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RC é uma revista de Cultura e, domínio do Espírito, é Livre. Avassalada ao encontro universal das culturas, servente da identidade cultural de Macau, agente de mais íntima relação entre o Oriente e o Ocidente, particularmente entre a China e Portugal. RC propõe-se publicar todos os textos interessantes aos objectivos confessados, pelo puro critério da qualidade. Assim, as opiniões e as doutrinas, expressas ou professas nos textos assinados, ou implícitas nas imagens de autoria, são da responsabilidade dos seus autores, e nem na parte, nem no todo, podem confundir-se com a orientação da RC. A Direcção da revista reserva-se o direito de não publicar, nem devolver, textos não solicitados.

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A globalização do conhecimento começou em Macau no século XVI quando os *saberes* do Oriente e do Ocidente se cruzaram nesta terra singular do Sul da China.

No século XXI, o intercâmbio cultural entre os *dois mundos* continua a ser a vocação de Macau.

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In the 21st century, Macao remains dedicated to cultural interchange between *both worlds* in a vocation maintained by *Review of Culture*.



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A NOSSA CAPA

As diásporas Muçulmana e Parse, oriundas da Índia, em Macau e na vasta região do delta do Rio da Pérola tiveram grande importância no desenvolvimento do comércio entre a China e o subcontinente indiano durante a dinastia Qing – um período algo negligenciado pelos investigadores.

O tema é tratado em detalhe nesta edição de *Revista de Cultura* com a publicação da segunda parte dos trabalhos de investigação apresentados num seminário conjuntamente organizado pelo IC e pelo Centro de Estudos Asiáticos da Hong Kong University. Todos os artigos foram, entretanto, revistos e aprofundados pelos autores para expressa publicação na *RC*.

As marcas dessa presença e desse intercâmbio – reflectidas no grafismo de Victor Hugo Marreiros que, na contracapa, insere uma vista de Macau no século XIX da escola *China Trade* – são ainda hoje notórias no património humano e arquitectónico de Macau, Hong Kong e Cantão, mas também influenciaram o desenvolvimento das terras de origem, como Bombaim, com o retorno de riqueza e conhecimento amealhados nos caminhos da diáspora.

É do encontro de culturas que nasce muitas vezes a luz, como se pode depreender de um outro trabalho, inserido nesta edição, realizado por um bolseiro do Instituto Cultural sobre o que designa de “equivoco Seres”. O equívoco – que dividia a China dos Ming em dois países (“Seres”, a norte da Ásia Oriental, e “Thin” ou “Sina” a sul) – vinha dos Clássicos e só foi desfeito na época dos Descobrimentos, por via do grande desenvolvimento da cartografia portuguesa.

OUR COVER

The Muslim and Parsee diasporas from India to Macao and the vast Pearl River delta region were hugely important in the development of trade between China and the Indian subcontinent, especially during the Qing dynasty – a period which has been somewhat neglected by scholars.

This edition of the *Cultural Review* looks at the theme in detail, publishing the second part of the research papers presented in a seminar jointly organised by the Macao Cultural Institute and the Centre of Asian Studies at Hong Kong University. Since then, all of the articles have been revised and further explored by the authors expressly for publication in the *Cultural Review*.

The signs of this presence and reciprocity – reflected in Victor Hugo Marreiros’ graphic design which includes a *China Trade* school scene of 19th Century Macao on the back cover – are still evident today in the human and architectural heritage of Macao, Hong Kong and Canton. However, they also influenced development in the lands of origin, such as Bombay, as the riches and knowledge gleaned along the diaspora routes came flowing back.

Enlightenment is often a by-product of a meeting of cultures, as demonstrated by another article in this edition by a grant-holder of the Cultural Institute on what he terms the “mistake of Seres”. The mistake – which split Ming dynasty China into two lands (“Seres”, northern Oriental Asia, and southern “Thin” or “Sina”) – was inherited from classical times, and was only overturned during the time of the Portuguese Discoveries through the great advances in Portuguese cartography.

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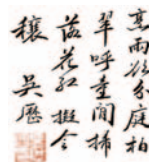


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The Huaisheng Mosque.

Muslims in the Pearl River Delta, 1700 to 1930

CARL T. SMITH* AND PAUL A. VAN DYKE**

It is well known that Muslims have a long history of being involved in trade with China. During the Tang dynasty (618-905), Muslims came regularly to Canton. These exchanges have left an enduring influence and presence in the city. Today, Canton is still home to a small community of Muslim believers. The Huaisheng Mosque located there is one of the oldest in the world. In fact, it has the tomb of one of Prophet Mohammed's relatives, Abu Wangus, who died in 629.

The presence of Islam in Canton influenced Buddhist beliefs as well. Today you can go to the Temple of the God of the South China Sea at Whampoa, and pray to the image of an Arab merchant who was incorporated into the pantheon of Buddhist gods. He stands with his hand on his forehead and eyes set on the horizon, waiting in expectation for his fellow believers to arrive and carry him home.

Much has been studied and written about these early Muslim contacts with China, but little has been said about their subsequent activities during the Qing dynasty. One of the reasons for those omissions is simply because there are very few references available to research their history. The Portuguese records from Macao, for example, say very little about the Muslim presence in the delta during the eighteenth century, and we have no records from the Muslim traders themselves. The

Chinese records also provide very little information. Thus, if that were all we had to go by, there would be nothing to say for most of the eighteenth century. Fortunately, there are other sources that have survived.

Other language sources clearly show that Muslims were indeed involved with the trade in China. When a French ship and English ship arrived in Macao in 1698 and 1699, both of them recorded that Moors

Arab merchant incorporated into the pantheon of Buddhist gods.



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and Armenians were already coming to the delta to carry on trade with Canton. In fact, when the English ship *Macclesfield* arrived at Whampoa in the latter year, the captain found a private English ship from Madras already there lying at anchor. The French traders report that it was a “Moors” ship from Surat.¹

The references to Muslims or “Moors,” as they were called at the time, are very few and far between for the eighteenth century. It is not always clear what exactly is meant by the term “Moors.” In some cases, the Moors appear to be Muslims, who were clearly distinguished as being of that persuasion by the persons writing the texts perhaps because of their dress (although their costumes are rarely mentioned). In other cases, however, the entries appear to be more general referring to persons with a dark skin such as is common in India, who were obviously not Europeans or of other Asian ethnicities. These persons were probably Arabs, but there is no way to say with any degree of certainty that they were indeed Muslims.

Sometimes the distinction seems to come from the type of vessels that were being used, which was thought to be one from India (meaning a non-European style and different from an Asian junk). In other cases, the distinctions come from the flag that the vessels were flying being one from the Malabar or Coromandel Coasts. In all of these cases, the traders might be referred to as “Moors,” whether they were Muslims or not. Because it is usually impossible to sort out what is actually meant by the term “Moors” in the documents, we will simply refer to those specific persons as “Moors” in this article, and not Muslims.

Regardless of the actual situation, all of the ships and persons mentioned below in the eighteenth century were private traders from India who were involved in the China trade. Surat is the city that they are commonly referred to as originating from so it is

assumed that they were centered in that port. Aside from being merchants aboard their own vessels, Moors also served as part of the crews of many of the European ships. These Indian Moorish sailors were commonly called “Lascars,” and they were often preferred over European sailors. In the early eighteenth century, the Englishman Charles Lockyer wrote that Lascars “are very good Sailors for the Climate” in Asia, and they worked “for small wages, and are Victual’d at a much cheaper Rate than our Ship’s Companies.”²

When Hamilton came to China in 1703, he made no mention of there being Moors present, but when Lockyer arrived a year later, he said “we found one of their [natives of Surat] large Ships in *Canton* River, that had been in the *Spanish* Service Twelve Months as a Man of War at *Luconia*; She was loaden and dispatch’d a great while before us, and was afterwards taken by the *Dutch* in the Straits of *Malacca*.” Lockyer also mentions that one of the great Moor merchants in Surat, Abdel la Ford, owned a fleet of about fifteen or sixteen ships, which ranged in size from 100 to 500 tons. The ship he saw in China was probably among the larger size, which was comparable to the French and English East India Companies’ ships at the time.³

In 1725 one of the Ostend General India Company (GIC) ships that was anchored at Whampoa Roads, reported that a “Moors Ship” arrived in August. In October, a ship from Manila arrived flying a Malabar flag, indicating that it was also a private ship from India. The next year, the Ostenders reported that there was a “Moors King Ship” at Whampoa, and one of the Ostend captains requested the Moorish captain to loan him a couple of his carpenters to help with the repairs of their vessel, which he consented to.⁴



Lascar, Calcutta, c. 1850. Painting on mica, 13.3 x 9.2 cm. Photograph courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum (E82002.33).

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Like all other sailing vessels at the time, these private merchants from India also suffered the hazards of sea. In mid-August 1727, the Ostenders reported a “Moors Ship” from Surat arriving at Whampoa. Upon approaching China in the early part of the month, the ship encountered a typhoon near the Ladrone Islands (Wanshan Islands 万山群岛), and suffered heavy damage. By the time they arrived upriver, they had lost their fore-mast, main-topmast, and bowsprit, but managed to save their import cargo of cotton. Despite these setbacks, the Moorish supercargoes were able to make the needed repairs, sell their import cargo and load with a return cargo by the end of November. A number of records actually record two Moorish ships at Whampoa in 1727, but the other one was suspected to be a Dutch East India Company (VOC) sloop sailing under the guise of a Malabar flag.⁵

The next reference to a Moorish ship comes from the logbook of the first Danish ship in China in 1731. The entry simply states on 31 October that “the Moors Ship set sail from here.” A few pages later in the journal is a list of 18 ships that were in Whampoa, and among them is “1 Morsk” (Moors). Private traders from India often left Whampoa fairly early in the season (October or November), while the East India Companies’ ships generally did not depart until later, usually December or January.⁶

In 1735, 1748, and 1764 we get more glimpses of how common it was for Moors to be coming to Canton as members of the crews of both company and private ships. In August 1735, the VOC ship *Alblasserdam* sank in the South China Sea “with man and mouse,” and there were two “Mooren” listed as survivors.⁷ In 1748 the Dutch in Canton employed thirty-two Moorish sailors, to outfit their undermanned ship *Padmos*.⁸ These men had apparently been misplaced due to the loss of their ship at sea. In 1764 the Moorish ship *Muxadavad* also sank on its way to China, and seventy-six Moors arrived in Canton in December from that vessel. One of the private traders in Macao, George Smith, had an interest in the *Muxadavad*, which was said to be consigned to the private account of the Governor of Bengal. These seventy-six survivors arranged to return to India aboard Portuguese vessels from Macao.⁹

On 14 September 1738 another ship from Surat with a “Moors Flag” arrived at Whampoa. It had also run into a typhoon in the delta a few days before, and

lost all of its masts. The other foreigners in Canton helped them to refit the ship. In December of this year all of the foreigners were requested to attend a ceremony in honor of one of the Chinese officials. Among the foreign officers that the Danes say attended this event were the “Morske” (Moors). These persons were probably the supercargoes and captain of the Surat ship, as it was common for the top foreign officers to attend these ceremonies. The Dutch report that the Moorish ship left China on 24 December bound for Malacca and Surat.¹⁰

In the Danish, Dutch and Swedish East India Companies’ records, we find references to Moorish ships at Whampoa in 1739, 1744, and 1752. In the latter two years, it is specifically mentioned that the vessels were from Surat.¹¹ The 1744 Surat ship, however, did not make it back to India. It was reported lost at sea, and that misfortune was attributed to a number of the sailors deserting. Getting a sufficient crew to man the ships coming to China was an ongoing problem for both the large companies and small traders throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and that affected the Moors as well.¹²

In July 1777 a private English ship, *The Cartier*, commanded by Captain Watson, arrived in China. The cargo was said to be consigned to the Moors, and there was a Moorish supercargo aboard. The cargo consisted of 600 to 700 bales of cotton, and a quantity of pepper and tin, all of which was for the Canton market.¹³ In the same year, the Danes shipped freight from their factory in Tranquebar, India to Malacca for a Moorish merchant. The Moors coming to China often had connections in Malacca, as it was a good place to purchase sago and other items that were needed in China.¹⁴

It is unfortunate that we do not have more references to the content of the cargos in the Moorish ships. We at least know from the references above that the Moors were importing large amounts of raw cotton. The import cargos, however, were likely to have been much more diverse than this. Their exports from China probably consisted of tea, porcelain, and silk as those products made up the bulk of the cargos for both company and private ships.

