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Company Privateers in Asian Waters: The VOC-Trading Post at Hirado and the Logistics of Privateering, ca. 1614-1624

Jurre Knoest

In 1609, nine years after the first Dutchmen arrived in Japan on the ship *Liefde*, the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC) had obtained permission from shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to establish a trading post at Hirado, a small port in Kyushu. However, the expected trade profits remained forthcoming, and many times the VOC-directors in the Republic wondered if it would not be better to pack up shop and leave Japan. Only after the establishment of a Dutch presence on Formosa in 1624 were the Dutch able to procure a steady supply of Chinese wares for the Japanese market, and by the early 1630s the trading post became profitable.

Scholars agree that during the first twenty years of its existence, the Dutch factory at Hirado functioned as a base of operations for Dutch privateering activities in East and Southeast Asian waters, rather than as a profitable trading post. At Hirado the booty was sold, new expeditions were being coordinated, and Dutch ships found a safe haven where they were re-supplied and repaired. From 1619-1622 it was also the home port of the combined Dutch-English Fleet of Defense, consisting of five Dutch and five English ships. This fleet was created with the purpose of destroying the Iberian trade monopoly in Asia, and to secure the Chinese trade for the two trading companies. This had to be accomplished by harassing Chinese and Iberian shipping between Macao and Manila. With this intent the fleet went on two expeditions, one from January till July 1621 and one from November 1621 till July 1622. Due to the constant breaking of promises and intensifying Anglo-Dutch rivalries, both in Asia and within the joint fleet itself, it was decided to disband the Fleet of Defense after the second expedition, and the Dutch continued their battle against the Iberians on their own.¹

¹ A. Clulow, 'Pirating in the Shogun's Waters: The Dutch East India Company and the Santo António Incident', *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* 13 (2006) 65-80: 65; P. van Dyke, 'The Anglo-Dutch Fleet of Defense (1620-1622): Prelude to the Dutch Occupation of Taiwan' in: L. Blussé ed., *Around and About Formosa. Essays in honor of Professor Ts'ao Yung-ho* (Taipei 2003) 61-81; E. Kato, 'Cheng Chih-lung, alias

The above raises some questions about the Hirado trading post. For instance, what did it take to coordinate these privateering activities? What was necessary to equip such expeditions in terms of supplies and manpower? Furthermore, since Hirado was strategically situated in the triangle China, Japan, and the Philippines, what role did the Hirado trading post play in the overall system of Company privateering and warfare in Asia? Apart from Adam Clulow, who conducted a study on Japanese mercenaries in Company service, scholars have paid little attention to these matters.² This article aims to provide an impetus to fill the void by exploring the role of the Dutch trading post at Hirado in the logistics of Company privateering in Asian waters circa 1614-1624. Subsequently, it will also briefly examine Jan Pieterszoon Coen's colonization policy on Ambon, the Banda islands, and Jakarta, in which, as will be argued later on, Hirado and Company privateering played an important part during this period.³

Although the Dutch East India Company is one of the most well documented early modern organizations, unfortunately no ledgers or diaries of the Hirado trading post prior to 1633 remain today. For the examination of logistics this article relies heavily on the correspondence between Jan Pieterszoon Coen and various Company servants, as well as on resolutions and instructions concerning Dutch ships and trading posts in Asia.

Dutch Privateering and warfare in Asia

The Dutch East India Company was forged amidst the flames of the Eighty Years War (1568-1648) with the idea that it would serve as an ally in the struggle against Spain. During the sixteenth century the Portuguese were Europe's largest provider of pepper and spices, and after the Portuguese

Iquan, and the VOC in the East and South China Seas in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century' in: L. Blussé ed., *Around and About Formosa. Essays in honor of Professor Ts'ao Yung-ho* (Taipei 2003) 83-93: 83-84; Historiographical Institute ed., *Diary kept by the head of the English Factory in Japan. Diary of Richard Cocks, 1615-1622 I* (Tokyo 1978) xi-xii.

² A. Clulow, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Trade: Tokugawa Japan and the Dutch East India Company* (PhD dissertation, Columbia University 2007).

