

**A Short Introduction to Some Archival  
Resources in the Netherlands,  
Spain, and Portugal for the  
Study of Southeast Asia**



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While specific books and articles have been written on archival holdings and the organization of various research institutions, the detailed information provided is often daunting and sometimes confusing. Ideally, scholars should spend long periods doing research in the relevant archives and libraries and learn by experience the best and most efficient way of using the documents. Unfortunately, however, few have the luxury of unlimited time, and in reality scholars usually have only brief periods (sometimes limited to just a few days) to spend at any one research institution. Often such scholars "make an appearance" without being able to do anything substantial, mainly because the task of locating their material seems too formidable. Others who have specific requests, such as the location of maps or documents, may be intimidated by either language problems or a particular institution's organization. It is for these scholars that this "Short Introduction" should prove most useful since it is intended as a handy guide to assist individuals to use their limited time profitably.

**The Netherlands**

In general hours are between 9 - 5 p. m. at most institutions. The General State Archives are also open on Saturdays from 9 - 5 p. m., but research documents must be requested before Saturday. The only major holiday period is between Christmas and the New Year period when these places

could be closed for two weeks at a stretch.

*1. Het Algemene Rijksarchief = The General State Archives*

**Location :**

The Hague, next to Centraal Station. The Archives are linked to the Royal Library for easy access for researchers.

**Formal Introduction :**

No formal documents are required, though a letter from your home institution is useful to establish your status.

**Comments :**

This is a new archive established a few years ago and brings together the papers from the three major depositories: (1) the old Algemene Rijksarchief, with papers up to 1800; (2) Arnhem, with papers from about 1800 to about 1900; and (3) Leegwaterstraat, with papers from about 1900 onward.

A useful starting point would be to consult the section head of the particular period in which you are working. He/She is an expert in the sources and will be able to direct you to the relevant material immediately. These heads are friendly, can be consulted at any time, and all speak excellent English.

In addition to the various major collections such as the Colonial Archives, there are also the Aanwinsten (Acquisitions of Private Collections) and the Personal Archives donated by families. There is also a fine separate map section with archival maps. However, the Leupe catalogue is not complete and much

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digging is necessary to locate particular maps. The best thing is to use the archival source and then direct the map room to try to locate a particular map mentioned in the source.

### 2. *The Koninklijk Instituut van het Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV) = The Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology*

Location :

Leiden, next to the University of Leiden, about a 15-minute walk from Leiden Station.

Formal Introduction :

An introduction is needed from your host institution. Only members of the Institute are supposed to use the library, but you can become a member by paying the dues and receiving also the Institute's journal.

Comments :

The library is one of the best in The Netherlands for material on Indonesia. In addition to the secondary literature, much of which is invaluable and not available outside of Holland, there are some good Dutch and Indonesian regional manuscripts in the library. There are published catalogues of these manuscripts in the library itself.

The Institute's Aanwinsten (Acquisitions) should also be consulted. They contain the papers donated from old Binnenlandsch Bestuur (Colonial Civil Service) officials and former missionaries of the Nederlandsche Bijbelgenootschap (Dutch Bible Society). There are also papers of such noted scholars as Korn and Cense in the Aanwinsten.

The photograph collection is superb and is very accessible through a card system.

Perhaps the most useful contact for information on the collections both in the KITLV and the Algemene Rijksarchief is Frits Jaquet. He is based in the KITLV and has published descriptions of the various archival collections. He was also instrumental in setting

up the papers found a number of years back in Pasar Ikan, which deal with the nineteenth and twentieth century mainly social history of Indonesia from Dutch reports. These papers are in the new archives in Jakarta.

### 3. *The University of Leiden Library*

Location :

Across from the KITLV in Leiden.

Formal Introduction :

In order to borrow books, one will need some letter from your home institution or from a Dutch scholar. Otherwise, the library is open. For use of the Eastern Manuscript Section, a letter from your home institution would be appreciated.

Comments :

The Eastern Manuscript Section is the most important part of the library for the researcher. Most of the Indonesian (and other languages from around the world) manuscripts which were collected throughout the Dutch former empires were deposited here. The collections on Indonesian regional languages are especially impressive. There are good published catalogues. Since this is a new library, the facilities of the library are excellent.

### 4. *Museums*

Location :

The Museum voor de Tropen in Amsterdam and the Ethnographische Museum in Leiden are two important sources of artefacts on the Indonesian region.

Formal Introduction :

None needed unless you wish to speak to the Directors or specific individuals within the Museum itself.

Comments :

Many of the treasures from Indonesia are stored in these museums. It would be worth the visit just for the experience. In the Am-

sterdam Museum are also a collection of Memories van Overgave, which are the reports which outgoing governors left for their replacements. These documents contain a lot of information reviewing the area's activities during the tenure of the official, plus incorporating material from previous governors.