In 1780 the Dutch tell us that the Moors in Canton were indeed purchasing raw silk, as would be expected. There is also a reference in this year to a private Englishman by the name of Leslie, who was said to have

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several Moors in his employ. If we could obtain full transparency of all the private traders' activities in China, we would probably find many of them having Moors aboard their ships. The many scattered references above suggest that Moorish seamen were employed fairly regularly by all persons trading in China.¹⁵

In the 1790s, we have more references to private Moorish traders being active in China. In 1794, the Danes mention that one of the Hong merchants in Canton, who was in arrears on the customs duties, had been trading with a number of the foreigners including a "Mormænd" (Moorman). In the same year, the Dutch mention that Poankeequa (Pan Zhixiang 潘致祥) had also been trading with the Moorish merchants. On 9 June 1797, at three in the afternoon, two sampans arrived at Macao from Canton with several Moorish merchants aboard along with their servants. There were twenty-two of them in all, and they requested permission from the Portuguese governor to reside in Macao until the country ships arrived from India. They were apparently granted this freedom, because the Dutch report again on July 10 that the "Moors received permission to return to Canton."¹⁶ They would not have been given permission to return to Canton unless they had a ship in Chinese waters, so it is assumed that their vessel or vessels had indeed arrived.

The Dutch list the foreigners who were holding debts from the failed merchant Monqua (Cai Wenguan 蔡文官) in 1797, and among them are two men who were probably Moors. The merchants Mahomed Hussein and Samsodeen are both mentioned as holding sizeable debts from Monqua, the former being 49,000 Spanish dollars (35,280 taels) and the latter 2,800 Spanish dollars (2,086 taels). A Parsee by the name of Edeljee Bowanjee was also carrying a debt of 10,269 Spanish dollars (7,394 taels) with Monqua, and there are a couple of Armenians listed as well as several private traders.¹⁷

The merchant Kiouqua (or Geowqua, Wu Qiaoguan 伍乔官) also failed at this time, and left behind considerable debts. In February 1798 the Moorish and Parsee merchants in Canton are noted as being the holders of part of Kiouqua's debt. In this year the Moors and Parsees appear to be trading together, which may have been the case in earlier years as well. In fact, the three debt holders mentioned above in 1797 were probably the same persons as in 1798. Kiouqua had apparently taken possession of all the tin

aboard the private Indian ship *Jehangeer*, but then did not pay for the cargo as was agreed. The Nacoda, Shumsoodeen Abdul Razack, (who is probably the "Samsodeen" above) sought the help of the English company to recover the debt.

These references show that the Moors were advancing credit to the Chinese merchants, and other references show that they were actually loaning money out directly in both Macao and Canton. On 25 November 1798 the Dutch supercargoes in Canton arranged a loan of 10,000 Spanish dollars from the Moorish merchant Mahomet Dadaway. The interest rate was set at 18 percent per year (or 1½ percent per month), which was fairly high for foreigners to pay in Canton and Macao.¹⁸ In 1804 the Danish Asiatic Company (DAC) also took out a loan from a Mr. Mohamed Ebram Parker in Canton to help finance the voyages of their two ships that year. The interest rate on these loans was also 1½ percent per month.¹⁹ There appears to have been a shortage of capital in these years, because for much of the eighteenth century, foreigners in good credit standing in China could usually get loans for 10 or 12 percent interest per year.

On 21 December 1801 the Dutch in Canton mention that "at 8:30 in the evening there was a fire in the Moorish factory, which was quickly put out with the help of a fire engine." This is one of the few references we have to there actually being a Moorish factory in Canton. By this time, there were quite a few Moors in China, some of whom were now staying year-round, which was a good reason to have their own factory. In 1810 the Dutch also report Moorish supercargoes in Canton having an interest in an English private ship, so it is very likely they were renting a factory out regularly in these years. But even in previous decades, the Moorish traders needed a place to stay and take care of their trade, so it is likely they rented factories for many years. They perhaps did not fly their flag above the building, which may account for contemporary paintings not showing Moorish factories.²⁰

However, another explanation is that they were simply sharing a factory with other private traders. The Americans did this regularly from 1784 onwards, but because there were so many Americans coming to China, they had several factories. In 1823 Robert Morrison recorded that the "Fung-tae Hong" (Fengtai Hang 丰泰行) was known as the "Chow-chow" factory

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(in this case meaning, “hodge-podge” or “miscellaneous”) because there was such a mixture of people living there, including Parsees, Moors and others.²¹ Thus, it is possible that the Dutch reference above to the “Moorish factory” was perhaps a place where a number of private traders lived and not exclusively the Moors.

In December 1803 the first officer of the private ship *Fanny* arrived at Canton with “5 Moors.” Their vessel was stranded near Hainan Island due to much damage it had suffered in a storm. They came to Canton to purchase the necessary supplies to make their repairs. Then in 1807 there was another unfortunate incident where an English officer and six Moorish sailors were held for ransom in the delta by pirates. The English Cruiser *Discovery* helped to negotiate their release, which was said to cost between 4,000 and 6,000 Spanish dollars. These are more examples of how common it was for Moors to be employed by the China traders.²²

From the late 1830s to the mid-1840s a few court cases appear in the Portuguese records in Macao concerning several Muslims that give us another part of their story. Because these are court cases, they only deal with problems, which when taken by themselves can give the wrong impression about the Muslim community. By reading between the lines, however, we get a broader picture of their lives and the role they played in Macao history. We will first present a number of these court cases below, and then use those examples to point out different aspects about the environment in which they lived.

One of the Macao court cases involved four *serangs* or *ghaut serangs*—persons who recruited lascar seamen for service on ships. The serangs acted as middlemen or brokers between captains, ship owners and managers, and the lascar seamen. Serangs sometimes also provided lodging, food and items for sale to the lascars. In this particular case, the four serangs in question were Shaik Moosdeen, Samadalay,

Ancient structure in Huaisheng Mosque.



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Agi and Bahu. The first two had actually lived in Macao for a long time. Shaik Moosdeen is reported to have come to Macao in 1822 as a ghaut serang, and then moved to Hong Kong in 1842. Samadaly came to Macao in 1809, and prospered as a ghaut serang, as a lodging house keeper, and as an owner of a schooner, which he is reported to have purchased in 1833.

In an afternoon in 1839 Agi and a band of thugs approached Samadaly and Bahu on a small street in the S. Lourenço parish in Macao leading down to the Praia Feitoria. Agi's band of "soldiers," who were armed with iron bars, grabbed hold of Bahu in retaliation for his demanding one of the sailors to sign an IOU for six patacas. In order to prevent a public row, Samadaly stepped in and offered to cover the debt owed to Bahu.

Agi apparently took no heed to this remedial action by Samadaly, because he then ordered one of his "soldiers" to hit Bahu with his hand. The others then joined in with shoes and bars. This locality was notorious for its wine shops and the unruly behavior of seamen and slaves, but faithful Muslims were forbidden to drink alcohol, so these actions were probably not the result of too much liquor. Samadaly requested the Macao court to press charges against Agi, and later we find Agi serving time in the Macao prison.²³

In 1841 Agi shows up again in the Macao court records concerning a debt that was owed. This time, however, Agi takes a different course of action than the one before, and requests the court to arbitrate in a debt of 178 patacas that Agi claimed the Muslim Mastram had owed him since 1839. Mastram had borrowed the money before embarking on the ship *Tranquilidade*, and he had apparently failed to repay the loan to Eusebio Vicente do Rozario, who was at Sulu in the Philippines. In the interim, Agi had been put in prison, which would have been a good excuse for Mastram not to repay the loan had he known about it.

The next year, Agi asked the court to arbitrate in another case involving a loan of 202 patacas that had been given to the Muslim Peru, who embarked on an English ship. The captain had paid Peru six months in advance to entice him to join his crew, but then Peru later deserted in consequence of harsh treatment. It is not clear whether the 202 patacas was connected to this advance, or whether it was a separate loan, but whatever the case, Agi was now out his money.

In 1841 there is another incident involving Samadaly, who shows up in the court records requesting a summons to be issued against António Ignacio Perpétua, a tavern keeper. Samadaly claimed that a Mr. António José Fernandes owed him money for freight that he had shipped on Lorch No. 24. The original debt had been 39 patacas, but Fernandes had paid 19 patacas, leaving an outstanding balance of 20 patacas. But in the meantime, Fernandes died. Perpétua submitted a receipt for the full debt of the deceased, but Samadaly claimed it was a forgery and that he had not received full payment.²⁴

In 1843 the Muslim Mamoth accused the Chinese Achan of stealing his cap. He complained to the special Portuguese judge who heard cases against Chinese. Action was speedily taken and on the same day, the cap was returned to Mamoth. The culprit was sent to the Mandarin for punishment.²⁵

In 1844 there are more court cases involving Muslims. In January the possessions of the Muslim Marcar were auctioned by order of the court to pay off a debt owed to the Muslim Miajan.²⁶ In the same year, a fight also broke out in Samadaly's establishment, which involved a certain Faqira, a native of Malabar, who had met two other Muslims in the street. The two had invited Faqira to a meal at Samadaly's. He accepted the invitation in good faith, but when Faqira entered the premises, he was suddenly attacked by a Malay, named Jeniba, and a Bengali, named Secasem, with a few accomplices. The Malay and Bengali had held a long-standing grudge against the Malabar man for reasons unknown. In the scuffle, Faqira was injured. This is why he turned to the Macao court for justice.²⁷

In 1845 Achbar sued Agi Mahomed for payment of 200 patacas plus 7 percent interest on a loan made in 1843. The borrower had given Achbar a mortgage on a schooner. Achbar later found out that the mortgage was useless, because Agi Mohamed had sold the vessel to the ghaut serang Agi. He was thus seeking remedial action from the Macao court to intervene on his behalf.

