, again apparently taking his information from de Bourges.

He lists a few "fortified places in the Kingdom", starting with "Bancok, where there are two forts" (1686:145). He notes that "A new brick wall is being built to defend the capital city of Siam which is called Juthai" (*ibid*). "Corsuma" (Korat) on the side of the Cambodian frontier is but ill-defended, like "Tanaserin opposite the Malabar coast" (*ibid*). "Mere [Megui] is not defended at all" (*ibid*), though it could serve as a good port (he apparently did not realize that it already did). "Porcelut [Phitsanulok] on the Lao frontier is but little fortified. Chenat [Chainat] has the name of a town and some show of defences which formerly served as walls. Louvo [Lopburi] is where the King of Siam spends nine months each year to take pleasure in hunting elephants and tigers" (1686:145-6); Chaumont notes he has much improved the town with the buildings he caused to be constructed there. All this information improves on de Bourges.

The only other town mentioned by Chaumont is "Patang [yet another spelling for Pattani] the finest of the ports on the Malay coast" (*ibid*), and that great trade could be conducted there. He notes that it belonged to a tributary queen.

## Choisy

The Abbé François-Timoléon de Choisy was the unlikely person, given his well-known foible of dressing as a woman in order to seduce young girls (whom he disguised as men), selected to accompany Chaumont as co-ambassador, and who might be required to stay on in Siam should Narai need instruction for conversion. Choisy had friends in high places, notably Louis XIV's only brother, Monsieur, and felt, as a consequence of a serious illness as much as pressing debts, that he needed to leave Paris for a time. He wrote a very lively account of his journey which was first published in Paris in 1687 (it had to wait until 1993 before appearing in English with the title *Journal of a Voyage to Siam 1685-1686*).

On his return journey — for he was not called to stay and instruct King Narai — on 18 January 1686 he listed twelve provinces of Siam: Sciuteja (Si Ayutthaya), Bankoc (Bangkok), Porcelonc (Phitsanulok), Pitpri (Phetchaburi), Pitchai (Phichai), Campeng (Kamphaengphet), Rapri (Ratchaburi), Tenasserim, Ligor, Cambari (Kanchanaburi), Conrasema (Nakhon Ratchasima, alias Korat) and Louconsevan (Nakhon Sawan) (1993:232). Of these, he lists nine "chief towns", namely, in modern spelling, and in his order, Si Ayutthaya, Tenasserim, Phuket, Ligor, Phetchaburi, Bangkok, Phitsanulok, Kanchanaburi, and Korat (his Conrasema) (1993:233). He names five tributary states of Siam, to wit Cambodia, Johor, Pattani, Kedah and Jambi (in Sumatra), who send the king "each year a bunch of golden flowers" (1993:232).

Choisy does not attempt to guess the size of the kingdom. Instead, he helpfully gives the time required to traverse its parts (unfortunately his time-frame to reach Fang from Phitsanulok seems excessively short, given that he says it takes twenty-four days from Ayutthaya to Phitsanulok). "From the entrance to the river of Siam to the royal capital takes four days; from the royal city to Phitsanulok twenty-four and from Phitsanulok to Fang, which is the last town on the northern frontier, there are nine days' travelling. There are eighteen or twenty days' journey from one end of the kingdom to the other going west to east" (1993:232). Like all other travellers, he was relying on information passed on to him; even including Fang within the territory of Siam, which at this juncture is inaccurate, since Chiangmai, Lampang and most of the northern cities were ruled by Ava.

Choisy, who is often accused, with some justification, of frivolity, shows himself far better informed about the state of the Kingdom of Siam than his nominal superior, the Chevalier de Chaumont, and, although he only visited Bangkok, Ayutthaya and Lopburi, appears to have enquired more about the trades carried on in the different towns. He notes the importance of *calin* and

ambergris for Junk Ceylon, *calin*, rice, fruit and pepper for Ligor, rice and cotton textiles for "Pitpri" (Phetchaburi), elephants' teeth, rice, saltpetre, rhinceros horns etc. for Phitsanulok, and so on.

### Tachard

The normally fulsome Jesuit, Guy Tachard, whose *Voyage de Siam des Pères Jésuites...*, published in Paris in 1686 (an English edition appeared in London in 1688), covered similar ground to Choisy's account, but says remarkably little about the administrative divisions and cities of the country he visited. He notes "The Kingdom of Siam reaches from the point of Malaca to the Kingdoms of Pegu and Laos which bound it on the North side" (1688:264) and goes on "The provinces that lie up in the Country towards the North are but little known, and our Geographical Maps mark not their Scituation and Limits well" (*ibid*).

