IV

Onto the battlefield

This thesis would not be complete without looking at the actual battlefield. One cannot get a grasp of the nature of VOC warfare by only looking at big logistical and political schemes, and I hope that the picture of the nature of VOC warfare will be enhanced by giving some descriptions of the proceedings on the battlefield and the atmosphere of such battles. This chapter will therefore look in more detail at some of the campaigns mentioned in the earlier chapters.

Some of the case studies in this chapter have already been thoroughly researched, usually a long time ago. Back in the introduction, it was told how until the ´40s of the last century, the military aspects of Dutch colonial history were often used as a source of epic stories of Dutch heroism. In some cases all I will do is blow the dust off these stories by retelling them, often with very little 'intervention' on my behalf. My aim in doing this, however, is different from that of the original researchers: I am not out to prove how brave these fair and sturdy Batavians battling on distant shores were; rather I hope that the details of these campaigns will add to the picture of the nature of VOC-warfare, and will be seen in a different way in the light of the earlier chapters. Some of the case studies below will however be based on more recent research, or on my own archival research.

Where available, these case studies will be supplemented with details from eye-witness accounts. Interestingly, many of these eye-witnesses were present at more than one battle in the period here under study, which makes their travel accounts *leitmotiv*s through the period. The most notable of these are Albrecht Herport and Wouter Schouten, who both merit a short introduction here.

Herport was a young German who had come to Holland to enhance his painting skills, and was subsequently compelled to join the VOC out of a sense of adventure. As he himself phrases it: "Even though I had a wealth of pictures of unknown things and persons at my disposal there, so that I had as it were the entire world to gaze upon, I was nonetheless struck by a great curiosity to see the original thing itself, and to sail to the Indies […]"[192] So he signed up in VOC-service as a soldier. He got his adventure alright: in addition to partaking in an expedition on Java, he was also present at Formosa as it was attacked by Coxinga, and was one of these soldiers who, arriving back from the Taiwan ordeal, was immediately sent out to lay siege to Cochin.

Wouter Schouten, then, had come to the Indies as a ship's surgeon, 19 years old, driven both by a sense of adventure and the will to put his surgeon's education to practice. He was also to get his fair share; we will find him present at the attack on Makassar, and the first, failed, siege of Cochin.

Before coming to these case studies, a perhaps somewhat superfluous disclaimer: the campaigns treated in this chapter are obviously no more than case studies. The VOC waged many more wars

192 Herport, *Reise*, 7.

in this period than could be comprehensively treated here. Although in my choice of case studies I will try to show several kinds of campaigns, I will still mainly concentrate on the larger campaigns, usually involving a naval expedition. The war with Bantam, the raids in the *Ommelanden* and the measures taken against it will only be mentioned in passing. Small explorations or penal expeditions, which amply took place on Java, Formosa and elsewhere, will not be treated here at all. Although this would have certainly enriched the picture of the nature of VOC warfare that this thesis tries to render, I have here given precedence to the larger campaigns, both to fill in the blanks of the last chapter and, admittedly, because the material on this was richer.[193]

Northern Ceylon: starving Jaffanapatnam

Van Goens, the "commissioner, admiral and commander-in-the-field of the Western Quarters", arrived in Colombo from the Goa blockade on the 1st of January 1658. As explained in the last chapter, the entire west coast of Ceylon had by now been conquered on the Portuguese. The east coast at this time remained free of European power: here were the harbours of the Raja Singha, king of the Kandy Kingdom. On the north of the island, however, the Portuguese were still in control of Jaffnapatnam and Mannar. Van Goens was here to change that, and to execute his own plans of sweeping the Portuguese entirely out of India and Ceylon.

Whereas Van Goens had left Goa with a fighting force of 800, several of his ships had gone missing and he had arrived before Colombo bringing only 450 soldiers. In order to be able to undertake something against the Portuguese positions in the north, he would therefore need to draw a substantial number of soldiers from the Ceylonese garrisons.[194] The Ceylonese governor Van der Meijden, however, was loath to spare any troops, as he feared an attack from inland Ceylon. Whereas originally the Raja Singha had worked together with the Company to oust the Portuguese, he had soon realised that by aiding the Company against the Portuguese he was just replacing one obnoxious European power with another, and in the past decade relations had steadily worsened. By now, the disposition of the Raja Singha towards the VOC had become whimsical at best, and Van der Meijden was anxious that the king might join the Portuguese in an attempt at reconquering the Dutch settlements. Seeing his garrisons march off to war was therefore not an attractive prospect to the governor.[195]

In the council meeting of the 7th of January, Van Goens however managed to overrule Van der Meijden, and the council finally decided that the 450 soldiers brought from Goa would be supple-

193 For some nice examples of such 'guerilla' campaigns, see Herport, who went along on several of such campaigns, or De Iongh, who dedicates a chapter to 'small war.'

194 J. Aalbers, *Rijckloff van Goens: Commissaris en veldoverste der Oost-Indische Compagnie, en zijn arbeidsveld* (Groningen 1916),138. The main storyline of this paragraph is comes from op. cit, C6; notes only put in where information came from other sources.

195 S. Arasaratnam, 'De VOC in Ceylon en Coromandel in de 17e en 18e eeuw' in: M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz ed., *De VOC in Azië* (Bussum 1976), 14-63, there 14-25.

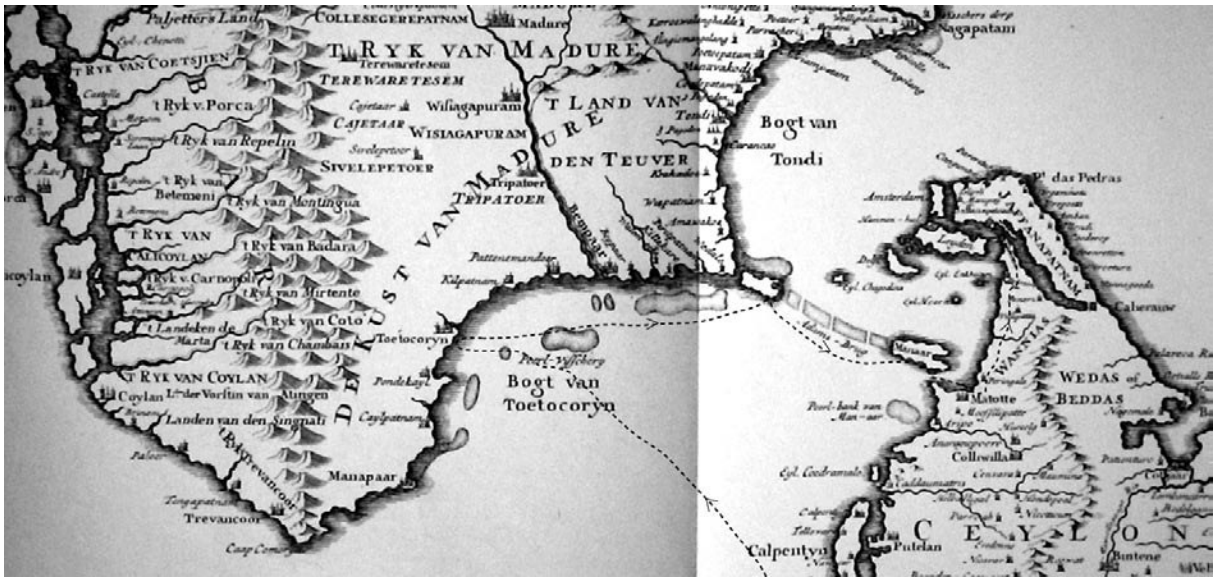


Illustration 3: map of Southern India and Nothern Ceylon, with the route of Van Goens' campaign schematically drawn in by me.

mented with another 800 European soldiers as well as 300 Lascars from the Ceylonese garrisons. It was now decided to first move against the island of Mannar with the entire force. From there, the army would subsequently move against Jaffanapatnam on the mainland.[196]

Circumstances, however, threw the planning upside down before the army could even move north. On the 16th of January, Van Goens received word that the *Naarden*, one of the missing ships of his original fleet, had been found. Its commander, Van der Laan, had felt confident enough to move against the unfortified Portuguese city of Tutucorin on the Coromandel Coast on his own initiative. He had subsequently failed to land and take the city, but with his ship currently had several Portuguese frigates pinned down in the bay there.

Van Goens was thus obliged to first mop up what Van der Laan had started. As Tutucorin was an unfortified city, and Van Goens now had quite an army assembled, this should hardly cause any delay in conquering the remaining Portuguese strongholds on Ceylon. On the 18th of January he sent out four yachts, bringing 146 soldiers, to Tutcorin, to help the *Naarden* seal in the Portuguese ships; the next day, he was able to send out another three small yachts. His own ship, the *Goes*, was ready to depart for Tutucorin on the 21st of January.

Arriving before Tutucorin three days later, Van Goens found that, including his ship, twelve VOC vessels were now before the city, with a total fighting force of 800 men. That same night, the troops were brought onto the small ships, and landed near the city. The next morning Tutucorin was taken practically without a fight. The open city had only 80 Portuguese soldiers defending it. As soon as

196 Ottow, *Van Goens* (1995), 33-34.

the VOC fleet had taken out the three Portuguese frigates defending the city, the Portuguese force had simply fled.

Taking the city might have been easy; a more complex question was what to do with it afterwards. In a council meeting on the 28th of January, the idea of building and garrisoning a small fortification was rejected; this would merely drain the available fighting force, and the VOC had no interest in Tutucorin, either strategically or with regard to trade. It was therefore decided to send a representative, Jacob van Rhee, to the Nayak of Madura, ruler of the region. Van Rhee was simply to give the city over to him, on the condition that no Portuguese would be allowed back in. Thus, the Company hoped to have driven the Portuguese out, without the burden of having to guard the door themselves afterwards.[197]

Having put things in order at Tutucorin, the fleet was ready to continue to Mannar. Missions to the local rulers had meanwhile yielded support to the Company attack on the Portuguese, in the form of small ships suitable for landing, and even warriors. While some ships of the fleet were already ahead, Van Goens was now waiting for these reinforcements, much to his discontent. He felt that his army was strong enough to move against Mannar without these warriors, and he would rather have the advantage of having a full moon during the attack. Just as Van Goens was preparing to depart without the promised reinforcements on the 11th of February, the small ships finally arrived. Van Goens then met up with the other ships at the island of Rammanacoylam (present-day Rameswaran, the westernmost island of Rama's Bridge.) The island of Mannar lay just on the other side of the Strait.

Due to adverse winds, the fleet only arrived before the southcoast of Mannar on the 19th of February, finding that the Portuguese had apparently been aware of the Company's plans. The southern coast was fortified by a trench two miles long, and eight frigates were defending the coastline. As it later turned out, the Portuguese had assembled 700 soldiers for the defence of the island. Landing the Company force on a different part of the island was undesirable: the northwest coast was also well-defended, and the east coast was covered by a fortification on the Ceylonese mainland just across. The troops then, would just have to land on the south coast, as had been planned, but not before the Portuguese ships, the biggest threat to a landing of the army, had been destroyed or taken.

The attack on the Portuguese ships began the next day. Destroying the Portuguese ships, however, proved harder than expected: by the second day of the naval battle, the Company fleet had only destroyed one Portuguese ship, at the cost of several lives on Company side. It was then decided to try and force the landing by a somewhat unusual manoeuvre. In the evening of the 21st, the VOC fleet first pretended to move away from the island, but during the night it returned, and manoeuvred the smaller ships of the fleet right in between the Portuguese ships and the beach, within mus-

197 For this mission to the Nayak see Ottow, *Van Goens* (1995), 41pp; Aalbers, *Van Goens,* 146pp.

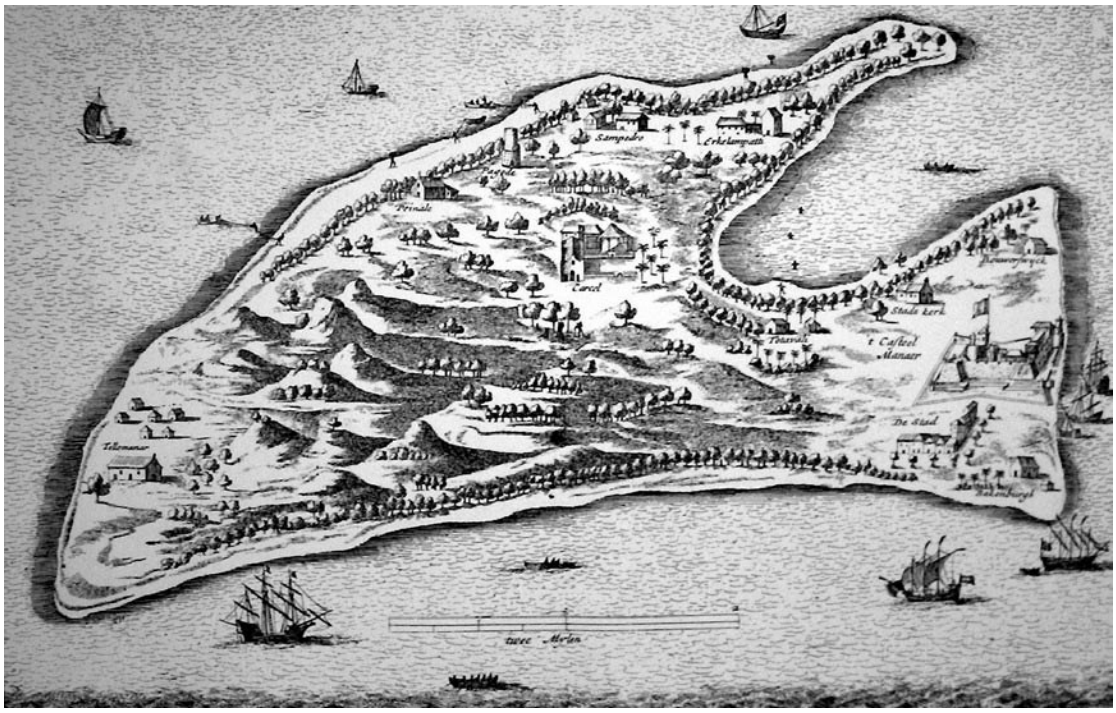


Illustration 4: map of Mannar.

ket range of the Portuguese soldiers in the trench. The Portuguese subsequently daringly copied this manoeuvre, sailing their frigates right in between the coast and the Company ships to prevent a landing. This was extremely precarious as the Dutch ships were already so close to the beach that they were in danger of stranding. This action turned out to be the end of the Portuguese frigates: the Company convincingly won the close combat which followed, destroying virtually all the Portuguese vessels. The landing could now proceed.

The naval battle of the past three days turned out to have been the most difficult part of conquering the island: in the morning of the 22nd, the Company troops landed, and by the next morning the island was practically in the hands of the Company. At least 400 of the 700 Portuguese soldiers had fled across the water and were now making for Jaffanapatnam. For now, this was obviously advantageous to the Company, as the various Portuguese fortifications were taken with hardly a fight. The disadvantage was, however, that these soldiers would now still have to be defeated at Jaffanapatnam, and that the Portuguese there would start preparing their defences as soon as the soldiers would bring the news of the fall of Mannar.

Van Goens therefore decided to immediately pursue the fleeing Portuguese army, leaving only 60 soldiers on Mannar. On the 25th of February, the bulk of the army crossed to the Ceylonese mainland near Matotte. The march which was supposed to overtake the Portuguese army or at least arrive at Jaffanapatnam shortly after the Portuguese force, only proceeded slowly, due to disease and a lack of supplies among the soldiers. As Baldaeus, a preacher and missionary who was marching along with the army, describes: "[A]s we had no great plenty of provisions, we allowed only a small

provision of rice every day to each soldier, rather than incommode the inhabitants: and finding our forces extremely tired by the long marches, and consequently incapable of engaging with the same advantage with the enemy in case they should be attacked, it was resolved instead of marching up to the head of the river through the sandy ground, to pass the river in boats [...]"[198]

The latter part of Baldaeus' description of the march requires some explanation. The city of Jaffanapatnam was on a peninsula going by the same name, only connected to the Ceylonese mainland by a small landbridge on the eastside. The Company army, however, had marched due north, taking the shortest route. This meant that they had to cross the bay (this long and narrow bay was often called the 'salty river', and this is what Baldaeus refers to), which rendered the army vulnerable. When the army arrived before the water after a three days' march, the Portuguese, however, were nowhere to be seen. Although crossing the bay finally took 24 hours, there was no Portuguese attempt to prevent it. Baldaeus tells how the Portuguese had supposed that the Company army was taking the long way around over the land bridge. The Portuguese had therefore moved away from the other side of the water the day before. Apparently the earlier delays of the march had at least been good for something.

