

## The Role of Cornelis Chastelein in the Development of the Depok Region, 1693-1714

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### Abstract

In the course of its history, The Depok area has had interesting dynamics. The growth of Depok has been inseparable from the people who originally settled in the area. Depok's emergence and growth as a city has been due to in large part the role of Cornelis Chastelein. At the end of the 17th century, he plotted the area of Depok and since then, it began to witness growth and development of that area. This study analyzes the traces and relics of Cornelis Chastelein in Depok in the period 1693 and 1714. It uses historical analysis technique in which carried out through four stages, consist of heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. According to the study, it shows that the history of Depok cannot be separated from Chastelein. His legacy in the form of colonial buildings can be found in the Depok area, West Java. Apart from the visible physical legacy, Chastelein also freed slaves, allowing them to live independently and become the original residents of Depok.

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### Introduction

History cannot be separated from human, space, and time elements. According to (Kuntowijoyo, 2013) history is about human beings. Throughout their lives, human beings experience myriad events within the extent of space and time. This is what makes a historical event. The continuity of this historical event occurs in the concept of space or the place where an event takes place. This concept of space has resulted in divisions in history such as local history, national history, world history. Meanwhile, the concept of time shows when an event occurs. According to (Kuntowijoyo, 2013) history talks about society in terms of time and therefore history is the science of time. Historical events leave traces of history, also known as historical relics. These relics can be investigated and reconstructed into a historical writing.

Depok has historically been a supporting area for Batavia because of its geographical proximity to other regions (Government of Depok, 2021). Apart from being the center of government, Depok remains a buffer zone for the capital city of Jakarta in the fields of housing, education, and trade and services. In addition, the existence of a railway connecting Batavia with Buitenzorg starting on October 15, 1869

further established its role. According to (Mudaryanti, 2016) in the 17th century the Depok area was owned by a high-ranking *Verenige Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) official named Cornelis Chastelein. The Depok area became private real estate inhabited by slaves from various ethnic groups. In the course of its history, the Depok area transformed from private real estate into government property after Indonesia's independence, from being a sub-district in the administrative area of Parung, Bogor Regency to its status as the Administrative City of Depok. The city center at that time was in Pancoran Mas, now called Old Depok.

The Depok area during the Cornelis Chastelein era was run by workers from various ethnicities. To support the management of Depok, Chastelein provided literacy education, taught Dutch, and introduced Christianity to his slaves. Among Cornelis Chastelein's legacies are colonial buildings in Depok, such as the YLCC (Cornelis Chastelein Foundation) Pastori building, the Western Indonesian Protestant Church (GPIB) Immanuel (the first church in Depok), Panus Bridge, Harapan Hospital, Cornelis Chastelein Monument, Kamboja cemetery. According to Estin, Antariksa, and Suryasari (2017) Dutch colonial buildings have high historical value, providing insights to architectural developments during the era and the city's growth. After Cornelis Chastelein died, these slaves were freed and were given the land for them to manage. It paved the way for the formation a community known as *Belanda Depok*. This study explores the role of Cornelis Chastelein in the development of Depok and its people. This paper traces Cornelis Chastelein's life in Depok starting with his work at VOC to being a landlord in the Depok.

## Method

This study adopts a historical research method to examine the role of Cornelis Chastelein in developing the region and society of Depok. The research method according to (Sugiyono, 2017) is a scientific way to obtain data with particular goals and uses. Meanwhile, according to (Wasino & Hartatik, 2020) the historical method is a proper way to achieve historical verification. There are four stages to perform the historical method, heuristics, critics, interpretation, and historical writing (historiography).

In heuristics or data collection, collected historical sources. The sources were obtained in Cornelis Chastelein Foundation building, the Western Indonesian Protestant Church (GPIB) Immanuel, Panus Bridge, Harapan Hospital, Cornelis Chastelein Monument, Kamboja Cemetery. The data obtained in the form of manuscripts, books, photos, and other documents to the history of Depok, Cornelis Chastelein, as well as the life of the people of Depok. After the sources were obtained, then it could be verified or criticized its credibility (Kuntowijoyo, 2013). Then it continues to conduct interpretation and historical writing.

## Profile of Cornelis Chastelein

Cornelis Chastelein was born in Amsterdam on August 10, 1657 into Anthony Chastelein and Maria Nicolai and was the youngest of 10 children (Cornelis Chastelein

Foundation, 2021). He married Cathrina Van Quaelbergt around 1680 and they had a son named Anthony Chastelein and a daughter named Judith Chastelein (Kwisthout, 2015). In addition, Cornelis Chastelein also had a daughter from his marriage to Leonara van Bali, named Maria Chastelein, who was legally adopted, and another daughter named Catharina van Batavia, who was not legally adopted, from his marriage to Cecilia van Bali (Mudaryanti, 2017).