He dwells at length on the meaning of the capital city of Siam, known to the Siamese as "*Crung si ayu tha ya*, and not Juthia or Odia" (1688:265). He goes on: "*Crung si*, signifies excellent Town. Their Histories call it also *Crung theppa ppra ma hà nà kon*. The meaning of that is, Angelical, admirable and extraordinary Town; and they call it Angelical, because they think it impregnable to Men" (1688:265-6). The only provinces detailed are those of "Bancok and Piplis" (Phetchaburi), who had but one governor between them, and who met the embassy at Phrapradaeng (1688:153). He mentions at the first formal audience the presence of the "Princes of the Blood Royal of Camboie... [and] the Princes of Laos, Chiamay, and Banka [Bangka], who have been taken in wars" (1688:167). But whereas Tachard is detailed on the sights of the capital city and the religious practices of Siam, his information on its geography and towns is very limited.

### Gervaise

Nicholas Gervaise was a priest working with the French Foreign Missions in Ayutthaya from 1683 to 1687, and after his return to France published his *Histoire Naturelle et Politique du Royaume de Siam* (Paris, 1688). English translations appeared in 1928 and more recently in 1989. The country is bounded, he notes, by Pattani to the south, to the north by Laos, to the east by Cambodia, and to the west by Pegu, Ava, and "all the land of Malacca" (1989:9). Its extent from north to south was "almost two hundred and twenty leagues [about 880 km] where it is not encroached upon by neighbouring states; from east to west it

extends for more than one hundred leagues [about 400 km] at its widest point, but scarcely more than twenty leagues [about 80 km] at its narrowest" (*ibid*).

The major ports are "Myrguim or Mygri and Jonsalam" (1989:17), that is, Mergui and Phuket. Ligor (Nakhon Si Thammarat) and "Cingor" (Songkhla) Gervaise did not consider important.

The capital city "is called by the Siamese Meüang Sijotuhia and by foreigners Juthia or Odiaa" (1989:37), and he describes it in detail. "The second city of the kingdom is commonly called Porselouc or Pet-se-lou-loc ... it is about one hundred leagues north of Juthia" (1989:40), and one of the tributaries of the "great river" leading to Juthia goes to "Campingue" (Kamphaengphet). Louveau (Lopburi) "which the Siamese commonly call Noccheboury, is a town which, so to speak, is to Siam what Versailles is to France" (1989:43).

In the chapter 'Of the city of Bangkok and other seaboard towns', Gervaise discusses the fortifications of Bangkok and its importance as "it is only place anywhere on the sea coast that could offer some resistance to enemy attack" (1989:49). In the north "the only towns of any consequence are Locontaje and Tennasserim" (1989:50). John Villiers identifies the first as Lampang "or perhaps Nakhon Thai, a small town between Phitsanulok and the Lao frontier". Given that Lampang and Chiangmai were not part of Siam at the time but were in Ava, the second possibility seems more likely (after Narai's sacking of Chiangmai in 1662, the city was abandoned, and as La Loubère notes, was subsequently "repopulated by the King of Ava, to whom Pegu does at present render Obedience" 1693:3). "Chantebounne" is mentioned as a beautiful place "in the southernmost part of the country" (198:51), and "on the other side of the Gulf of Siam" are Piply (Phetchaburi), Ligor, and Soncourat or Cingor (Songkhla). Pattani is mentioned as having been in rebellion but now subdued (*ibid*).

Gervaise goes on to note "The provinces of Porselouc, Tennasserim, Bangkok and Piply, which are the largest and most populous in the kingdom, each have their own governor, who is given the title of viceroy because these provinces were separate kingdoms before they were united to the Siamese crown" (198:72). He specifies no other governorships, but says "The individual governors of places in each province have to report to the viceroys everything that occurs there" (*ibid*).

## La Loubère

Simon de La Loubère led the second French embassy to Siam in 1687, accompanied by Claude Céberet du Boullay who was to look after commercial affairs.

The embassy (it was more a military expedition, with several hundred soldiers led by General Defarges, with secret instructions to seize Bangkok if it were not handed over peacefully) was a disaster, thanks to the intrigues of Tachard with King Narai's minister, Constantine Phaulkon. During the return voyage La Loubère began to write his masterly *Du Royaume de Siam*, published in Paris in 1691 (after the collapse of all French pretensions in Siam), and which appeared in English in 1693.