The Company army arrived before Jaffanapatnam on the 7th of March, and split up in two forces. Van Goens circumvented the fortress and moved part of the force to the north of the city, Van der Laan attacked from the south. Jaffanapatnam, unlike many other Portuguese cities in Asia, was not walled all around, but had a citadel on the coast, around which the city was built. Van Goens easily took the northern part of the city, which was the smallest and housed fewer strong buildings. Van der Laan, however, had to wage a true city guerrilla on the south side: the Portuguese had barricaded the streets, and were firing from strongly built churches and stone houses. Van der Laan had to use heavy cannon to bring these down and advance. In order to aid in the conquest of the southside of the city, Van Goens came back from the northside with his troops. The efforts there were further helped along by the arrival of the *Salamander* from Mannar, bringing 209 soldiers. These soldiers had come from the *Mars*, another ship that had gone missing from Van Goens' fleet, had somehow ended up on the Maledives, but had finally made it to Colombo. The troops had immediately been sent to Mannar, and from there had arrived at Jaffanapatnam. Van Goens' army now counted 1100 soldiers. With this force, the southern side of the city was finally taken by the 18th of March. This however, still left the fortress in its centre to be conquered.

Jaffanapatnam was one of the strongest fortresses the Portuguese possessed in Asia. It was larger than fortress Batavia, its walls were thick and 30 feet high, and the four corners were all excellent bastions. Climbing these walls or storming the fortress was unfeasible, Van Goens was somewhat low on gunpowder and did not wish to try and breach the walls by bombardment, so there was

198 Philippus Baldaeus, *A true and exact description of the most celebrated East-India Coasts of Malabar and Coromandel and also of the Isle of Ceylon, translated from the High Dutch* (Amsterdam 1672, facsimile reprint New Delhi 1996), 794.

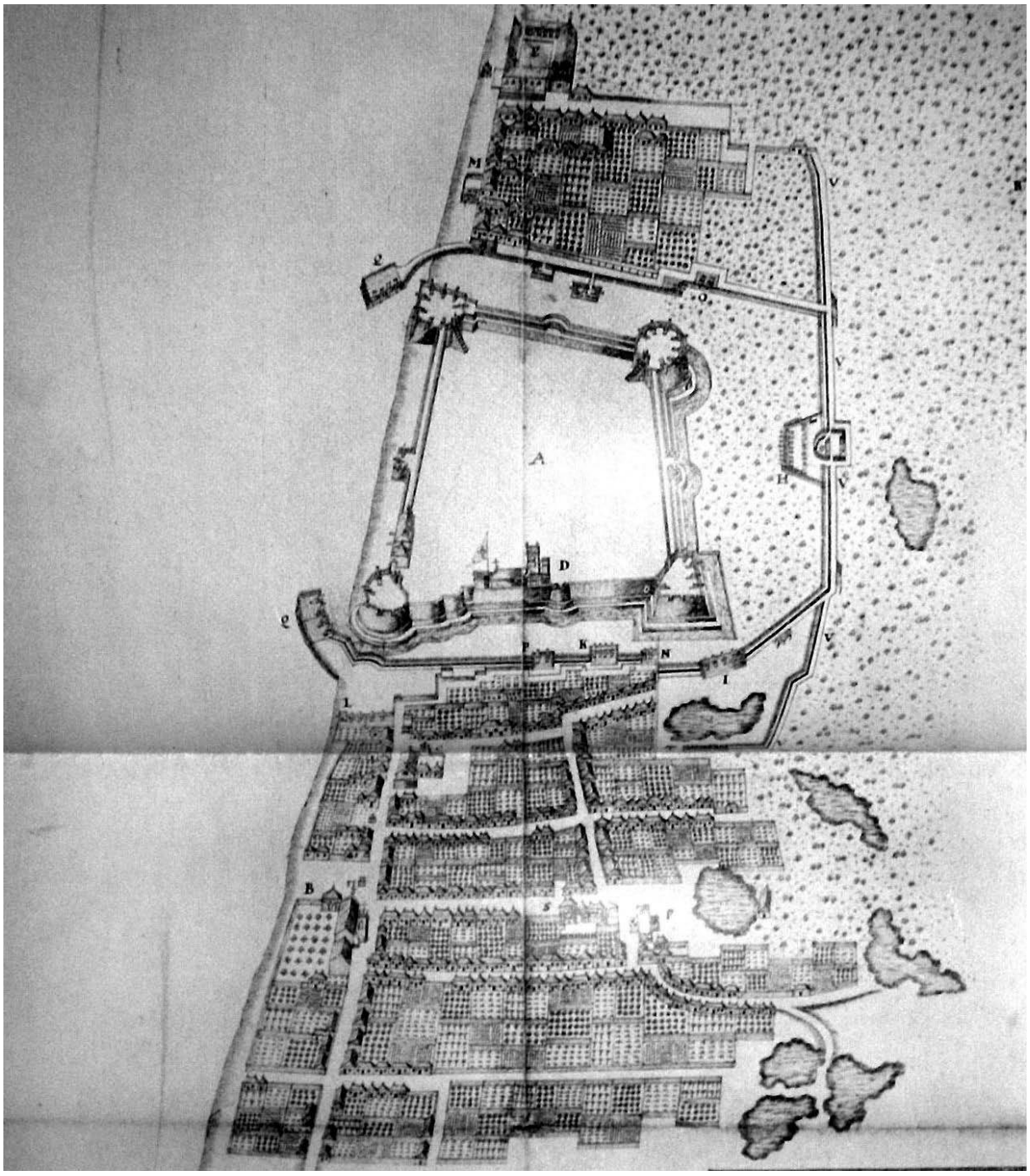


Illustration 5: the fortress and city of Jaffanapatnam.

nothing for it but to begin building siege works and starve the city.[199] Trenches were dug, and under severe Portuguese fire from the fortress, the city was slowly sealed in. Various smaller ships had arrived from Mannar, which also sealed off the city from the sea. By the 30th of March, the siege works had closed in the fortress on all sides.

The Portuguese were also still in possession of a smaller fortress on an island called Kay just before Jaffanapatnam, which was a serious threat to both the ships and the Dutch positions around Jaffanapatnam. Before moving against Jaffanapatnam, Van Goens decided to first take this fortress. On the 19th of April, he bombarded Kay from the surrounding islands and ships. Although the bombardment was far from successful and the Portuguese subsequently refused to surrender, by a stroke of fortune the bombardment had destroyed the water supply inside the fortress. Just as Van Goens, as yet unaware of the destroyed water supply, was preparing to land at the small island and storm the fortress, which would have been a precarious undertaking, thirst made the Portuguese surrender the fortress on the 26th of April.

The siege of Jaffanapatnam, meanwhile, continued. The Portuguese inside the fortress had received the rumour that a Portuguese fleet would be arriving to break the siege, and held out. The Company forces had by now successfully sealed off the city. What the Company troops did not know was that before the arrival of the Company army, many civilians had fled inside the fortress from the city and the surrounding area. Almost 6000 people had been packed into the fortress, and resources were rapidly draining. Portuguese deserters informed Van Goens that an epidemic had also broken out. In the end, all Van Goens therefore had to do was wait it out.

On the 21st of June, a letter arrived from the fortress, requesting a ceasefire and negotiations. The next day, the city officially surrendered. 3500 survivors left the fortress; as many as 2170 people had died during the siege of the last three months. Jaffanapatnam had successfully been starved. The Company army only entered the fortress three days later, fearing the disease that had raged through it. The Portuguese who had survived the siege were either transported to Goa or to Batavia.[200]

With the fall of Jaffanapatnam, the Portuguese had entirely been driven from Ceylon. The cinnamon trade had now been monopolized. Securing this monopoly against possible future attack, however, would mean the end of several more Portuguese cities in India.

199 Whereas the beginning of March hails the start of the rain season on the Malabar coast, and for one made a campaign in Cochin utterly impossible, as will become clear below, the north of Ceylon, while quite close to Cochin, has a very different climate. Jaffanapatnam is in the dry area of Ceylon, which is in the rain shadow of the Ghats mountain range and the mountains on central Ceylon. The rain season is therefore not nearly as intense there in the summer months, and certainly did not make a siege impossible.

200 For a more detailed description of the Company policy of completely disbanding Portuguese cities and deporting its population, see the political sector of the last chapter, and the paragraphs on the second siege of Cochin below.

Makassar: finding a modus vivendi by all means necessary

The last chapter of this thesis attempted to create insight in the logistic and informational network of the VOC, putting a particular emphasis on the contact with patria and Europe. This network is most clearly visible in case of long-distance campaigns, and for this reason the last chapter has to a large degree passed by the various campaigns that the VOC waged "closer to home", i.e. within the Archipelago. These were usually waged entirely on the initiative of the *Hoge Regering*, and most of the time patria was only informed of them afterwards, making these wars a lot less relevant to the decision-making process as sketched in the last chapter.

Nonetheless, the Company had its fair share of wars within the Archipelago, most notably with its two biggest Asian rivals: Bantam and Makassar. As these have been largely passed over in the last chapter, they will require slightly more introduction than the other campaigns in this chapter. For one, throughout the period here under study, Batavia had an on-and-off war with its closest neighbour, Bantam. In 1656, the sultan of Bantam, ever bent on breaking the trade hegemony of the Company, had taken two Company vessels and set fire to them. This hailed the start of a period when the Dutch structurally blockaded the Bantam harbour, and the Bantamese, in their turn, raided the *Ommelanden* and took as many prisoners as they could. Only by the end of 1659 did things quiet down again.[201]

The conflict with Makassar also had its origins in trade rivalry. Hostilities had started off as early as 1616, with the massacre of 15 Dutch sailors by the Makassarese. This massacre in itself had been a retaliation for several Makassarese nobles being taken hostage by the Company, in order to get the king of Makassar to pay his debts. The fifty years of on-and-off war that were to follow this incident, however, had a deeper-lying cause. The city of Makassar thrived mostly on the trade in spices. In the first half of the 17th century, the power of the Makassarese kingdom was ever growing, and the kingdom coveted a direct control over the spice-producing regions. At the same time, the Company was aspiring to a complete monopoly of these spices. The fact that not only Asian traders, but also Spaniards, English and the Portuguese found a warm welcome in Makassar, was a threat to both the Asian trade and the European spice market of the VOC. Particularly the Portuguese were strongly present in Makassar: their population numbered about 2000, living in their own quarter. They had a great measure of autonomy there, and were very influential with the Makassarese king. For all these reasons, the kingdom of Makassar and the 'kingdom of Jakarta' grew to be rivalling powers, very soon after the Company made its first entry into the Archipelago.[202]

At the beginning of our period of study, the aforementioned Ambonese wars were largely over. This conflict over the control of the spice-producing regions of the Archipelago had largely been fought out in the Moluccas; in the years 1654-1655, the harbour of Makassar had also been block-

201 Colenbrander, *Koloniale geschiedenis*, 180-181.

202 F. W. Stapel*, Het Bongaais verdrag* (Leiden 1922), 14-17.

aded. As this war was costly and was severely hampering the spice trade, the directors back in the Netherlands were far from enthusiastic about it, and sent orders to Batavia to try and reach an agreement. Such an agreement was reached by Willem van der Beeck, and was confirmed by Batavia on the 2nd of February 1656.[203]

This treaty, a rather thin document that left a lot of room for interpretation, was to prove a Trojan horse to the Company. In the *Generale Missiven* of the following years, we find Maatsuiker constantly complaining that the treaty (which he himself had ratified) was way too lenient.[204] Particularly clauses six and seven, which specified that the Company and the kingdom of Makassar would not interfere in each other's alliances and conflicts, effectively meant that the Portuguese and the English still had a way into the spice trade. Clause eight *requested* that the king would not send ships to Ambon, and gave the Company the right to seize Makassarese ships trading in the Moluccas. Of course this didn't stop the Makassarese from trying, and the Company's maritime hegemony was not strong enough to make these attempts unprofitable.

Makassar's strength was the biggest check on solving these issues with violence. Even the hawkish *Vertoog* by Van Goens had advised to appease the kingdom, although the appeasement should be combined with larger garrisons in the Moluccas. As everyone within the Company was painfully aware, the Company could ill afford a war with Makassar, which had a large and professional army and by the 1650s was extremely well-fortified. Attempts at settling the differences by negotiation therefore continued.[205] The king of Makassar, however, was also aware of his excellent bargaining position, and became ever more provoking in these negotiations. Things finally escalated when on the 27th of April 1659, the negotiator for the Makassarese demanded that the Company should take no action against Ceram, Buru and Amblau, which stood under the protection of Makassar but with which the Company had a conflict. In addition, the Company was to retreat from Menado, and had to admit that its monopoly on the Spice Islands was in contravention of God's law. The Dutch negotiator, Bastinghs, replied that he was in no position to decide on these matters, and went back to Batavia. The *Hoge Regering*, upon hearing of the turn things had taken, decided that the fruitless negotiations had carried on long enough. Politics would just have to be continued by other means.[206]

The *Hoge Regering* decided to amass troops and ships at Ambon. When the wind turned at the start of the summer monsoon of 1660, the campaign would take off. In the first months of 1660, a total

203 Corpus Diplomaticum, CCXVII, treaty of 28th of December 1655.

204 For example *Generale Missiven*, III, 87-89, 147-148, 215pp. The latter pages are the letter of December 14th, 1658, when Maatsuiker is already contemplating an attack against Makassar, but adds that he will wait, as disease and other campaigns are tying his hands.

205 In February 1657, Dirk Schouten was sent to Makassar to negotiate. He died there, apparently of natural causes. A letter from the King sent back by Schouten's associate gave no reason for optimism with regard to future negotiations. Stapel, *Bongaais Verdrag*, 56-57.

206 Stapel, *Bongaais Verdrag*, 61-63.

of 700 soldiers left from Batavia on several ships, in small groups so as not to draw attention. The rest of the army would have to be formed from the garrisons of Ambon, Banda and the Moluccas.[207]

On the *Mars*, one of the ships leaving for Ambon, the men that were to lead the expedition also left from Batavia: Johan van Dam, with Johan Truytman as second in command. The instructions for the commanders by the *Hoge Regering* were remarkably precise for an attack that was only going to take place months later. As the VOC force would simply not be strong enough to attack Makassar head on, some kind of subterfuge was needed, and the gentlemen in Batavia had it all worked out. First, the VOC employees that were still present in the Dutch lodge would have to be evacuated in some way. Then, the bulk of the fleet had to sail along the Makassarese coast from south to north, firing at the Makassarese defences as it went, until it would reach the large royal fortress Sombaopu. The goal was to create the impression that a large attack was going to take place on this fortress, which would then lure away the troops from the other strongholds. A small part of the fleet, which should remain out of sight until that time, consisting of smaller vessels and carrying the bulk of the soldiers, would then undertake a surprise attack and take the southernmost fortress, Panakoke. The Company being in possession of a fortress so near the Makassarese court would probably reverse the tables in the negotiations that were to follow.

The *Mars* had arrived on Ambon on the 17th of March. A good five weeks later, by the 29th of April, the army had largely taken shape, and a day of prayer for the success of the expedition was held, even though reinforcements from the Moluccas had not come in yet. Interestingly enough, as with most VOC campaigns, the praying soldiers, sailors and citizens on that 29th of April did not know exactly what they were praying for: neither the sailors or soldiers, nor even the officers that were to take part in the expedition knew where they were going. Only Van Dam and Truytman did. To most observers it must however have been clear that it was not some small-time penal expedition, as the fleet was by now becoming formidable by Company standards: 31 vessels (including small boats), carrying 1200 European soldiers, 1000 sailors and 400 Ambonese: a total of 2600 people. Siege equipment was being produced and brought on board. Finally, two of the ships from the fleet set sail on the 7th of May to obtain additional supplies; the other 29 ships followed on the 12th of May.

In spite of the impressive strength of the army, most of the soldiers on board wouldn't have guessed that the goal of the expedition was Makassar, and had believed that they would be going to the Portuguese possessions on Solor and Timor. When, on the 26th of May, Van Dam finally disclosed the goal of the expedition, there was great surprise among the crews. As Schouten,

207 W.E. van Dam van Isselt, 'Mr. Johan van Dam en zijne tuchtiging van Makassar in 1660', in: *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlands-Indië* (60: 1906), 1-44, there 9-10. This article forms the basis for this paragraph: footnotes only added for other sources.

who had been working in and around Ambon and was now going along with the expedition, describes:

> "This sounded rather incredible to us all. Makassar, after all, was a powerful kingdom, full of combative folk, which, because of its unbreakable power and strong fortresses, despised our nation as a kind of Goliath. They mocked the peace they had made with us and caused trouble to our people on and around Ambon. They regularly attacked us there, as a result of which many of our people had died. The Makassarese even inspired great fear among their mighty neighbours, and many kingdoms, islands and fortifications stood under their control. The kingdom of Makassar itself is equipped with strong castles and many fortresses to repel possible enemies."[208]

The fleet came to a halt at Selayar, the island under the westernmost 'finger' of Sulawesi, on the 5th of June. The city of Makassar was just to the Northwest. Before the plan that the *Hoge Regering* had spelled out could be put into effect, the three residents of the Dutch lodge needed to be gotten out of there. For this purpose, Van Dam went ahead with the *Mars* and the small flute *Breukelen*. As the Dutch had been continuously trading in Makassar in spite of the differences, the arrival of two Dutch ships before Makassar would hopefully not arouse suspicion. As soon as the ships would have returned and met up with the fleet, which was to slowly advance in the meantime, the attack would take off.[209]

The two ships left the fleet that same evening, and arrived before Makassar on the morning of the 7th. As was usual, the head merchant and his assistant immediately approached the *Mars* in a boat to welcome the ships and talk business. They would not be leaving the ship again. The third Dutch resident, a simple helper, had however remained in Makassar. The open boat, with which the other two had arrived, was therefore sent back to land with orders to have this helper bring a few chickens to the ships. In the early morning of the next day, the third resident of the lodge also arrived on board. (I don't know whether he actually brought the chickens.)