³ From 1614 Jan Pieterszoon Coen had worked in Asia as president of the Bantam and Jakarta trading posts, as well as being the second in command to the Governor-General until 1619, when he was promoted to Governor-General.

and Spanish crowns were united in 1580 the Dutch saw themselves cut off from these Asian products. Thus in the 1590s they organized themselves in small independent companies and decided to trade directly with Asia, sending a total of fifteen expeditions to the East. When it became apparent that the Dutch could only establish themselves on the Asian market at the expense of the Iberian enemy, land's advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and the States-General urged the many smaller companies in 1602 to cooperate in a United East India Company. They argued that by using the Company to harm the Iberians through warfare and privateering in the East, the enemy's finances would suffer, and it would also provide the States-General with much welcomed additional income, which in turn could be used in the war effort at the European front.⁴

Privateering was a common form of maritime warfare adopted by early modern European powers, and can be described as a legal form of state-supported piracy. The privateer had to be in possession of a letter of marque, issued by a sovereign power, which gave the holder the right to engage in acts of maritime violence and the seizure of enemy ships and their cargo. Once a capture was deemed legal the booty was auctioned, and after the costs were subtracted the proceeds were divided. In the Dutch case this meant that from proceeds of confiscated goods in Asia, the Prince of Orange was entitled to one thirtieth percent, the States-General to twenty percent, and the crew that took the ship to four percent. The rest was profit for the Company.⁵ However, the line between pirate and privateer was vague, for not all states might recognize the legitimacy of the license held by the privateer. As such, it is not surprising that the Spanish and Portuguese did not acknowledge the legitimacy of violent acts by the 'rebellious' Dutch, and since the concept of privateering was unknown to the East Asian powers, they too generally perceived and denounced Dutch acts of maritime violence in Asia as acts of piracy.⁶ Whether perceived as piracy or privateering, scholars agree that during the first twenty years of the

⁴ V. Enthoven, 'Van steunpilaar tot blok aan het been. De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de Unie' in: G. Knaap and G. Teitler ed., *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie. Tussen oorlog en diplomatie* (Leiden 2002) 35-58: 36-41.

⁵ Enthoven, 'Van steunpilaar tot blok aan het been', 44-45.

⁶ N. Yoko, 'Hirado ni dentatsu sareta nihonjin baibai buki yushutsu kinshirei [The prohibition of the trade in Japanese people and the export of weapons, communicated through Hirado]', *Nihon rekishi* 611 (May 1999) 67-81: 67, 69-70.

seventeenth century these activities were of the utmost importance for the VOC.⁷

The lion's share of Dutch warfare and privateering in the area focused around two major objectives that overlapped from time to time. One was the establishment of a monopoly in the spice trade, and the other was to secure a position on the Chinese market. This encompassed extensive campaigns against the Iberians and the indigenous populations of the Moluccas – especially Ambon and the Banda islands – as well as campaigns on and near the Chinese coast. For example, in 1622 Jan Pieterszoon Coen had ordered the conquest of Macao, one of the most important positions of the Portuguese in China. The attempt failed, so the Dutch decided to build a fortress on the Pescadores, a small island group just off the Chinese coast. The Chinese authorities, however, did not approve of this, and in 1624 they forced the Dutch under the threat of a large naval force to move their base from the Pescadores to Formosa.⁸ Furthermore, every year the Dutch engaged in blockading the Spanish stronghold in Manila with about ten ships, and they cruised before the Philippines, hunting for the silver ships coming from Mexico, Chinese junks⁹ that traded with Manila, and Portuguese ships bound for Nagasaki and Macao, all in an attempt to ruin the China trade of the enemy. Another

⁷ By the year 1623 the Dutch in Asia maintained 21 fortresses, more than 100 ships and employed about 2000 civil and military personnel. As much as one third of the available ships was engaged in blockades and the cruising for enemy vessels, of which approximately 150 or 200 were taken in Asia. The income this generated is estimated to have amounted to roughly ten million guilders, which was enough to cover more than half of the operating costs in Asia. It is even argued that without privateering the Company would have been bankrupt before 1623. Enthoven, 'Van steunpilaar tot blok aan het been', 42, 45-46; E. van Veen, 'VOC Strategies in the Far East (1605-1640)', *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* 3 (December 2001) 85-105: 92.