These cases concerning Agi, Samadaly and the other Muslims mentioned above tell us several very important things about the wider environment in Macao. Samadaly had come to Macao as part of a long historical trend of Muslims participating in the China trade. He and his other serang companions were able to establish themselves in Macao because of the huge demand for Muslim labor

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aboard the China merchant ships. Those men had a good reputation for being dependable and hard working, and they could be hired and maintained for considerably less than European sailors.

The fact that four serangs were operating in Macao in the 1820s is proof in itself of the demand for Muslims at this time. When these sailors arrived at Macao, they needed a place to stay, because they were out of employment until another captain hired them. They were obviously being hired by the Portuguese ship owners in Macao, because prior to the 1840s, the Portuguese were the only ones legally allowed to trade there. Moorish sailors aboard any of the East India Companies would not have been permitted to go to Macao, unless they were on a mission for those companies. But Moorish sailors who were in Macao could go to a ghaut serang and arrange employment aboard any of the foreign vessels, including the East India Companies or other vessels that happened to be in the area.

If there were not enough sailors available for hire in Canton or Macao, which was often the case, then the companies were forced to rearrange the crews between the ships in order to even them out. It was better for all of them to be a little short than for one or two to be severely short. The small private traders with one vessel, however, did not have that option, and even with the redistribution efforts of the companies, some ships were still left with crews that were much too small to ensure the safety of their voyages.

Aside from common sailors, each ship needed to have carpenters, sail makers, and various other specialists who could care for the ship's needs, and many times there were not enough of these men to go around. As a result, there are many references in the records to captains pleading with other captains or with the Portuguese governor in Macao to have pity on them and spare them the men that they needed. Foreign captains also hired Chinese sailors from time to time, but that was forbidden by the Chinese government, so it had to be done secretly.

If these measures did not produce enough men to ensure the safety of the voyage, then there were still other ways to attract sailors. In a couple of the cases above, we find sailors being given advances on their future wages, before they were earned. This was an effective way to attract men, and we find many captains using this method, even among the East India Companies. But there was always the threat that the

men would desert before the contracts were fulfilled, as in the example above of the Muslim Peru.

There was one more drastic move that captains could employ in the event that they still could not get enough men for their ships. They could send a rumor around Canton and Macao that a reward would be given to every sailor who left his ship and joined their crew. This action, of course, would bring great anger and condemnation from other captains. But then all he had to do was to deny the charges, keep the new recruits out of sight while the ship was anchored in China, and then leave with a sufficient number of men for the voyage. This was indeed a tactic that was sometimes employed by captains in Canton to get the men they needed, and it caused much discontent among the foreigners in China.

Thus, considering the circumstances, the ghaut serangs played a very important role in the overall scheme of the trade. If the captains hired the sailors through them, then they did not have to resort to the extreme measures of bribing sailors to leave other ships, and they had the assurance of the serangs that the money that was advanced would not be lost. As far as hiring Chinese sailors was concerned, that was done by Chinese compradors who supplied provisions to the foreign ships.²⁸ But compradors had no control over Muslim sailors, just as the serangs had no control over Chinese sailors. Serangs were thus a vital component in making all of this work. Hiring sailors through them or the compradors was more expensive than doing it directly because there was a commission involved, but the captains then had the assurance of not being cheated out of their money in the event that the sailors deserted. And from the sailors' point of view, they also benefited in these arrangements. They received payment in advance for their services, which meant they could be assured that they would receive their full wages. It also gave them the wherewithal to make small investments of their own with those funds.

What these labor-brokering activities of the ghaut serangs and the compradors then meant to the commerce was more security to the owners' profits and greater safety to the ships by helping to provide sufficient crews to man them. These services also provided opportunities, more security to sailors' employment, and a means to help their families by forwarding the advances to them. All of these activities

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reduced risk, which contributed to the trading environment in China becoming more secure over time. The reduction of risks, led to there being less need for large monopolies to control everything, and in turn is what gradually led to private traders taking over the China trade. After 1834 no more East India Companies' ships came to China, because they could no longer compete with the private traders.²⁹

Thus, if we look at the wider environment, all of the examples above of Muslims in Macao are representative of a very important shift in international commerce. The Muslim sailors and *ghaut serangs* were at the center of that change. The Macao government also played a role by providing individual Muslims and others in Macao with legal protection in the event that their investments went awry or they were in some way mistreated. As a result, even the common Muslim sailor in Macao could get a loan from a *serang* at a reasonable rate of 7 percent interest, and credit is what is needed for commerce to expand. Therefore, these individual court cases are much more important than they may appear to be on the surface, because they represent a change in the trading environment.

Today, there are several monuments in Macao that represent the long Muslim presence in the delta. In 1854 Jeraz Manjee, the manager of the company of the Cojak Muslims in China (Companhia dos Moiros Cujar), purchased a country garden from Felipe António Ozorio in Macao. It was to be used as a cemetery and site for a small mosque. The lot was below the Fort of Dona Maria II, near the Estrada de Cacilhas, and not far from the Chinese village of Mongha. Mamot Goover witnessed the sale.

In 1859 the Muslim community in Macao gave a donation of 200 patacas to the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, with the understanding that from it, the Santa Casa would pay to the Macao Treasury the annual rent for the cemetery and mosque property. In 1926 the Santa Casa was officially released from this obligation. Today, the mosque is still the daily meeting and worship place for Muslims in Macao, and the cemetery is kept in good order.

In 1874 the Macao government built an impressive Moorish style building overlooking the Inner Harbor, to house the Muslim maritime police. The first contingent of forty-one Muslims recruited at Goa arrived at Macao on 27 July 1873. Muslims continued to play a role in the Macao police force in

the early 1900s as well. The cemetery, mosque and Moorish barracks are still being used today.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were a number of Muslim shops established along the Rua Central in Macao. In 1880 the Kamisa family opened up a milliner and drapery shop. Later, another similar store run by the Moosa family was opened. Some of the Moosas later became contractors, brokers, shippers, insurance agents, and import and export dealers.

These establishments were followed by a succession of milliner and drapery shops opening up in the Rua Central district. The families of Abdoola, Carrim, Rama, Mahomed, Bachoo, Elias and Ebrahim all had similar types of shops at one time in this area. Some of these families now have descendants buried in the Muslim cemetery in Macao, and a number of them are still living in Macao and active in the community. There are many others as well who are keeping the Muslim faith alive.

CONCLUSION

This brief account of Muslims in the Pearl River Delta show that they were involved in the trade from the beginning. They came from India with their own ships; they freighted goods to China aboard other vessels; and they manned the crews of many China traders. Muslims *serangs* provided services to help the commerce to become more secure, and as a result many families settled in the area. Muslims continue to play a role today and form an important part of the communities in the region. **RC**

ABBREVIATIONS

- AM *Arquivos de Macau* Published in three series: Series 1 has three volumes (1929-1931); Series 2 has one volume (1941); and Series 3 has 15 volumes (1964)
- DAC Danish Asiatic Company
- GIC Ostend General India Company, Belgium
- JFB James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota, USA
- NA Dutch National Archives, The Hague, Netherlands
- NM Nordic Museum Archive, Stockholm, Sweden
- OIO Oriental and India Office Library, London, UK

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RAC Rigsarkivet [National Archives], Copenhagen, Denmark
 SAA Stadsarchief [Municipal Archives], Antwerp, Belgium

UBG Universiteits Bibliotheek [University Library], Ghent, Belgium
 UGS Utah Genealogical Society
 VOC Dutch East India Company

NOTES

- 1 H. B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635-1834* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926. Reprint, Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Co., 1966), 1:91; and E.A. Voretzsch, ed., *François Froger. Relation du Premier Voyage des Français à la Chine fait en 1698, 1699 et 1700 sur le Vaisseau "L'Amphitrite"* (Leipzig: Asia Major, 1926), 143.
 - 2 Charles Lockyer, *An Account of the Trade in India* (London: S. Crouch, 1711), p. 258.
 - 3 Lockyer, *An Account of the Trade*, p. 257-259; and Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East-Indies . . . from the year 1688-1723* (London: 1739; reprint, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995). One of the officers of the Ostend Company also reported that the Moors' ships in Surat in the 1720s were about four or five hundred tons, which was said to be equivalent to the size of the English ships frequenting that port. Stadsarchief (Municipal Archive), Antwerp (SAA): IC 5922.
 - 4 Universiteits Bibliotheek (University Library), Ghent, Belgium (UBG): Ms 1839, 1840, 1847, 1923; and SAA: IC 5701, 5697.
 - 5 SAA: IC 5698, 5704, 5705, 5753. The other Moors ship was a sloop that arrived flying a Malabar flag (one report said an "Armenian flag"). But the foreigners in Canton suspected that this vessel was simply a scout ship sent by the Dutch in Batavia to check out the prospects of VOC ships coming to China. The English reported the following concerning this ship: "Yesterday arrived at Wampo a Dutch Sloop of about 70 Tons named the New: Mode Capt. Jacobus Van den Beake. She is said to be Freight by the Chinese that live at Batavia, but it is thought she comes to try if the Chinese here will suffer the Dutch Bottoms to trade again into this Country." Oriental and India Office Library, London, UK (OIO): G/12/26. The first "official" VOC ship arrived in 1729.
 - 6 Kaptajn J. H. Schulz, ed., "En Dagbog ført paa en Kinafarer 1730-32 af Kadet Tobias Wigandt," in *Tidsskrift for Søvesen*, by G. L. Grove. (Copenhagen: Hovedkommissionær Vilhelm Tryde, Thieles Bogtrykkeri, 1900), 202, 206.
 - 7 Dutch National Archives, The Hague (NA): VOC 2346.
 - 8 It was very uncommon in Canton throughout the eighteenth century to find so many able-bodied foreign seamen available for hire.
 - 9 NA: Canton 10, 73.
 - 10 The coming of this Moors ship was recorded by the Belgians who were in the employ of the Swedish company, by the Danes, and by the Dutch. UBG: Ms 1928; Rigsarkivet (National Archives), Copenhagen, Denmark (RAC): Ask 999, 1118; and NA: VOC 2438.
- The Macao Pilot Atak approached the VOC ship *Hogersmilde* when it entered the delta in this year, and offered to guide it to Whampoa. He claimed to the captain that he had much experience in the past bringing European and Moors ship up the river. NA: VOC 2438.
 - 11 James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota (JFB): Charles Irvine Papers; RAC: Ask 880, 1005; and NA: Canton 3, 17, 70.
 - 12 JFB: Charles Irvine Papers.
 - 13 NA: Canton 43, 86; RAC: Ask 1178. *The Cartier* arrived in China commanded by Captain Watson again in 1779, but this time it is reported to have come from Bombay. RAC: Ask 1180.
 - 14 RAC: Ask 1178.
 - 15 NA: Canton 89; and Paul A. Van Dyke, "Port Canton and the Pearl River Delta, 1690-1845," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2002), 407-408.
 - 16 NA: Canton 56, 97.
 - 17 NA: OIC 197.
 - 18 This loan of 10,000 Spanish dollars was repaid with interest ten months later, which came to a total of 11,500 Spanish dollars. Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:299; Ch'en Kuo-tung Anthony, *The Insolvency of the Chinese Hong Merchants, 1760-1843* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1990), 311-312; NA: Canton 60, 61, 97; and Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Five.
 - 19 RAC: Ask 2260.
 - 20 NA: Canton 98, 100.
 - 21 Robert Morrison, *Notices Concerning China, and the Port of Canton. Also a Narrative of the Affair of the English Frigate Topaze, 1821-22. With Remarks on Homicides, and an Account of the Fire of Canton.* (Malacca: Mission Press, 1823), 15-16.
 - 22 NA: Canton 98, 99; and Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:63.
 - 23 This incident is mentioned in a Macao court case in 1839. Utah Genealogical Society (UGS), microfilm of Macao court records, Reel 1128001.
 - 24 UGS, microfilm of Macao court records, Reel no. 1128004.
 - 25 AM, series 3, vol. xxix, no. 3 (March 1978), p. 162; *Da Aurora Macaense*, vol. 1, no. 8, 4 March 1843.
 - 26 AM, series 3, vol. xxxi, no. 3 (March 1979), p. 174; *Da Aurora Macaense*, vol. 2, no. 54, 20 Jan. 1844.
 - 27 UGS, microfilm of Macao court records, Reel no. 1128008.
 - 28 Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter Three.
 - 29 For a much more thorough analysis of the end of the companies and the rise of the private traders in China, see Van Dyke, "Port Canton," Chapter One and Conclusion.