Now, the two ships were in principle ready to head back to the fleet lying hidden behind Selayar. Circumstances, however, had inspired Van Dam to make a small change in plans. As the *Mars* and the *Breukelen* had sailed into the bay, they had spotted six Portuguese ships and a small Portuguese junk there, four of which were lying deep in the water and were presumably loaded with trade goods. During the night, before the third VOC employee was back on board, Van Dam had already decided to attack the ships in the morning. Although Van Dam only had two ships at his disposal, one of these was the well-armed flagship of his fleet. He had decided to take the risk.

208 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 92.

209 Interestingly, Schouten does not seem to be aware that the ships only went ahead to evacuate the lodge. He seems to be under the impression that Van Dam was going to do a last attempt at negotiation. Van Dam did no such thing. Schouten *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 94, comp. Van Dam van Isselt, 'Tuchtiging Makassar', 15-17.

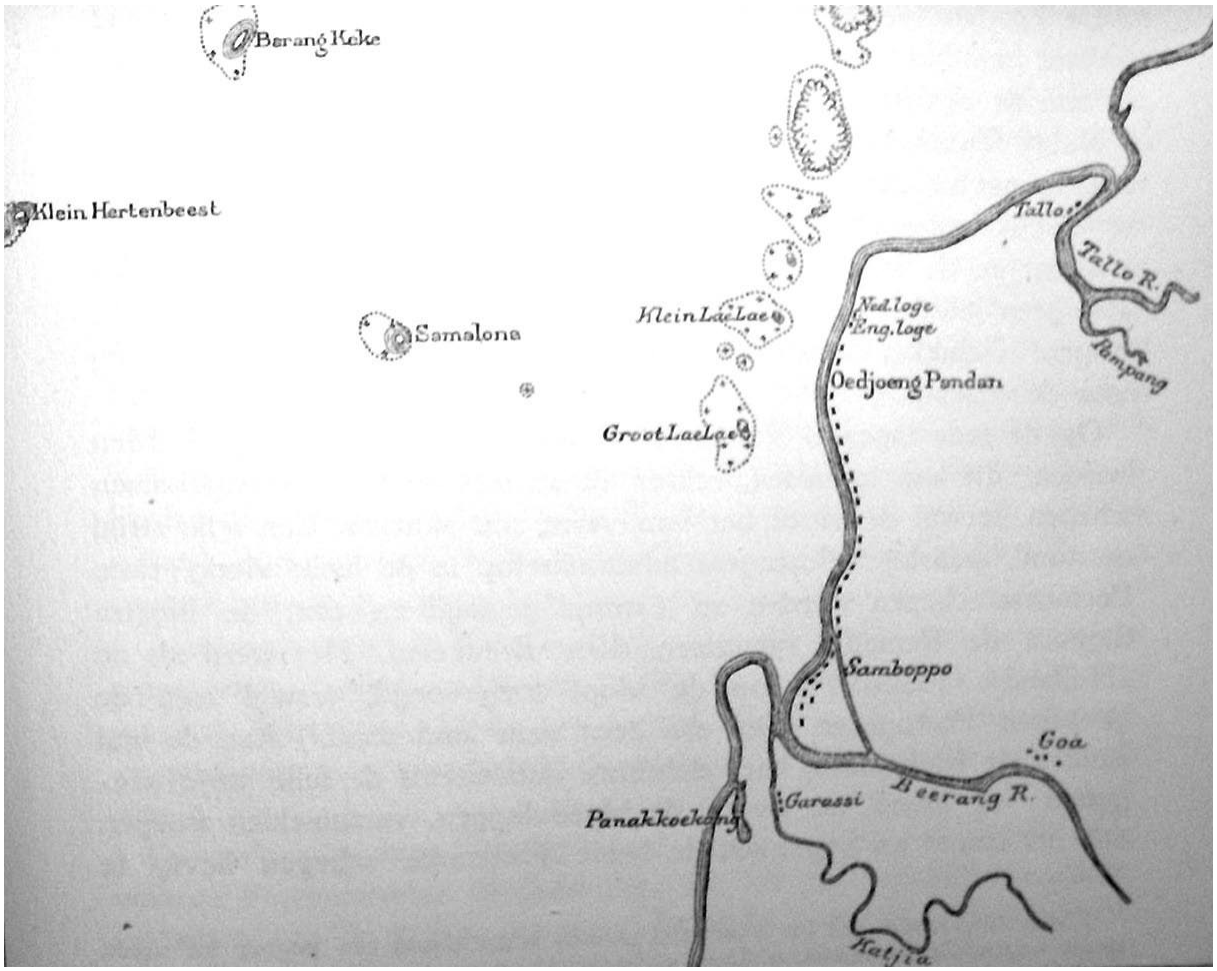


Illustration 6: map of the coastline of Makassar, with the various important fortresses and lodges.

Just after the helper had arrived on the *Mars*, the attack on the Portuguese vessels began. Clearly the Portuguese had been on the alert, as fire was immediately returned. The fleets seemed evenly matched for a while, until, by a stroke of good fortune, the *Mars*, which was in close combat with the Portuguese lead ship, hit its powder chamber and thus destroyed the vessel. Two other Portuguese ships caught on fire soon after, two more were manoeuvred onto the beach. The sixth vessel was entered by the crew of the *Breukelen* and taken. Its crew was released to Makassar, and as the Makassarese defences also opened fire on the VOC vessels, the ships, now three in number, headed back to the fleet.[210]

This fleet, meanwhile, had waited for two days, and had then set sail for the small coral island of Tanakeke, just slightly to the South of Makassar, as had been pre-arranged. Everything was made ready for battle. Only the Ambonese soldiers, long-time enemies of Makassar who in the course

210 Van Dam van Isselt, 'Tuchtiging Makassar', 16-18.

of time had built up a healthy fear of the kingdom, were not so enthusiastic. As Wouter Schouten describes:

> "The Ambonese soldiers who had gone along, brave heroes of war, had acted very courageously when we left Ambon, in the prospect of chasing off a bunch of defenceless blacks on Solor or Timor. Now that they saw that we were going to Makassar to do battle there, they had suddenly become very frightened. We had a company of these heroes on board, of whom the captain ate at the table with our skipper. Earlier, he had been boasting that on this war fleet, he would not eat salted meat until he had fried and eaten the eyes and brains of his bitter enemies, convinced that this concerned a hapless bunch in the woods of Timor. Now this hero nearly collapsed with fright as soon as he even heard Makassar mentioned, imagining nothing but how he would be led to a slaughter there."[211]

On the 11th of June the ships met up, and the entire fleet headed for Makassar. Apparently the Makassarese king was now aware of what was afoot. It is possible that the incident of three days before had made the king suspicious, but the fleet had also been spotted behind Tanakeke by a Makassarese vessel, as Wouter Schouten reports.[212] At any rate, a Makassarese ship carrying a peace flag now approached the fleet, bringing cloth and gold as an indemnity for earlier damage on the Company. The gifts were accepted and the vessel was sent away. This acceptance of the gifts, however, did not mean any change in plans on Van Dam's side.

In the morning of the 12th of June, only half a mile south of Makassar, Van Dam and Truytman transferred to a fast yacht, the *Kat*, and the eleven largest and best-armed vessels transferred their soldiers to the other ships. These eleven would be performing the bombardment of the coast. The other ships, among which the *Kat*, would remain out of sight and then attack Panakoke, just as the *Hoge Regering* had ordered five months ago.

The plan worked out just as the *Hoge Regering* had envisioned. The eleven ships sailed up the coast, taking under fire the various fortifications, until in the end they halted to fire at Sombaopu, the fortress that housed the royal palace. Wouter Schouten tells how one of the king's most beautiful wives, who was right at the king's side at the time, was killed by a cannonball.[213] Many barges and small ships lying on the beach were destroyed by the ship's bombardment. The Makassarese, meanwhile, returned fire, first from Panakoke, then from various smaller defences, and finally from Sombaopu itself. Wouter Schouten, first having described how the massive bombardment from the ships wreaked havoc upon Makassar, then continues:

211 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie*, 94.
212 Ibid.
213 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 99.

> "But for is it wasn't exactly child's play either, as the Makassarese and Portuguese had rushed from their quarters to the aid of the king and started firing at us, rather more intensely than from Panakoke. Their heavy cannonballs struck the heart of our fleet, which was battered badly by this. On our ship, the mainstay was shot in two, due to which our mainmast came quite loose. We also got some direct hits on and below the waterline, but the holes were fixed by our carpenters immediately. Thus the enemy cannonballs of twelve, eighteen and twenty-four pounds did a lot of damage to masts, rope and sail, which brought our ships into quite some trouble."[214]

In spite of the damage done to these eleven ships, the plan was working out. The 4000 Makasserese defending Panakoke, under the impression that the main attack was on Sombaopu, rushed away to defend it. Only a small force remained behind. Then, Van Dam and Truytmans landed their force, well-equipped with siege equipment, at the beach near Panakoke. As Wouter Schouten describes, the small Makassarese force that had been left behind, realising that it was hopelessly outnumbered, decided to just abandon the fortress. However, as they opened the small gate to leave it, a company of VOC pikemen had already arrived near this gate, and stormed in, driving back the Makassarese soldiers, who now started jumping from the walls.

The VOC army now entered Panakoke, bringing in cannon, powder, grenades and other weaponry, and hoisted the Dutch flag over the fortress. Now the troops in Sombaopu finally realised what was happening, and a large Makassarese force made for Panakoke to reconquer it, bringing one siege ladder which Schouten describes as utterly unusable. The VOC troops now loaded their heaviest cannon with scrap and fired at the huge crowd of soldiers below, and threw fire grenades. This treatment created chaos among the Makassarese forces, and soon the Makassarese army went into a disorderly retreat. Van Dam decided to do a sortie; VOC troops pursued the retreating Makassarese until the river Beerang, halfway between Panakoke and Sombaopu. On their way back to Panakoke, the troops set fire to the city, which burned down for a good part.[215]

The eleven ships before Sambaopu, meanwhile, had spotted the Dutch flag raised over Panakoke, and headed further north, particularly in order to bombard the Portuguese quarter of the city. The Portuguese, who were allowed their own defences within Makassar, returned fire. The fleet sailed all the way up to the northernmost fortress along the coast, Udjung Pandan. They carefully avoided hitting the English lodge, which was near there. The fleet then turned around to head back to Panakoke, not foregoing the chance to have another round of bombardment on the Portuguese quarter. The ship on which Wouter Schouten was sailing, however, got stuck in the ropes of the Portuguese admiral ship which Van Dam had blown up on that location four days ago. The Portuguese, noting that the ship was stuck dangerously close to the Portuguese guns, tried to hit it below the waterline in order to sink it. By another incredible stroke of fortune, however, one of the cannonballs appar-

214 Ibid.
215 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 101-102.

Illustration 7: a drawing of the attack on Makassar from Wouter Schouten's travel account. In the background we see the eleven most heavily armed ships bombarding Sombaopu, while in the foreground the smaller vessels land and Company pikemen make their way towards Panakoke.

ently hit the rope in which the rudder of the ship was entangled. The ship came loose and managed to get away and return to Panakoke, which in the next few days would be defended with an extra trench. Only nine Dutch soldiers had died in the entire action.

Thus, on the 12th of June 1660, the VOC, not powerful enough to fight an all-out war with Makassar, had caused it enough harm to be taken seriously as a negotiation partner again. The city was burning, the Portuguese quarter and the royal palace had been severely battered by artillery bombardment, and Panakoke was now flying the Dutch flag. The next day, ambassadors of the king arrived to negotiate. Now, it was the Company which made use of its excellent bargaining position; it simply sent the negotiators back as not being qualified to a sufficient degree. Van Dam subsequently demanded that the king sent a plenipotentiary to Batavia. Until negotiations were concluded, Panakoke would remain occupied as a guarantee. The Makassarese sent Crain Papowa to Batavia as an ambassador. There, a new treaty was reached on the 19th of August.[216]

216 Van Dam van Isselt, 'tuchtiging Makassar', 21-24; Stapel, *Bongaais verdrag,* 66-67; *Corpus Diplomaticum* CCXLIII, 19th of August 1660.

This new agreement was much more precise, as well as much more severe, than the one agreed upon by Van der Beecke five years earlier. The treaty specified that Makassar would no longer interfere with the Company's business in Menado, Bouton and Ambon, that Makassar was prohibited from sailing on Banda and Ambon, that it would pay an enormous war indemnity which would cover the cost of the entire operation, and, worst of all, that all Portuguese should leave Makassar, and the Company would have open trade there.

This display of power and the resulting treaty had however not changed the deeper-lying causes of the enmity between Makassar and the Company. Although at first the king seems to have been earnest in ousting all the Portuguese from his capital, it soon became evident how important the Portuguese had been to the welfare of Makassar, and the king realised that he was ruining himself. In addition, the king was apparently not expecting the peace to last forever, as he started not only restoring but enhancing his defences before the treaty had even taken effect. When in 1663, rebels against the Makassarese king started taking refuge in Bouton, where Makassar was not allowed to interfere by the terms of the treaty, and Batavia was negotiating with the Bugis who were also in rebellion against Makassar, the atmosphere quickly turned sour. A series of incidents alternated with attempts to restore the peace by negotiation, made clear that it was only a matter of time before war would once again break out. In 1665, the Company evacuated its lodge in Makassar. When by the end of 1666 the *Hoge Regering* suspected that Makassar was planning an attack on Bouton, Ternate and perhaps on Ambon afterwards, the Company once again took recourse to war: an expedition under Speelman was first sent to Bouton and Ternate, and would then have to go to Makassar, not so much to definitively defeat it as to once again flex the VOC's muscles in the hopes of keeping Makassar at bay. As has been described in chapter two, so many local allies joined the fleet that Speelman felt confident to attack Sombaopu. After a siege of the city which lasted for more than two years, the backbone of Makassarese power would finally be broken in 1668.[217]

Quilon and Cochin: a penal expedition and a failed siege

The campaign on the Malabar coast of 1661-1662 did not come out of the clear blue. Long had the Company been interested in this region, first and foremost because of its pepper and cardamom production. As late as the 1660s, the directors of the Company were motivated to certain actions by the hopes of one day achieving a complete pepper monopoly. In addition, in the past few years the general strategy of the Company had been to completely drive the Portuguese from Asia, and the approaching peace made a speedy achievement of this goal all the more pertinent. Thirdly, there was now Ceylon to be thought of. The hugely valuable cinnamon production there needed to be protected, and it would be prudent to guard its backdoor. Securing the Malabar Coast would prevent the Portuguese or the English from ever using it as a stepping stone to conquer Ceylon.

217 See above, 39pp.

The strategy that Van Goens en Van der Meijden therefore came up with, in one of the very few instances that they agreed on something, was to secure the Malabar Coast from the South upward. First Quilon needed to be retaken, subsequently the various rulers along the Coast needed to be appeased, then Cochin should be taken, and finally, if time and resources permitted, Diu and Daman should be conquered.[218]

Particularly with regard to Cochin, the Company was in a very good political position at the time. The Malabar Coast was a patchwork of small political entities, of which the central region had long been the scene of rivalry between two main power blocks: Cochin and Calicut. As the Portuguese had centred their trade on the coast around Cochin, the VOC had soon started working together with the Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut. On this campaign, the Zamorin had also pledged to assist the VOC with military reinforcements of his own Nayars, and food supplies. The best card that the Company had recently been dealt, however, was a pretender to the Cochinese throne. A dynastic struggle in Cochin, settled by Portuguese intervention in 1658, had ousted one branch of the Cochinese royal family from the kingdom. The ousted pretender to the throne, Vira Kerala Varma, had subsequently sought contact with the enemies of Cochin and the Portuguese: the Zamorin and the VOC. Here, then, were some nice mutual interests. The Cochinese pretender to the throne had a means of conquering it, and the VOC had found a way of legitimating its conquest of Cochin and ousting of the royal family working with the Portuguese.[219]

As the fleet departed from Colombo, the first seven ships on the the 5th of November and the bulk of the fleet, fourteen large vessels and six smaller ones, ten days later, the wind was certainly not adhering to the prayers that the inhabitants of Colombo and the soldiers and sailors on the fleet had dedicated to the success of the expedition on the 4th of November:[220] the fleet had to sail against the wind, and proceeded extremely slowly. En route, fire also broke out on the *Beurs van Amsterdam*. The ensuing attempts to extinguish the fire ruined part of part of the powder and the fuses. It was only on the 2nd of December that the entire fleet lay assembled before Travancore, ten miles south of Quilon. Information from the raja there and scouting along the coast before Quilon made clear that although the Portuguese might be willing to surrender, the *Nayars* of the queen of Quilon would not. The army landed on the 7th of December, 2 miles south of Quilon. The next morning, the march towards the Portuguese city commenced.

