



## UNIVERSALITAS & PERVASIVITAS

*IL COSTITUIRSI E DIFFONDERSI DELLA S.J. E SUOI ECHI (1540 - 1773)*

di A. Pisani

Schede autori Attività missionarie ed esplorazioni non gesuite

### Jan Huygen van Linschoten

(1563-1611)

“Initially the ships from the Dutch provinces of Holland and Zeeland imported spices and other oriental goods from Portugal. But when this country was occupied in 1580 by the Spanish, this was, due to the Dutch 80-year independence war against Spain, impossible. Dutch ships harbored in Portuguese ports were repeatedly confiscated by the Spanish. The Dutch were forced to acquire these products directly from the East. The problem was how to find the right route. In order to find out, Jan Huygen van Linschoten sailed on a Portuguese vessel to the Indies. Once returned to his hometown Enkhuizen, he wrote and published two books in which he revealed his findings: “*Reisgheschrift van de Navigatien der Portugaloyers in Orienten*” (1595) ( Travel document of the navigation of the Portuguese to the Orient ) and “*Itinerario, voyage ofte schipvaert van J.H. van Linschoten naar Oost ofte Portugaels Indien*” (1596) (Itinerary of the voyage by ship from J.H. van Linschoten to the East or the Portuguese Indies ).



Jan Huygen van Linschoten lived since 1579 as a merchant in Spain and from 1583-1598 as secretary from the Portuguese archbishop in Goa. There he succeeded with the help of Dirck Gerritszoon Pomp, nicknamed “Dirck China “ to retrieve the secret sail instructions, with the help of which the Portuguese ships sailed there from harbor to harbor. Pomp, a Hollander, also in the service of the Portuguese, went to sea in 1584 aboard the Portuguese vessel “Santa Cruz”. The ship was richly laden with merchandise and had sailed by way of the trade-settlement in Goa, India, to Macao in China and from there to Japan. He arrived in Nagasaki in 1585, perhaps the first Hollander to set foot on Japanese soil. Dirck gave oral information to Jan van Linschoten.

He wrote: “so stretches the coast [from Japan] again to the north, recedes after that inward, northwest ward, to which Coast those from Japan trade with the Nation which is called Cooray, from which I have good, comprehensive and true information, as well as from the navigation to this Country, from the pilots, who investigated the situation there and sailed there.”

In the Itinerary , which was published one year later, at page 37 we will find the following extract:



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“A little above Japan, on 34 and 35 degrees, not far from the coast of China, is another big island, called Insula de Core, from which until now, there is no certainty concerning size, people, nor what trade there is.”

Later at page 70 he writes more about it:

“From this corner from the bay of Nanquin 20 miles southeast onwards, there lay several islands with at the end, of which, to know, on the east side lies a very big and high island [This Island is] by many people inhabited, as well as on foot as on horseback. [sic!] These Islands are called by the Portuguese as Ylhas de Core, or the Islands of Core, but the islands, as previously described, is called Chausien, has from one side to the northwest a small indentation. There’s also a small island in the mouth, which is the harbor, but has little deepness, here the lord of the country has his residency. From this main Island off, 25 miles southeast onward, lays the island of Goto, one of the islands of Iapon, which lies at the corner of the indentation from the bay of Nancquin off, east to north seaward on, 60 miles or little more.” (Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, *Reys-Gheschrift van de Navigatien der Portugaloyzers in Orienten enz.* [1595], bl. 70). [The original text can be interpreted in several ways, so the text is given in a literal translation]

The Flanders-born theologian Petrus Plancius, whose original name was Pieter Platvoet ( Peter Flatfoot ) Published in 1592 an atlas under the title: *Nova et exacta terrarum Tabula geographica and hydrographica* ( New and exact geographical and nautical maps). In this we find not yet any of the data van Linschoten obtained. Plancius is considered to be a useful amateur.

Skippers stayed away from the coast of Korea, the Portuguese, the English and Dutch have had several encounters with the Koreans. We would have known more about this if the journals of the ships sailing to Japan had survived the ages. The hostile attitude and the forceful actions of the Korean coastguard, were reported when the Dutch ship “de Hond” in 1622 sailed accidentally into the waters of Korea. Accordingly we can read: Immediately the ship was attacked, by not less than 36 war-junks, who shelled de Hond with ‘bassen, roers, boogen ende ontalrijcke hasegajen’ (cannons, firelocks, bows and numerous wooden lances). So all the skippers received a sail order to avoid the coast of Korea.

It’s interesting to know that Koreans themselves depict Korea also as an “almost” island, with one mountain connecting Korea to the mainland. The two rivers (the Yalu and the Tumen) flowing from that mountain (Mount Peaktu), were drawn that wide that the drawings of the early Western maps were in concordance with the image the Koreans themselves had of their country.”

**Cfr.:** H. Savenije, *Van Linschoten, in Korea through western cartographic eyes - [www.cartography.hennv-savenije.pe.kr/vanlinschoten.htm](http://www.cartography.hennv-savenije.pe.kr/vanlinschoten.htm)*

Jan Huyghen van Linschoten (1563 – 8 February 1611) was a Dutch Protestant merchant, traveller and historian. An alternative spelling of his second name is Huijgen.

He is credited with publishing important information about Asian trade, such as the navigational routes that enabled the passage to the elusive East Indies to be opened to the English and the Dutch. This enabled the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company to break the 16th century monopoly enjoyed by the Portuguese on trade with the East Indies.



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### Origins

Jan Huyghen was born in Haarlem in the Netherlands, the son of a public notary, but the family moved to the town of Enkhuizen when he was young. The addition of van Linschoten could indicate that his family had origins in the Utrecht village of the same name [1].