La Loubère's information was largely culled, like that of other writers of the period, from information obtained from informants, since he himself only saw Bangkok, Ayutthaya, and Lopburi. He adds little to our knowledge of the location of the country, but says that the valley of the kingdom contains "in some places between fourscore and an hundred Leagues in breadth" (1693:3) and is quite specific about Chiamai [Chiangmai] being occupied by people from Ava, after the King of Siam had abandoned it some thirty years previously (*ibid*).

Of the cities in the valley of the Menam (the Chao Phraya), there is first Bancok "about seven Miles from the Sea" (1693:4) which "is called Fon in Siamese" (*Fon* is a misprint for *Ton*, being Thonburi; see Jacq-Hergoualc'h 1987:125); a little to the north is Talacoan (Talat Kwan) which supplies fruit in quantity. "The other principal places which the Menam waters, are, Me-Tac [Tak], the first City of the Kingdom to the North North-West, and then successively Tian-Tong [?], Campeng pet [Kamphaengphet] or Campeng simple, which some do pronounce Campingue, Laconcevan [Nakhon Sawan], Tchainat [Chainat], Siam, Talacoan, Talaqueo, and Bancok ... the City of Louvo [is] a little to the East.... The City of Me-Tac renders obedience to an Hereditary Lord, who they say, is a Vassal to the King of Siam, whom some call Paya-Tac, or Prince of Tac. Tian-Tong is ruin'd, doubtless by the Ancient Wars of Pegu. Campeng is known by the Mines of excellent Steel" (*ibid*).

At Nakhon Sawan, the river receives a tributary, starting near "Meuang-fang, then to Pitchiai, Pitsanoulouc, and Pitchit" (*ibid*), all readily identifiable. Phitsanulok has fourteen bastions and much trade. He discusses at length Prabat (Phra Puttabat) which he locates east north-east of Lopburi. The meaning and origin of Siam, both for the country and the city are discussed, and for the latter he notes "the Siamese do call it Si-yo-thi-ya" (1693:7), the etymology of which is gone into at length.

"On the Frontiers of Pegu is seated the City of Cambory [Kanchanaburi] and on the borders of Laos the Town of Corazema, which some do call Carissima [Nakhon Ratchasima, also known as Korat]" (1693:6). Two other "considerable cities" are found "in the lands which lie between the Rivers" (*ibid*), namely Socotai (Sukhothai) and Sanquelouc (Sawankhalok).

The territory of the kingdom extends "in form of an Horseshoe on either side of the Gulph," going eastwards "to the River Chantebon where the Kingdom of Camboya begins; and opposite thereunto, viz. in the Peninsula extra Gangem, which lies on the West of the Gulph of Siam, it extends to Queda and Patana, the Territories of the Malayans" (*ibid*). According to La Loubère, its coasts extended some 200 leagues on the Gulf of Siam side and some 180 "or thereabouts" on the Gulf of Bengal.

Mergui, on a "great and populous island", and Tenasserim "about 15 Leagues from the Sea", (1693:8) are detailed. In discussing the history of the Siamese, the "City of Pipeli" is recorded, as is the city of "Lacontai", some forty or fifty leagues from Pitsanuloke. This would appear to be Nakhon Thai, on the Laos border. The city of "Jonsalam" (Junk Ceylon, namely Phuket) is mentioned for its mountain of "loadstone" or tin (1693:14).

However La Loubère writes that "These Cities, like all the rest in the Kingdom of Siam, are only a great number of Cabbins frequently environ'd with an enclosure of Wood, and sometimes with a Brick, or Stone Wall, but very rarely of Stone. Nevertheless as the Eastern people have ever had as much magnificence and pride in the figures of their Language, as simplicity and poverty in whatever appertains to Life, the names of these Cities do signifie great things" (1693:4). He cites three examples, notably Kamphaengphet meaning Walls of Diamonds.