These Nayars were the knighthood of the Malabar Coast: a caste of nobles whose *raison-d'être* was fighting. Wouter Schouten qualified them and their fighting skills as follows:

218 Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar*, 246. All of this chapter based on this work, C5, unless stated otherwise.

219 T.I. Poonen, *Survey of the Rise of Dutch Power in Malabar* (Trichinopoly 1943), 75pp.

220 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 184

> "The nairos are the keepers of the weapons and are trained in their use from childhood. […] They are very strong and agile in fencing and wrestling, and prove themselves to be real masters at this. They use their weapons all their life. Like brave Europeans, they charge in ranks, and they ably use bow and arrow, muskets, but also artillery. […] They go to battle naked, with only their loins covered. […] When fighting their enemies, they often find their biggest advantage in flight, as they cannot be overtaken: they jump and fly quickly over fences and dams, through shrubbery, swamps, ponds and wilderness, and then suddenly charge again from the other side. With their shields they are able to protect themselves remarkably well and they do more harm slashing and stabbing than shooting, as their aiming is very poor which often makes their bullets fly into the air. They don't easily retreat, but stand upright like poles, or bravely advance through fire, sword or barrage. By using opium they go quite mad and beside themselves."[221]

As the VOC army was marching towards the Portuguese fortress, it was attacked by an army of these Nayars, estimated by Baldaeus to be 7 or 8000 strong.[222] The VOC army was first taken under fire from an artillery battery and various smaller fortified positions. The smaller VOC vessels, which were sailing closely along the coast to provide cover for the army, in their turn took these batteries under fire, "so that the onslaught from that source lessened somewhat." Wouter Schouten was observing the battle from one of these ships. In the meantime Van Goens tried to circumvent the battery and attack it from behind. Here, however, he was charged by the Nayar army:

> "There under the high trees the nairos, cheered on by Portuguese and Mestizos, howling terribly and crazed like tigers and lions, immediately attacked our brave Batavians. The latter charged at the enemy quickly and in good order and shot amply. This first outburst of violence was extremely intense and the unafraid nairos struggled forward bravely, in the hopes of making a breach in our ranks. Most however walked right to their deaths, as our troops had stayed very closely together and had made a closed front. From our ships we no longer dared to fire, as friend and foe had come to clashes behind the batteries and bulwarks, under the shadow of the palm trees. The enemy, gone mad by the opium, remained standing like a wall and slashed and hacked at everything it could get at with big knives. Our Dutchmen however did not falter and opened their ranks on the sides with a few small pieces of artillery, loaded with scrap, to take the naked vermin under fire."[223]

This latter treatment soon scattered the ranks of the Nayars, who had to retreat with great loss of life. The various batteries and strongholds were taken. Schouten mentions that as the VOC army was resting, the Portuguese came to the camp negotiate. Van Goens, however, refused the terms and the Portuguese went back to the city empty-handed. This peace offer is not mentioned in Van

221 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 193-194.
222 Baldaeus, *Exact description,* 644.
223 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Reis,* 194.

Goens' own reports on the campaign.[224] At any rate, the march to the Portuguese city continued that same morning. As the Portuguese saw the army approaching, they simply abandoned the fortress: the women and children went to Cochin by land; the men joined the Nayars for another possible fight against the Dutch.

The next day, the council that Van Goens called together decided to a penal expedition in the region of Quilon. In words that echo Van Goens' *Vertoog* very closely, it was stated that now for the second time, the Dutch had come into the region of the Queen of Quilon as a friend, but had been treated as an enemy (the first time being 1659, when a combined Nayar-Portuguese army had forced the Company to evacuate the fortress.) The only thing that the Company could do to change this, was to inspire some awe for the might of the Company again, and teach the queen a lesson.

In the morning of the 10th of December, the army, 24 companies strong, made way to the queen's capital, having to fight its way through the defences of the Nayars. Resistance was fierce, but the capital was not fortified, except by some makeshift Nayar positions. As soon as the VOC forces had broken through the outer perimeter of the city, fighting went on around the royal palace and the temple. Particularly the temple was fiercely defended; Wouter Schouten speculates that the Nayars amassed there believed that the god to which the temple was devoted would bring them salvation or victory. In any case, it failed to bring the latter. The temple and the palace, from which the queen had already fled, were taken and set ablaze. The cannon that were inside the complex were taken back to Quilon as a prize of war.

Van Goens now prepared to move against Cochin, leaving behind 480 soldiers, mainly inexperienced and sick folk, to garrison Quilon. However, just as Van Goens was planning to send ahead the first eight ships, one of these, the *Zeepaard*, caught on fire. In the end the crew managed to extinghuish it, but the ship was severely damaged, the powder supply, some 10.000 pounds, had been set overboard and all the fuses, already in short supply, were ruined by the water. Then, just when the first eight ships had left under the command of Roothaas, the ships still before Quilon were hit by a hurricane in the night of the 18th of December.[225] When in the course of the 19th of December the storm turned from southeast to southwest, the ships were in danger of being wrecked against the rocky coast. Several ships lost many of their anchors; the *Raadhuis* even tore loose of its last heavy anchor and seemed doomed to be hurled against the cliffs, but miraculously came to a standstill in an opening between two cliffs. Although the ship ultimately survived the storm, it was heavily damaged and had lost all its anchors and its rudder.[226] All these disasters, added to the earlier trouble which had plagued the expedition, made Van Goens wonder if higher powers were

224 Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar*, 257-258; Schouten, *Oost-Indische Reis,* 194.

225 This came unexpected as the hurricane season on this side of the Indian Ocean is during the summer monsoon, i.e. from April to September.

226 Schouten lived through this storm on the *Rode Leeuw*. His description is of the storm is great but too long to quote here. See Schouten, *Oost-Indische Reis,* 200pp.

against him, as it seemed that "while we are making war on our enemies, God our Lord, in his turn, is making war on us."[227] The *Parkiet* was sent back to Ceylon to get as much powder and fuse as could be spared there. The *Raadhuis* remained before Quilon to make a new rudder, and the *Beurs*, under the command of Godske, would remain at Quilon to conduct peace negotiations with the Signati, the queen of Quilon. The rest of the fleet headed north.

On the 30th of December, the bulk of the fleet once again lay assembled before Cochin. Van Goens learned that the English had already informed the Portuguese of Dutch plans to attack, and the Portuguese, in spite of the ever more precarious state of their empire, had managed to send fifteen frigates, well-armed and well-manned with soldiers, from Goa to Cochin. The fortress of Cochin had been reinforced by an earthen bulwark around the existing walls, and the English, it appeared, had provided the Portuguese with ammunition and artillery. In addition, the Portuguese were also aware of the peace negotiations and the marriage between Catherine of Braganza and Charles II. They thus had both the means and the will to defend Cochin to the utmost.

In addition, the local ally of the VOC, the Zamorin of Calicut, also got in the way of plans. For this campaign, the Zamorin had pledged to aid the Company armies with food supplies and *Nayars*, in exchange for which the Company would conquer Cranganore, the northernmost large city now under the rule of Cochin, which had recently been conquered upon the Zamorin. This city also held a Portuguese garrison. Now, the Zamorin demanded that the Company would live up to its part of the deal before it moved against Cochin. Van Goens, who would have rather moved against Cochin first but who could not afford to cross the Zamorin, grudgingly agreed.

The fleet therefore moved another five miles north to Cranganore, and the army landed there on the 2nd of January 1662. When, on the 3rd of January, the army approached the Portuguese city, it became clear that the Portuguese had also been unusually busy here: the defences had been significantly enhanced, and it would require a regular siege to conquer the city. The Company army therefore got to work: trenches were dug and batteries were thrown up. The Company army started bombarding the city and the Portuguese fired back convincingly. The Portuguese fired on the soldiers digging the trenches incessantly, and made sorties from the city every night to break through the Dutch defences. They were unsuccessful, but caused a lot of dead and wounded among the Company soldiers. Schouten had been ordered off the *Rode Leeuw*, and now had the job of tending to the wounded right at the frontline. He describes how "we bandaged the wounded as well as we could, with candle light, under the open sky and in the open field, and in grave danger ourselves, as bullets whizzed around our heads. Then we had our wounded carried to the hospital by Ceylonese Lascars who had been appointed to that job, while our brave soldiers tried to bring the attacking Portuguese to a halt."[228]

227 Quoted in Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar*, 262.
228 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Reis,* 207.

Learning from a spy of the bad situation within the walls of Cranganore, Van Goens decided to storm the city. After a last attempt to a negotiated surrender, Van Goens ordered the attack in the afternoon of the 15th of January, after a siege of twelve days. He decided to use a subterfuge: not only did the attack take place in the hour that mass was held inside the city; he also had part of the army perform an all-out attack on one side of the wall, which however was only for show. The main force would meanwhile attack a weak spot in the defences as pointed out by the spy, only defended by Nayars. The plan worked: whereas the force performing the all-out attack suffered heavy losses, the main force meanwhile succeeded in entering the city almost without firing a shot. Bastion after bastion fell to the Dutch troops, until the Portuguese force withdrew into the church. Van Goens then once again requested the Portuguese to surrender, and the 350 soldiers inside the church did. At the end of the day, 50 Portuguese were dead. The Dutch had 20 dead and 80 wounded. The trenches were now filled up, the walls of the city repaired. Cranganoor was garrisoned only by the sick and wounded soldiers that Van Goens had to leave behind, about 200 in number.

Of the more than 2500 [229] soldiers which Van Goens had had at his disposal at Quilon, he was now marching on Cochin with less than 1800. Of these, 300 had to be left at the Periyar river, which sealed off the north of Cochin. To prevent the Portuguese from crossing the river, he had a small fortification built on the northern bank, called it *Nieuw Oranje* and manned it with 300 soldiers. The remaining force of 1500 soldiers, however, was not sufficient to risk an attack on Cochin. Van Goens presently sent word to Quilon to send 100 soldiers from the garrison there, and had 100 sailors disembark to work as bus-firers. With these 1700, Van Goens would now have to lay siege to a well-defended Portuguese city the size of which he himself compared to the city of Leiden.[230] In addition, the Portuguese could count on the support of the thousands of Nayars of the raja of Cochin.

As much as Van Goens thought it useless, he sent representatives into the Portuguese city to offer terms to the Portuguese. The two representatives were politely received and heard out by the Portuguese commander, Ignacio Sermento, and the latter also politely declined to accept the terms, telling the representatives that even should they take the city, they would simply have to return it afterwards by the terms of the imminent peace treaty. The Dutch representatives therefore returned empty-handed, as Van Goens had expected.

After these formalities, Van Goens proceeded with the attack. Leaving behind the garrison in the newly-built fortification, Van Goens silently embarked his army in the night of the 1st of February, and landed four miles south of Cochin the next morning. No river to protect the city on this side.

229 That is 2139 European soldiers and 240 Lascars counted before the arrival of the *Rijzende Zon* and *Huis te Swieten*. The latter two ships must have brought at least 200 more soldiers.

230 Interestingly, at the siege of Leiden in 1574, the city had had 15.000 inhabitants. As Cochin had about 14.000 when Van Goens laid siege to it, his estimation was in that respect pretty accurate. At the time Van Goens made this statement, however, Leiden had four times as many inhabitants.

To the pleasant surprise of Van Goens, the Portuguese had apparently not counted on this move of the army: he had been very concerned about the landing, but no Portuguese was even in sight. The Cochinese pretender to the throne, who had been in exile in Beccenore, slightly inland from Cochin, now joined the Dutch army. He had Van Goens promise that the local population was to be left completely unharmed, and Van Goens instructed his troops accordingly.

The same day, the VOC army headed for Portuguese Cochin, meeting surprisingly little resistance from Portuguese forces. Van Goens, however, learned that a great force of Nayars was amassing in the old city to defend the palace and the royal family. Having this large enemy force looming in the background while the Company army was besieging Cochin could prove a serious liability, and it was therefore decided first to attack the old city and effectuate the planned 'regime change.' Nine companies moved towards the old city. An attempt at negotiation ended in a shoot-out, after which the VOC troops attacked the Nayar force. The old queen of Cochin, who had been ousted by the conflict in 1658, was still living in the palace as a hostage of sorts, but she was successfully evacuated from the scene by VOC forces. Both Vira Kerala Varma and the old queen gave the Company forces *carte blanche* to slaughter the present royal family, and the Company forces acted accordingly. The palace was attacked from two sides to prevent anyone escaping. It became a slaughterhouse: more than 500 Nayars met their deaths, as well as the new king and his closest advisors and family. As Schouten describes, the "walls were painted with blood and spattered with brains."[231] Vira Kerala Varma was now king. Van Goens left the palace to him, but also left two companies of VOC soldiers there.

Now, Van Goens needed to come up with a way to attack Portuguese Cochin, the second largest city in Portuguese India, well-armed and well-stocked. As mentioned before, he himself was low on troops. This made a regular siege problematic: in spite of the fact that the city was sealed off by a river and the small Dutch stronghold on the north side, by the ocean and the Company fleet on the west side, and by swamps and backwaters on the eastside, the 1400 soldiers which Van Goens still had at his disposal were not enough to securely seal off the remaining 1100 meters of city wall, particularly considering the fact that Van Goens expected the garrison inside the city to be at least as large as his own army. In addition, the rain season was approaching rapidly. All in all, Van Goens had neither the time nor the resources to take the fortress the usual way. His only chance of success was a surprise attack on a weak spot in the city's defences.

Thus, on the 4th of February, the entire VOC force stormed the eastern side of the wall, just off the river. At this spot, the city actually continued outside the city wall, which was a serious liability to the Portuguese defences there. At some spots, the VOC forces managed to break through the Portuguese defences and enter the city. The Portuguese, however, were clearly expecting the attack. They rushed to the scene, and soon the Company forces were caught up in skirmishes. The Portu-

231 Schouten, *Oost-Indische Voyagie,* 216.

Illustration 8: battle between Nayars and Company forces in Old Cochin.

guese set fire to some of the buildings in which the Company forces had taken cover, and shortly afterwards the Company army was in retreat.

As this first surprise attack had not managed to breach the defences in any way, Van Goens was unwilling to risk another storm attack. On second thought, the city was simply besieged with what little resources the army had. Trenches and tunnels were dug, batteries thrown up and moved ever closer. The city was steadily bombarded, both from the fleet, the trenches and batteries on the south side, and the fortification on the north side.

Whereas this steady bombardment was certainly bad for Portuguese morale inside the city, the situation of the Company was not getting any better either. Several of the ships which had sailed along with the fleet had orders to continue to Suratte and Persia, and Van Goens reluctantly allowed them to go. These ships took with them a great number of sailors which Van Goens had deployed to

operate artillery. In addition, a prince of the royal house which the VOC had recently almost, but not quite, eradicated, was now building an anti-Dutch coalition in Purracad, slightly further south, and was rumoured to have amassed as many as 6000 Nayars there. The arrival of 1000 Nayars to reinforce the Company army from Calicut did not help an awful lot: the arrival of these Nayars from the old enemy of Cochin greatly antagonized the local population, some of whom now started fleeing the area. As the Company had too few small boats to completely control the river, and the Portuguese still had several frigates, the latter were still capable of getting supplies into the city and even getting their possessions, women and children out. Disease was once again making itself felt among the Company forces. And worst of all: the powder and fuse supply, which had been so severely diminished by fires and storms earlier in the campaign, was now rapidly running out.

Van Goens, who had earlier declared that he would continue the siege right through the summer monsoon if necessary, now saw his supplies run out, his soldiers go ill and his trenches ruined by the first rains by the end of February. He finally had to admit that continuing the siege any further was pointless. In the night of the 2nd of March, the army secretly embarked, covered by a small group of constables which made enough noise for the entire army. Vira Kerala Varma, who had been in power for a month, was informed of the retreat and immediately packed to leave for Mannar. He would just have to go into exile for a little longer.

The fleet presently split up. Roothaes stayed before Cochin with a few ships for a while longer, to prevent reinforcements from coming in. Van Goens went down the coast in the *Notenboom* to make treaties with the various rulers, so that his conquests would be secure and his possible return next year would be provided for. Two yachts were left before Cranganoor. The whole expedition had cost the lives of 500 VOC employees, half of them dead by disease, half of them in combat. In addition there were 400 wounded.

Van Goens, of course, was very disappointed, as would be the *Hoge Regering*. Nonetheless, the expedition had been a partial success. Cranganore and Quilon were now in possession of the Company. The failed siege of Cochin might partly be attributed to the fact that the expedition, which had nothing less as its aim than to completely drive the Portuguese from the Indian coast, had to be conjured up in very little time on the basis of developments in Europe. Expectations had been too high, and the means too few. Van Goens himself had been particularly unhappy with the quality of the fresh reinforcements from Europe: these young men without any fighting experience had been sailed right from the Netherlands into this intense campaign, and had therefore not received the usual training in Batavia. On various occasions, they had simply fled the battlefield. This did not surprise Van Goens, as their first combat experience consisted of being stormed by howling, intoxicated Nayars who greatly outnumbered them. In addition, the fleet had its fair share of those eventualities of war that could not be planned for, such as storms and fires ruining the ammunition supplies.