In 1675, Cornelis Chastelein set foot in Batavia in the Dutch East Indies. He departed on January 24, 1675 on the ship "Huis van Kleef" from the port of Texel in the Netherlands with his two sisters, Machteld and Ida, and his aunt Henriette. He arrived in Batavia on August 16, 1675 (Cornelis Chastelein Foundation Foundation, 2016). He was a high-ranking VOC official who worked in Batavia. He started his career at VOC as a bookkeeper in the accounting department. In 1682, he became a big merchant (*groot winkelier*) and then climbed the career ladder to become a second-class senior merchant (*tweede opperkoopman*) (Cornelis Chastelein Foundation Foundation 2020). Due to health problems in 1691, he resigned from his position in the VOC. However, in fact, in 1691 there was a change of Governor General from Johannes Camphuys to Willem van Outhoorn. Cornelis Chastelein disagreed with the way Governor General Willem van Outhoorn exploited the natives for profit. In line with this, Cornelis Chastelein was deceived by the VOC into engaging in colonialism or exploitation instead of enlightenment as taught by Christianity (Interview with J. J. Rizal). After resigning from the VOC, on May 18, 1696, he purchased a land area of 1244 hectares to build a business engaged in agriculture and mission to spread protestantism and christianity (Perwata, 2018).

According to (Harahap, 2018) the Depok area and its surroundings during the Dutch colonial period were agricultural land (*onderneming*). In the second half of the 17th century the small circle of Batavian aristocrats began to establish and maintain plantations. They lived outside Batavia and around Batavia (Kwisthout, 2015). People wanted to live in areas outside the fortress of the city of Batavia. Managing land for use as a place for agriculture certainly requires human labor (interview with J. J. Rizal). In managing agricultural land Cornelis Chastelein bought slaves from the king of Bali (Perwata, 2018). Around the 17th century Bali was part of the international trade route. However, according to (Pardi, 2018) in addition to agricultural products and crafts, traders were also interested in buying slaves from Bali, especially traders from the Netherlands. Slaves from Bali were needed by the VOC to work as servants and soldiers. These slaves from Bali, apart from being sold in Batavia, were also sold to other areas. In addition, Chastelein bought slaves from other areas such as Makassar, Timor Minahasa and from the eastern part of the archipelago. There were approximately 150 slaves had been brought to Batavia. However, there were no Javanese slaves worked for Chastelein. It was due to that the agreement between the VOC and the Mataram kingdom was not permissible for the people of Java to become slaves. Chastelein became a caring figure who treated slaves properly. It because that he had a fairly high education and received religious teachings from his parents who were Protestant Christians.

Cornelis Chastelein died on June 28, 1714. Before he died, he paid attention to the welfare of his slaves and wrote a will. In another note, he had a plan to free all of 150 slaves who had brought to Batavia and they had the right to own and manage the land under condition that they must become Christians.

### **The Origin of Depok**

A region is often named after its characteristics and legendary folklores. There are several versions for the origin of the name Depok (Perwata, 2018). According to one version, the Depok area was a place to meditate and get peace. Another version states that Depok comes from the word *padepokan*. Another version states that Depok is an abbreviation of *De Eerse Protestantse Organisatie van Kristenen*. Meanwhile, the word *padepokan* came up because the Ciliwung river was part of the Padjajaran kingdom's power (Rahardjo et al., 2018). It writes that Ciliwung River was controlled by the Padjajaran kingdom because its connection to the center of the kingdom.

Since he had resigned from VOC, Cornelis Chastelein began focused on agriculture. Before buying land in Depok, he had already owned land in Gambir, Senen, Srengseng, and Mampang areas. In 1696, the Depok area came under his control. According to Mudaryanti (2017) the Depok land was purchased by Cornelis Chastelein from Lucas Van De Meur, a Cirebon resident for 300 *rijksdaakders*. The Depok was transformed into agricultural field planted with pepper, indigo, citron, jackfruit, soursop, cocoa, and star fruit. In addition, he raised raising cows and buffalo and even established coal, tiles and other potter factories.

Cornelis Chastelein believed that there was only one way to improve the lives of the Indies, by establishing an agricultural society (*landbouwgemeenschappen*) and that agriculture was more important than trade under the VOC. By establishing a prosperous agricultural center, the colony would be able to function optimally (Kwisthout, 2015).