⁸ For a good account on these events see for example L. Blussé, 'De Chinese nachtmerrie. Een terugtocht en twee nederlagen' in: G. Knaap and G. Teitler ed., *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie. Tussen oorlog en diplomatie* (Leiden 2002) 209-237; T. Andrade, 'The Company's Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War against China, 1621-1662', *Journal of World History* 15.4 (December 2004) 415-444.

⁹ A junk is a large Chinese ship with three masts and a considerable high and broad stern. *VOC Glossarium* (Instituut voor Nederlandse geschiedenis, The Hague 2009) 57.

tactic involved persuading Chinese merchants to trade on locations where the Dutch were stationed instead of Manila. Furthermore, the Company frequently requested Chinese authorities the right for free trade, which was always firmly rejected. At the same time the Dutch saw how these same officials tried to persuade Chinese pirates, who were constantly raiding the Chinese coast, to cease their activities by granting them prestigious posts. Watching these practices, the Dutch decided to expand their privateering activities from Chinese-Philippian shipping to the Chinese coast in order to harass the Chinese authorities in allowing the VOC to establish a permanent position on the Chinese market.¹⁰

During the years 1621-1623 as much as one third of the available ships were engaged in blockades and privateering activities. Apart from a brief period of collaboration with the otherwise rival English East India Company, the Dutch also cooperated with certain Chinese pirate bands in these endeavors. Sometimes the Dutch even employed Chinese pirates by providing them with Company letters of marque. The Chinese pirate, and later official, Zheng Zhilong, who pillaged under the Company's flag, is a good example of this. However, the Chinese pirates proved to be an unpredictable lot, and rivalries for supremacy eventually broke out. In the 1620s, alliances between the Dutch and various Chinese pirate bands shifted back and forth. Ironically, at one point Zheng Zhilong found himself against the Company, and eventually won the pirate wars that followed. For their limited supply of Chinese goods the Dutch now saw themselves dependent on treaties and agreements with Zheng Zhilong and later his son Zheng Chenggong.¹¹

Organizing and Coordinating the Raids

Let us now have a closer look at the way these undertakings were organized, and the role Hirado played herein. From the correspondence between Jan Pieterszoon Coen and various VOC personnel in Asia it becomes evident that there were four major hunting grounds for Dutch privateering ships. First of all, there were the regions in and around the Moluccas. Secondly there was the area close to the Philippines, thirdly the area stretching from

¹⁰ Van Veen, 'VOC Strategies in the Far East', 93-96; Andrade, 'The Company's Chinese Pirates', 423, 433-437.

¹¹ Ibidem, 93, 96-98; Andrade, 'The Company's Chinese Pirates', 429-440.

the coastline of Siam to that of China, including the area around the island Formosa, and finally the region between Formosa and Japan that encompassed the direct vicinity of the western Kyushu coast. In order to operate so close to the Japanese coast it was necessary for the Dutch to secure some level of support from the Tokugawa shogunate (*bakufu*) for VOC privateering. In his article on the *Santo Antonio* incident Clulow shows how on 18 August 1615 the Dutch tried to put it to a test by taking the Portuguese junk *Santo Antonio* in Japanese waters. If the *bakufu* would approve of, or at least consent to the capture, the Dutch would assume this meant that the Company had the go-ahead to expand its privateering operations to the waters of the Japanese archipelago. Most of all it would be possible to attack the Portuguese galleon¹² that shuttled between Macao and Nagasaki every year, while it was in Japanese waters.¹³ In the lawsuit that followed, the *bakufu* eventually ruled in favor of the Dutch. The result was that Jan Pieterszoon Coen intended to extend privateering against Portuguese shipping into Japanese waters, and he sent ships to Japan with the instruction to intensify the hunt for the galleon that shuttled between Macao and Nagasaki.¹⁴ Besides the concerning ships' captains, these instructions were usually also sent to the trading posts these ships would frequent on their journey, which resulted in a fairly detailed *plan de campagne* that gives us insight in the route and duration of these undertakings. Unfortunately, the scope of this article does not allow for an extensive treatment of all Dutch privateering activities in the Japanese region. Therefore, the following two expeditions and their aftermaths will serve as an example of the way these undertakings were generally conducted. Not only do they show the general level of organization involved, but more specifically they show the Hirado trading post's usual attitude towards these raids in and near Japanese waters.