'The shameful fall of fort Zeelandia'

At about the same time, some 5000 kilometres away, the Company was facing another military debacle on Formosa. The VOC had originally come to the island off the Chinese coast in 1624 as a way into the Chinese trade. An attempt to simply take Macao, the Portuguese gateway into the Chinese trade, in 1622, had miserably failed, after which the Company had limited itself to structurally blockading the Macao harbour. Negotiations with the Ming government in which the Company tried to present itself as a tributary country to China, which would allow them to trade with China directly, failed. The Company then had no choice but to look for a settlement from where to start indirect trade with China. In 1624, Fort Zeelandia, on the southwest coast of Formosa, was erected in the hopes of being able to lure the Chinese junks there and get a foot in the door of the silk trade.[232]

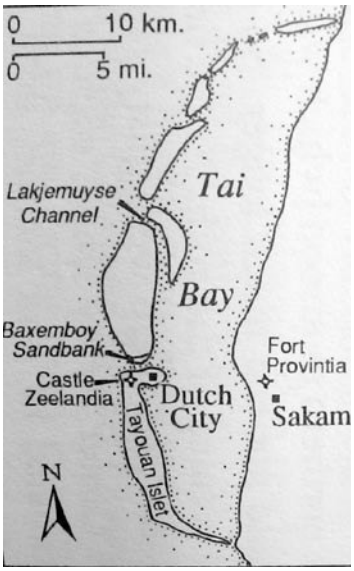
Whereas, particularly in the 1640s, the trade at Taiwan (which means "terrace bay", now the name for the entire island, then only for the small bay and the islet on which fort Zeelandia was situated) had become rather successful, in the years leading up to our period of study, the harbour at Fort Zeelandia was once again becoming less prominent. The most important reason for this had nothing to do with trade systems or political developments: in the decades since the founding of the Dutch settlement, the channel that gave access to the bay had silted up so badly that it could no longer be navigated by any but the smallest of vessels. Ships therefore had to anchor in the open sea in front of the harbour, and could subsequently only be loaded and unloaded with specifically designed flat-bottomed boats. In addition to being highly unpractical, anchoring in the open sea was simply very dangerous in this typhoon-plagued part of the world. The China trade, which had been the sole reason for building the fortress, had therefore steadily moved away from Taiwan harbour.

On the political front, however, the China trade was also becoming more complicated, as the Chinese mainland was being ravaged by war. In 1644, Manchu armies had driven the Ming dynasty from Beijing, but this in no way meant the end of the war. In the area around Fujian, just across from Taiwan, troops had remained loyal to the Ming dynasty, and were continuing the war against the Manchus. The VOC now had to navigate a precarious course between the two warring parties: on the one hand, it immediately attempted to build up relations with the new dynasty, for one by sending out an embassy to Beijing in 1656.[233] On the other hand, the Company was trying to keep up relations with the Ming-loyalists fighting on just across the Chinese Sea, under the general Zhen Chenggong, known in the Dutch sources as Coxinga.[234] The latter had never hidden the fact that

232 Blussé, ´De Chinese nachtmerrie´, 209-226.

233 *Generale Missiven*, III, 122-123; *Daghregister* 1657 (Den Haag 1903), 69-70.

234 The name Coxinga is probably a corruption of the Minnanese pronunciation of Guoxingye. Lynn A. Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing cataclysm: China in tiger's jaws* (Yale 1993), 206n. The latter work is a fascinating study, of which chapter 13 sets off Coyet's rendering of the events with that of Coxinga's revenue officer, Yang Ying.



Ullistration 9: map of Taiwan in 1661.

he felt that Formosa belonged to him, but the Company still hoped for a solution by negotiation. The fact that Coxinga's war efforts on the mainland were quickly unravelling and he had fallen into discord with several of his generals, did not improve the chances of such a solution being reached, as Coxinga was looking for a place to retreat his army to. Just like the Kwo Min Tang some 300 years later, he let his eyes fall on Formosa for this purpose. The governor of the fortress, Coyet, who had feared an invasion by Coxinga for years, saw these fears confirmed in the beginning of 1660, when several intercepted letters made clear that Coxinga was about to make the jump to Formosa. On the 10th of March, he sent out a junk against the monsoon asking Batavia for immediate reinforcements.

In the last chapter, the laconic attitude with which Maatsuiker responded to Coyet's cries for help was already pointed out. In an anonymously published pamphlet called *'t Verwaerloost Formosa* (Formosa neglected), Coyet would later give utterance to his frustrations over the fact that he had hardly been taken seriously in Batavia. Not only was this expressed in Maatsuiker's rather lukewarm response to Coyet's warnings about the invasion: he had also pointed out to Batavia that Fort Zeelandia was a rather troublesome fortress. It was protected by a redoubt, *Utrecht*, which was in fact built on a hill, and should it be taken by an enemy, Fort Zeelandia would become a sitting duck to artillery bombardment from there. The defensibility of Fort Zeelandia was thus entirely dependent on the fate of a small redoubt, but Batavia had never given permission to change this situation. The bickering over matters like these had already soured the atmosphere between Maatsuiker and Coyet before the latter sent out his cry for help in March 1660. Developments were about to worsen their mutual dislike quite severely.

In July, responding to Coyet's letter, Maatsuiker sent out a fleet to come to his aid, commanded by Johannes van der Laan, the same who had been the right hand of Van Goens in several of the campaigns in the Western Quarters. After his attack on Macao had failed to materialize,[235] he arrived before Taiwan harbour in September. Coxinga's attack had not come, and Van der Laan was eager to immediately return to Macao with his eleven remaining ships (one had been wrecked in a storm while headed for Macao.) However, on a council meeting on the 20th of October, Coyet decided to cancel the Macao expedition. He was retaining the soldiers brought to Taiwan by the fleet to strengthen his garrisons. Most of the ships had orders to continue to various destinations in the Indies, and the fleet was dispersed by next March. Van der Laan, furious at being robbed of his chance to attack Macao, left for Batavia in February 1661.

The complete dispersal of Van der Laan's fleet was apparently what Coxinga had been waiting for, and with the onset of the northern monsoon, his fleet had set sail. Herport, being one of the soldiers who had been transferred from Van der Laan's fleet to strengthen the Fort Zeelandia garrison, describes the arrival of the huge Chinese fleet as follows:

> "In the morning of the 30th of April, as in the entire preceding night, there was a very thick mist, due to which one could not see into the distance. As soon as the mist had cleared, however, we saw such a fleet of ships, to wit Chinese junks, lie before the harbour in front of Baxemboy, that we could not oversee them, let alone count them. There were so many masts, that it looked like an arid forest. We looked at this, all of us equally awestruck and puzzled, as no-one, not even our Lord Governor, had expected anything like this, and we did not know, whether they were friend or foe."[236]

The Lord Governor, however, probably did have a vague notion whose fleet was lying before the coast, and must have been less surprised than Herport, although probably as appalled. Coxinga had arrived, bringing 25.000 soldiers on hundreds of warjunks.

Taiwan island, on which Fort Zeelandia was situated, was in front of the bay. Coxinga presently sent several of the smaller ships into the bay through the Lakjemeuse Channel, slightly further north, and started landing his forces on the Formosan mainland as well as the island of Baxemboy,

235 Boxer writes that Van der Laan went straight from Batavia to Macao merely to boast his fleet to the enemy in their plain sight, and then continued to Formosa, only planning to take the fortress on his way back from there. He does not disclose his sources in this passage, but does not mention the storm or the dispersion of the fleet. As Van der Laan might have been self-righteous and rash but certainly not stupid, it seems unlikely that Van der Laan merely dropped by Macao to warn the Portuguese that he was going to attack them in a few months. More probably, he was earnest in attacking Macao, but the chaos caused by the storm finally made him call off the attack. It wouldn't, after all, be the first time that Van der Laan attacked without orders on the basis of his own judgment, witness his solo action before Tutucorin. (See above, paragraph on Jaffanapatnam) Boxer, 'The siege of fort Zeelandia and the capture of Formosa from the Dutch 1661-1662' in: *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London* (24:1926), 16-47, there 24.

236 Herport, *Reise,* 52.

which was only separated from Fort Zeelandia by the narrow silted-up channel. At the mainland Coxinga's soldiers were aided in their landing by the local Chinese population, which was happy to see Coxinga arrive and sped up the landing by providing small boats.

Fort Zeelandia was now isolated from the mainland, and thus also from Fort Provintia, a smaller fortification providing cover for Fort Zeelandia from across the bay. Van der Laan's fleet now being almost entirely dispersed, Coyet only had four ships at his disposal. Only one, the *Hector*, was a large vessel, the other three were small vessels. Coyet thus had to look on helplessly as his fortress was surrounded on all sides. After the initial shock, however, resolve grew to defend Fort Zeelandia as well as possible. For this purpose, Baxemboy should be reconquered, and Sakkam, the settlement in which Fort Provintia was situated, should be occupied, so as to keep open lines of communication between the two fortresses.

The next day, on the first of May, these plans were put into effect. Three of the four ships, the *Hector, 's Gravenlande* and *Vink*, first having provided cover for the landing on Baxemboy, subsequently made for the Lakjemeuse channel in an attempt to destroy the Chinese fleet guarding it, about 60 vessels strong.[237] The last ship, *Maria*, which was a practically unarmed flute, meanwhile sped out to sea, making use of the chaos to escape and bring news of the attack to Batavia. At first, the attack at the channel seemed successful, as the *Hector*, a 600 ton vessel well-equipped with artillery, blew several large Chinese junks out of the water. Soon, however, it became clear that the three ships were too severely outnumbered. The *Hector* was closed in. Coyet would later describe what subsequently happened:

> "Heated by the fight, five or six of the bravest junks attacked the *Hector* from all sides; whose warriors, in trying to save it, caused such a dense smoke by firing its cannon from below, above, front and behind, that neither the *Hector* nor the junks could be observed from the castle, from which this battle could otherwise have been easily watched. During the smoke, such a terrible explosion was heard that it caused the windows of the castle to shake: and when the smoke had cleared away, neither the *Hector* nor the junks which had been nearest to it could be seen. Unfortunately the *Hector* had been blown up [...]"[238]

The loss of the *Hector* convincingly tipped the scale to the advantage of the Chinese. The *'s Gravenlande* and the *Vink* now made a run for it, heading out into the open sea, fighting off Chinese all the way, who actually succeeded in entering the *'s Gravenlande* but were beaten off the ship again,

237 This sounds more grave than it was: these junks were rather small, and each only equipped with two guns, whereas a ship like the *Hector* would have carried a few dozen.

238 Coyet, ''t Verwaerloost Formosa', quoted in Struve, *Tiger's Jaws,* 213. Boxer wonders whether the explosion was accidental or not, i.e. whether the powder-chamber had been struck by enemy fire or some precursor of Van Speijck had been at work, resolving to blow up the ship and taking the junks around it with it. Boxer, 'siege', 27.

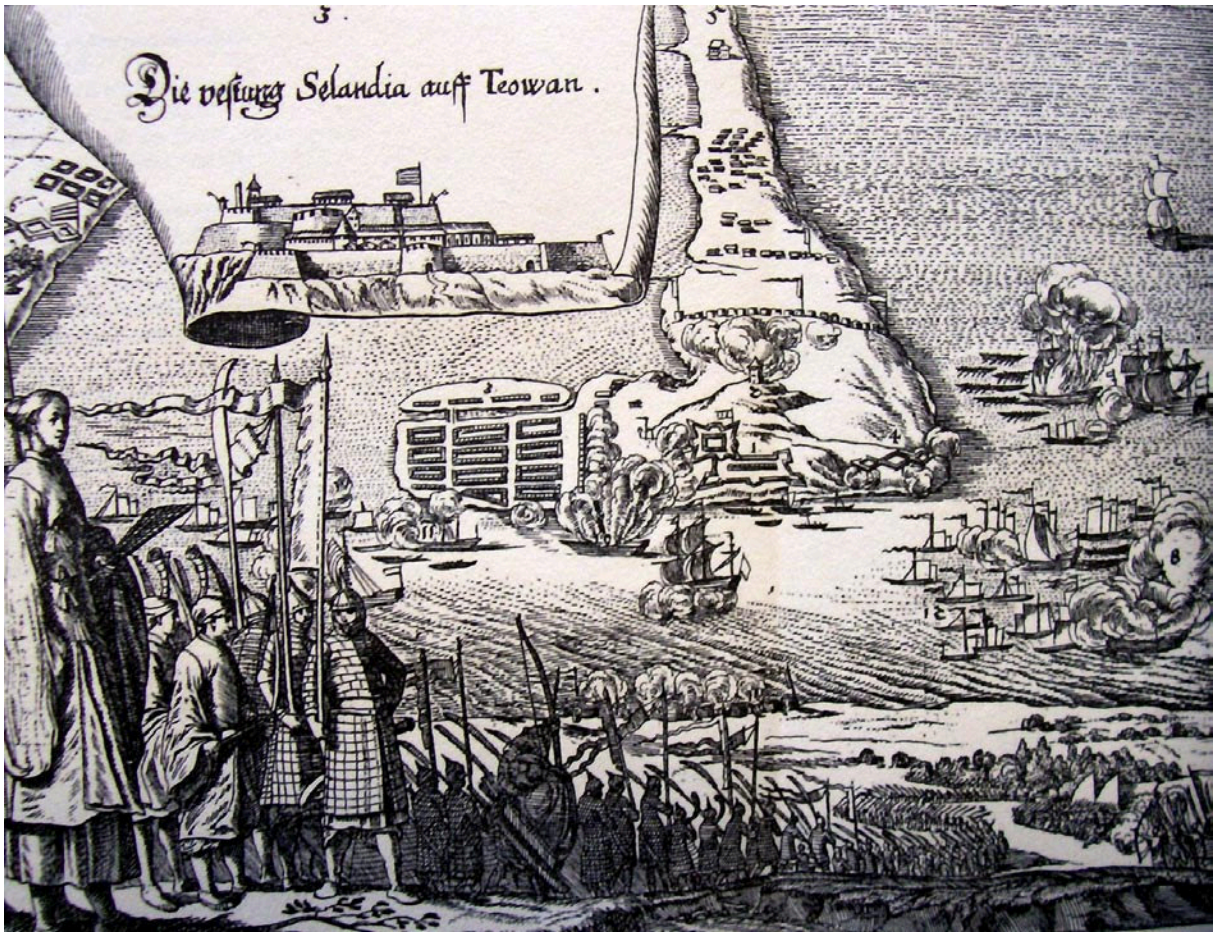


Illustration 10: Impression of the siege of Fort Zeelandia from Herport's Reise. We are looking south from Baxemboy. Number 1 is the fortress, number 2, hardly visible up on the hill, marks the redoubt Utrecht. Number 3 is the city, number 4 is the wooden bulwark the Company forces managed to set up in November. Number 6 is Sakkam and fort Provintia, on the other side of the water. Number 8 is the exploding Hector*, attacked from all sides by Chinese junks. This was probably added just for dramatic effect, as the battle with the* Hector *took place on the other side of Baxemboy.*

and avoiding fire-ships let at it, one of which actually brushed the *'s Gravenlande* but did not destroy it. Having cleared the Chinese fleet, the two ships headed north for Japan.

The two actions on land, meanwhile, had also both failed. The attempt to reconquer Baxemboy, under the command of captain Pedel, had been undertaken with 240 soldiers. The Chinese had by now landed 4000 soldiers at the small island, but a heated-up Pedel, out for revenge as his son had lost an arm in the first clashes with the Chinese the day before, just went ahead and attacked. Pedel himself died in the initial clash, along with half his soldiers. The others fled back to the boats and crossed the water to Taiwan in disorderly retreat. Herport, who took part in the action, describes how some of the boats were overcrowded and several of them sank, many of the survivors arriving back on Taiwan swimming. The other action, an attempt to reconquer Akkam and reach Fort Provintia, also failed: the commander of the small army, Aeldorp, realised the hopelessness of the

situation and retreated back to Zeelandia almost as soon as he had made contact with the enemy. The next day, two messengers from Fort Provintia managed to reach Coyet, informing him that Fort Provintia's water supply was insufficient, and the fortress would not be able to hold out for very long. Coyet decided to abandon the fortress and just retreat the entire force to Taiwan. Even this failed, however, as in the first negotiations with Coxinga the next day, he did not receive permission from the latter to evacuate the force to Zeelandia. Fort Provintia surrendered to Coxinga unconditionally on the 4th of May.