Parsis in the China Trade

MADHAVI THAMPI*





J. N. Tata.

In the interactions between China and India in the modern period, the region of the Pearl River Delta, and Hong Kong in particular, has undoubtedly played a most significant role. Similarly, the community of Parsi traders and businessmen from Bombay and the west coast of India have also played an extremely prominent role in the Sino-Indian relationship in modern times. While the significance of Hong Kong in these relations and the contributions of Parsis (Parsees) have been getting some recognition in recent years, the role of the Parsis still has not got the attention it deserves from scholars both in the East and the West.

One reason for this—and it is best to confront the reality up front—is that the role of the Parsis is very much connected with the notorious opium trade, and it is perhaps understandable that this is something which few today in China or India, including Parsis themselves, care to highlight. Yet, there is also another reason for the neglect of the role and activities of the Parsis in China in modern times. Both in India and outside, the tendency has been to view the Parsi (and in general the Indian) presence in China as merely an extension or subset of the British presence in China that hardly merits serious attention in itself. As an

example of this attitude, we can look at the subject of the growth of Hong Kong. While the role of the British in the development of Hong Kong has quite naturally received great attention, the important part played by Parsis in its development in spite of their relatively small number has not been highlighted much until recently, despite the tangible evidence of their contribution wherever you go in Hong Kong, including the University of Hong Kong, which came into being to a great extent because of the determined efforts of one Parsi, H. N. Mody!

From a scholarly point of view, the relative neglect of the Parsi role in the trade of the Pearl River Delta region with the outside world is not justifiable. This article seeks to bring out the following features of the Parsis' trading with China: First of all, it aims to give some idea of the broad scope of the Parsis' economic interaction with China, showing that it encompassed much more than opium, although the opium trade without doubt constituted an important part. Furthermore, it tries to clarify the nature of the Parsis' problematic relations with the British and Chinese in China, which included elements of collaboration as well as competition, friendship as well as antagonism.

THE ORIGIN OF PARSI TRADING TO CHINA

How did the Parsis come to the coast of southern China? While there is some evidence of people of the Zoroastrian faith having been present in China in pre-modern times, the presence of Parsis on the south China coast has more to do with the centuries-old trading patterns between India and China. Trading

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relations between India and China date back to the second century B.C. or even earlier. These relations followed both the land routes through Central Asia and Tibet, the famed “Silk Road,” as well as the sea routes. The sea became the preferred channel of trade, especially from the Song period onwards. We know that both Guangzhou and Quanzhou were visited by traders from different parts of India in this period. However, with the development of Chinese naval power and navigational technology, Chinese began to replace Indians in the carrying trade between India and China. Later, from the late fifteenth century, the Ming emperors discouraged overseas trade and maritime ventures, and direct trade between India and China suffered as a consequence. Nevertheless, Sino-Indian commercial interaction continued, with Indian and Chinese goods being exchanged at intermediary points along the route, especially Malacca on the Malay Peninsula. From the last quarter of the seventeenth century there was a partial revival of direct Sino-Indian trade, with Indian traders venturing again into the China Sea. This was based largely on the import of gold, tea and porcelain into India from China in exchange for silver, pepper and other items from India.¹

By this time the most important ports in India for the intra-Asian trade were Cambay and later Surat on the west coast of India, in the region of present-day Gujarat. Gujarat is the region where the Zoroastrians who had fled Persia for India in the eighth century and who came to be known as Parsis had chosen to settle. Initially, the Parsis in Gujarat were engaged mainly in agriculture, spinning and weaving, carpentry and various other occupations, even though by the eighteenth century there were also a number of prominent Parsi traders and financiers in Surat. However, two factors led to a redefining of the nature of this community in occupational terms and to a turning-point in their fortunes. One was the rise of Bombay, south of Surat on the west coast, from a group of small fishing villages to a major port, a phenomenon which paralleled the decline of Surat as a trade and shipping centre. The other was the rapid growth from the late eighteenth century of the so-called triangular trade between Britain, China and India, in which Britain’s rising imports of Chinese tea were paid for by the export of Indian raw cotton, and later opium, to China.

Bombay being an economically weak and politically vulnerable British enclave in the

eighteenth century, its administrators were eager to attract Indian settlers from other parts of the region and offered them favourable terms to come there, including freedom to pursue their own religious and social customs. In 1735 the East India Company invited the Parsi Lowji Nussarwanji Wadia to Bombay from Surat to become its master shipbuilder. He built and repaired ships of the Royal British Navy and private traders as well as those of the East India Company, establishing the foundations of a remarkable shipbuilding dynasty. Another personality who rose from a humble background to eventually dominate Bombay’s China trade was Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the son of a poor weaver who began earning his livelihood in Bombay by participating in his uncle’s bottle-selling business. By the 1780s the early trickle of enterprising Parsis and others into Bombay had become a large-scale migration, contributing to Bombay’s growing prosperity along with Surat’s further eclipse.

THE EARLY CHINA TRADE: RAW COTTON, SHIPPING AND OPIUM

The earliest Parsi merchant known to have voyaged to China was Hirji Jivanji Readymoney who, incidentally, acquired his name through his reputation for promptness in making payments. He went to China in 1756, but it was only about two or three decades later that there was a spurt in Bombay’s trade with China that drew large numbers of other Parsi traders to it like a magnet. The passing of Pitt’s Commutation Act by the British Parliament in 1784 enabled the East India Company to greatly increase its imports of Chinese tea. The East India Company found it impossible to balance its imports of tea with items exported from Britain, but found that there was a large and growing Chinese demand for raw cotton that could be sourced from India.² Within a few years, there was an approximately six-fold increase in the export of cotton from the west coast of India to China.³ The heyday of the trade in raw cotton between Bombay and China was the period from 1787 through the first decade of the nineteenth century, with 1805 being the peak year. In that year, the value of the cotton exported amounted to over Rs 9,400,000 out of the total value of exports to China of about Rs 15,000,000.⁴ For the period as a whole, the export of cotton to China

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amounted to an average of 80,000 bales worth approximately Rs 6,500,000 per year.

Whereas the direct trade between Britain and China was the monopoly of the East India Company, in the intra-Asian trade, or “country trade” as it was called, private traders, both British and Indian, were permitted to take part under East India Company license. Indian merchants from Bombay and its hinterland began to turn their attention to the Chinese market in a big way. The first community from India to plunge wholeheartedly into the China trade from Bombay was the Parsis. In contrast to the Bengali traders from Calcutta known as *banians*, who had become involved in trading with China even earlier, the Parsis were distinguished by their willingness to travel personally to China. They were even prepared to spend years far from their homes setting up and working in their family establishments, although a large number returned home after a tour of duty. Their spirit of adventure and enterprise was perhaps best exemplified by Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, who made five voyages to China between 1799 and 1807. At that time, sailing to China was a dangerous affair because of the typhoons and squalls encountered as well as raids by pirate gangs that infested the waters of the South China Sea. There were also other dangers. During his second and fourth voyages, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy found himself caught in the crossfire of Anglo-French hostilities during the Napoleonic Wars. Within a few days of the commencement of his fourth voyage to China in 1805, the ship on which he was travelling was intercepted by the French, who hijacked it in a westerly direction, all the way to the Cape of Good Hope in Africa! All his goods were confiscated. Eventually, he and some of his co-passengers managed with great difficulty to secure passage on a Danish ship that transported them to Calcutta, more than five months after they had set sail from Bombay.

Besides the Readymoneys and Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, other prominent Parsis involved in the early decades of the China trade included the Dadiseths, such as Ardesir Dady; Pestonjee and Hormajee Bomanjee of the famous Wadia shipbuilding family; the Banajis such as Framji Cowasji and Dadabhoy Rustomjee who played a prominent role in the affairs of the Parsi community at Canton in the run-up to the Opium War; and the firm of Cowasjee Pallanjee & Co., whose forerunner firm had a branch at Guangzhou as early as

1794. In the small foreign mercantile community at Guangzhou and Macao in the early nineteenth century, Parsis were a prominent segment. A little-recognised fact is that, numerically at least, the Parsis were more prominent than even the private English traders on the China coast in the period before the Opium Wars. According to one source, in 1809 there was only one private English trader resident in Canton, as opposed to several Parsis there. The corresponding figures for 1831 and 1835 were thirty-two English private traders and forty-one Parsis, and thirty-five English as opposed to fifty-two Parsis, respectively.⁵ These Parsis on the China coast in the early period were predominantly men without their families. At Guangzhou they were to be found largely in what was known as the Chow-chow (*chaochao* or “miscellaneous”) Factory, which was also unofficially known as the “Parsi factory.” A contemporary Western observer, Toogood Downing, described them as striking figures in the streets of Guangzhou in the area of the foreign factories, with their white, loose-flowing clothes and caps, which, he claimed, suited their surroundings much better than the tight clothes and stiff hats of the Europeans!⁶ In fact, on account of their clothing, and in particular their white caps, the Parsi merchants came to be referred to by the Chinese, even in some official documents, as “whiteheads” (*baitouren*, *baitouyi*).⁷

In general, the reputation of the Parsi traders on the China coast was that they were enterprising and hard working, and inclined to bend the rules to achieve their commercial objectives, like their counterparts among the private British traders. Both the Qing authorities and the representatives of the East India Company in China despaired because the Parsis often contrived in violation of the rules to stay behind at Guangzhou after the end of the trading season in order to augment their profits.⁸ They were also deeply involved in the chronic problem that afflicted the trading system at Guangzhou before the Opium War, whereby one Chinese Hong merchant after another became hopelessly indebted to foreign traders and went bankrupt. What irked both the Chinese authorities and the East India Company's Canton Committee was that the Parsi traders appeared to actually go out of their way to get the Hong merchants indebted to them. They were accused of seeking out the most junior, inexperienced Hong merchants, and of urging them to take credit and loans from them.⁹ Because interest

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rates were much higher in China than in India, it was said that the Parsis transferred funds in bulk from India specifically for the purpose of money-lending. Once the Hong merchants were hopelessly bankrupt, their Parsi creditors showed little patience or charity towards them and troubled the authorities by vociferously petitioning for recovery of their funds. Money-lending was by no means practiced only by the Parsis among the foreign traders, but the fact remains that, in Chinese eyes at least, the Parsis were particularly identified with it. Generally speaking, they were known as aggressive traders who collaborated with the British, especially the private traders, when it suited their interests, but were also ready to differentiate their position from that of the British when they felt their interests demanded it.