Administratively, La Loubère notes, "The Kingdom of Siam is divided unto the upper and lower" (1693:82). There are seven provinces in the upper part, "which are named by their Chief Cities, Porselouc, Sanquelouc, Lacontai, Campeng-pet, Coconrepina, Pechebonne, and Pitchai" (*ibid*). This is the first mention of Phetchabun, and one notes the new spelling of Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat) and the importance of Nakhon Thai. Each has various "jurisdictions" under it, varying between ten for Phitsanulok and two for Phetchabun. Lower Siam likewise comprises seven provinces, namely "Jor [Johor], Patana, Ligor, Tenasserim, Chantebonne, Petelong or Bordelong [Phatthalung], and Tchiai [Chaiya]." As with the north, there were various smaller "jurisdictions" reporting directly to the court, and "the City of Siam has its Province apart, in the heart of the State" (*ibid*). However, "the Governor of Jor renders Obedience no longer" and the Queen of Pattani sends the tribute of gold and silver trees to the King of Siam every three years. It is interesting that no mention is made of Kedah in this respect. La Loubère had earlier noted that the kingdom "extends to Queda and Patana" (1693:6), but Kedah is not listed as one of the southern provinces, nor is it noted for sending tribute. Omitting Kedah, then, the total number of provinces in both the north and south over which the King had effective control was twelve.

La Loubère also notes that "the course of the River from its Mouth to the Metropolis, is divided into several small Governments. The first is Pipeli [Phetchaburi], the second Prepadem [Phrapradaeng], the third Bancok, the fourth Talaccan [Talingchan], and the fifth Siam" (1693:88). He indicates that the governors of Tak and Phitsanulok had the title "Pa-ya" to indicate their importance, whereas Tenasserim, Ligor, Korat "and other" had the subordinate title "Oc-ya" (1693:80). There are "six orders of Cities, which have been anciently determined according to the Rolls of the Inhabitants" (1693:79), and the ranking is indicated by the title of the governor, in descending order and in his spelling Pa-ya, Oc-ya, Oc-pra, Oc-Louang, Oc-Counne, Oc-Meuing (1693:80).

Only La Loubère noted the administrative division of the kingdom into two. His record is by far the most detailed discussion of the extent of the kingdom, its provinces and its cities, and is in contradiction with many earlier accounts, yet, as noted, he relied on informants for the greater part of the information he obtained.

### Placide

The Augustinian Father, Placide, was Geographer in Ordinary to Louis XIV and produced his map in 1686 dedicated to the Chevalier de Chaumont, the King's Ambassador to Siam. It plots the journey of his ship, the *Oiseau*, and the accompanying frigate, *Maligne*, and covers most of mainland Southeast Asia as well as Sumatra and Java. Placide obviously obtained his information from earlier maps, published texts and interviews with persons who took part in the 1685 embassy, though who he consulted is not known. The map is widely known as the earliest of any consequence concentrating on Siam, and is even available in a jigsaw today.

Siam of the central valley includes the towns of Bencicha (?), Porcelut, Chenat, Louvo, Prabat, Siam at[au] Iudia, Sancok, the river Tlakieu (Thachin?), and Bancok. The only person to mention Samkok in the published accounts of the embassy is Choisy, who passed through it on 11 October 1685 (1993:153). On the east of the Gulf Chantaome (Chantaburi) is marked, but is shown as inside Cambodia, which is wrong according to all published texts which mention the town.

On the east coast of the peninsula are marked Clockomboury (?), Pipely (Phetchaburi), Chiam (Cha-am), Pra (Pranburi), Cin (for Cui, Kuiburi), Patanor (?), Ligor, Bordelong (Phatthalung), Singora, and Queda. There the territories of Siam stop, and Patane is marked beyond the frontier. The curious Patanor, roughly in the position of modern Chumporn, is also marked on a map by Robert Morden of 1680, published in *Geography Rectified*.

On the west coast of the peninsula the islands of Iunsalaon (Junk Ceylon, or Phuket) and Meringue (Mergui) are marked, and so are the towns of Tanacerim and Martaban. In the Gulf of Siam there are three named islands, I. Goete Inficos to the west, clearly modern Ko Samui, and to the east I. Macara and I. Panian. The former may be the two separate islands of Ma and Kut, and the latter is Choisy's Pol-pangean (Pulau Panjang). Pulau Obi, mentioned by Choisy, is not marked on Placide.

Of interest in Placide's map are the crowns next to certain cities, which appear to indicate vice-royalties or hereditary governorships formed of previously or currently independent states. They comprise Martaban, an unnamed state just north of Iunsalaon (and probably meant for it), Ligor, Pera[k], Malaca, Ihor (Johor), Patane and Siam.

### **La Loubère 's map**

The map which appears in La Loubère 's 1691 and 1693 editions, and which was either drawn or engraved by one Michault in its original form, concentrates on the Chao Phraya River Valley and Siam Peninsular. Marked *A Mapp of the Kingdome of Siam* it was clearly, at least in part, redrawn for the 1693 English edition.