The Company army was now entirely surrounded on Taiwan. The negotiations of the previous day had yielded nothing, other than a good look at the Chinese camp, which housed about 12.000 soldiers by Coyet's estimates.[239] His council now unanimously decided to defend Fort Zeelandia to the utmost, and on the same 4th of May, the blood-flag was hoisted over the fortress. There would be no surrender. That same night, the Chinese moved into the settlement on Taiwan, and many of the civilians from the settlement sought refuge in the fortress. It was decided to evacuate the entire city and set fire to it, so as not to provide cover for the Chinese. An attempt from the fortress to go into the city and set it ablaze two nights later succeeded only partially, and the entire settlement fell into Chinese hands, including large amounts of rice and sugar still in the warehouses there. The positions still in Dutch hands were now only Fort Zeelandia, and the small redoubt Utrecht up on the hill.

At first it seemed that Coxinga was content to just wait it out and starve Fort Zeelandia. In the night of the 24th of May, however, after three quiet weeks, the Chinese threw up a battery near the fortress. Two days later they started a massive bombardment from this battery, and a large Chinese army approached the walls of the city. Coyet, seeing how the storm attack on the city was rather rash and disorderly, had his soldiers and bus-firers hold fire until the Chinese army was quite near and he had the best shot. Then he had a massive barrage unleashed on them. The Chinese commander leading the attack, however, had promised Coxinga to take the fortress on the forfeit of his head, and kept on bringing in reinforcements, until some thousand Chinese soldiers had been killed. Only then did the army go into retreat, also abandoning the cannon on their battery. Coyet immediately organised a sortie to spike (i.e. sabotage) these cannon. Just as these had arrived back from their mission, Coxinga had the castle stormed two more times, but both attacks failed.[240]

After these rather bloody attempts to storm the fortress, Coxinga decided not to try such a thing again and just be patient. As he had landed on Formosa just as the southern monsoon had started, he was confident that news of the invasion would not reach Batavia for months, and that he could comfortably wait the whole thing out. The flute *Maria*, however, which had escaped on the first of May, had beaten its way right against the monsoon via the Philippines, and had arrived in Batavia

239 The other half of the army was spread out over Formosa by now, to occupy the rest of the island.
240 Boxer, 'siege', 31-32.

after fifty days, bringing the tiding of the attack. Interestingly, only two days before, Maatsuiker, hearing Van der Laan's somewhat biased version of how Coyet had behaved, had just decided to have him sent up to Batavia and replace him as governor of Formosa. The new governor, Hermanus Clencke van Odesse had just left Batavia two days ago, sailing to Formosa with two ships, and a yacht sent out to cancel his instructions failed due to adverse winds. Clecnke would therefore be sailing into a very interesting situation. By July 5th, then, Batavia had managed to organise a succour fleet of ten ships carrying some 700 soldiers. Its commander, Jacob Caeuw (reportedly a rather incompetent and presumptuous figure), carried a letter with instructions to retain Coyet as governor.

Apart from some gruesome executions of Dutch prisoners by Coxinga within sight of the fortress[241] and disease which had broken out inside the fortress and left only 400 men fit to fight, the siege had continued rather uneventfully, when Clencke's two ships arrived on the 30th of July. In the end, the letter that Caeuw, who would be arriving a few days later, had with him was not even necessary: assessing the situation, Clencke was quite ready to just forego the honour of becoming governor. In fact, he did not enter the fortress but stayed on his ship, until after a few days he sailed out to sea on the pretext of bad weather, and continued to Japan.

Only days later, on the 12th of August, Caeuw's fleet arrived within sight of Taiwan. Fate, however, was apparently not on the side of the Company: just as the fleet had started unloading reinforcements and supplies, a great storm put up. Now, the danger of the access to the bay being silted up made itself felt. The fleet had nowhere to safely anchor, and had to sail out to sea to ride out of the storm. Only 28 days later, on the 8th of September, did the weather calm down and did the fleet return to aid the beleaguered fortress. The same storm gave Coxinga time to put his defences in order. The arrival of the fleet had woken him up from his rather complacent attitude towards the siege, and in the four weeks that the fleet spent out at sea, he now closely sealed in Fort Zeelandia and prepared his troops for more serious resistance.

When the reinforcements and supplies had finally been brought on land, it was decided in a council meeting on the 15th of October to retake the initiative and attack the Chinese in Taiwan to reconquer the settlement, and to destroy as many of the junks as possible with the ships. The attack took place on the following day, but backfired terribly. Adverse winds prevented the larger Dutch ships from coming within range of the city of Taiwan. The smaller vessels, meanwhile, did attack but, without the support of the large vessels, were repulsed. Two of the larger ships actually stranded due to the unfavourable wind and were subsequently destroyed by the Chinese. As support from the sea was therefore less than convincing, the land attack also failed, and the army lost 128 sol-

241 For one, Coxinga had had several Christian missionaries executed by crucifixion, forcing other prisoners to watch.

diers. The next day, the Company army attempted another sortie, but this was also beaten back by the Chinese lines.

Incredibly, in November, the Company army managed yet another offensive move of sorts, this time to some degree successfully. It succeeded in erecting a *wambuis*, a wooden bulwark, outside the main fortress, on the shore right opposite the Chinese battery on Baxemboy, from where they successfully bombarded it.

The moves which were to finally draw the curtains on the defence of Fort Zeelandia, were, ironically, all to be made by Company personnel. On the 6th of November, a letter from the Manchu governor of Fukien reached the besieged Dutch fortress. It offered assistance to the Dutch against the common enemy, in return for which the Dutch would temporarily provide some ships. On the 26th of November, the council decided to accept the proposal, and send out three ships to the Chinese mainland. This might force Coxinga to send part of his force back to the mainland, and would at any rate ensure Manchu cooperation. Jacob Caeuw, the commander of the rescue fleet who had until now done virtually nothing, volunteered to lead the fleet to China. On December 3rd , three ships left the harbour. Caeuw, however, had never meant to go to Fukien: as soon as he reached the Pescadores, he set sail for Siam, and from there to Batavia. It would appear that he had only volunteered to command the fleet to have a ticket out of the whole mess. In doing so, he had taken three good ships and a considerable number of men with him, which were now lost to the defence of the fortress.

In the meantime, many Company soldiers, convinced that the situation was hopeless, were deserting to the enemy. Among these deserters was sergeant Hans Jurgen Radis. He finally pointed out to Coxinga that the conquest of the redoubt Utrecht, which was still bravely holding out, would make Fort Zeelandia indefensible. Coxinga took his advice to heart and concentrated his efforts on the redoubt. Coyet, painfully aware of what was afoot, concentrated his resources on the defence of the redoubt, but to no avail. In the night of the 25th of January, after two abortive storm attacks on the redoubt and a massive bombardment of 24 hours which had left the redoubt to be no more than a ruin, the Company forces withdrew from there to Zeelandia, leaving a booby-trap in the ruins, which killed quite some Chinese as these took the redoubt the next morning.

With the redoubt taken, it was only a matter of time before Fort Zeelandia would fall. Coyet decided not to await that moment. On a council meeting on the 27th of January, he found a majority of the council members to be in favour of opening negotiations on the surrender of the fortress with Coxinga. On the 1st of February, Fort Zeelandia surrendered, after a nine month siege.

Charles Boxer, in his article on the siege from which I have extensively drawn in this paragraph, concludes with a rather moralizing yet very interesting passage in which he assesses the roles of the various Company officials in this entire drama. He fells rather harsh judgments on all involved except for Coyet, who held out in a gruelling siege for an improbable nine months, both against a vastly superior power and the ultimately fatal cowardice of those that were supposed to come

to his aid. Incredibly, Coyet, upon his return to Batavia after the surrender, was immediately imprisoned, tried on rather ridiculous charges, and banished to the Banda Islands, only returning to the Netherlands in 1674. Caeuw and Clencke, by contrast, who had both effectively deserted from Taiwan leaving Coyet to fend for himself, were never tried and in fact promoted. It would seem that Maatsuiker, who was after all Governor-General and had clearly wrongly assessed the entire situation, had in this case simply used power politics to shut up Coyet who was now a serious threat to his position. When Coyet finally returned to the Netherlands, he attempted to find justice by anonymously publishing *'t Verwaerloost Formosa*, in which he rendered his account of what happened at Taiwan.[242]

It is of course doubtful whether Fort Zeelandia would have held out against such a vastly superior force, should Maatsuiker have liked Coyet more and heeded his warnings. The fortress, after all, was facing a professional Chinese army, 25.000 strong, well-equipped with artillery and bent on wiping the Dutch off Formosa. To this was added the impossible strategic situation of the silted-up bay, inaccessible to the large Dutch ships, in the region of the world most visited by typhoons. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see that in this instance, when the Company for once did not command the field, self-preservation reflexes in people throughout the chain of command prevented an adequate response from materializing. Coyet was the notable exception, and as a reward became the scapegoat for the entire drama.

The Mozambique-expedition: battling the monsoon

In the spring of 1662, the directors in the Netherlands had once again decided to make an extra effort against the Portuguese in Asia by sending out an extra fleet, equipped with an unusual number of soldiers. On the 17th of April 1662, Huibert de Lairesse set sail from the Republic, commanding a fleet of six ships manned with some 1400 souls. His mission was first to drive the Portuguese from their port of call Mozambique. From there, two ships would continue to Batavia; the rest would set sail to the Indian coast to aid the Company war effort there.

Had the expedition of last year been slightly late to the taste of Van Goens; the expedition of this year never actually made it to the Indian Coast, or to Mozambique for that matter. The first port east of the Cape in which it would arrive was Batavia, after a trip which had lasted for almost a year. A small dossier on the expedition in the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* tells what actually happened, and why the Mozambique attack never took place.[243]

242 Boxer, 'siege', 44-46.

243 VOC-Archives, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren,* 1239, 1365-1455. These pages contain letters from de Lairesse to patria, Batavia and the Cape, as well as the various resolutions of the *brede raad* of the fleet (the 'broad council', which was the meeting of all the high officers), and the *Daghregisters* of the *Kennemerland*, De Lairesse's ship.

The head of the fleet, Huibert de Lairesse, had set sail from Texel with three ships on the 16th of April: the *Kennemerland*, which he commanded, the *Rijnland* and the *Waterhoen*. The other three ships, the *Kogge*, the *Oranje*, and the *Waterhoen*, set sail from the Wielingen on the 23rd.

After leaving the Republic, the three ships sailing with de Lairesse had immediately run into delays. Adverse winds had forced it to sail 'along the backway' (i.e. around Scotland instead of through the Channel). Sailing in convoy even with this small fleet soon proved difficult: the flute *Waterhoen*, fresh off the yards, proved to be a crank ship, and kept on lagging behind. As the fleet approached the equator, more and more people on the *Kennemerland* fell ill, and being forced to wait for the *Waterhoen* thus became increasingly frustrating. On the 29th of June, five degrees above the equator, Lairesse finally decided that it would just have to be every ship for itself. They would just have to meet up at the Cape.[244]

Leaving the *Waterhoen* behind sped up things somewhat, and the *Kennemerland* ran into Table Bay on the 3rd of September, finding four ships there: the yachts *Kogge* and *Vlaardingen*, and the flutes *Veldhoen* and *Zeeridder*. Of these ships, the *Kogge* was in a very bad state. Not only had it lost a lot of sail in storms, its foremast was also broken. The *Veldhoen* and the *Zeeridder* were not even part of the expedition fleet. The former of these had left the Netherlands in January and was simply still at the Cape; the latter had not been in the Republic since 1656, its year of commissioning, and had arrived at the Cape from the East. The various larger ships of the fleet had not arrived yet. Lairesse was particularly unhappy to be missing the *Oranje*, one of the larger ships of the fleet. This ship had the bulk of the timber with it, and its arrival would greatly speed up the repairs of the *Kogge*.

Four days later, the *Wapen van Zeeland* arrived. This ship had sailed in convoy with the *Oranje*, but had left it behind as its skipper "had just left his sails flutter" and was not making an effort to get to the Cape as quickly as possible. The skipper of the *Wapen van Zeeland* also suspected that the *Oranje* was not planning to stop at the Cape at all. The *Oranje* was in fact one of the two ships that would continue to Batavia after the battle at Mozambique, and as Lairesse had not given out orders yet, it would seem that it did not know of the plans against Mozambique and simply supposed it would have to go to Batavia.[245] This would be disastrous to the expedition: not only did this ship have much of the timber; it was also one of the larger vessels in the fleet, carrying 344 souls. Having to miss it in the attack would be detrimental. At any rate, Lairesse now sent the crew of the *Kogge*

244 Overgekomen B&P, 1239, fol 1365-1366. Leaving the *Waterhoen* behind turned out to be a good decision, as this ship only ran into the Table Bay on the 22nd of November. (Ships-database on vocsite.nl)

245 It has every appearance that the skippers didn't know the exact goal of the expedition until they had left the Cape. The resolutions and the Daghregister make clear that Lairesse only gave out specific instructions to the *brede raad* and the *krijgsraad* on the 31st of September, when the fleet had already departed from the Cape. In his later letter to patria, Lairesse describes how around the same date, the crew was very enthusiastic to be part of such a 'notable exploit.' In his letter of the 21st of September, he does not mention the word Mozambique once but only talks about 'our design' and alike formulas; he only talks about Mozambique in his later letters. It therefore seems that the exact goal of the expedition was a secret even to its participants, and in this light it becomes understandable that they expected that the *Orange* would just sail on. *Overgekomen B&P*, 1239, fol. 1367, 1419, 1445.

into the woods to make a new foremast; "a bloody task, I can assure Your Honours, as I was there myself."[246]

Although the crews of the ships were apparently not yet aware of the exact goal of the expedition, it did become clear at the Cape that they were up for a fight. Lairesse divided his soldiers into companies, and had crews work around the clock to produce storming ladders and other siege equipment. The muskets were tested and the troops were drilled. Lairesse was also looking for pilots to Mozambique, or at least skippers who could tell him how best to sail. As the Company had very little experience sailing northward from the Cape (last year's fleet to Ceylon had been the first since the days of the *Voorcompagnieën*, and the fact that one ship bound for Ceylon had accidentally sailed to Batavia by reflex is telling), he did not actually find anyone who knew anything about sailing to Ceylon. He would just have to make use of the "old documents and printed books" brought from the Republic, which was far from ideal.[247]

Meanwhile, Lairesse was haggling with the commander of the Cape Colony, Zacharias Wagenaar, for more ships.[248] It had already been decided that the *Veldhoen* would go with the expedition fleet; now Lairesse was also trying to get his hands on the *Zeeridder*. Wagenaar had planned to send out the *Zeeridder* to look for the missing vessels of the return fleet from Batavia, which had been hit by a severe storm. Only three out of the seven ships had come in, and Wagenaar was planning to send out a search party to see if the ships, or any survivors, had ended up on Madagascar or Mauritius. Lairesse, however, managed to convince Wagenaar otherwise, promising that during his expedition he would also do his utmost to find the missing ships. This brought the fleet to seven ships, with a total crew of 581 sailors and 660 soldiers.[249] By the 20th of September, the fleet was ready to sail, and a day of prayer was held in the Cape Colony. The next day, Lairesse sealed his letter to the directors, concluding it in a very war-eager spirit, and on the 22nd, the fleet was to lift anchor.[250]

The day of prayer, however, had apparently not helped an awful lot. Just as the fleet was preparing to depart, a strong adverse wind came up, trapping the fleet in the Table Bay for another four days. Then, just when the wind had turned and the fleet had left the bay, the wind completely died down and the fleet was adrift for two days. By the 28th of September, the fleet was still within sight of Table Mountain.

246 Ibid., fol. 1368.

247 Ibid., fol. 1419.

248 Wagenaar had replaced Jan van Riebeeck just four months ago, as the latter had been recalled to Batavia for an investigation concerning his private trade.

249 In one of those instances where actual events are way more intriguing than any fiction, Maatsuiker had predicted this shipwreck. Six weeks after the return fleet had left on the 10th of December, he had a recurrent dream in which the ship *Wapen van Holland* was wrecked, and the head of the fleet, Arnoud de Vlaming, who was repatriating with his wife and child, was calling out to him for help. He found this dream so curious that he noted it down. As it later turned out, the *Wapen van Holland*, along with the *Gekroonde Leeuw*, the *Prins Willem* and the *Arnhem*, had been wrecked on the 11th and 12th of February. *D.A.S*. III, 74-75.

250 This first letter was thus sealed on the 21st of September 1662. *Overgekomen B&P*, 1239, fol. 1365-1375.

After this rather slow start from the Cape, things went better, but only slightly. Only on the last day of October did the fleet gain sight of the southernmost point of Cape Corinth (the area around Inhambane in present-day Mozambique.) After more than five weeks of struggling, they had covered only two thirds of what should have been an easy and quick sailing trip. And things were about to get worse: the next day the wind turned and became stronger. As the current was also coming from the northeast, the ships were mercilessly blown back to where they had come from. Five days later, the ships were still near Cape Corinth, and back on the wrong side of it. Supplies had not been prepared for this great amount of ill luck, and water was put on ration by the 9th of November.

