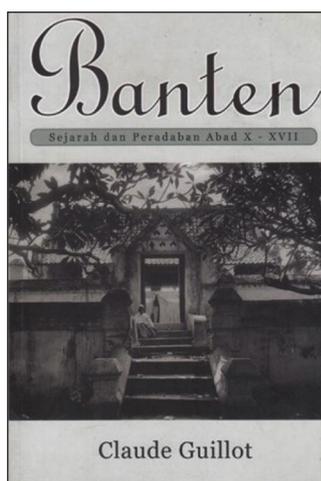


BOOK REVIEWS

Claude Guillot, *Banten; Sejarah dan peradaban abad X-XVII*. Translated by Hendra Setiawan, et.al. Second Edition. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia in collaboration with the École française d'Extreme-Orient, Forum Jakarta-Paris and National Archaeology Research Centre, 2011, 430 pp. + 35 photos, [First Edition 2008.] ISBN 978-979-91-0144-0 (Indonesia), 978 2-85539-486-2 (France) (soft cover).



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Banten has a truly long history the sources of which include relics dating from prehistoric times, relics showing Hindu or Buddhist religious influences, and others from the period of Islamic and colonial encounters. Banten's long history has attracted the interest of researchers in various disciplines, both local and foreign. One of the foreign researches is Claude Guillot, a Frenchman who has written much about Banten from the perspective of historical archaeology. Guillot's research has had

a great impact on the understanding of Indonesian history in general, and of Banten in particular, that the Department of Foreign Affairs of France, in cooperation with the French Embassy in Indonesia and the French Cultural Centre in Jakarta, has contributed funds for the publication of some of Guillot's articles in the Indonesian language by Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.

Some of Guillot's articles on Banten have been compiled into a book, translated into and published in Indonesian with the title *Banten; Sejarah dan peradaban abad X-XVII*. The first edition came out in 2008 and the second in 2011. The book covers seven centuries of Banten's history and is arranged into three sections. Each section comprises articles both written solely by Guillot (p. 12) and co-authored (p. 3). Eight of the articles included in the book have already appeared in the scientific journal *Archipel* in France. Another seven articles have appeared in scientific journals in various countries. The volume also includes a very controversial article concerning the miserable conditions of Banten.

The fact that Guillot wrote a new article almost every year from 1989 until

2006 shows his great interest in Banten's history. His objectivity as a scientist is well known. He sought out various materials by travelling to several countries to obtain enough data to write a comprehensive study of Banten. Such effort should set example for other researchers.

The contents of *Banten; Sejarah dan peradaban abad X-XVII* are organized following a chronological sequence. Part One, "Banten before Islam", contains two articles: "The Banten Girang State" and "The 1522 treaty between Portugal and Sunda and its problems". The period from the tenth through the fourteenth centuries can be described as "the dark ages", because there are few written sources and archaeological findings. The little amount of archaeological data from the Banten Girang site and of written reports in Portuguese, Chinese, and the Chronicles of the History of Banten notwithstanding, Guillot manages to describe the role of the Banten Girang Kingdom, also called Wahanten Girang, which was located somewhat inland near the headwaters of the Cibanten River. Chinese ceramic artefacts have been found in the site. Based on those artefacts Guillot concludes that import trade in ceramics from China persisted and flourished, despite political and economic upheavals in Banten Girang which then fell under the dominion of the Pakuan Sunda kingdom with its capital in Pajajaran. Written sources indicate that Banten Girang had two large harbours - Banten and Kelapa - and consisted of several "states", one of which was Banten with its capital in Banten Girang. When Guillot describes the Sunda Kingdom based on the Portuguese Chronicles, he takes a cautious, scientific approach relying only on accurate sources, especially when he presents his interpretation.

Guillot then proceeds to propose that Sunan Gunung Jati, an Islamic scholar-saint from Demak, together with his son, Hasanuddin, succeeded in capturing the Banten harbour on the north, near the bay of Banten. An Islamic dynasty had ruled Banten Girang, and Hasanuddin was appointed as its leader. At the suggestion of his father, Hasanuddin moved the palace to the Banten harbour. This relocation of the centre of power of the Banten Sultanate notwithstanding, the former palace at Banten Girang was still being used as a lodge for the travelling Islamic teachers, at least until the end of the seventeenth century. Guillot proposes an important interpretation (p. 30) that an Islamic dynasty did not establish Banten, but rather that such a dynasty seized power in a nation which already had had a long history and had become prosperous from selling pepper and also from international trade. This statement challenges the current assumption that an Islamic dynasty had founded Banten.

