



Introduction lesson

Lesson 7: Finalizing

Storage of goods in warehouses

Goods from Western Africa and West-India were stored in warehouses. Middelburg houses many warehouses from various trade companies: United East-India Company (VOC), West India Company (WIC) and the Middelburg Commerce Company (MCC). The WIC had a large warehouse complex along the Kousteensedijk. On the wharf grounds and in the city warehouses for the WIC could be located. The MCC used warehouse De Hoop in the Nieuwepoortstraat for the storage of ivory (elephant trunks) and gold from Africa and sugar and coffee from West-India. The largest MCC warehouse stood at the Balans. All stored goods were noted in a warehouse book.

Sale of return goods

The return goods from The Unity were auctioned off on various dates in Middelburg. There was no separate auction for the goods from The Unity. The directors decided on this due to the limited amount of ivory and tobacco The Unity had brought back. Everything was offered for sale, even the packaging. This was done, for instance, with the packaging used to transport the tobacco. This packaging was made from animal hides.

Revenue

Naturally speaking the profits of the sold items must also be noted. This happened in a profit and loss account, which was drawn up late December 1763 and written in the ship's book. The company received the revenue from the sale of the enslaved Africans in Guyana much later.

Profits

The profit in 1763 was 2220 Flemish pounds, approximately 13.320 guilders, which in 2013 would have been approximately 131.000 euro. Captain Jan Menkenveld managed to make it a profitable voyage for the MCC.

Money for the crew

The crew was paid their wages in April 1763. The five highest-ranking crewmembers earned additional bonuses from the slave money (percentages of the sale of the Africans) and recognition money (profit percentage from the voyage).

Secret profits

Not all profits for the highest-ranking crewmembers are in the books. The profits from secret private trade during the journey remain invisible. Officially it was illegal for officers to commence in private trade, but it did occur. Captain Menkenveld was no exception to this. It would eventually cost him his job.

The Unity's last voyage

The Unity would make two more triangle voyages. On the journey home of the fifth voyage it went awry. Severe weather caused The Unity to drift towards the estuary of the Maas River. Here the snow ship stranded on the riverbanks. The ship began to take on water. The crewmembers boarded the small boat and sloop and left the ship. The cargo could not be saved. The Unity broke in the waves. So in 1767 the ship had sailed her final voyage.