¹² A galleon is a large ship with three or four masts and high sides, which was particularly favored by the Iberians. These Iberian ships were usually beautifully decorated, but were not very suitable for fighting. *VOC Glossarium* (Instituut voor Nederlandse geschiedenis, The Hague 2009) 45.

¹³ Clulow, 'Pirating in the Shogun's Waters', 65-66, 68-70.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 78-79.



fig. 1: Some of the Areas and Locations important to the Dutch East India Company in East and Southeast Asia, circa 1614-1624.

On 14 May 1616, the ship *Swarte Leeuw* had received orders from Jan Pieterszoon Coen to sail from Bantam directly to Patani, and then straight to Sangora to pick up the cargo destined for Hirado.¹⁵ From Siam it had to cruise for the galleon, if possible in the company of the yacht *Jaccatra*. In the meantime the Dutch ‘friends’ in Sangora had to assist in the endeavor by sending some ships via Macao, without being detected, to cruise the route between the Chinese mainland and an island group north of Formosa until the 15th of July. In case they did not encounter the galleon, the *Swarte Leeuw* and *Jaccatra* had to sail to Meshima, a group of islands near Hirado, and position themselves near the Goto-Islands. There they had to wait for

¹⁵ Patani and Sangora were places in Siam (present-day Thailand) where the VOC had trading posts.

instructions by Jacques Specx, chief of the Hirado trading post, and see if there was still time for the *Jaccatra* to cruise in the vicinity of Nagasaki. Before definite action could be taken Specx had to cautiously sound out how high officials of the shogunate and other influential Japanese would react if the Portuguese galleon were to be captured in Nagasaki. Likewise he had to find out if these officials were willing to look the other way in exchange for a large portion of the booty. In case of success they had to record a detailed account of the cargo, and, depending on the best course of action at the time, bring the booty to either Hirado or Bantam. Even though they had to search for the galleon as long as possible, it was vital to take into account the northeast monsoon. No later than the end of November 1616, the *Swarte Leeuw* had to take in the silver and provisions from Hirado and either return to Bantam or sail to Patani. Furthermore, all the junks that were visited at sea, which had no Portuguese, Spanish or prohibited goods on board, had to be released unmolested.¹⁶

Roughly two weeks later, on 26 May 1616, the ships *Galliasse*, *Bergerboot*, *Halve Maen*, *Vlissingen* and *Jamby* were instructed to sail to Jambi in order to map the area. Subsequently, they had to attempt to procure a good quantity of pepper and return to Bantam. If, however, they received word that the enemy armada was near Malacca or the Moluccas, and the route via the west coast of Sumatra was passable begin or mid August, the *Galliasse* had to sail there in order to damage the enemy. In case the *Galliasse* and *Bergerboot* could not be fully loaded with pepper, and the ships' councils did not resolve to set sail for the Moluccas, the *Galliasse* had to be sent to Patani at once, from where it would join the *Swarte Leeuw* on its hunt in Japanese waters. Instructions for this undertaking would be provided in Patani.¹⁷

After about five months the first reports of this expedition reached the ears of Jan Pieterszoon Coen. According to Specx, the council in Hirado had decided not to send the ships out to look for the galleon, because it had not been sighted that year (1616). Furthermore, for the same reason, the council had decided to send the yacht *Jaccatra* to Patani on request of Hendrick Janszen, head of the Patani factory, to transport a valuable load back to Hirado. Throughout his letter, Specx kept hammering on the fact that it was a council decision and not his personal one.¹⁸ In a letter dated 31

¹⁶ H.T. Colenbrander ed., *Jan Pietersz. Coen. Bescheiden omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indië II* (The Hague 1920) 109-111, 113-114.

¹⁷ Coen, *Bescheiden II*, 119-122.

¹⁸ National Archive, VOC inv. 1063, micro 5031, fol. 120-130.