### Spain

With a letter of introduction from your home institution and purpose of research, you can obtain a card (with a photo) which entitles you to do research in any of the archives in Spain for a three (or five?) year period. The document is available from the first archive that you work in.

Hours in Spanish libraries and archives appear to be determined by the Spanish custom of very late dinners. It is possible, therefore, for some places to be open from 8-2:30 p. m. and again from 5-7 p. m. But times vary from one place to another.

The Archivo General de Indias is open from 8-2:30 p. m., but no longer opens in the evenings because there is no demand for it.

#### 1. *Archivo General de Indias*

Location:

Seville, in an old picturesque building right at the edge of the Jewish Quarters.

Comments:

These archives house all the records sent from Spanish officials from throughout the Spanish Empire. As a result the bulk of the documents deal with Latin America, although there is also a substantial collection of material on the Philippines.

Within the Philippines' material can be found documents dealing with eastern Indonesia because of the Spanish presence there from the second decade of the sixteenth century until 1663. There is an excellent catalogue of

the Philippine documents published in the beginning of this century by Torres y Lanza. Unfortunately, the numbers of the documents have been changed, and so you need to consult the archivist to synchronize the numbering system.

Insofar as the rest of the archives are concerned, there are no recent catalogues. The hand-written catalogues are only partially helpful because the descriptions are too brief to be of much use. One can waste a lot of time calling for documents which are of no real value. The best way to begin is to consult foreign scholars working in the archives or Spaniards who do research for foreign scholars as a livelihood. They know the ins and outs of the archives and can show you short-cuts through the information.

The sixteenth century documents are especially difficult to read. It would be necessary before embarking on archival research to sample the writing style of the Iberians. There have been books published. A good way of finding out about the script is to speak to Latin American experts who will be able to direct you to relevant books.

### Portugal

To be able to enter any research institution in Portugal, you must first go with a letter of introduction from your home institution and a purpose of research to your embassy. You should know beforehand which archives you wish to consult since the embassy has to make out a separate letter for each place.

While many of the research institutions are in Lisbon, they are scattered throughout this large city. If you have only limited time in Lisbon, it may be wise to plan your strategy according to location and hours of opening. Like Spain, the hours of opening vary considerably.

## Field Report

### 1. *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT)*

#### Location :

Lisbon, in one of the wings of the Parliament building.

#### Comments :

The main sources in the ANTT for the study of Southeast Asia are in the Corpo Cronológico, which are a collection of documents organized in chronological bundles. There are also the documents of the various chancelleries of the different rulers, and documents called Gavetas (Drawers) which contain also bundles of documents.

It is useless to be more precise about the various collections since there seem to be very little real reason for the various documents being here or there. After the major earthquake and fire in the late eighteenth century in Lisbon, many documents were destroyed and the rest were reorganized the best they could. However, the archives are difficult to use, and there are only old hand-written imprecise catalogues which do little to ease the burden of the researcher.

Fortunately, the Gavetas have been published and can be consulted in printed form rather than in the archaic script.

### 2. *Filmoteca Ultramarina Portuguesa*

#### Location :

Lisbon.

#### Comments :

This body has attempted to microfilm many of the documents dealing with the Portuguese Overseas Empire which are housed in various places both in Europe and Asia. It has documents from Macao and Goa, a service which is useful for scholars with limited time and money.

There is a small but efficient staff at work editing documents for publication. Some useful publications are available free from the Filmoteca. But in addition there are good complete

collections of documents of archives which have already been published.

### 3. *Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos*

#### Location :

Lisbon, about 10 minutes' walk from the Filmoteca. The Filmoteca closes at 12 noon and this Centro does not open until 1:30 p.m. These two institutions are ideally located for the researcher.

#### Comments :

The material in the Centro supplements the archives of the Torre do Tombo because it deals with seventeenth and eighteenth century activities of the Portuguese (and of the modern period).

There is a good collection of books and especially rare published documents unavailable elsewhere.

### 4.

#### Location & Comments :

Generally much of the relevant Portuguese material on Southeast Asia have been published in limited edition collections of documents intended mainly for government officials and a few favoured academics. Some are still available in second-hand bookshops in Lisbon. An excellent second-hand bookshop in Lisbon is the Livraria Histórica Ultramar, Rua do Diário de Notícias. In Annex No. 2 is a Mr. Berkmeier, a German now living in Portugal, who speaks English and can locate almost any book you require. You may have to give him a few days to obtain certain limited edition books. Within walking distance of this bookshop are a number of other second-hand dealers where important published Portuguese documents on Asia may be purchased for very reasonable prices. (**Visiting Scholar, 1985-1986, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University**)