In the second article, Guillot utilizes Portuguese sources obtained for him by a colleague at the New University of Lisbon. He reads in those sources an amicable relationship between the Portuguese and the Sunda Kingdom. The sources comprise important documents which the Portuguese used in the fifteenth century as a source of information that allowed them to travel around the Banten region and its environs. Mentioned in them are names such as Banten, Bantam, Bintam, Banta, Sunda-Banten, Sumdabata, Sumdabamta, Padram, Banta, Cumda, Calupu, Calapa, and Cheguide. For the purposes

of writing history, names of locations are very important and their referents need to be interpreted. Based on the Portuguese materials, Guillot holds the opinion that the location intended by the Portuguese is not entirely accurate, and can mislead our understanding of the actual events. Previously it has been assumed that the Portuguese had placed the *padrao*, an inscribed stone carrying the royal emblem of king Dom Manuel, in the Kelapa area of Jakarta. Guillot strongly questions the assumption. According to him, sources contemporary with the Portuguese documents support a radically different interpretation. He doubts the validity of many other events of that period, because he suspects the interpretation of the data involved both mistakes and lack of clarity. Guillot can be said to have straightened out the history of the Sunda kingdom and the Banten Sultanate.

Part Two, entitled "People and politics in the Banten Sultanate", consists of six articles dealing with the political condition, urban areas, trade, and the economy of the Banten Sultanate. Most of the sources Guillot uses for this part are from Dutch archives, archaeological research, and Banten chronicles. They cover the success of Sultan Ageng in leading his state to its golden age. Part Three, entitled "Banten and the foreign world", consists of seven articles dealing with happenings in the Banten Sultanate from the point of view of the Portuguese, French, English, Indians, Dutch, and the Chinese. These people wrote journals based on both individual experiences and oral traditions that had come their way. This part complements what is presented in the second part by covering the development of Banten to become a centre for international trade.

What were the political and economic strategies employed by Sultan Ageng to overcome trade fluctuations and to maintain peace in the Banten Sultanate during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? This concerns the situation beginning in 1678 when Banten grew rapidly and experienced a period of prosperity, to become the largest city in the archipelago, apart from Malacca and Banda Aceh (p. 220). Banten's success can be attributed to various strategies and policies which Sultan Ageng carried out, such as a foreign policy of open territory. Banten opened its doors to all merchants coming from other parts of the world, and thereby transformed itself into an international port and a cosmopolitan city enjoyed by the foreign traders.

They came from China, Taiwan, Japan, Tonkin, Cochin China, Campa, Siam, Benggala, Tamil, Gujarat, Persia, Turkey, Arabia, The Netherlands, England, France, Denmark, and Portugal. For the most part, they were trading pepper. Much pepper was produced in the interior part of Banten as well as the region of South Sumatera which was under Banten's control. It became the primary commodity produced in the state, the quality of which was so good that it penetrated European and Chinese markets. The traders brought with them commodities from their own countries, flooding Banten's market with both everyday and luxury goods. Banten became known internationally as a trading centre, where both retailers and wholesale merchants came together bringing in their wares.

As a result of the influx of large numbers of foreigners, the structure of Banten city changed. Clusters of foreign settlements blossomed outside the fortress – such as compounds for English, Dutch, French, and Danes, while the Chinese settled in Chinatown. The natives of the islands of Indonesia – such as the Buginese and Makasarese, Javanese, Sumatrans, and Balinese – also built their own separate settlements. The city of Banten itself was inside the fortress, and only Banten people who were Muslims could live there. Guillot's description of the city of Banten, states that it consisted of several villages each of which was governed by its own social rules. Each village was carefully guarded, and closed off by a swinging barrier for security. The villages were like small cities, each led by a nobleman appointed and dismissed by the king. The noblemen lived in large houses that looked like a king's "palace", complete with a religious teacher, vendors, and entertainers (musicians and dancers). The wealth and power of each nobleman depended on the number of citizens under his leadership. The noblemen were responsible to the king for their citizens, but "the Sultan of Banten possessed absolute authority over the entire life and property of his subjects, and all the people submitted to him as his slaves" (p. 86).