Of course it was not only bad luck which caused the fleet trouble: the combination of the earlier delays before the Cape and inexperience sailing this route were taking their revenge. As Lairesse was at least partly aware, the fleet had entirely missed the summer monsoon. Whereas, two months ago, it would have been blown right to Mozambique, the fleet was now facing adverse winds and calms. In addition, the onset of the Northeastern Monsoon also hailed the start of the cyclone season on the East African Coast, and the fleet was now stuck right in the area where the bulk of these cyclones hit the African mainland.

The first storm hit the fleet in the night of the 17th of November. As Lairesse visually describes, "the dense rain, combined with the complete darkness and the incessant lightning, made everyone blind as a bat." Collisions were only avoided because each of the ships was carrying a big lantern on the stern. When the sky cleared by dawn, damage turned out to have been limited to several sails torn to rags. And the wind was now finally blowing in the right direction!

Nonetheless, Lairesse was getting quite fed up. On the 20th of November he once again called the *brede raad* together, as "this continuous sailing back and forth without making any advancement, or even the appearance of advancement, was making us all rather sad." In addition, supplies weren't getting any bigger, and disease had struck several of the ships. Slowly but steadily, various council members started wondering whether it was at all sensible to still try and attack Mozambique. With so much of the crew lying sick, the attack might well become a complete disaster, even if the fleet actually reached its destination. Then again, what were the other options? Waiting it out on the African Coast or the Cape was madness, as the monsoon would only turn around again by March. On the other hand, just giving up on the whole project and continuing to the Indian coast or Batavia was also undesirable. Not only was this a humiliation after struggling for so long; it was also insensible, as the ships bound for the Indian coast would still have to wait until March anyway.

It was finally decided to keep on trying to head north for another five days. If there was no improvement within that time, the fleet would find a suitable place along the Coast to take in fresh water and supplies. The wind did not turn around, so after five days the fleet did. The next day, it was once again at the southern point of Cape Corinth, which by now must have looked awfully familiar to the crews of the ships.

To de Lairesse's great amazement, the fleet had not spotted a single other sail since its departure from the Cape. Near Cape Corinth, however, a ship appeared ahead of the fleet. As it approached, it turned out to be the *Oranje,* the arrival of which De Lairesse had so fervently been hoping for at the Cape. The ship had not passed by the Cape, but had just been extremely delayed and after a ten day stay at the Cape, had tried to catch up with the fleet. The crew must have been somewhat surprised to see the fleet coming towards it.

After a failed attempt to anchor on the 27th of November, the fleet found a river the next day, and anchored in the open sea "near what was called Bazzaratto on the maps."[251] The river turned out to be brackish, but by digging wells one could obtain fresh water. The local "blacks" were very friendly, and more than willing to sell animals and fruits in exchange for cloth and simple ship's blankets. The fleet, however, was two miles out on the open sea, and therefore completely unprotected. The fear of another storm immediately prompted de Lairesse to send off the *Veldhoen* to look for a bay.

For four days, the various chaloops rushed back and forth between the coast and the fleet. Then, the weather once again got in the way of plans. A strong seawind trapped the little flotilla of chaloops on the coast for three days; then the wind just died off completely, making traffic between the fleet and the coast extremely troublesome. All in all, the replenishment of supplies didn't make as much headway as had been hoped. De Lairesse had also expected that fresh fruit would hem the diseases that ran rampant among the crews somewhat, but mortality just kept on increasing. The *Wapen van Zeeland* was now so low on sailors that operating the ship became troublesome. But the *Veldhoen*, which was supposed to be back within eight days, was also trapped by the calm and only appeared after twentyseven days, during which the fleet was just lying there and the crew just kept on dying off.

The *Veldhoen* finally arrived back on a rather strong wind blowing towards the coast, which was dangerous to the fleet and made the trade on the coast virtually impossible. It was decided to bring all personnel back to the ship as soon as possible, and set sail. However, just a few hours after the ships had set sail on the 1st of January 1663, another storm hit the fleet, threatening to throw it against the beach. The *Zeeridder* and the *Oranje* actually stranded and were in grave danger for two days, but ultimately managed to get afloat again. In the end, all the ships survived the storm, but several anchors and many of the chaloops were lost.

251 In some old maps, the area between Cape Corinth and the Maputo Bay, the present-day province of Inhambane, is called Bassarat or Bazarat. The river might be the Limpopo, but as the map used by Lairesse would probably have a name for this river, it is at least as likely that they anchored at a smaller stream further to the northeast. This would also explain the brackish water of the river, as these streams are fed by salty backwaters. Looking at the map of this area will also explain why the *Veldhoen* was unable to find a bay: the coast is a straight line for hundreds of kilometres in this area.

Before the fleet had lifted anchor, de Lairesse had informed with the council members "whether anyone still felt inclined to tend to our goal." No-one did. The only question that still needed to be resolved was whether an attempt to reach the Indian Coast was still viable. Reaching Batavia was no problem, but the bulk of the fleet was supposed to go to Ceylon. Crossing the Indian Ocean would still be impossible for another two months, and the fleet would have to sail all the way to the coast of Sumatra to circumvent the adverse winds. Under these circumstances, sailing to Batavia in convoy was the most sensible thing to do.

De Lairesse sealed his letter on the 6th of January 1663, after a disaster journey of three-and-a-half months since the Cape. On the same day, on the other side of the Indian Ocean, Van Goens stormed Cochin and thus finished the campaign in which the fleet had been supposed to participate. The letter bound for patria was sent to the Cape with the *Veldhoen*. De Lairesse concluded it by telling the directors how sorry he was to see that the good designs of the Company had had so bad an outcome, and that, if the war with the Portuguese should continue, he would request of the Governor-General and Council to be sent to Mozambique once again. The battered fleet finally arrived before Batavia on the 30th of March, after a fruitless journey of almost a year. News of the peace reached Batavia only two-and-a-half months later,[252] and Mozambique would never be captured by the VOC. De Lairesse's fleet had not fired a single shot at the Portuguese, but the East African monsoon had proven itself an adversary not to be messed with.

The second siege of Cochin

In the first days of July 1662, while Huibert de Lairesse was slowly making his way towards the Cape, news of the extra fleet and the postponed peace reached the *Hoge Regering* in Batavia. Van Goens, who had arrived back in Batavia only two weeks earlier, would be getting another chance at conquering Cochin, and would perhaps even find time and resources to undertake something against Diu. A small fleet of three ships, manned with some 300 soldiers under command of Ijsbrand Godske, was sent out on the 26th of July, in order to block Cochin, and take command of the Dutch garrisons on the coast to form a field army. Learning lessons from the failure of the earlier campaign, the *Hoge Regering* also instructed Godske to have the Dutch garrisons in Malabar produce fuses, and sent out a huge order for gunpowder to the Coromandel coast, where the Company had a powder mill. The rest of the fleet would be sent after Godske as soon as it had been assembled.[253]

By the end of August, the fleet, consisting of thirteen large ships manned with 800 European soldiers and 134 Mardijkers, Bandanese and Ambonese, was ready to sail. The *Hoge Regering* reckoned

252 On the 14th of June, the *Joncker* brought news of the ratified treaty to Batavia. Daghregister, II, 236.

253 Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar*, 302-303. This paragraph mostly based on op. cit, C6. Footnotes will only be added when referring to other sources.

Illustration 11: map of part of the Malabar coast. To the right we see the Ghats mountain range, separating the Malabar coast from the rest of the Indian mainland. The top leftmost island is Baypin. Right underneath we see Cochin (' Coetsjien'), and slightly further south Purracad ('Porca'). The map also nicely shows the backwaters connecting the various Malabarese cities, which made isolation of Cochin highly problematic. Just south of the backwaters we see Quilon ('Coylan').

that the total force, consisting of this fleet combined with soldiers drawn from the Ceylonese and Malabar garrisons and even 150 which would have to come from the Cape, would amount to a good 3000 soldiers. This calculation did not even include the extra fleet coming in from Patria. Disappointed by the late arrival of last year's extra fleet, combined with the poor quality of the soldiers it brought, the *Hoge Regering* was apparently not getting its hopes up this time.

The fleet set sail on the 26th of August. As Van Goens was severely ill at the time, Jacob Hustaert was in command. Should Van Goens recover, he would come after the fleet and retake command later. Van Goens, did recover, and went in pursuit of the main fleet on the 10th of September, with one ship and a yacht. He received additional orders to sail to Wingurla in Bijapur, north of Goa, to inform there whether any reinforcements had run into Goa that year. On the basis of that information, it would then have to be decided whether Goa should be blocked, to prevent these reinforcements from sailing out to Cochin.

As Van Goens departed from Batavia, Godske, after a very speedy journey, arrived before Cranganore on that same 10th of September. He presently learned that only three small ships, bringing 100 Portuguese soldiers, had come into Cochin in the past few months. Combining the troops from his fleet with a good part of the Cranganore garrison, he marched towards the northside of Cochin, and had the Dutch stronghold built last year, *Nieuw Oranje*, restored by the 24th of September.

Hustaert arrived before Cochin on the 17th of October. He immediately called together the military council. His own suggestion, inspired by Van Goens' original plan, was to just have a storm

attack on the city and get it over with, but all the other officers thought this too risky. An attack on the city from the north, over the river, was considered too risky as the Company had very few small boats and the Portuguese still had various operational frigates which could navigate the river. It was therefore finally decided to just do what they did last year: besiege the city from the south.
On the 28th of October, Hustaert landed 1600 men two miles south of Cochin. The Portuguese, apparently also learning from their past mistakes, were waiting there with six detachments of Portuguese soldiers and 2000 Nayars. A short battle followed. Herport was one of the 1600 soldiers now landing on Malabar shore, and he describes the battle as follows:

> "As soon as the Portuguese had gotten wind of our plan, they had rushed to the beach and dug trenches. Now, at the crack of dawn, we got on board chaloops and small vessels, 23 in number, each of which was equipped with two field cannon. We sailed towards the land in a line. The Portuguese, however, fired heavily from their trenches, so that we were forced to fight our way onto land. When we had finally arrived on the beach, with great trouble because of the wild surf, the first to jump onto land was an Ambonese with shield and sword in hand, after whom we then quickly followed. There we got a full blow of fire, as we were out in the open field, but the Portuguese were taking cover in their trenches. When, however, we attacked them on one side, where we found that they were mostly Nayars, or Malabars, we came at them with a lot of violence and killed several of their leaders. After this, the rest fled. When the Portuguese saw this, having put all their faith in the Nayars, they also made way towards the city, with us in pursuit."[254]

With slightly more trouble than the year before Hustaert had now landed 1600 soldiers and could start building siege works around Cochin. The army of 3000 soldiers which Batavia had projected had not yet materialized, but things looked a lot better than last year. From a captured Portuguese, Hustaert learned that there were only 600 soldiers within the walls of Cochin, al lot less than expected. Although the Portuguese had now also fortified old Cochin, where Godorme, the leader of last year's anti Dutch coalition, was now inhabiting the palace, this prince and his Nayars had simply fled the city as soon as they learned of the Dutch landing, and the Dutch army could simply walk into the old city with two companies and occupy it. The extensive defences of the old city were reduced to a small, easily defensible position. Hustaert's biggest advantage compared to last year, however, was the fact that it was only the 28th of October. He had a full four months of dry season ahead of him.
Hustaert, whose force was barely enough to lay siege to the city but also too small to storm the walls, had been steadily bombarding the city, hoping for Van Goens to arrive with reinforcements. Van Goens arrived on the 14th of November, bringing 400 veteran soldiers and 500 Lascars from Ceylon and Quilon. Assessing the situation before Cochin, he immediately forewent his plans to

254 Herport, *Reise,* 96-97.

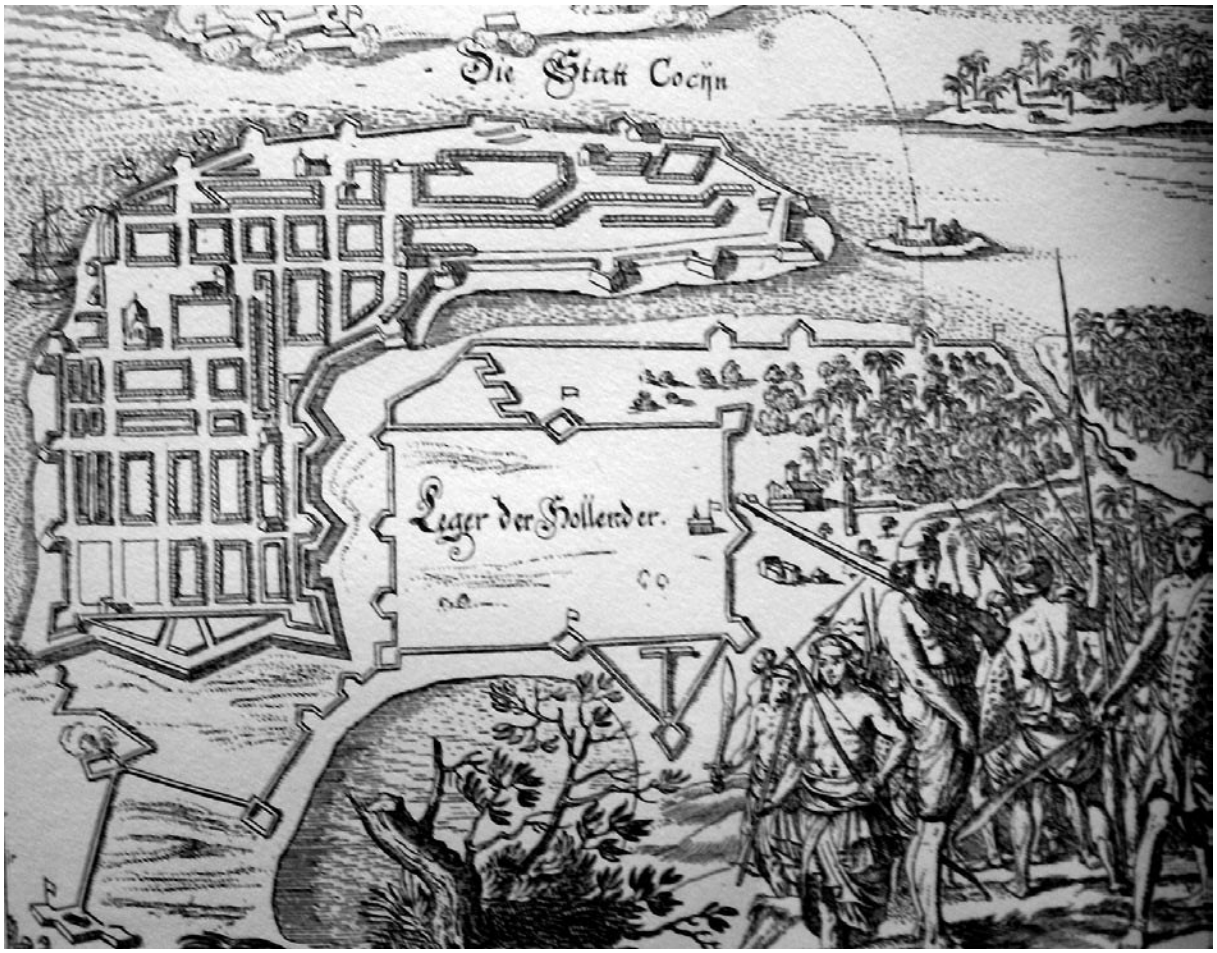


Illustration 12: the siege of Cochin as depicted in Herport's Reise. In the top-left we see the small fort Oranje. Papeneiland is not visible but would be slightly up-river, on the top-right. The lower branch of the water led to the backwaters. Calewety is the bastion to the far right, across from the small island. The bastion to its left is St. Lazaro. Furthermore we get a great impression of the Company's siege works. The form of the city, however, is not very accruate, as becomes clear when we compare this map to that of Baldaeus. (See below.)

blockade Goa and attack Diu. The force would certainly not be split up until Cochin had been stormed and taken.

For now the siege works needed to be perfected and the city isolated. The trenches and batteries were moved ever closer towards the city. Complete isolation of the city however remained troublesome, as the Company army did not control the river or the backwaters. Several VOC soldiers who had deserted to Cochin last year, came to the camp on the 5th of December and asked for pardon.[255] They informed Van Goens that prince Godorme, now once again in Purracad, was supplying the besieged city not only with food, but also sulphur for gunpowder production, and Nayars, over the backwaters. As many as 150 Nayars had been brought into the city this way, and if the need arose he was able to send a whole lot more, so Van Goens learned.

255 Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar,* 328-330. Date from Herport, *Reise,* 99.

Van Goens took immediate action: he ordered an attack on "Papeneiland", an island in the river, that same day. Being in control of this island would make smuggling over this route virtually impossible. The attack succeeded. This, however, was not all. As several small vessels were taken at this attack on the island, Van Goens equipped a fleet of small boats to sail south over the backwater, which reached all the way to Purracad, to take or destroy the various small vessels by which Cochin had been supplied, that same night. Herport was sailing along on one of these vessels. His ship, however, had not been conquered, but, along with one other ship, joined the small flotilla from the main VOC fleet at sea. It immediately became clear why this raid could only be performed with small ships:

> "As these two ships were sailing into the river mouth, one of them sailed right on, but the other one, in which I sailed, ran onto a sanbank, hardly a pistol shot away from the city. As the Portuguese saw this in the clear moonlight, they fired away at us, with muskets and cannon, until, through the rising tide, we finally came loose and could sail on. They had fired ten balls through our ship, and besides many wounded, had also killed our pilot, the quartermaster, one corporal, four soldiers and five sailors."

