

Please consider these questions and use them to guide your reading of this primary source:

1. The selection is from the first volume of a 13-volume diary kept by a Tamil commercial broker employed by the French in India, named Ananda Ranga Pillai. Given the brief preamble on p. 1, and the entries that follow, what do you understand to be Ananda Ranga Pillai's motivations in keeping this journal?
2. A central theme in the journal is the rivalry between Ananda Ranga Pillai and another Tamil broker, Pedro or Kanakarâya Mudali. What do these entries teach us about this rivalry?
3. Based on this source, on what was Ananda Ranga Pillai's success founded?

THE PRIVATE DIARY
OF
ANANDA RANGA PILLAI

DUBASH TO
JOSEPH FRANÇOIS DUPEIX
GOVERNOR OF PONDICHERRY

A RECORD OF MATTERS:
POLITICAL, HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND PERSONAL
FROM
1736 TO 1761

TRANSLATED FROM THE TAMIL
BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

EDITED BY
J. F. PRICE
K. RANGACHARI

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APPENDICES

	PAGE
APPENDIX I.—Note on the question of the particular island referred to where Masukkarai is mentioned	413—417
„ II.—Accounts given in Orme's "History" of the murders of Safdar 'Alî Khân and his son	418—422
—————	
NOMINAL INDEX	423—445

ANANDA RANGA PILLAI'S DIARY.

CHAPTER I.

FROM SEPTEMBER 6TH, 1736, TO JUNE 17TH, 1737.

Preamble—M. Dulaurens appointed to Council—M. Dumeslier dissatisfied with arrangements—Remonstrates with Governor—Resigns—Arrival and state reception of charter authorizing coining of money—Cost of obtaining this—Contracts for supply of piece-goods to Company—Merchants of old Company receive portion of these—Illness and death of Mádavarâya Pillai—Arrangements for working mint—Potti Pattan pays bribe for employment—Kanakarâya Mudali illicitly shares in profits—Remarks of diarist touching this—Appointment of a merchant for the mint—Shares allotted to him and others—Rates fixed for coining—Division of profits—Working expenses, present and past—Results of working—Bribe paid to Governor—Coining done for merchants—Diarist proceeds to Porto Novo—Sailing of *Maure*—M. Signard speaks to diarist as to succeeding Kanakarâya Mudali—He visits Governor and members of Council—Conversation with M. Delorme—Arrangements as to cargo of *Sankarapârik*—She sails—Allegations against diarist of short lading—Defends himself—Governor finally satisfied—Arrival of *Phénix*—Her cargo—Treatment of French in China—Letters to friends from M. Lenoir—Departure of brother to Madras—Arrival of *Phelippeaux*—Meeting of Council to read despatches—MM. Dulaurens and de Choisy appointed by Governor members of Council—Arrival of *Duc de Bourbon*—Cargo landed by her and *Phelippeaux*—Contents of letter from M. Lenoir—Decision of Company regarding M. Dumeslier—Conversation with him—He states how M. Dumas obtained appointment as Governor—Bribe paid for this.

I proceed to chronicle what I hear with my ears; what I see with my eyes; the arrivals and departures of ships; and whatsoever wonderful or novel takes place. Preamble.

Thursday, 6th September 1736, or 25th *Avani* of 1736.
Nala.—At a meeting of the Council held at 8 this morning, M. Dulaurens was appointed a member of Council. At 4 in the afternoon, M. Dumeslier

M. Dulaurens
 appointed
 to Council

CHAP. I. waited on the Governor, M. Dumas, and informed him that he would continue to be a member only on the condition that he was to be given precedence over M. Dulaurens in the matter of signing; but that if this was not conceded he did not care to retain his appointment. The Governor replied that he was bound to carry out the orders of the Company, and could not with propriety contravene them. M. Dumeslier then rejoined: "Was I not required, in a despatch which came last year by the ship in which you arrived, to affix my signature beneath those of MM. Dulaurens and Signard? In connection with this your predecessor, M. Lenoir, convened a meeting of the Council. He asserted that the Company had passed its order in ignorance of the actual circumstances of the case, and he promised to address the Directors on my behalf, and to cause a revised one to be issued. He assured you that in the event of the Company charging you with disobedience of its instructions, he would take the responsibility on himself, and he begged you to allow me to sign as fourth member, immediately after M. Legou; as had been the practice during his tenure of office. You thereupon undertook that until receipt of a further communication from him, you would continue to me the precedence which I had hitherto been accorded. He then sent for me, and told me in your presence to retain my appointment only so long as I was in the enjoyment of my present honours, and to throw it up whenever I was

1736.
M. Dumeslier dissatisfied with arrangements.

Remonstrates with Governor.

required to sign after the persons to whom I have alluded. On this, you gave your word that you would respect what he had said, and you have done so for a year. If you will grant me the same privileges for another twelvemonth, I will remain in my present place; if not, I shall be obliged to resign it." To this the Governor replied: "Your functions will continue undisturbed, and your salary will still be the same. The only change required is in the position of your signature, which you will have to affix after those of the gentlemen already mentioned." M. Dumeslier then made answer: "My means are not so insufficient as to compel me to submit to such an indignity. I regard honour as of greater value. I will therefore, give up my post." The Governor exclaimed: "That is left to you," and M. Dumeslier thereupon took his departure.

Monday, 10th September 1736, or 29th *Ávani* of *Nala*.—The charter authorizing the coining of rupees which, together with a dress of honour, was sent by Nawáb Dôst 'Alí *Khân** from *Álambarai*, arrived at 8 this morning. Kanakarâya Mudali † came with it. A procession started to receive it,

* Nawáb of Arcot.