Guillot admits (p. 214) that the government of Banten was autocratic, with unlimited authority in the hands of the sultan. Change of rulers was based on tradition alone, where the son of the sultan's first wife was heir to the throne. In actual fact, this tradition was not always followed, and palace intrigues caused divisions among the sultan's relatives. Frequently these divisions developed into civil wars. Sultan Ageng built various facilities and infrastructure in the city of Banten, including streets to facilitate transportation inside and outside the fortress, canals for boats to carry goods and people from the bay into the city and to Banten Girang and Tirtayasa in the interior. He consistently safeguarded the use of the river when the river became shallow, and ordered it to be dredged. He also had two sea walls built to prevent the build up of silt. His actions guaranteed a stable environment for the areas along the river and seacoast. He realized that the port was the primary entry point for visitors. Ships would have a hard time docking if the seaport became shallow that might cause merchants to be reluctant to use the port. In other words, the condition of the port of entry for foreign merchants who brought profits to Banten had to be guarded. The lively trade in Banten brought wealth to the territory, allowing Sultan Ageng to build a new palace in Tirtayasa. In his old age, he made the palace his residence and came to be called Sultan Ageng of Tirtayasa (that is the Great King of Tirtayasa).

His concern for the environment is also seen in his order for each inhabitant to plant one hundred coconut trees along the Java Ontong River (now the Cisadane River). The river formed the boundary with Batavia, which was subject to VOC, his great enemy. He also moved about 5,000 households to live in the area of reforestation and to tend to the coconut groves. This action implies an astute strategy for defence as well as expansion of the land under his authority. To prevent the threat of food shortages, the Sultan ordered his

subjects to enlarge the area for rice paddies and to build storage barns. To protect the people from enemy attacks (especially by the Dutch), he bought many weapons – cannons, muskets, and gunpowder – from other European merchants. The city fortresses were equipped with cannons and strengthened with artillery forces. One of the large cannons, “Ki Amuk”, was unique in that it bore an Islamic inscription in Arabic. “Ki Amuk” can be seen today in the Museum Kepurbakalaan Situs Banten Lama.

Banten remained a centre of power for almost three centuries. The ruling sultans utilized several strategies to improve the prosperity of the people. At the beginning of the Banten Sultanate, the rulers exacted very low tax from the merchants. This nevertheless provided enough revenue for developing the small Banten harbour into a great port. It is noted that before 1609 Banten had a free trade policy and the sultanate did not involve itself much in setting prices. Pepper brought great profits for Banten, and Guillot goes into detail in several articles, although he does not follow a chronological sequence. Ever since the Pajajaran Kingdom, Banten had relied on the pepper trade as its primary source of income, and the Banten Sultanate continued this policy. Banten promoted the cultivation of pepper, and became famous to foreign traders as the prime producer of pepper. These merchants competed with each other to capture the limited supplies of pepper, often resulting in riots or warfare within the Banten territory. One sultan ordered that all pepper bushes must be cut down to prevent further turmoil. As a result, there was a partial shift from cultivating pepper to planting rice and sweet potatoes. During this time, however, pepper was selling at a very high price in the world’s markets. The next sultans decided to change the strategy and ordered people to concentrate on cultivating pepper again.

By early 1625, Banten had grown and changed its economic strategy. Taxes were increased on all commodities, and trade monopolies were applied, especially for sale of pepper. Merchants could not deal directly with pepper farmers; all business was regulated by the sultanate. Guillot describes this change of strategy as Free Trade Versus Managed Economy.