Due to this delay, the raid therefore took place by daylight. Initially it worked beautifully, but grown reckless by the success, the commander De Roer threw his orders of staying on the water to the wind and risked a landing at Angicamal, on the other side of the backwater, slightly east of Cochin. Here, the Company soldiers turned out to be too severely outnumbered. De Roer himself was killed, as were many other soldiers.[256] Definitively clearing the various settlements along the backwaters of ships and enemy Nayars, was however so important to Van Goens, that he later sent Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede out with a large force to conquer both coasts. By the 4th of January, this would ultimately be accomplished, and Van Reede returned to the camp, leaving Nayars from Calicut to guard the various settlements.

In the meantime, the Company siege works around Cochin had at many places come within a pistol shot of the city walls. Some unexpected rain in December had come to an end again, and the ground had once again dried up. Powder and fuses had not run out (although supplies were by now running low), the city had been incessantly bombarded throughout the siege, and Portuguese morale would probably be crumbling by now. It was time to storm the city.

Van Goens decided that a small attack would take place on the westernmost point of Cochin, where the wall had been breached. The commander there, Schimmelpenninck, would however only proceed as far as the breach in order to draw as many Portuguese soldiers as possible from the

256 Interestingly Meilink-Roelofsz, basing herself on the official reports sent to Batavia, talks of 20 dead. Herport, who was there, talks of 40 dead in the first attack wave alone, and a total of about 300(!) dead later on. He is not even counting the 12 dead from earlier on. Even if an extra zero was printed accidentally, this is a rather great difference. Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar,* 329; Herport, *Reise,* 100-101.

rest of the city. Then, the northeasternmost Portuguese bastion, called Calewety, where the walls had also been breached, would be stormed by Van Goens. If this attack immediately succeeded, then the entire force would move there and enter the city. If not, Hustaert would lead his force in a storm attack on a Portuguese bastion slightly to the West, called St. Lazaro. All the while, all the Dutch batteries should start an enormous barrage on the city.

In the early afternoon of the 6th of January 1663, when the water in the defense motes was at its lowest, the attack began. Van Goens personally led his force to Caleweti, where a bloody fight ensued. 50 Company soldiers died or were or mortally wounded, another 70 were wounded. On the Portuguese side, as it later turned out, 200 Portuguese died in the initial clash. It was now clear to the VOC troops that there were slightly more than 600 Portuguese soldiers in Cochin. Although this first storm attack was not decisive, Van Goens nonetheless called off the attack on St. Lazaro, to prevent chaos and another bloodbath. Instead, the city would slowly be taken from the northeastern side, where the defenses had now been breached. Van Goens had six fresh companies reinforce the troops there, and severe skirmishing in the streets of the city followed.

One of the soldiers sent in with these six companies was Herport. By nightfall the troops had fought their way to what Herport calls "the half-moon Portogafo",[257] probably halfway along the southeastern city wall, which meant they had the entire narrow part of the city along the river under their control. Then, still under fire from the Portuguese, the army started barricading itself in, to continue the city guerilla at dawn again. Continuing the attack, however, turned out to be unnecessary. In the early hours of the next morning, a Portuguese officer approached the Company's makeshift defenses with a peace flag. It was agreed that hostilities should be ceased, and that a Portuguese delegation would arrive shortly to negotiate a peace.

Thus, On the 7th of January 1663, Cochin had finally fallen. The siege had cost the VOC 360 soldiers. However, there were 300 wounded (many badly burnt by firepots), and beri-beri had left another 500 too sick to fight. The Portuguese had had more than 900 casualties. Incredibly, more Portuguese had died than the Company had even believed were in the city. The total defense force of the city turned out to have been 2300 souls, consisting of soldiers but also volenteers from the students and clergy living in the city. The VOC army, by contrast, had had a maximum of 2000 soldiers in its camp at any given time, as many other activities (garrisoning Baypin and Cranganore, raiding the backwaters) had diminished the total size of the force.[258]

As was Company policy, the final treaty entailed that Cochin, the second largest Portuguese city in Asia, would be completely rid of all Portuguese influence. The *soldados*, unmarried Portuguese receiving wage from the *Estado* (which included but did not limit itself to the soldiers) would be

257 In his own map, there is a bastion in the form of a half moon halfway onto the southern wall of the city, where the narrow part of the city ends. Herport *Reise,* 104-105.

258 Meilink-Roelofsz, *Vestiging Malabar,* 339.

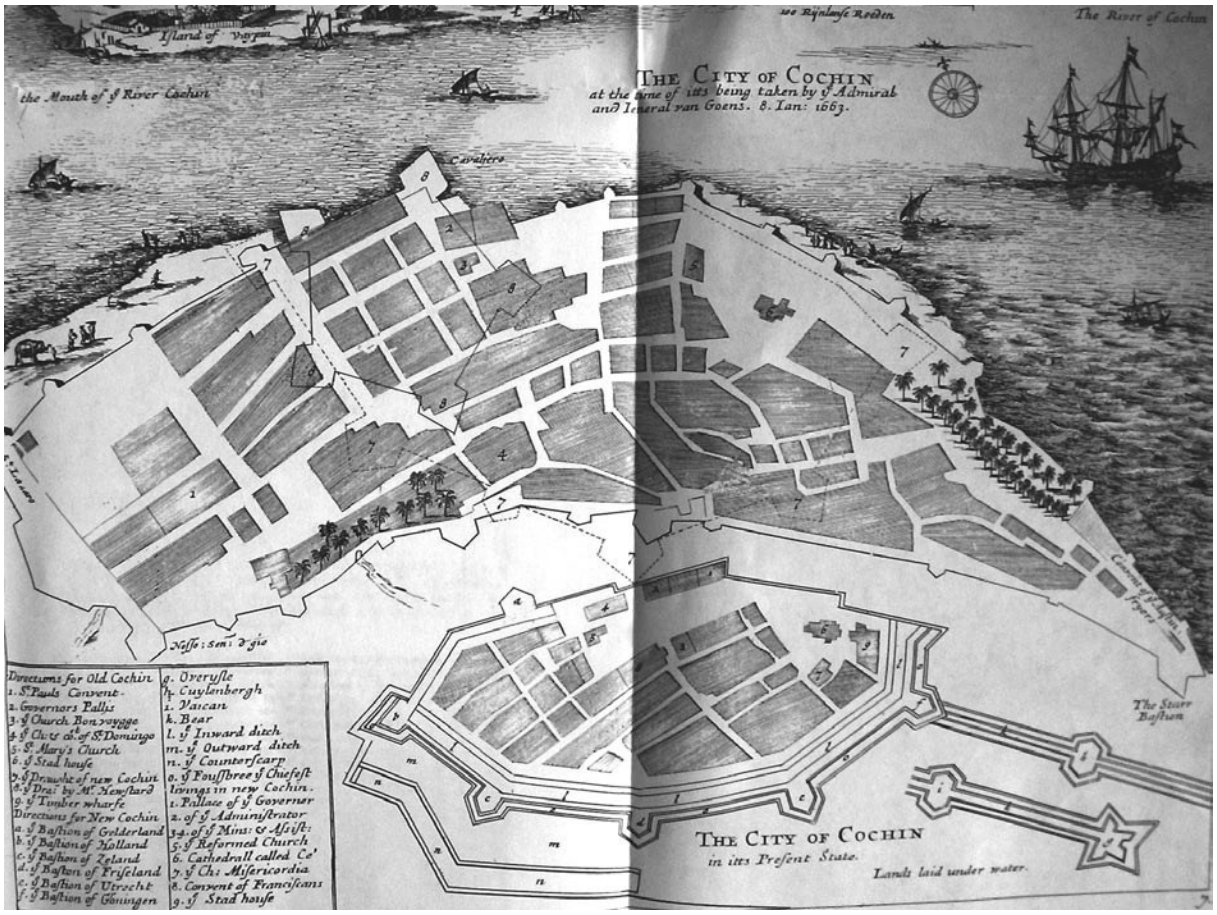


Illustration 13: Cochin under the Portuguese and Cochin as it would become under Company rule. The dotted line in the Portuguese city marks the form of the later Dutch city worked out below, much smaller and more easily defensible. The uninterrupted line marks the place where Jacob Hustaert had envisioned building a five-pointed fortress, which however, was never built.

treated as prisoners of war and brought back to Europe. The *cazados*, Portuguese 'freeburghers', usually married and in possession of their own house in the city, would be allowed to leave for Goa, as would the mestizos. The implication of this policy becomes clear when we learn that only days after the conquest, a Dutch fleet left for Goa bringing 4000 mestizos and Portuguese. In the following months, the Company would demolish part of the walls and buildings to turn Cochin into a much smaller fortified post with a garrison. One church was turned into a warehouse, one remained Catholic for the local population, one was turned into a Protestant church, all the others were simply torn down. Much of the Indian population living in and around the city, many of them catholic, would move away in the next few years: some 4000 in the first year after the conquest alone. Thus, the city was simply disbanded, and the society that it had housed ceased to exist, as had happened before with many cities on Ceylon.[259]

259 *Coprus diplomaticum* II 231, 232. Hugo 's Jakob, 'De VOC en de Malabarkust in de 17de eeuw' in: Meilink-Roelofsz e.a., *De VOC in Azie* (Bussum 1967), 85-99, there 87-88.

The bulk of the army, under command of Hustaert, meanwhile left for Cannanoor, the last remaining Portuguese stronghold on the Malabar coast, which would fall to the Company on the 15th of February after a short siege. Van Goens, however, remained at Cochin, to attend to another important matter now that Cochin had fallen: Malabarese politics. Vira Kerala Varma, whom the VOC had very much wanted to see in the Cochinese palace, had died, in all probability by poisoning, and the Zamorin of Calicut now coveted sovereignty over Cochin. This, however, was unacceptable to the Company, as this would make Calicut too powerful and would thus make Malabarese politics unmanageable to the Company. The old queen was now requested to appoint a successor to the throne, and she chose Vira Kerala Varma's brother. The Zamorin would never forgive the Company. Thus, the conquest of Cochin also entailed a *renversement des alliances* on the Malabar Coast: Calicut, the old ally of the Company, now became its sworn enemy, while Cochin, the old Portuguese ally, was now on very good terms with the Company.

Nieuhoff, who during the siege had mostly worked as an ambassador along the Malabar Coast (in fact, Vira Kerala Varma had died on board his ship after a visit to Quilon to build relations) describes how, on the sixth of March, "[Vira Kerala Varma's] brother, being the next heir to the crown, was, after the taking of the city, crowned king of Cochin by the Dutch, his crown, which was of gold, having the cypher of the East India Company, engraven on one side."[260] This ceremony was based on a similar ceremony which was performed under Portuguese rule.

With the fall of Cochin and the subsequent fall of Cannanore, Portuguese rule over the Malabar coast, the area where Vasco Da Gama had first arrived 165 years ago, had come to an end. In some six years of intense warfare, the Portuguese empire, already greatly diminished by the Company's campaigns under Van Diemen, had now been reduced to only a handful of posts. The past years, however, would turn out to have been the last great VOC campaign directed against the Portuguese. The VOC was now entering a century of its existence during which the bulk of its enemies would be Asian rather than European. Most Portuguese possessions that had survived the Company's concerted effort to entirely drive the Portuguese from Asia, would remain Portuguese until the days of Salazar.

Conclusion

This chapter is probably the most 'old-fashioned' part of my thesis. It has mainly consisted of various stories which I have taken back out of the drawer from usually very old literature, spiced up with some eye-witness accounts and supplemented with some additional sources. Little new research or new approaches have gone into this chapter. Nonetheless, I felt that a chapter like this was essential for making this thesis meaningful. Knowing the proceedings of the actual campaigns

260 Johan Nieuhoff (Anthony Reid ed.), *Voyages and travels to the East Indies, 1653-1670* (Oxford 1988, facsimile of English edition of 1723), 221.

'on-the-ground' adds the last stage to the wider scope of the previous chapter, showing the actual nature of these wars, as well as the results. Putting several of these detailed campaign descriptions, very different in nature and taking place over a huge area, next to each other, offers a kind of cross-section of VOC warfare in this period.

Particularly when contrasting these campaign histories to the last chapter, this approach yields an interesting insight into the nature of VOC warfare. By substantiating the final result of the entire logistic and organisational system as described in chapter III, which after all existed to defend the Company's possessions and facilitate these battles, it shows the merits and limits of this system. The merits, for one, become clear when we look at the campaign against Makassar or the second siege of Cochin. In the case of Makassar, it is interesting to see how the extensive knowledge of the situation as well as the tendency to plan everything from Batavia had exactly the desired result. Six months before the attack took place, the *Hoge Regering* in Batavia thought up a battle plan which specified the movements of the fleet, the garrisons from where the soldiers for the attack would have to be drawn, and the exact proceedings of the attack on Makassar, with pretty much every move described in detail. Months later, this plan proved its worth as Van Dam was able to successfully execute it to the letter. The *Hoge Regering* in Batavia clearly knew what it was doing. In the case of the second siege of Cochin, we wonderfully see the logistical and organisational network kick into gear. Within two months of the news that the war could go on, the Company had amassed an army of both its own soldiers and its allies in Batavia, 800 strong, and had specified where the rest of the army would have to come from. The way in which Godske was sent ahead to mobilize the Malabarese garrisons, Van Goens was ordered to take soldiers from Ceylon, and the gunpowder order to the Coromandel coast was immediately sent out, all give testimony to the functioning of the Company's great knowledge of its own possessions and a logistical system to put this knowledge to good use. The *Hoge Regering* in Batavia was able to mobilize half of Asia from its council room, and even though not all of its plans were executed exactly as hoped (for one, no soldiers from the Cape showed up at Cochin), the way in which "the plan came together" remains an astonishing feat.

The case studies of this chapter, however, have also shown that one could not plan for everything. As Clausewitz wrote: "War is the province of chance. In no other sphere of human activity must such a margin be left for this intruder. It increases the uncertainty of every circumstance and deranges the course of events." This applied all the more strongly in the vast area of operation of the VOC. Due to the time news took to travel, the Company was always acting upon outdated news. In addition, it was to a very great degree dependent on such whimsical things as the wind for the success of its campaigns. We see this exemplified in the first siege of Cochin: the already somewhat shaky and overenthusiastic plan for this campaign was subsequently further complicated by circumstances which simply could not be planned for, such as the various storms and fires ruining the powder supply or the rather lacking cooperation of the Company's local ally. Even Van Goens, who had been working nearby on the Coromandel Coast, could not possibly know how

well Cochin would be defended when he arrived there. Although Van Goens could adapt plans and tactics to the circumstances, the resources he had at his disposal were entirely determined by earlier planning.

Indeed, reading through the various case-studies treated in this chapter, one gets the impression that storm might have been the most decisive factor in the wars of these years, saving Macao and Mozambique from attack, preventing the aid to Coyet from materializing in time, and severely hampering the 1661 campaign on the Malabar coast. If we were to follow the reasoning of contemporary Europeans on this matter, who often attributed favourable winds during naval campaigns to divine intervention, we might be tempted to conclude that perhaps in 1588 in the English Channel the winds might have been protestant, but that in Asia in our period of study, they were definitely Catholic. This was certainly the opinion of Van Goens, whom we have seen explicitly wondering whether God Almighty might be attempting to sabotage his campaign. Of course, Van Goens had no idea how many Portuguese fleets were hit or destroyed by storms in this period, and admittedly, neither do I.

Finally, this chapter has also attempted to add to the previous chapters the experience of war, by showing the entire period not in the form of tables, or from the perspective of the decisionmakers, but also from the eyes of soldiers, surgeons and preachers who were actually participating in the campaigns and working in the line of fire. This has hopefully added the roar of the cannon, the long months at sea, and the chaos of battle to an otherwise somewhat technical approach of Company warfare in this period. I have also hoped to show this 'human aspect' with regard to the Portuguese. Whereas the former chapters might have rendered an image of these campaigns against the Portuguese as some sort of chess-game, in which both parties had a number of pieces at their disposal, the war was not by far as symmetrical. Van Goens' remark on his laying siege to a city the size of Leiden gets a wholly new significance when we take into account that he would afterwards simply 'disband' this city, by deporting one part of the population and scaring off the rest. Such a city, rid of the society that it had housed, could afterwards become a much smaller trade settlement with garrisoned fortress. This was not one chartered Company driving out another. In order to reach its trade goals, the Company had to drive off an adversary entirely unlike itself; one which had large cities housing schools, churches, civic institutions and a mixed society of which many members no longer considered Portugal their homeland. Van Goens' successful attempt to monopolize the cinnamon trade, get hold of the Malabar pepper and secure the region, thus drew the curtains on a way of life and society which had existed in this region for 150 years.