October 1616, Hendrick Janszen writes that the *Jaccatra* was in too bad a shape to hunt for the galleon. Besides, there was no more time left, because they had waited too long to dispatch it in order to get as much good commodities on board as possible. Also, they did not want to risk the precious cargo. The ship *Galliasse* had arrived in Patani as well, and although they did intend for it to hunt the galleon, in the end it was considered to be too dangerous because of the coming monsoon.¹⁹

After seeing these explanations, Coen considered them to be completely absurd and unfounded.²⁰ In two letters of 23 April 1617 to respectively Jacques Specx and Hendrick Janszen, Coen showed his discontent for the fact that against his orders the ship *Swarthe Leeuw* had not been dispatched on time, and more importantly, nothing had been done in the hunt for the Portuguese galleon. He informed both men of a new expedition that had to be conducted in a similar fashion as the one from spring 1616. He ordered the ships to hunt for the galleon, and 'for all he cared they were to sail straight for Macao to do so.'²¹ In the instructions for the ships *Galliasse* and *Swarthe Leeuw* he used a much harsher tone. In these instructions he wrote that in case the galleon would arrive in Nagasaki two or three days before them, and provided that it had not yet unloaded its cargo, they must try to capture it no matter the consequences for the Dutch position in Japan. In case of success Jacques Specx would have to try and smooth things over with the Japanese by presenting them reasonable gifts. If this proved to be impossible Specx was to close the factory and leave Japan.²²

In spite of Coen's harsh words, again the hunt for the galleon ended in failure. In a letter dated 12 October 1617, Jacques Specx explains how they had strived very hard to seize the vessel, but that it outsmarted them and run into a harbor about ten miles south of Nagasaki. Because the harbor was too shallow and they had contrary winds they decided to stop the hunt. They had equipped the ship *Hollantschen Leeuw* after its arrival, and intended to have it cruise for the galleon the next day under the pretext of looking for a Dutch junk that stayed behind. However, Specx continues:

¹⁹ W.Ph. Coolhaas ed., *Jan Pietersz. Coen. Bescheiden omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indië VII a* (The Hague 1952) 215-216.

²⁰ Coen, *Bescheiden II*, 232.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 236.

²² *Ibidem*, 236, 238.

Unfortunately, due to a huge typhoon that suddenly rose the previous evening nothing could be done. If only [the ship] had set sail on another day. Since time immemorial was there not such a strong wind this time of year, so much that it seems as if God Almighty does not look favorable upon this expedition.²³

In a letter of 30 March 1618 Coen merely replied to these events that one should have patience and that the news that the galleon had been missed a third time would really sadden the directors in Holland.²⁴ In a later letter to Hendrick Janszen, Coen also admits that he was perhaps a bit hasty when he remarked that the galleon had to be captured even at the cost of banishment from Japan. He had acknowledged that the factory in Japan had its uses.²⁵

Through the above it becomes apparent that these raids were loosely, but very economically organized. Ships charged with hunting enemy ships were also charged with the transportation of goods and capital between trading posts. Involved parties often had to make decisions on the scene, based on their own judgment, but to some extent attention had to be given to Coen's plans for the capture of the Portuguese galleon. The councils of the Hirado and Patani trading posts more than once seem to have disregarded Coen's wishes on this point in favor of their own respective agendas. It appears that these trading posts put more value on the transportation of goods and capital than on the hunt for enemy vessels. Furthermore, we also have to consider the fact that Specx had to operate carefully in and around Japan. Iberians, Chinese and even English alike were taking every opportunity to smear the Dutch's good name – denouncing them as mere pirates – at the shogunal court in Edo, hoping the Dutch would be expelled from Japan.²⁶ Thus, whether it was deliberate or not, Hirado seemed to have played a rather ineffective role in organizing and coordinating these raids in Japanese waters. Of course there was some occasional success in the Japanese region, but it appears that most privateering successes have been achieved by the Fleet of Defense in the

²³ Coen, *Bescheiden* VII a, 287-289.

²⁴ Ibidem, 369.

²⁵ Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 321.

²⁶ Historiographical Institute ed., *Diary kept by the head of the English Factory in Japan. Diary of Richard Cocks, 1615-1622* II (Tokyo 1979) 331-333, 335-337.

area of Manila and the Moluccas, after which the booty was sold at Hirado.²⁷

Supplies, Manpower and (Forced) Migration

From its establishment in 1609 till 1622 the trading post at Hirado already played an important role in provisioning the various VOC ships in East Asian waters. The directors in Holland had decided that it was not profitable to send much needed supplies from the Republic to the VOC trading posts in Asia, hence by 1615 Jan Pieterszoon Coen began to entertain the possibility of Hirado fulfilling the role of supplier of all the Dutch trading posts in Asia.²⁸