Parsis were not only traders but shipbuilders and shipowners as well. The export of raw cotton required the building of huge ships capable of carrying this bulk commodity. Parsis were famous for their skills in shipbuilding. Made from Malabar teak, the country ships they constructed were reputed to last as long as sixty years, and even in some cases up to one hundred years. They resisted water logging and even damage from gunfire, which made them particularly useful during the Napoleonic and later the Opium Wars. Although initially commanded almost exclusively by European captains, the owners of these magnificent ships included both Europeans and Indians. As a rule, the Parsi merchants in the China trade preferred to ship merchandise in Parsi-owned ships. Among the prominent Parsi shipowners were the Wadias themselves, and also the Dadiseths, the Readymoneys, the Banajis, the Kamas, and the family of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. By 1840, for instance, the Banaji family owned as many as forty country ships.

The market for raw cotton from Bombay in China, however, entered a period of slump from the second decade of the nineteenth century. By 1824 it was commonly acknowledged that the market for Indian cotton in China was under an “irretrievable depression.” Cotton was always a speculative item, with the price at Canton fluctuating depending on the availability of Chinese cotton. The representatives of the East India Company at Canton wrote,

“It is difficult to account for the diminished demand of an article hitherto in such general estimation in China, otherwise than by attributing it to the

extended cultivation of the Chinese Native Cotton, the fertility of the Crops this year and the facility with which it is now brought Coastways from the northern provinces.”¹⁰

The increased availability of native Chinese cotton coincided with a glut in the market for Indian cotton after the throwing open of the trade between Britain and India to private traders in 1813. Another factor that contributed to the slump was the increasing importation into China of manufactured cotton piece-goods and cotton yarn from Britain, which began to depress the traditional Chinese hand-spinning and weaving industry.

In contrast to the Bengali traders from Calcutta known as banians, who had become involved in trading with China even earlier, the Parsis were distinguished by their willingness to travel personally to China.

While some early Parsi and other China traders from Bombay lost heavily due to the slump in the market for cotton, others recouped and greatly augmented their fortunes by turning their attention to the export of another commodity—opium. Opium had been grown in Bengal and exported to China from Calcutta under East India Company supervision and license from the eighteenth century, even though the trade was banned by the imperial government of China. Opium of a slightly inferior variety also used to be grown in the Malwa region of western India. After the defeat of the Marathas in the early nineteenth century brought this region under British domination, the possibilities of exporting this variety of opium through Bombay became apparent. The Company initially sought to establish a monopoly over the cultivation and procurement of opium in Bombay as it had done in Bengal, but was unsuccessful because Indian

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cultivators and brokers resisted strongly. The production of and domestic trade in opium in the Malwa region thus remained firmly in Indian hands. This opium found its way to the port cities on the western coast, especially Bombay. The Parsi brokers, with their network of links to the inland traders as well as the relative ease with which they were able to deal with the British, functioned as the vital link securing the supply of opium for shipment abroad. They either consigned their supplies of the drug to the big European agency houses, such as Jardine & Matheson, or else shipped on their account. Often they were involved in both kinds of activities. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, for instance, was the major trading partner of the firm of Jardine, Matheson & Co., while at the same time he was an independent shipper commanding enormous clout of his own. Cursetjee Framjee, of the Wadia family of shipbuilders, was an agent of the American firm of Forbes & Co., one of Jardine Matheson's major rivals on the China coast. Although the British East India Company did not control the drug trade from Bombay in the same way that it did the opium business in Bengal, it nevertheless gave the trade full encouragement for two reasons: Firstly, it helped to resolve its balance of payments problem with the Chinese owing to the slump in the market for cotton there, and secondly, the government at Bombay derived considerable revenue from the transit duties imposed on the export of opium from there.

There is no doubt that the profits from the opium trade brought enormous wealth to Parsi and other Indian merchants—as it did, one might add, to British and American merchants and those of other nationalities as well. The importance of opium to the trade with China from Bombay can be seen in the fact that between 1830/31 and 1860/61, its share of Bombay's exports increased from 25 per cent to 42 per cent, and the value of opium sales increased by more than ten times.¹¹ It was also brought out very vividly at the outbreak of the Opium War. Of the 20,383 chests of opium surrendered at Canton to the Chinese authorities when the Qing Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu cracked down on the trade, a major portion belonged to twenty-eight Indian firms. A total of 5,315 chests belonged to Parsi traders alone, of which one thousand belonged to just one Parsi trader, Dadabhoy Rustumjee.¹² Leaving aside the question of whether the Parsi and other Indian

merchants acted as agents or as independent traders, it is a sobering thought from the standpoint of today that Sino-Indian commercial interaction in the modern era depended so largely, though by no means exclusively, on a commodity that proved so injurious to the Chinese in a number of ways.

JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHOY AND THE MID-CENTURY DIVIDE

The mid-nineteenth century proved in many ways to be a turning-point in the fortunes of the Parsi China traders. Although Parsi business involvement in China continued long afterwards, by the mid-nineteenth century various developments contributed to the decline of the old China trade based on raw cotton, opium and shipping, and to a reorientation of Parsi business in China in the process leading to the folding-up of a number of once prominent Parsi firms. A look at the letters of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy throws light on some of the problems encountered by Parsi China traders at this juncture in a more revealing way than mere statistics. His records are valuable, not only because his career was in many respects the most outstanding of the early Parsi China traders, but also because his letters give an insight into the actual working of the trade, the relationships among the British, Chinese and Indian traders and officials, and the anxieties and difficulties faced by the Parsis and other Indians who took part in the trade.¹³

After his initial voyages to China in quick succession, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy was content to direct his voluminous business with China from his headquarters in Bombay. Nevertheless, because of the many contacts he had built up in China earlier on and his continuing intimacy with them, Jamsetjee retained a very lively interest in and understanding of developments in China and the China trade as they unfolded. Initially, Jamsetjee, like other Parsi and Indian traders, was most enthusiastic over the outcome of the Opium War insofar as it broke down the restrictions involved in the earlier system of trade. However, post-war developments caused him a certain degree of unease. Unlike some of the British merchants, Jamsetjee was cautious and believed in avoiding further confrontation as far as possible. In a letter to his partner Matheson in early 1843, he expressed strong reservations about resorting to hostilities once again. "What will be

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the consequence when the Emperor heard such row again take place," he worried, "and how bitter would be the authority against us." He advised that "keeping distance is far better than showing threat. They know very well now what we are and what is our force. This fear will do great good than by sending actual troops and destroy all the confidence among the Chinese."¹⁴ Jamsetjee also wrote to Henry Pottinger cautioning him against "pressing too severely upon the Chinese, who in common with all other nations are entitled to have their prejudices respected and their self-love not too rudely disturbed."¹⁵ Another matter which greatly worried Jamsetjee was the loss suffered by those Bombay merchants who surrendered their opium on the British Superintendent's recommendation, but who then found that they did not get the promised compensation, even after the British Government levied a huge indemnity on the Chinese as compensation for the destroyed opium. Even when compensation was finally received, about twenty years later, it amounted to only a portion of the value of the stocks they had surrendered. "You can have no idea of the ruin and misery which this China War had brought to many families here and abroad," wrote Jamsetjee.¹⁶ At least two Parsi traders committed suicide because of the delay in compensating them for their losses on account of the war.

Towards the end of his life, Jamsetjee's letters reveal a creeping disillusionment with his long-time partners in China, Jardine, Matheson & Co., particularly after the departure of his old friend William Jardine in 1839. Both on his own behalf, as well on behalf of his friends in India who had consigned their stocks to the British agency house, he accused them of unnecessarily delaying the disposal of shipments, of selling them at low prices and of other unfair practices that had led to "heavy loss."¹⁷ But he was even more worried about major changes that were taking place in the structure of trade and communications between Britain, India and the Far East that put the interests of his firm and of other Bombay firms like his at a disadvantage. As early as 1843 he wrote,

"The prospects of the shipping interests appear to be getting worse and worse instead of better, we have now in Bombay Harbour an immense fleet of free-traders who are willing to take cotton on to China for the very lowest freights, which it is impossible to sail in a country ship. Last year many of our fine Teak

ships were laid up, and this season have gone on at miserably low freights."¹⁸

In another letter to Donald Matheson in 1851 he lamented,

"Our Trade with China which, even when you were in Hongkong was beginning to be on a reduced scale is now even more limited, and where there are so many competitors in the field it is hardly worthwhile pursuing it. In fact, times are very much changed here ever since you left and many new Houses have sprung up in China."¹⁹

The background to Jamsetjee's winter of discontent, as well as to the increasingly strained relations between the Indian and British traders in China, lay in the changed economic and trading patterns of Britain, India and China. From around the mid-nineteenth century, Indian merchants were increasingly unable to compete effectively with the flood of private British trading firms drawn to the trade with China following the abolition of the company's monopoly in 1833, who were able to command far greater credit resources than the Indians. The Indian merchants were also at the receiving end of rate wars launched by European shipping firms with their new steamships. The huge country ships designed to accommodate bulky commodities like raw cotton could not profitably ship freight at the lowered rates offered by their competitors. In the midst of these troubles on the shipping front, there took place a series of mysterious fires in Bombay harbour that destroyed several of the fine old teak ships belonging to Parsi merchants. Jamsetjee found himself left in possession of just one of his once proud fleet of sailing vessels. He was deeply troubled and embittered by what he considered to be deliberate acts of sabotage. "Without some effectual plan to prevent these disgraceful and most shocking occurrences can be hit upon, there will be no safety, for either owners, shippers or underwriters," he wrote. But his laments were in vain. Jamsetjee himself died in 1859, and within a short time the interests of his family firm in the China trade, as well as those of a number of other pioneering Parsi firms, had lapsed.

