The significance of the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) archives for research on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was fully acknowledged early this year when the organization’s complete archives, including the relevant archives held at the Cape Town Archives Repository, were incorporated into the Memory of the World List of UNESCO, the cultural branch of the United Nations. The Resolutions of the Council of Policy of the VOC covering the whole period of Dutch occupation of the Cape colony from 1651 to 1795, are presently being digitized by two TANAP (Toward A New Age of Partnership) teams in Cape Town.

The work involved in the digitizing project was carried out in two phases by a team of two computer experts and two proofreaders. Firstly, the 121 already published volumes were scanned, digitized in Word, proofread, corrected and finally converted into XML format. Secondly, of the 121 volumes concerning the transcription project, 75 volumes which were initially transcribed in Word had to be converted into XML format. (The remaining 35 volumes of the transcription project are transcribed directly in XML format.) At present, ships’ names and geographical names are two of the encoded text types. Once the encoding has been done, searches may be executed on the Internet and all the encoded information covering these subjects may be extracted. When the information has been converted into XML data, it can be made available, for instance, in either printed or electronic format.

The publication of the massive quantity of information contained within these 231 volumes will not only be of interest to historians, sociologists, and anthropologists, but also expected to capture the attention of linguists, as it offers examples of Asian influence on the development of the African languages. A number of words from Malay origin entered the vocabulary of the inhabitants of the colonized regions of the Cape. Some words were part of the standard trade jargon, referring to beautiful and exotic fabrics, while other words referred to social behaviour. Words like pikol (Afrikaans), bakkaleien, bakkale, and pikol, are examples of words of either of Dutch or indigenous origin. The fact that the texts also include a large number of personal names of VOC employees, casual visitors and their families, high-profile Easterners banned from their countries, and slaves and their families, should be of great importance to genealogical research. Those interested in maritime history can find many ships’ names, reconstruct sea routes, locate shipwrecks, and much more besides. After the completion of the editing later this year, the sources will be made available on the TANAP website.

Asia and South Africa:
A Missing Link of Nearly Seven Million Words

By Helena Liebenberg

From 1624 to 1795 the Council of Policy was the highest governing body at the Cape. Prior to 1651, on 26 June 1659 to be exact, Leendert Janz and M. Poort compiled a remonstrant or short exposition of the advantages that the VOC would derive from a fort and garden at the Cape of Good Hope (C. 274 ‘Letters received’). Jan van Riebeeck commented on this letter in June 1659. According to the relevant documents the Council of Policy had already been established before the landing at the Cape of Good Hope on 6 April 1652, since the first resolutions that Jan van Riebeeck and the Council of Policy took were recorded in the Drummedaris, when the Council was actually known as the Broad Council (made up of captains and other high-ranking officials of the fleet). When the captains of the fleet that founded the settlement of the good hope, otherwise appointed in their stead, the meetings of the Council of Policy did not take place regularly but were dependent upon the commander, who was the convener. All letters from the Lords Secretaries, the Directorates in Amsterdam and from Batavia had to be opened and discussed at the Council meeting. Responses had to be drawn up by the Council and signed by all members. Written work was carried out under the Council’s auspices.

In order to make all this information available to the world TANAP decided to launch and finance a transcription project and a digitizing project. The former involves transcribing 11 volumes (1744-1759) or approximately 4.5 million words. The latter involves scanning, digitizing, and converting the 121 already published volumes (1652-1743) into XML, involving approximately 2.5 million words.

whose paper demonstrated how multi-ethnic in Malayalam companies can be an asset as well as a liability to both management and staff.

In the final analysis, organizational change always challenges group identi- ties and sets new targets for identifi- cations. Mergers, acquisitions, strategic alliances, and diverse forms of part- nerships between both large- and small-scale enterprises generate new organi- zational forms and necessitate the redefinition and renegotiation of orga- nizational boundaries. The disappear- ance of borders, in both past and pres- ent, has not necessarily led to more openness or cosmopolitan orientation, but has given rise to the emergence of socially constructed borders within and across spaces.

References

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Dr Helena Liebenberg is a language researcher who is presently involved in the transcription project in Cape Town, transcribing sev- enteenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch documents and translat- ing these texts into modern Afrikaans and English on request. She has a keen interest in the origin and development of languages, in particular Afrikaans.

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The interdisciplinary ASEF-Alliance sponsored workshop ‘Transnation- al Exchanges: Business Networks and Identity Formation in Nine- teenth and Twentieth Century Asia and Europe’ was organized as a joint activity of the Free University, Amsterdam and the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. The papers presented at the workshop will be published in an edited volume and a special issue of a business jour- nal. The abstracts are available at: www.asia-alliance.org

The intercultural logic of transnationality, as developed by Gunder Frank and Andre and Barry Giles, transposes to the context of late capitalist organizations this concept refers to diverse loci of power and control within and outside these organizations, which are partly converging, partly conflicting, and continuously changing in a complex global economy.

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