In terms of food supplies, until 1622 every year orders were placed at the Dutch trading post at Hirado for Japanese rice, sometimes varying from 300 to 1000 tons, but also for flower and bread. Additionally, orders were placed for salted and dried fish, salted meat, and salted bacon that had to be distributed among the trading posts. Also they requested a good deal of tree oil, cod-liver oil, and beans.²⁹ In order to secure the quality of the provisions they had to be stored on board of the ships, and after a fair period of time it was up to the ship's council to decide whether these provisions could be conserved adequately before being shipped to various trading posts. Besides food supplies Jan Pieterszoon Coen also ordered 500 picol of unwrought Japanese iron, as well as two dozen cables and cable ropes, which had to be fabricated as cheaply as possible, to be used on the yachts.³⁰ Wood, planks and several tools also made the delivery list. The wood was, apart from being used in reparations, destined to serve as ballast for ships that returned to the Republic. The bulk of all these supplies were destined for the Moluccas – Ambon and Banda in particular – as well as Bantam and Jakatra.³¹

²⁷ See for example Van Dyke, 'The Anglo-Dutch Fleet of Defense (1620-1622)', 61-81.

²⁸ Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 6-7.

²⁹ Apart from its use in food preparation, oil was a necessity for the production of fuses and lamp fuel.

³⁰ A picol is a unit of measure and translates to roughly 125 pounds.

³¹ Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 6-7, 114-117, 232-236.

In terms of manpower Hirado was the perfect place where the Company could recruit swords for hire, as well as procure weapons and ammunition to arm its troops in Asia. By the first decade of the seventeenth century the newly unified Japan had left behind an era of civil war and great turmoil. This meant that a great deal of Japanese warriors were now sitting idle. Furthermore, during the (failed) invasion of Korea late sixteenth century the Japanese had gained an international reputation as brutal, fearless warriors. This explains why as early as 1613 the first Japanese soldiers of fortune had left Hirado to fight in the service of the Company throughout Southeast Asia. They performed quite to the satisfaction of Jan Pieterszoon Coen. So when Coen in 1614 presented his design for the procurement of a monopoly in the spice trade to the directors in Holland, these Japanese soldiers played a prominent part. According to him, these Japanese soldiers were infamous throughout Asia and their reputation in the Indonesian archipelago alone would be sufficient to get good results in the expedition to the Banda islands. Hence, in 1615, Coen ordered the Company servant Hendrick Brouwer in Hirado to buy the junk *Fortuyn* from Jan Joosten van Lodensteijn³², as well as two or three light Japanese galleys of twenty or thirty oars each that could be purchased in Miako for the sum of 350 guilders.³³ Furthermore, they had to modify these Japanese galleys so that they could hold heavy canons. Subsequently these ships, together with the ship *Enckhuijsen*, had to be provided with a good contingent of Japanese mercenaries, although their number should not exceed the amount the Dutch could effectively control.³⁴

In total about three hundred Japanese soldiers were shipped from Hirado to be used in the expeditions in the spice-islands, the siege of Jakatra, and the defense of Batavia. The exported weapons amounted to 62 long Japanese firearms, 45 swords, 52 spears, eleven bows, 300 pikes, and five canons. These canons, however, proved to be of inferior quality once tested, so the idea of casting canons at Hirado was abandoned. The Company still

³² Jan Joosten van Lodensteijn was second mate on the ship *Liefde*, the first Dutch ship to arrive in Japan. Joosten was favored by shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu and received among others a shogunal pass to trade in East Asia. In their dealings with the shogunal court in Edo the Dutch more than once relied on this Jan Joosten.

³³ Miako is present-day Kyoto.

³⁴ Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 6-7, 114-117, 232-236; A. Clulow, 'Unjust, Cruel and Barbarous Proceedings. Japanese Mercenaries and the Amboyne Incident of 1623', *Itinerario* XXXI.1 (2007) 15-34: 16-19.

exported the ingredients for gunpowder, which was then mixed at Ambon. The Dutch even exported an unknown number of Japanese warhorses, but until decent riders could be found in the Indonesian archipelago that could ride these horses, Coen thought it best to suspend future orders of this nature.³⁵

