

4-1-2012

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Recommended Citation

Buck, David D. Ph.D. (2012) "Tonio Andrade. Lost Colony: The untold story of China's first great victory over the West. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2011.," *Journal of International and Global Studies*: Vol. 3: No. 2, Article 6.

DOI: 10.62608/2158-0669.1091

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/jigs/vol3/iss2/6>

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In the seventeenth century, the Dutch gained and lost a foothold in Taiwan. From their principal Asian trading base in Batavia, the Dutch sought to extend their reach to both the Chinese and the Japanese trade routes. After unsuccessfully challenging the Portuguese at Macao, the Dutch established a fortified port and a trading settlement on a shallow bay in southern Taiwan in 1624. They lost this same outpost to the famous pirate and Ming loyalist Koxinga thirty-eight years later in 1662. In the case of Japan, they had greater success. The Tokugawa shogunate's fear of Catholic Christianity led to the exclusion of both the Spanish and Portuguese and the toleration of a Dutch East India Company presence at Nagasaki that lasted past the mid-19th century.

Tonio Andrade has already published an account of how the Chinese came to control Taiwan entitled, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish and Han Colonization in the 17th Century* (Columbia University Press, 2008). In this work, Andrade focuses on how Koxinga was able to succeed in the nine month siege of the Dutch fort of Zeelandia on the Bay of Taiwan and drive out the Dutch. Koxinga's victory presents a challenge to the historians' theory that European military power proved dominant from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. This theory argues that European military superiority rested on a combination of factors: superior sailing ship, complex defensive architecture for fortresses, advanced naval and land gunnery, effective individual firearms, and well-disciplined soldiers and sailors led by a dedicated officer class. These are the principal components of the "Military Revolution Theory" which would predict a Dutch victory against Koxinga's forces. In fact, in the siege of 1661-1662 the Chinese forces of Koxinga prevailed.

European military superiority, beginning in the sixteenth century, depended on a combination of elements: superior sailing ships, complex fortress architecture, advanced naval gunnery and land artillery, effective individual firearms, and well-disciplined soldiers and sailors led by a skilled and dedicated officer class. These features contributed to the military dominance of European forces throughout the world during that time, a phenomenon described by the "Military Revolution Theory." Such dominance would appear to predict a Dutch victory, but in fact, in the siege of 1661-1662, the Chinese forces of Koxinga prevailed.

Andrade's explanation for Koxinga's success is threefold. First, he says, the Chinese matched the Europeans in many aspects of the early military revolution through their own development of not only cannons and firearms but also well-disciplined fighting formations, effectively led by skilled military elite. Second, when facing Dutch forces, the Chinese quickly adopted several Western advantages to even the balance of forces. Specifically, for example, in the siege of the Dutch fort of Zeelandia, Koxinga gained the skills of a German artilleryman, who understood how to exploit the weaknesses of the Dutch fortifications. Finally, Andrade found the unpredictability of the weather and inconsistencies in leadership had a major impact on the outcome of the struggle. Andrade shows that problems of resupply and reinforcement of both Dutch and Koxinga's forces show how poor judgment of commanders set back both the Dutch and the Chinese forces during the long battle. Andrade believes that the Dutch should have used their superior naval fleet to blockade Koxinga's efforts to resupply his army from Fujian while the Dutch cause was harmed by differences between the governor on land and his naval counterpart at sea.

Andrade found that seventeenth century Chinese feared the superiority of Dutch naval vessels. The Dutch ships were larger, more heavily armed, more maneuverable and employed more effective cannonading than the Chinese. Nonetheless, he concludes that overall the Chinese and Dutch forces were fairly evenly matched. Andrade's account leads to the conclusion that in the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries, the advantages conferred upon the Europeans by the Military Revolution Theory were not of major importance against the Chinese, whose military establishment was both

formidable in its own right and capable of rapid adaptations. Only in the nineteenth century, with the advances of steam navigation and industrially manufactured arms did the balance of military power shift decisively in the favor of the European forces. Andrade makes no effort to extend his conclusions beyond the Chinese case and, therefore, endorses the notion that until the Industrial Revolution, the Chinese were unique in their ability to compete with Western military power. In his conclusion, Andrade looks to the future in the twenty-first century and suggests that Chinese military power may again rival that of Western nations through a combination of their own skills and the ability to quickly match the advantages of opposing forces.

Andrade's book is based on excellent research. He has utilized with great skill both the Chinese and Dutch sources relating to Sino-Dutch military encounters in the seventeenth century. He has a distinctive narrative style. When evaluating the decisions of Dutch and Chinese leaders, Andrade offers alternative decisions (along with the implications of those decisions) and then pronounces his own views. For example, in relating how a prisoner advised the Dutch leaders to blockade the Taiwanese coast to stop Koxinga's hopes of being resupplied with grain, he tells how Governor Coyet did not follow the advice and declares that not doing so "was a stupid decision" (p.217). Occasionally, he introduces colloquial expressions such as "Zhilong goes legit" (p. 30) (in reference to the decision of Koxinga's father, Zheng Zhilong, in 1628 to give up freebooting for an official appointment from the Ming dynasty) and "cover his ass" (p. 146) to describe how a Dutch commander at the outpost of Provintia consulted the Dutch inhabitants and soldiers before surrendering to Koxinga. Andrade also enjoys adding small vignettes from the archival record, often with an ironic twist. In one, a Dutch soldier thinking a musket was unloaded, shot a Dutch woman who had asked him to use the weapon to hunt for bird for dinner. The woman died within an hour, and the soldier served five years of hard labor. The greatest irony in Andrade's book is that within months of the Dutch surrender, Koxinga died in what various accounts suggest was a fever, a fit of madness, or the last stages of syphilis.

In his concluding remarks, Andrade states he began his research hoping to challenge the Military Revolution Theory that posits Western military superiority. Even though Koxinga's forces defeated the Dutch on Taiwan, Andrade concluded that there is solid ground to claim the Dutch were superior militarily to the Chinese in the seventeenth century. The Dutch lost, he believes, because of weak leadership and difficulties of resupply from Batavia. Thus, Andrade backs away from a direct challenge to the Military Revolution theory. His book offers an entertaining and often ironic view of Sino-Dutch struggles to control Taiwan.

What Andrade misses in his comparison of China and the West in the seventeenth century is the advantages stemming from the particularly European institution of the chartered trading company. In the Dutch case, this was the East India Company (VOC). The combination of a charter backed by a state, pools of private capital assembled for commercial gain, the ability of the employees of the trading company to win great fortunes for themselves, and the support from both state and privately supported armed naval and land forces gave both the VOC and, later, the British East India Company a means to project their power overseas far beyond anything available in other parts of the world, including China. The VOC may have lost its foothold in Taiwan, but the European state chartered trading company proved to be a highly successful institution until the mid-nineteenth century.

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