As a sovereign state, the Banten Sultanate endeavoured to obtain state income from various sources. One source was excises on import-export. Another tax was a land rent tax for foreigners’ houses. (Land belonged to the sultanate and could not be owned by his subjects.) There was a head tax for non-Muslim foreigners, but Muslims were required to provide labour for their country. Other income resulted from an entertainment tax, because Banten as an international port had various places of entertainment such as gambling houses, brothels, cabarets and places providing arrack. In Banten, one could obtain even prohibited goods such as opium and tobacco, which European traders brought in large quantities. In Sultan Ageng’s time, other income came from the profits of the Sultan’s own trading ships – which transported goods for delivery to customers. The Sultan’s role was to invest funds in commerce conducted by a number of European and Chinese merchants (p. 231).

Several sultans employed foreign workers with specific skills – architects, economists, interpreters, harbour masters and such. In 1596, several Tamils

held important positions of Prime Minister (champion), harbour master, and a certain "Andamohi Keling" (royal advisor?). During the reign of Sultan Ageng, several foreigners were appointed, but they were required to be Muslims. In return, they were given high level positions in the government bureaucracy. During the time of the Dutch sea blockade, a Chinese merchant named Kaytsu, who was both an economic advisor and a harbour master, was sent by Sultan Ageng to lead a Banten delegation to negotiate with the Dutch. Another name mentioned is Tantseko, also known as Kiayi Ngabehi Cakradana, a Chinese man who had the position of a harbour master, and played an important role in changing the administration of Banten city. When Sultan Haji came to power, he appointed Kiayi Arya Mangunsadana, a Chinese man, as both a harbour master and a prime minister. He was also named a nobleman with the title Prince Dipaningrat. According to tradition, the Banten mosque minaret was built by a Chinese architect named Cek Ban Cut, or Prince Wiradiguna.

Certainly, the involvement of foreigners helped develop Banten. Guillot explains that Tamil, Benggali and Pegu merchants had the roles of middlemen; they sold goods from China to other merchants who traded in Banten. In addition goods were brought from Coromandel, Surat, and Bengal for sale in Banten – textiles, iron, medicines, and opium. A portion of these goods was then exported to East Asia, Manila, Taiwan, and China. When there were political upheavals in Banten, many of those foreigners abandoned the port. Although their numbers were not as large as the Chinese traders, they had a significant role in expanding Banten as a centre of international commerce. Following the capture of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511, trade relations with the Portuguese proceeded smoothly, both before Banten came under the control of Muslims, as well as under Islamic sultans. There were times of both expansion and contraction. Banten trading ships often visited Macao, a territory controlled by the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, Banten was a link in the chain of their trade with China and Japan. In Banten, Portuguese traders sold gunpowder for cannons which were produced in Malacca; then they bought pepper to be sold to other countries. There were Chinese carpenters in Banten who made carriages to support the cannons in forts. Other Chinese businessmen were known for distilling arrack and making sugar. Indeed, Banten became famous for sugar, which was sought after by English merchants. About 1640 the sultan presided over the signing of a trade agreement between a Chinese sugar producer and an English merchant. Relations between the Chinese living in Banten and the Banten rulers were very congenial. Guillot states that the sultans supported the Chinese businessmen during the entire history of the Banten sultanate (p. 138). This was despite the fact that there were also noblemen who did not like the Chinese. Guillot points out (p. 213) that Sultan Haji, the crown prince who replaced Sultan Ageng, wanted Banten to become an Islamic state. Sultan Haji felt that the Chinese in Banten had received excessive, special privileges from his father. Thus, conflict arose between father and son as each party had different stakes. Guillot interprets this as a conflict between nationalism (the nobility) and internationalism (the merchants).

The people of Banten embraced Islam; the people of Banten today are also known to be devoted to their faith of Islam. However, the sultan showed high tolerance for other religions. A French reference stated that when the French residents asked permission to build a church in their compound, Sultan Ageng granted their request, giving "written permission to not only assign a priest and build a place of worship, but also to make the building transit lodging for all priests and religious workers who visited Bantam" (p. 301). Houses of worship were also constructed for the Chinese residents with the sultan's permission, and those temples can still be seen today.