The Japanese soldiers of fortune were not the only human resources the Company got from Hirado. As early as 1614 Jan Pieterszoon Coen's plan concerning Ambon and the Banda islands encompassed the elimination and forced migration of the local population, which he regarded as treacherous and rebellious.³⁶ In order to secure a monopoly in the spice trade these islands had to be colonized by people who would have a more 'positive' attitude towards the Company. These people have often been thought to be Dutch people, but letters from Coen to Jacques Specx portray a different picture. In 1615 Coen requested that Specx would send 'a good deal of married Japanese with their wives and children, as well as a number of unmarried Japanese women, which would be used to colonize Ambon and Banda.'³⁷ In the years to come Coen repeated this request, and Specx had to procure these people by any means necessary, persuading them by offering them jobs within the Company with a possibility to become *vrijburger*, or by simply buying them as slaves.³⁸

The Chinese also gradually became more important in his plans. He was especially looking for a way to convince Chinese merchants to settle in Company territory and thought them to be of great importance for the viability of the new rendezvous Batavia he founded in 1619. His quest for people went so far that the crews of Chinese junks that were taken by Dutch privateers in the vicinity of Manila were also pressed into participating in Coen's colonization project. For example, in his instructions to the Fleet of Defense 13 June 1620 Coen ordered that of all the captured Chinese that traded with Manila, as many as possible should be sent to Jakatra. In the event that the Fleet had to move back to its port in Hirado, and it so happened to be that the Japanese authorities ordered the release of their prisoners, they had to maroon the Chinese on a deserted island (with

³⁵ Clulow, 'Unjust, Cruel and Barbarous Proceedings', 16-17, 19; Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 114-117, 232-236.

³⁶ H.T. Colenbrander ed., *Jan Pietersz. Coen. Bescheiden omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indië*, I (The Hague 1919) 87.

³⁷ Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 6.

³⁸ Ibidem, 109-111, 534-540, 570-571, 654-655, 734-735, 748.

enough water and food) and guard them with two ships. When the Fleet would leave Japan and return to Jakatra they had to pick up the Chinese prisoners again.³⁹

In 1621 Coen's plans were seriously disrupted when the Tokugawa shogunate issued an edict that among other things prohibited the 'buying and selling of men and women, the export of Japanese weapons, the entering of Japanese into the service of foreign powers, and ordered a stop of all "pirate" activities of the Dutch and English in Japanese waters.'⁴⁰ Coen ordered the Dutch at Hirado to do everything in their power to regain their old privileges, but he gradually had to abandon his plans concerning Japanese mercenaries and migrants. Although it would usher in the end of large-scale privateering activities in Japanese waters, the overall strategy of privateering and warfare prevailed until the 1630s. Henceforth the company had to resort more to diplomacy than force to acquire a fruitful intercourse with the East Asian rulers.⁴¹

Conclusion

What can we say about the role the trading post at Hirado played in the logistics of Company privateering? On these privateering voyages it usually was not the case that ships were only hunting for enemy vessels, as they were also used in transporting cargo between trading posts. It has become apparent that a lot of people were involved in planning these raids on Iberian and Chinese shipping. Jan Pieterszoon Coen provided general instructions, but for the most part the ships' councils had to rely on their own judgment and instructions from the trading posts they frequented on their journey. Although Hirado did participate in the organization and coordination, it did not play a greater role than, for instance, the trading post in Patani.

In addition to the provisions and repairs the factory in Hirado provided for VOC ships in the vicinity, every year large quantities of foodstuffs were transported from Hirado to the Moluccas, Jakatra, and Bantam. Subsequently, the military manpower and materials that the Company exported from Japan were likewise to be used in the war effort at

³⁹ Coen, *Bescheiden* II, 734-735.

⁴⁰ Nagazumi, 'Nihonjin baibai buki yushutsu kinshirei', 67-81.

⁴¹ Van Veen, 'VOC Strategies in the Far East', 96-98.

the Moluccas. Finally, as early as 1615 we can see that by means of purchase or persuasion the chief of the Hirado factory had to procure as many Japanese families, as well as unmarried Japanese women, as possible. Coen also turned his attention towards Chinese people who, either by gentle persuasion or through capture during privateering activities, were to settle under Dutch rule. All this in order to make Jan Pieterszoon Coen's vision of colonizing Ambon, the Banda islands, and Jakatra a success. Thus, until 1621 Hirado clearly played a much more important part as a supplier of provisions, war materials and manpower.