

Van Uliet's Siam

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CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Introduction: Ayutthaya, King Prasat Thong, the Dutch, and Jeremias van Vliet	1
 The Written Works of Jeremias van Vliet	 33
Diary of the Picnic Incident (1636–37)	35
<i>Translated and edited by Alfons van der Kraan</i>	
Description of the Kingdom of Siam (1638)	89
<i>Translated by L. F. van Ravenswaay, edited by Chris Baker</i>	
The Short History of the Kings of Siam (1640)	179
<i>Translated by Leonard Andaya, edited by David K. Wyatt</i>	
Historical Account of King Prasat Thong (1640)	245
<i>Translated by Alfons van der Kraan, edited by Dhiravat na Pombejra and Chris Baker</i>	
 Appendices	
I Structure of Government	323
II Table of Kings	326
III Dynastic Tree	328
IV Yamada Nagamasa	329
 Glossary	 331
Bibliography	333
Index	339

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Van Vliet's Siam

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ALFONS VAN DER KRAAN • DAVID K. WYATT

The most detailed and fascinating account of old Siam was written by Dutch merchant Jeremias Van Vliet between 1636 and 1640 in four works: the earliest surviving chronicle of Siam's history; a wide-ranging description of the kingdom's geography, economy, society, politics, and religion; a blow-by-blow account of a bloody struggle over the crown; and the Dutchman's day-by-day diary during a crisis. Here they appear together in English translation for the first time.

Jeremias Van Vliet went to the east to make his fortune. He became head of the Dutch Factory in Ayutthaya, and later was convicted of massive corruption. His writings offer an intimate view of a major Asian port, the politics of its court, and early European merchant activity. *The Diary of the Picnic Incident* is printed here for the first time. The *Historical Account* appears in a totally new translation from the original old Dutch text, correcting the major errors and omissions in earlier versions. The *Description* and *Short History* reproduce the earlier translations with new annotation and analysis. The editors add new details on Van Vliet's life, the Dutch community, the city of Ayutthaya, and the court of King Prasat Thong, which set this ordinary merchant's extraordinary literary work into its context of time and place.

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