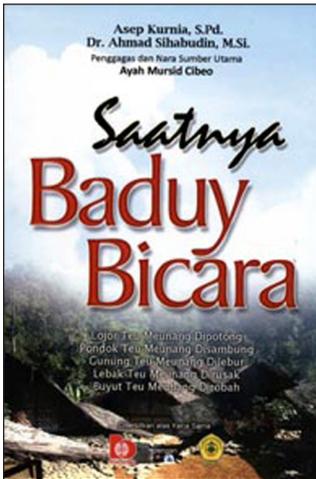
An unpleasant account comes from English sources, given by Scott, an Englishman who had once lived in Banten for two years. When he arrived, Banten was experiencing a political crisis. Over a period of two years he witnessed seventeen fires, three of them accidental, but the others due to arson. He both witnessed and experienced firsthand a series of frightening and irritating events - fighting, brutality, bloody battles, and murders committed for political, economic or cultural reasons. He pictures Banten as a country of death - with poisoned water causing illness and death, people lacking food, almost no livestock, hot and humid weather, infested with various diseases, and many people attacked by wild animals. Scott also wrote about evidences of disobedience, laziness, theft, injustice and other conditions he considered very inhumane. His report of such happenings adds to the long list of events that occurred in the Banten Sultanate. Guillot calls this story "A season in hell: Scott in Banten, 1603-1605".

The final article in this book is based on various publications written by seven European authors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some only mention the name Banten or Bantam, referring to a kingdom on the island of Java. Others take Banten as a setting for the stories about their characters; these can be categorized as historical novels. The journals of European merchants travelling to Banten were instrumental for Europeans, especially the Dutch, French and English, coming to know about a very different country on the other side of the world. Also, the Banten Sultanate sent a delegation to England in 1682 that stayed in London. The English people were startled to learn of people coming from a far country to visit the king of England. The fame of Banten was spread to the peoples of Europe, stimulating the imagination of writers in the land of four seasons, who picked up Banten's story in a literary fashion. Guillot writes about this in "Life and death in an exotic place; The image of Banten in the literature of England, France and the Netherlands".

Thus, the thoroughness of Guillot's writing in *Banten; Sejarah dan peradaban abad X-XVII* can be described as representing the highest stage - the perfection - of all that had been written about Banten from the tenth through seventeenth centuries. It is not an exaggeration to say that this book has removed the veil which had kept much of the history of Banten shrouded in darkness. The book's main strength is its use of nimble and easy-to-understand style of writing. In a unique way, this book melds a limited number of published

sources with data from archaeological fieldworks, yielding new, previously unexpressed interpretations.

Asep Kurnia and Ahmad Sihabudin, *Saatnya Baduy bicara*. Jakarta: PT. Bumi Aksara and Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Banten, 2010, 294 pp. ISBN: 978-979-010-998-8 (soft cover).



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The Baduys are a traditional society that lives in the Kendeng Mountains in South Banten. When exactly the Baduys started to live in this region is unknown, but they are thought to have settled in this area hundreds or even thousands of years ago.

Administratively, the Baduy people now live in the Kanekes Village, District Leuwidamar, Lebak, Banten Province. Unlike other villages in Indonesia, Kanekes is a tribal village in which the village head – called Jaro Pamarentah – is not appointed and dismissed by the Camat (subdistrict head), who is referred to as *puun* by traditional leaders. Because of their modest and secluded way of life in the mountains, the Baduy people are often regarded as a backward or primitive society.

Historian of the Sundanese, Edi S. Ekadjati (2009: 44-45) said that when he was a primary school pupil (in the 1950s), his teacher used to tell stories of the Baduys. He pointed out that the Inner Baduys always wore white clothes while the Outer Baduys were entirely dressed in black, and they never washed their clothes. They obtained their food from hunting and simple farming and that they liked to eat monkeys, but they did not eat the meat; they only drank the animals' bodily fluids while they hanged them over the fireplaces of their homes. Their houses were made of wood and bamboo but they did not use nails, and the roofs were made of thatch. They never bathed and they would carry a machete wherever they went. However, when Ekadjati himself visited the Baduy people for the first time in 1967, he found them to be very different. Their bodies, houses, clothes, and environment were clean enough, and every morning they bathed in clean water in rivers and springs. They also washed their clothes, rice, and other household appliances. Their food consisted of rice and side dishes just like any other Sundanese community. They were also agreeable and helpful.