REORIENTATION OF PARSI BUSINESS FROM THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Parsi business ties with China continued, but in a modified form. Their domination of the China trade

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from Bombay was weakened as new business groups from India moved in, including Jews, Marwaris and later Sindhis. For instance, Jewish merchants, with the formidable Sassoon family in the lead, took over as the premier opium traders in the later nineteenth century, displacing even Jardine Matheson from this position by around 1870. In the last years before Bombay's opium trade was ended in 1913, it was the Marwaris who cornered the lion's share of the trade.²⁰

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and other China traders
from Bombay lost heavily due
to the slump in the market
for cotton, others recouped
and greatly augmented their
fortunes by turning their
attention to the export of
another commodity—opium.*

There is some evidence that in the late nineteenth century, Parsis in China turned from trading and entrepreneurial ventures to less risky activities. This was the conclusion of Claude Markovits after studying the estates in China of six Parsis between 1882 and 1907. He found that real estate accounted for about 54 per cent of their total value, while shares, debentures and deposit receipts accounted for another 25 per cent.²¹ Yet the entrepreneurial or risk-taking spirit had by no means disappeared altogether. This is illustrated by the career of the famous house of Tatas in China (although it may be admitted that not all Parsi business houses were as adventurous as the Tatas).

The Tatas were not among the earliest Parsi families to go to China, but they managed to sustain their interests there for a considerable length of time, even though they were beset by a fair share of troubles. Initially they, like many other Parsi firms in China, engaged in the import of opium and cotton, and exported tea, silk, camphor, cinnamon, copper, brass

and Chinese gold. In 1864, the trading community in Bombay was badly jolted by the great crash in the share market. Many firms involved in the China trade were among those that collapsed as a consequence of this crash, including those of the second Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy, K. J. Readymoney and K. N. Cama. The Tatas were particularly hit, since their partner Premchand Roychand was one of those most deeply involved. They were forced to discontinue their China business for a while, but in a few years sought to revive it in the form of a new company called Tata & Co. The new company went through various teething troubles until it finally stabilized by around 1883.

The Tatas experimented with new lines of business in China. With one foot in industry in India, particularly the newly-established textile mills, they made the transition to exporting manufactured products to China. They also ventured, more adventurously, into steam shipping. Following the decline of Indian-owned country ships, Indian shipments of goods to China had been handicapped by the high freight rates they had to pay to the European shipping lines, which drove up the price of their goods in China. The European shipping lines jealously guarded their monopoly through the system of shipping "conferences" set up with the aim of keeping out competitors. Challenging the established shipping lines like the P. & O., Jamsetji Tata set up his own, the Tata Line, in collaboration with the Japanese Nippon Yusen Kaisha. The rates offered by the Tata Line were less than two-thirds of the going rates.²² However, Jamsetji's move predictably met with an outraged reaction on the part of his European rivals backed by the British Government. A fierce "freight war" accompanied by devastating propaganda against the Tata Line followed, eventually causing the Japanese firm to withdraw from the partnership and the Tata Line to fold up. Nevertheless, Tata, Sons & Co. continued to remain active in business in Hong Kong long after several other Parsi firms wound up their interests in China.

However, what really sustained the business interests of not just the Tatas but other Parsi firms in China for several decades from the later nineteenth century was the discovery of another commodity from India for which there was great demand in China. This commodity, cotton yarn, was not so much a product of India's agriculture—as were raw cotton and opium—

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or of her traditional handicraft industry, but was a product of her fledgling modern industry.

Following the great crash of the 1860s, and with the stagnation of the cotton and opium businesses in China, leading Parsi merchants sought new avenues for investment in India itself. Some experimented with founding banks, insurance companies, and steam navigation companies and with investing in the railways, but it very soon became apparent that the most promising field of investment was the textile industry. In 1858 the Petit family, old China traders and survivors of the share market crash, entered the field and set up several cotton mills. Merwanji Framji Panday was another former China trader who ventured into manufacturing textiles. The Tatas too set up their Empress Mills at Nagpur. Initially, the Indian mill owners tried to cater to the domestic market, but found

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that they could not compete with the imports of the British textile industry. Consequently, they turned to China, a market with which they were already familiar. The hand-weaving industry continued to survive in China despite the British attempts to flood it with their cotton goods, and Chinese weavers at that time preferred the coarse yarn produced by the Indian mills to the finer yarn from the British industry. From an average of just 2000 bales of cotton yarn exported to China in the period 1875-1879, the figure rose to 452,000 bales in 1895-1899.²³ By the 1880s, 80 per cent of the output of Bombay's cotton yarn industry was absorbed by the Chinese market. By the turn of the century, the value of the exports of cotton yarn amounted to 16 per cent of the total value of Bombay's exports—more than that of opium.²⁴ In 1892, 96 per cent of the total Chinese imports of cotton yarn came from India, in contrast to just 4 per cent from Britain,

which had been the sole supplier of foreign yarn to China before the 1870s.

However, the Indian domination of the Chinese market for cotton yarn did not last beyond the early years of the twentieth century. Already, by the mid-1890s, there were signs of trouble. The Chinese market could not absorb the available supplies of cotton yarn, which had increased due to bumper crops of cotton and improved output in India. But the more serious problem came from the Japanese, who engaged in aggressive marketing of their cotton yarn in China. In 1906 India still supplied 77 per cent of the Chinese imports of yarn, while the Japanese share stood at 23 per cent. But by 1913 Japanese yarn imports had overtaken Indian yarn. By 1924 India's overall share of China's cotton yarn imports had dropped to 24 per cent as compared to the Japanese share of 76 per cent.²⁵ Yet in the end, what finally put paid to the Indian export of cotton yarn to China (much as in the case of Indian export of opium earlier) was Chinese efforts at import substitution. By 1927 China was a net exporter of cotton yarn and 31 per cent of its exports went to Japan and India!²⁶

Although the loss of the China market for Indian cotton yarn did not spell the end of Parsi business involvement with China and Hong Kong, the early twentieth century appears to be a reasonable point to conclude this survey of the Parsis and the China trade. The character and scope of the economic interaction between Bombay and China changed in the latter decades of the twentieth century, and it is hard to speak of "the China trade" as such after this point. The basis of Parsi wealth and prominence in India also diversified from this period, with Parsis becoming more renowned as industrial entrepreneurs and for their eminence in various professions. Yet in the century and a half in which they were involved with it, the Parsis played a major, driving role in India's China trade and also made lasting contributions to the early growth and development of the two main poles of this trade: the great port cities of Hong Kong and Bombay. **RC**

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Parsi Contributions to the Growth of Bombay and Hong Kong

SHALINI SAKSENA*

Many Parsis (Parsees) were involved in the trade between India and China during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the money they earned from this lucrative trade, they made significant contributions to the development of both Bombay and Hong Kong. The large number of traders involved, the frequency of their visits to China, the volume of trade, and the fact that some of the traders decided to make Hong Kong their home all point to the vast wealth the traders amassed with a potential for more. Most of the traders involved were from western India, particularly Bombay. Therefore, the accumulated wealth found its way back to Bombay to help develop commercial activities, industries and shipyards. The China connection did not contribute merely to the economic growth and urbanization of Bombay. Chinese influences were reflected also in the social, cultural, political and intellectual life of this fast-developing commercial capital of India. An important aspect that needs to be highlighted is the volume of philanthropy the Indian traders indulged in, both in Bombay and Hong Kong. They were in the forefront for any worthy cause that merited a generous donation.

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The Parsis in Bombay started as guarantee brokers to British firms, and then entered into partnerships, banking and insurance, and real estate before they became entrepreneurs and pioneered the establishment of cotton textile mills. They contributed in a big way to religious institutions and created charitable trusts to promote education. The establishment of hospitals, medical colleges and research centers, and a college for art and architecture were some areas where their philanthropy served the noble cause of higher technical education. The Parsis were also among the earliest to start retail merchandising stores. They maintained cordial relations with the British Government while being active in political associations. They were associated with social and cultural activities involving not only their co-religionists but also the entire city of Bombay and their native province of Gujarat.

PARSI COLLABORATION WITH EUROPEAN FIRMS IN BOMBAY

The doyen of Parsi traders in China in the first half of the nineteenth century was Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, who made several voyages to China between 1799 and 1807. He was in close association with Sir Roger de Faria, through whom he entered the trade in the first place. China fascinated him as a land of opportunities. While on his third voyage, from June 1803 to Dec. 1804, he not only consolidated his business but also established agencies at Madras and Calcutta as well as in Southeast Asian countries. On his fourth voyage he met William Jardine in a chance encounter. He established the most successful opium business at Canton and became their principal collaborator in Bombay. After 1816 he was broker to Bruce, Fawcett and Co.¹ Besides Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy,

many other Indian merchants also maintained relations with European firms and did business with them. Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia, brother of the master builder Jamsetjee, was a partner of Bruce, Fawcett & Co. who operated in Bombay between 1789 and 1816. Hormusjee, another brother, had close relations with Forbes, Smith and Co. Dady Nasserwanjee was a partner of Alexander Adamson, a senior merchant of the East India Company, and later his son Ardesir Dady was their partner. Messrs. B. and A. Hormusjee used to consign to Dent and Co., and Muncherjee Jamstjee was a partner of Pope, Hamilton & Co.²

BANKING

The Parsi traders in China took the lead in establishing banking institutions and other related organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and insurance companies to facilitate business activities. The prominent merchant Dadabhoy Pestonjee Wadia (adopted by his maternal grandfather Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia) was one of the founders of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and became a committee member in 1836. In December 1836 he was the only Indian member of the provisional committee to establish the Bank of Bombay. He was one of the promoters of the Oriental Bank, and at one time held three-eighths of the entire shares.³ Framji Cowasji Banaji, another great Parsi, known as Lord Leicester of western India, was associated with the Bank of Bombay and the Chamber of Commerce. Cowasjee Nanabhoy Davar took the lead in founding the Mercantile Bank of India, which commenced business in 1853. The early shareholders were divided almost equally between European and Indian residents, with the Parsis the largest body of proprietors. The first Board of Directors had a balanced composition with three British and two Parsi directors.⁴

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation was born on the eve of the tremendous speculative boom that occurred in Bombay in 1864.⁵ The Hong Kong taipans from many nations founded it to finance the trade and development of the East. The founding of the Hong Kong Bank “may be described as a merger into one specialist corporation of the Bombay interests of the old agency houses.”⁶ Of the fourteen members of the provisional committee,



Bank of Bombay. (All illustrations courtesy of Rustom Jamsetjee, Seventh Baronet).

three Indians represented the Bombay interests. They were Rustomjee Dhunjeeshaw of Messrs P. F. Cama and Co., Pallanjee Framjee of Messrs P. & A. Camajee and Co., and Arthur Sassoon of Messrs David, Sassoon, Sons and Co. The HSBC played a major role as banker and counselor in the finance of trade between India and China, which, so long as it remained legal, involved the finance of opium exports to China. The speculations in Bombay brought down many Indian Houses, and by July 1866 both Parsi members had left Hong Kong.⁷ The taipan of David Sassoon and Co. continued to serve on the HSBC Board of Directors, except during World War II.