### Early life

He left for Spain during December 1576 to be with his brother in Seville, staying in Spain until 1580 when he got a job working with another merchant in Lisbon. A downturn in trade led him to seek alternatives. With the help of his brother, Willem, who was acquainted with the newly appointed Archbishop of the Portuguese colony of Goa, Dominican Vicente da Fonseca, he was appointed Secretary to the Archbishop. So Jan Huyghens sailed for Goa on 8 April 1583, arriving five months later via Madeira, Guinea, the Cape, Madagascar and Mozambique.

### Goa

While in Goa, Jan Huygen kept a diary of his observations of the Portuguese ruled city, amassing information about both the European and the Asian people who lived there. He also collected accounts from travellers who had been further afield, such as Dirck Gerritsz. 'China,' a fellow resident of Enkhuizen who earned his nickname from his travels in the Far East. As well as cultural facts about the different peoples in Asia, Jan Huygen made note of the trading conditions between different countries, and the sea routes for travelling between them. This information later helped both the Dutch and the English to challenge the Portuguese monopoly on East Indian trade.

The 1587 death of his sponsor, the Archbishop of Goa, while on a trip to Lisbon to report to the King of Portugal meant the end of the subcontinent adventure for Jan Huyghens. He set sail for Lisbon in January 1589, passing by the Portuguese supply depot at St. Helena island in May 1589.

### Back in Holland

His voyage was interrupted by English piracy which forced a shipwreck, and as a result Jan Huyghen spent two years in the Azores. He landed in Lisbon only in 1592 and thereafter returned to his home at Enkhuizen.

In June 1594, Linschoten sailed from Texel in the expedition headed by Dutch cartographer Willem Barentsz. The fleet of three ships was to enter the Kara Sea, with the hopes of finding the Northeast passage above Siberia.[1] At Williams Island the crew encountered a polar bear for the first time. They managed to bring it on board, but the bear rampaged and was killed. Barentsz reached the west coast of Novaya Zemlya and followed it northward, before being forced to turn back in the face of large icebergs. The following year they sailed again in a new expedition of six ships, loaded with merchant wares that they hoped to trade with China.[2] The party came across Samoyed "wild men" but eventually turned back upon discovering the Kara Sea frozen. Linschoten was one of the two crewmembers to have published journals on Barentsz' travels.

In 1595, with assistance from Amsterdam publisher Cornelis Claesz, who specialised in shipping, geography and travels, Jan Huyghens wrote *Reys-gheschrift vande navigatien der Portugaloyzers in Orienten* (Travel Accounts of Portuguese Navigation in the Orient). This work contains a large number of sailing directions, not only for shipping between Portugal and the East Indies colonies,



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but also between India, China and Japan.

Jan Huyghen also wrote two other books, *Beschryvinghe van de gantsche custe van Guinea, Manicongo, Angola ende tegen over de Cabo de S. Augustijn in Brasilien, de eyghenschappen des gheheelen Oceanische Zees* (Description of the Entire Coast of Guinea, Manicongo, Angola and across to the Cabo de St. Augustus in Brazil, the Characteristics of the Entire Atlantic Ocean) in 1597, and *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien, 1579-1592* [2] (Travel account of the voyage of the sailor Jan Huyghen van Linschoten to the Portuguese East India) in 1596.

An English text edition of the *Itinerario* was published in London in 1598, entitled *John Huighen van Linschoten his Discours of Voyages into ye Easte & West Indies*. A German edition was also printed the same year.

In addition to detailed maps of these places, Linschoten also provided the geographic 'key' to unlocking the Portuguese grip on passage through the Malacca Strait; he suggested approaching the East Indies from the south of Sumatra through the Sunda Strait, thereby minimizing the danger of Portuguese attention.

Linschoten died in Enkhuizen.

### **Linschoten Society**

A Linschoten Society was founded in 1908 to publish rare or unpublished Dutch travel accounts of voyages, journeys by land, and descriptions of countries and survives today at the Amsterdam Ship Museum.

### **Linschoten Award**

Business excellence award granted by ABN-AMRO bank of The Netherlands. The 2007 Jan Huyghen van Linschoten award was won by the Netherlands based architectural firm 'Office for Metropolitan Architecture' (OMA) for its successful entrance and maintenance in emerging markets such as China, Kazakhstan and amongst others the United Arab Emirates. The award honors innovative international practice, the ability to compete with the best in their particular field and excellent financial management. OMA is active in more than 30 countries and has achieved enormous international growth over the last two years.

### **Editions**

In addition to the original Dutch editions of the *Itinerario*, there was an English translation in 1598, a German translation in 1598, a Latin translation (in Frankfurt, 1599), another Latin translation (in Amsterdam, 1599) and a French translation (1610).[3]

1598 English translation, John Huighen van Linschoten, His discours of voyages into ye Easte and West Indies: deuided into foure bookes London: John Wolfe. online. In Wolfe's ordering, the First Book is the 1596 *Itinerario*, Second Book is 1597 *Beschryvinghe*, Third Book is the 1595 *Reys-gheschrift* and the Fourth Book is Linschoten's translation of the revenues of the Spanish crown. In other editions, the 2nd and 3rd books are often switched around.



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1874-85 English edition, *The Voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies*, 1874-85 edition, London: Hakluyt. Reprint of only the First Book of 1598 translation (vol.1, vol.2)

### References

[1] Synge 1912, p.258

[2] ULT 2009, web

[3] For a list of the various editions, see Koeman (1985: p.41f.)

### Additional reading

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Koeman, C. (1985) "Jan Huygen van Linschoten", *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra*, Vol. 32, p.27-47. offprint

**Cfr.:** Wikipedia.en - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan\\_Huygen\\_van\\_Linschoten](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Huygen_van_Linschoten) - This page was last modified on 6 January 2013 at 01:01 - Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.