According to Mudaryanti (2017), Depok's land status as ownership title (*eigendom verponding*) from 1714, until the Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels from 1808 to 1811 decided to give private status to the purchased lands. This meant that buyers enjoyed full ownership rights (*eigendom*) that applied for generations. This also meant that Depok was privately-owned. The Depok area, which became private property, was inhabited by various ethnic groups who served as slaves for Cornelis Chastelein.

Depok history cannot be separated from Cornelis Chastelein and his heritage of colonial buildings, one of which is the YLCC building, namely the Pastori building, the Western Indonesian Protestant Church (GPIB) Immanuel which the first church in Depok, Panus Bridge which is the oldest bridge in Depok, Harapan Hospital which is the oldest hospital in Depok, Cornelis Chastelein Monument, Kamboja cemetery, Depok Cultural Heritage, and Sekolah Kasih become the first school in Depok. According to Estin, Antariksa, & Suryasari (2017) Dutch colonial buildings have a high historical value, regarding the development of buildings in their time and the development of the city. Apart from the physical form, the most visible legacy is the

freedom of slaves who can live independently to continuously grow into Depok people.

### **Emergence of the Dutch Influence in Depok**

There were 150 slaves who had freed and had the right to manage 1.244 hectares of land under the certain requirement, they should be Christians. It was written in his will and was revised five times. The initial draft of his will, made on July 4, 1696 and the last draft finished on March 13, 1714. This last concept is known as Cornelis Chastelein's will. It would come into force on June 28, 1714 (Cornelis Chastelein Foundation Foundation, 2020). After accepting Christianity, the slaves were grouped by Baprima Lucas into 12 clans. It consists of Leander, Bacas, Soedira, Izakh, Samuel, Jonathan, Loen, Yacob, Laurens, Yoseph, Tholose, Zadokh.

Perwata (2018) writes that there was a cultural leap after they were freed. Their role changed and later became landowners who managed agriculture, plantations, and livestock. However, they did not manage their farms themselves and instead leased them out, because of their inability to manage them. Gradually their situation changed after in the 18th century thanks to the policy of the Batavian Church Council, which allowed religious teachers to be placed in Depok to teach and visit congregations.

According to Tampi (2018) the slaves grew into a large community, gaining the nickname *Belanda Depok* (Depok Dutch). Depok people were a community of migrants on the island of Java. They were not Javanese, but a colony of Depok settlements in Java. They were the descendants of freed slaves who developed the Depok area.

According to Mudaryanti (2016) the term *Belanda Depok* emerged because of differences in lifestyles. The *Belanda Depok* lived a Dutch lifestyle. They enjoyed the same rights as Europeans and education in schools for the Dutch and spoke Dutch. Meanwhile, *Belanda Depok* were native Indonesians. The term *Belanda Depok* was mockery from train passengers from Buitenzorg who observed Depok people speaking Malay mixed with Dutch. This was the origin of the term *Belanda Depok*. According to (Lasmiyati, 2017) the construction of the railroad connecting Batavia with Buitenzorg began on October 15, 1869. The railway line between Batavia and Buitenzorg extended 58.6 km. There were 15 stations starting from Pasar Ikan Station, Jakarta Kota Station, Sawah Besar, *Noordwijk* (water gate), Gambir, Pegangsaan, Jatinegara, Sunday Market, Lenteng Agung, Pondok Cina, Depok, Citayam, Bojong Gedeh, Cibulut, and ending in Bogor.

In terms of religion, the Depok people were shepherd by Baprima Lucas from 1713 and J. M. Sudirman from 1947-1955. Culturally, they came from different tribes with diverse cultural backgrounds. However, because many of them came from the Bali, so that Balinese culture more prominent (Jonathans, 2011). In holidays, *dodol* cakes, *iwel*, *geplak* were served to a type of gamelan musical instruments (Cornelis Chastelein Foundation Foundation, 2020). In addition, in its development, the descendants of the Depok people then initiated a forum called the Cornelis Chastelein Institution on August 4, 1952. Then, in 1990 it changed its name to the YLCC. This foundation is engaged in social, humanitarian, and religious fields.

## Conclusions

Historically, the development of Depok areas could not be separated from Cornelis Chastelien who became an important figure who established and developed Depok. He was affiliated with VOC and became a major merchant (*groot winkelier*) and rose to become a second-class senior merchant (*tweede opperkoopman*). He resigned from VOC due to his disagreement with the way Governor General Willem Vvan Outhoorn treated slaves and exploited natives. Then he built a business engaged in agriculture and mission to spread Christianity. The Depok area became private land inhabited by various ethnic groups from the slave trade. The slaves who were freed over time had descendants until there grew to become a large community, gaining the nickname Belanda Depok (Depok Dutch). The original Depok people applied the Dutch lifestyles and enjoyed the same rights as Europeans.

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