REAL ESTATE

The wealth earned through commercial activities was invested in buildings and bungalows all over Bombay. Cursetji Cowasji built the ‘Grant buildings’ at Colaba that were later owned by Kharsetji Fardunji Parekh, another China trader.⁸ Properties in Parel, Mazagoan, Breach Candy, Cumballa Hill, and Lal Baug still stand testimony to the vast investment in real estate.⁹ The Readymoney house and the Banaji house in the prime Fort area of Bombay are offices of the descendants of the erstwhile China traders. The many Parsi colonies all over Bombay inhabited by Parsi families are held as trust property by the charitable trusts charging nominal rents in prestigious and posh areas. Dadabhoy Pestonji Wadia was regarded as the owner of half of Mazagoan if not the Island of Bombay. He and his brother Muncherjee owned a large number of buildings in different parts of the island. Besides, they owned a large area of vacant land in Sewri near

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the seashore, which was later converted into salt pans. It was a good source of income to the owners, and the government benefited as well by realizing taxes.¹⁰

SHIPPING

Since the Parsis were in the forefront of trade and commerce, they realized the importance of owning ships. Parsi merchants in the China trade usually shipped their merchandise in Parsi-owned ships. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy took the shrewd decision to buy a fleet of ships to save freight charges, which swallowed most of the profits.¹¹ Pestonjee Bomanjee Wadia and his brother Hormusjee of the famous Wadia shipbuilding family made immense contributions to the development of the Bombay dockyard. Their involvement in the promotion of the shipping business is equally noteworthy. Framji Cowasji Banaji, who made a fortune trading in silk and opium with China, was a major ship owner. His brother Cursetjee Cowasji, also a China trader, owned several ships. At one time the Banaji family owned as many as forty country ships. Other prominent ship owners, the Dadiseths, the Readymoneys and the Camas, were also shipbuilders.¹²

According to Amalendu Guha, the significance of the Bombay shipyards lay not just in the number of ships that it produced but also in the forward-looking mindset that it helped to generate among Indian entrepreneurs. Christine Dobbin writes, "the Bombay dockyards assisted the transition of the Parsi mentality from mercantile to industrial by way of technological innovation."¹³

INDUSTRY

The amount of capital sunk into the shipbuilding industry seems to have paved the way for subsequent Parsi industrial ventures. In fact, shipbuilding was a pre-industrial endeavour that was overtaken by Parsi investment in the cotton textile industry. Instead of investing only in land, as was generally the case of merchants and traders elsewhere, the Parsi merchants launched Bombay as a center of the modern cotton industry.

The earliest Parsi venture was the Bombay Spinning and Weaving Mill founded in 1851 by Cowasjee Nanabhoy Davar.¹⁴ This triggered the setting

up of many textile mills such as the Bombay United Spinning and Weaving Co. by Mangaldas Nathubhai, the Maneckji Petit Manufacturing Company by Sir Dinshaw Petit, the Royal Mills (later Dinshaw Petit Mills), the Mazgoan Spinning and Manufacturing Co., the Victoria Spinning and Manufacturing Co., the Framji Petit Spinning and Manufacturing Co., the Golden Mills (later Bomanji Petit Mills), and the Bomanji Hormusjee Spinning and Weaving Mill by Bomanji Wadia. Merwanji Bhavnagari and Pallonji Kapadia established the New Great Eastern Spinning and Weaving Mill. These mills were started mainly with the Parsi entrepreneurs' own capital and contributions from relatives and friends.

The entry of "the Tata family into modern cotton industry is an excellent example of the fact that in the process of industrialization... the merchants have converted themselves into industrial leaders."¹⁵ Before the Tatas emerged on the scene, Bombay mills had specialized in weaving coarse cloth for home consumption, or spinning the lower counts of yarn suitable for the Chinese market. Later the Tatas decided to compete with British manufacturers by spinning a finer yarn and weaving finer materials from local cotton.¹⁶ The pioneering force in this venture was the Swadeshi Mills, the yarns of which had considerable success in the Chinese market.

Jamsetji Nasarwanji Tata, a great industrialist and well known as the father of Indian industries, was the founder of the renowned firm Messrs. Tata and Co. in Hong Kong and did extensive business on a large scale in textile goods. He was a pioneer of the cotton manufacturing industry and owned four large spinning and weaving mills in India. Jamsetji was the founder of the Tata Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur, the city that was named after him. The prosperity of the Indian trade with China and other parts of the world was due to this and other large industrial and hydroelectric works to which he contributed.

The Parsis were associated with every economic activity of consequence. They purchased shares of the great Indian Peninsular Railway and founded the Bombay Steam Navigation Co. and the Parsee Insurance Society.¹⁷ Parsis established local businesses by retailing imported goods from Europe and China. Bhikaji Behramjee Pande first seized the opportunity and opened a shop at Meadow Street in 1725.

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RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE WORKS

A strong tradition of giving charity among the Parsis, coupled with the relatively poor finances of the Bombay government, meant that many of Bombay's early buildings, roads and other facilities—some of them still landmarks of Bombay—owed their origin at least indirectly to profits from the China trade. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, known as Sir J. J., was particularly generous with his public endowments, which amounted to about 2.5 million rupees altogether.¹⁸ His philosophy of life was to participate in public activities for the growth of Bombay and to share his wealth for the common good by pioneering institutional philanthropy. Victims of fire, flood and famine got his generous support. His public activities won Sir J. J. considerable renown as an enlightened citizen. The extensive and diverse philanthropy of which he was the pioneer won him the gratitude of millions of Indians.¹⁹

Sir J. J.'s major public activity was his role in the Parsi *panchayat* of which he was a trustee from 1823-59. It performed quasi-judicial functions. He was a great believer in the Zoroastrian religion and authored *Kholaseh-I-Panchayat*, castigating the clergy for their ignorance.²⁰ However, he was by no means orthodox or unduly conservative.

Sir J. J.'s benefactions included fire temples, *dharma-shalas* (rest house or a temporary place of residence), *dakhmas* (tower of silence) and gifts of utensils. Fire temples (*agiaries*) with which his name is associated are in Surat, Pune, Navasari, and the Gamadia Agiary built by his sons out of his estate. He had a well sunk to benefit the residents of Colaba. The Sir J. J. Bund & Water Works in Pune cost him 173,050 rupees, while the government contributed Rs 84, 499. Avabai, wife of Sir J. J., shared his love for the city and his passion for uplifting the poor.²¹ She sponsored the joining of Bombay to the thickly populated island of Salsette. The Mahim Causeway was built at the cost of 140,000 rupees donated entirely by Lady Jamsetjee.

Other Parsis involved in religious and charitable works include Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, who provided thirty-two decorative fountains set up to provide drinking water.²² Framji Cawasji Banaji got the Dhobi Talao tank cleaned and deepened in 1832 at a cost of Rs 20,000. Pestonji Bomanji Wadia was also a liberal patron of charitable institutions. His greatest contribution to the community was the stone

steps he built from Chawpatty right up to the tower of silence in memory of his mother Hamabai.²³ Dadabhoy Pestonjee, a prominent trader, was a public-spirited citizen and philanthropist. He rebuilt the Udvarda Atesh Behram building, the Atash Dadgah at Vadi Bunder, a *dar-e-meher* in their property at Lalbaug and a *dharma-shala* in Bassein. He also gave a donation toward a new tower of silence (*dakhma*) in Bombay.²⁴

EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES

Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy did not receive any formal education, but he wanted his name to be linked with every endeavour to diffuse education among the people.²⁵ He set up the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Benevolent Institution, which founded nineteen schools, including two girls' schools. Eight of the surviving schools run by the SJJPI are doing great service to the cause of

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Benevolent Institution.



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education. Among the many diverse philanthropies, one that stands as the most remarkable is an endowment of 100,000 rupees toward founding a school of art. At a time when education was in its infancy and schools could be counted on one's fingers, the establishment of the Sir J. J. School of Art in 1857 was a remarkable act of benevolence. In 1878 the school shifted to its own building. In 1958 the government decided to trifurcate the school. Today the Sir J. J. School of Art, Sir J. J. College of Architecture and the Sir J. J. Institute of Commercial Art bear testimony to the foresight of this great visionary. Dadabhoy Pestonjee Wadia contributed Rs 1,500 towards the Elphinstone Professorship fund.²⁶ Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney spent about 1.4 million rupees on charity, which included an endowment of Rs 300,000 to build the Convocation Hall of the University of Bombay.²⁷

At a time when there was no hospital for civilian patients, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy opened the Bombay Native Dispensary in 1834. In this effort he encountered difficulties. Therefore, Sir J. J. decided to make a donation of Rs 100,000 for a hospital. He augmented

the amount by a similar offer and a further donation of 50,000. The foundation stone of Sir J. J. Hospital was laid in 1843 by the then Governor of Bombay, Sir George Arthur. The old building of the hospital was replaced by a new eight-storeyed structure in 1958. Today the J. J. hospital is one of the leading public hospitals in Bombay. The first free Cosmopolitan Home for the Aged in India and the first obstetric institution were also established due to his generous grants.²⁸

The Petit Sanatorium, built in memory of F. D. Petit, a China trader, and the B. D. Petit Parsi General Hospital are still receiving generous support from Parsis in Hong Kong.

Pestonjee Hormusji Cama, who had been a businessman in China, established the Cama Hospital.

ART AND CULTURE

Two events in October 2002—An Exhibition of Paintings, Photographs and Artifacts of the Parsee, "Portrait of a Community" held at the National Gallery of Modern Art; and a Seminar, "Treasures from the



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Hospital.

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Zoroastrian World” organized by the Bombay Museum Society—brought to light the India-China connection in the fields of art and culture. The collection of paintings and photographs displayed and the holdings of the Prince of Wales Museum (now Chatrapati Shivaji Museum) revealed an interesting cultural link that developed during the heyday of trading activities.

Parsis brought to India the richest of Chinese silk weaving, and their first significant contribution to the economic aspects of the arts and crafts of India was in the field of textiles. Chinese traders carried exquisite linen, embroidered cotton and silk to India, which were much sought after by the Parsi ladies who lived in Bombay in the early decades of the twentieth century. The display of a China connection in their lifestyle was a status symbol.²⁹ The most distinctive item of Parsi clothing, the *gara*, was made in China for the Parsi dowagers. These saris of thick silk, fully hand embroidered, showed scenes from Chinese mythology or social life.