† The predecessor of Ranga Pillai in the office of the Company's chief *dubâsh* and courtier at Pondichery. *Dubâsh* means literally "a man of two languages," i.e., an interpreter. This was the original significance of the word, but at the time that the diary was written it was applied also to a native agent, or broker, who negotiated the purchase of merchandise. Hence the title *courtier* (broker) conferred by the French authorities on their chief *dubâsh*.

CHAP. I.
1736.

Who remains firm.

M. Dumeslier resigns.

Arrival of charter from Nawab authorizing coining of money.

every 100 seers of silver. For the favour thus shown them, those doing the goldsmith's work of the mint bribed M. Dumas with 2,000 pagodas, at the rate of 400 pagodas for each of their five shares.

CHAP. I.
1737.
Bribe paid to Governor by goldsmiths of mint.

[Friday], 4th January 1737, or 25th Mârgazhi of Nala.—I give a statement of the number of rupees coined for the Company's merchants from the silver received from them for that purpose. Dollar-silver weighing 224 seers and 65 pagodas-weight* was coined into Rs. 5,249 $\frac{1}{16}$, being at the rate of Rs. 2,335 per 100 seers. Coins stamped with a double head, and weighing 100 seers, were recoinced into Rs. 2,318. Thus, for the total weight of 324 seers and a fraction, the value of coins struck was Rs. 7,567 $\frac{1}{16}$. The expenses of coining amounted to Rs. 121 $\frac{1}{16}$, or Rs. 16 on every 1,000 rupees. The remainder viz., Rs. 7 446, was paid to M. Legou.

Statement of coining done for merchants.

[Tuesday, 15th January 1737, or] 6th Tai of Nala.—I started for Porto Novo in view to making up into bales, and despatching, the goods required for embarkation on board the ship *Maure*, which belongs partly to the Governor, M. Dumas, and partly to Imâm Şâhib, who is about to start for Mocha. There were also stuffs ordered for the *Heureux Marchand*, and for certain tradesmen, which had to be baled at Porto Novo by me.

Diarist proceeds to Porto Novo to ship cargo.

Wednesday, 30th January 1737, or 21st Tai of Nala.—The requisite cargo was placed on board the *Maure*, which is bound for Mocha. M. Gabriel

Sailing of *Maure* for Mocha.

* Standard weight of Pondichery pagoda, dwt. 1 g. 16 mi. 6.

CHAP. I.
1737. Dumas and M. Lefranquerie, embarking in a boat at Porto Novo, reached the vessel at about 5. Owing to failure of wind, she remained in sight until 10 to-day, and then disappeared from view.

Diarist returns from Porto Novo.

Thursday [28th February 1737, or] 21st Mâsi of Nala.—At 9 this night, I returned to Pondichery from Porto Novo.

M. Signard speaks to him as to succeeding Kanakarâya Mudali.

[*Friday*], 1st March 1737, or 22nd Mâsi of Nala.—M Signard, whom I went to see, observed, in a tone of slight disappointment, that I had not paid him a visit for about a month after the departure of the ship. He then said to me: "Kanakarâya Mudali has been ill of diabetes for a month past, and is entirely bed-ridden. His recovery is problematical, and you stand a good chance of being appointed in his stead. I make no doubt of this; it is only a matter of days." He advised me to assume, in my intercourse with the Governor, a deportment which would evoke feelings of regard, and so to word my language as to make an impression on him; and he favoured me also with other like kind counsels. Thereupon, I paid a visit to the Governor, M. Dumas, offered my respects to the other members of Council, revisited the Governor, and finally waited on M. Dumeslier.

Visits Governor and members of Council.

[*Friday*], 15th March 1737, or 6th Panguni of Nala.—M. Delorme sent for me and said: "Rangappa, how is Pedro*? How goes it with

* This was the Christian name of Kanakarâya Mudali.

his complaint?" I replied: "The nature of the malady is such that one cannot be assured that a perfect cure will be effected. For four days at a time there are symptoms of recovery, and then a relapse follows. This seems to be the present condition of his health." He then said: "You will be his successor. You may be almost certain of this. The Governor and I have considered the matter and have selected you for the post. God will favour you, and it must come about." Upon this I thanked him, took leave, and came away.

CHAP. I.
1737.

Conversation with M. Delorme.

Who assures him that he will become chief dubash.

[*Saturday*], 16th March 1737, or 7th Panguni of Nala.—A quantity of blue piece-goods was received to-day from Porto Novo. This was made up for M. Dumas into twenty-six bales.

[*Wednesday*], 20th March 1737, or 11th Panguni of Nala.—The *Sankarapârik*, which will sail for Manilla after she has completed taking in cargo for that place, goes to Madras, and there ships, in order to complete her lading, some fine chintzes. M. Dirois, M. Rousselière Dubois, M. Mahé de la Villebague, captain of the ship, native captain Louis Prakâsam, and supercargo Jaganivâsa Mudali, who is the brother-in-law of Kanakarâya Mudali, have embarked on board the *Sankarapârik*, which is to proceed to the roadstead at Mylapore.

Arrangements as to cargo of *Sankarapârik*.

~~[*Wednesday*], 27th March 1737, or 18th Panguni of Nala.—The *Sankarapârik*, having anchored off Mylapore, embarked the consignments awaiting shipment there, and set sail for Manilla to-day.~~

She sails for Manilla.