Chiamai (Chiangmai) is definitely placed outside the boundary of Siam, though Meuang Fang just within it. Clearly there was little exact idea of the location of Fang. Locontai is marked north-east of Porselouc, thus confirming it to be Nakhon Thai. Within the central valley are also marked Metac (Tak), curiously above Fang, Pitchai, Pitchit, Sanqueklouc, Socotai, Capeng pet, Laconsevan, Cambori (Kanchanaburi), Tchainat, Louvo, Prabat, Siam and Bancok. Level with Phichit to the east are marked Sckinbon (?) and Cainmai (perhaps a repeat of Chainat), and nearer to the capital are to be found Taramamou (?) and Bammacavram (?).

To the east, level with Nakhon Sawan, Corazeram (Korat, Nakhon Ratchasima) is marked, and coming down a river are the intriguing Canaiot, Banka, Perion and at its mouth, Banplasoi. This is the first mention of Ban Plasoi, the old name for Chonburi. Further along the east coast, Chantobon, at the mouth of a river, is marked within the frontier of Siam, in contradiction to Placide.

Level with Siam the Mahapram River is marked. It was on this branch of the Chao Phraya that the French Foreign Mission college was located, and near its source is a town, Papri, which appears to duplicate Pipeli (Phetchaburi), found in its more usual position close to the coast. Going down the east of the peninsula, after Pipeli, are marked Pram (Pranburi), Couu (Kuiburi), Clai (?)



The map of Siam  
which appeared in  
The English translation  
of La Loubère's  
text in 1693.

Ligor, Singor and Patane. No boundary is marked before the latter. On the west side of the peninsula are marked Mergroy, Tenasserim (with inland Ialingue, mentioned by both Bourges and Céberet, who passed through it), Deschuingue (?), Lespera (?), I. of Iansalon, Papera (?), Bordelong (Phatthalung, on the wrong side), and Queda. Two islands in the Gulf of Siam are marked, Pulo Sangori and Pulo Cornam, which Choisy mentioned as Pol-cori and Pol-cornon—in modern terms Ko Phangan and Ko Samui.

The map in La Loubère is interesting (as well as frustrating in the questions it gives rise to) because it makes an attempt to mark the eastern boundary of the kingdom, and is the first map to include, howsoever inaccurately, Korat.

### Conclusion

On present evidence the extent of the Kingdom of Siam was generally known to all those visiting it, though in detail there were grey areas where suzerainty was uncertain. All agree that Johor was no longer still subject to Siam and that the Queens of Pattani sent tribute, but the status of Kedah is less clear (Van Vliet does not even mention Kedah). Most like to include, perhaps because in informants' minds it was historically important, Fang, whereas clearly Fang was well outside the jurisdiction of Ayutthaya, which did not run much further north than Tak, and did not extend to Chiangmai. The western limits with Pegu seem fairly clearly defined, with agreement on the status of Mergui and Tenasserim. The eastern limits with Cambodia, however, are less well clearly established, though most agree Chanthaburi came within the kingdom. The north-east is clearly undefined. Korat (variously spelt Corassima, Corsuma, Conrasema, Carrisma, Corazima, and Corazeram) was there, somewhere, on the borders of Laos, but where Laos began and where the jurisdiction of Korat ended was to remain unclear for another two hundred years.

The governorships and chief cities may have varied over time, but for the most part are likely to have been stable. The earlier Dutch accounts of the chief towns raise a number of problems of identification, which are less marked in the later French accounts, if one excepts certain townships marked on the map in La Loubère. In all cases one has to remember that people wrote down the names that they thought they heard from their informants, and there is clearly confusion at times between different forms of names.

It is important to emphasize that, apart from de Bourges and Céberet, who took the overland route to Mergui, few had little experience of anywhere in Siam except the stretch of the Chao Phraya between the Bar of Siam and Lopburi (and only as far as Ayutthaya before King Narai's reign). Neither Schouten nor

Van Vliet specifically mention Lopburi by name — unless it be their Lydure or Lyoure — nor does de Bourges, who was in Ayutthaya only six years after Narai's accession). In this context, the detail found in La Loubère 's account is all the more extraordinary. One would like to say the same of Van Vliet, but his lists of provinces and towns raise innumerable questions.

Apart from this (and quite separately from the minor problem of spelling), there is also the question of changing place names. Ban Plasoi for modern Chonburi has been mentioned, and so have the earlier names of the islands in the Gulf. Names of towns were changed wholesale in the late nineteenth century, and before that the actual site of cities was often shifted. This makes any examination of early texts and maps always an interesting, if sometimes a baffling, experience.

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