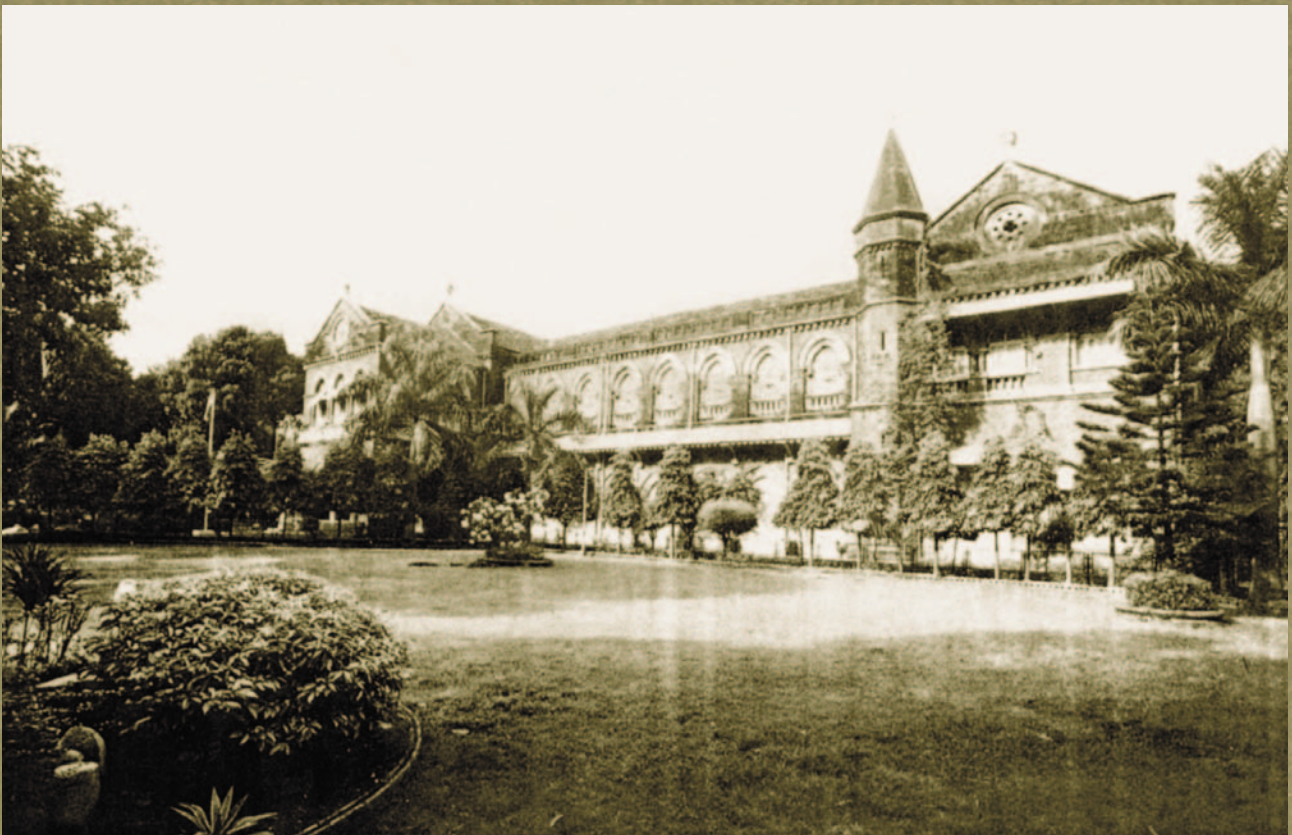
Parsi traders probably introduced the *gara* in India in the nineteenth century. It was patronized by

them and worn for weddings and *navjote* ceremonies. The original Chinese *garas* were considered quite bulky to wear as saris since they had embroidered borders on all four sides. There were typical scenes of Chinese life—pagodas, shrines, riverbanks, soldiers and cranes. The more intricate the designs, the more expensive the *garas* became.

Chinese characters, which appear on some saris, are taken to be the embroiderers' signature.

The *sali garo* and *tanchoi* were originally Chinese crafts, the *tanchoi* being named after the three (tan) Parsi Joshi brothers from China (Choi) who learnt the technique and brought it to India. Based on Chinese embroidery, it contains motifs of birds, animals, flowers, scenes and stories, often with clear Chinese influences e.g. pagodas and Chinamen. Many *garas* dating to the nineteenth century are precious heirlooms of the past, a celebration of the Indo-Chinese trade.³⁰

Some Parsi portraits were also painted by Chinese artists visiting India or based in China. Portrait and glass painting became very popular in China in the



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy School of Art.

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nineteenth century, especially in Canton. One of the most popular and prolific artists was Lamqua, who operated a studio in Canton with a team of assistants. Among the interesting Chinese paintings were a pair of 1830s unsigned oil portraits of Framji Pestonji Puatuck and his son Kaikhushru, another of Kooverji Katrak, and one by Sunqua of the 'Children of the Chandabhoy family'. The latter shows the children dressed in traditional costume, complete with embroidered prayer caps.

The Parsi furniture, with its distinctive carvings, shows cross-cultural links, including Chinese.

Sir Ratan Tata has an unparalleled collection of art, especially Chinese jade, including numerous small snuff bottles. They formed the most important single collection at the Prince of Wales Museum when it opened.

OTHER PIONEERING WORKS

The name of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy is associated with a number of other pioneering public works and activities.³¹ In 1852, when the first political association, the Bombay Association, was founded, he was voted the first honorary President. He was a patron of journalism and literature and provided substantial help to the Bombay Samachar founded in 1822 by Furdoonji Marzbanji. He was on the syndicate of the *Bombay Times* and *Journal of Commerce*, later renamed the *Times of India*. Sir J. J. gave money to Pestonji Maneckji for the Jame-Jamshed Press. He was also one of the owners of the *Bombay Courier*. Sir J. J. was one of the five fellows appointed to the University of Bombay in 1857. All the big Parsi traders were prominent members of the Parsi *panchayat*. The British appointed several to the Grand Jury or as Justices of the Peace. This ensured that they also exercised considerable political clout in their community and in the city. The major China traders thus were not just wealthy men, but constituted a fairly small, close-knit elite dominating various aspects of the life of Bombay right through the nineteenth century.

Sir George Anderson, Governor of Bombay, invested Jamsetjee with the rank and title of Knight of the British Empire in May 1842. This was followed by the presentation of a gold medal studded with diamonds in December 1842. Knighthood was not

considered a sufficient recognition for this enlightened citizen; the Queen conferred on him the Baronetcy in her birthday honours list in May 1857. The last precious honour by the Bombayites was a statue in his honour erected after his death. The statue still stands at the Royal Asiatic Library in Bombay.

Sir J. J.'s death in 1859 evoked a spontaneous outpouring of grief; the city schools, factories, offices and mills remained closed. Flags were flown at half-mast. His last rites (the *uthamna* ceremony) were observed not only in Bombay but also in towns of Gujarat touched by his munificence, by Parsis in India and even in Hong Kong. His name is included among the great Zoroastrians in all religious ceremonies even today.

THE PARSI ROLE IN HONG KONG

Having given an outline of the Parsi contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of Bombay, we will survey in brief the important role the Parsi merchants played in the commercial, sports, social welfare, educational development and community work of Hong Kong. Even today they remain active in business and in other spheres of Hong Kong life. As noted earlier, the Parsis were among the first merchants from the Indian subcontinent to recognize the excellent possibilities of the China trade.³² They saw the opportunities for huge profits in the opium trade and ran or chartered opium clippers for that purpose. Though the Parsi firms gradually engaged in businesses that were more connected with Hong Kong than with India, some continued to trade in Indian goods, such as cotton yarn, metals, spices, opium, precious stones, pearls and silk. Parsi dominance of trade declined during the early twentieth century when Chinese merchants entered the overseas market

REAL ESTATE

When Britain took possession of Hong Kong, four Parsee merchants moved at once to the new colony from Macao where they had been living temporarily. Dhunjibhoy Ruttonjee Bisney, Hirjibhoy Rustomjee, Pestonji Cowasji and Framji Jamsetjee were among the first purchasers of land in June 1841.³³ By taking over some forty sites offered by the government, they

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contributed to the future prosperity of the colony. As the conditions stabilized, more merchants moved to Hong Kong and made it their home.

Dorabjee Naorojee, one of the earliest residents of Hong Kong (he came from Bombay in 1852), was an enterprising and prosperous merchant. He built large godowns at Wanchai and did storage business, thus relieving the congestion in the Indian trade from which the merchants were suffering.³⁴ He owned several properties in Kowloon and was responsible for the development of Kowloon as a residential area.

Hormusjee Ruttonjee, who arrived in 1884, joined his kinsman already in business in Hong Kong.³⁵ The Ruttonjee family became well known for their public service and generous philanthropy. J. H. Ruttonjee developed property in Kowloon, having an interest in the Kowloon and Palace Hotels.

Hormusjee Navrojee Mody reached Hong Kong in 1858 as a junior assistant, but with his enterprising spirit and foresight soon rose in prominence as one of the leading merchants of the colony.³⁶ In partnership with Sir Paul Chater, Messrs. Chater and Mody conducted business with such acumen and ability that they made themselves known as prominent financiers and owners of large properties in Hong Kong and Kowloon. They organized the Praya Reclamation Scheme, which proved very successful. The lofty and imposing Prince's and Queen's buildings are the largest built by them. This Central portion of the town is a prominent business and banking center of Hong Kong. He had special faith in the development of Kowloon at a time when it was almost an empty area, and he invested heavily in real estate there. When Kowloon started to develop as a residential area, the government wanted a large portion of Mody's estate to make a public road, and he generously granted that portion of the land free. In recognition of this valuable gift, the government named it Mody Road.

BUSINESSES

The Parsis in Hong Kong engaged in a variety of businesses. Trading in a variety of products to and from India was their main business until they made Hong Kong their home and started participating in numerous other activities for the economic growth of Hong Kong and their own prosperity. Hormusjee

Mody switched from opium trading to exchange and share brokerage, in which he was eminently successful. This won him the respect and confidence of leading banks and the mercantile community of Hong Kong.³⁷ Hormusjee Ruttonjee, after having served with P. F. Daver and B. P. Karanja and Co., opened his own store in 1891 dealing in provisions, wines and spirits first at Lyndhurst Terrace and later at D'Aguilar Street. His son, J. H. Ruttonjee, expanded the business and diversified into imports and exports, agencies and real estate. He had an interest in the Kowloon and Palace Hotels, and after World War I he established a successful brewery.³⁸

The Parsis in Bombay started as guarantee brokers to British firms, and then entered into partnerships, banking and insurance, and real estate before they became entrepreneurs and pioneered the establishment of cotton textile mills.

Dorabjee Naorojee, after working with Duddell & Co., auctioneers and provision merchants, branched out as a baker and held for many years a contract to supply provisions to His Majesty's Army and Navy.³⁹ In 1870 he appears first as manager and later as owner of several hotels both in Hong Kong and Kowloon, including the Victoria Hotel, the King Edward Hotel and the Kowloon Hotel.

D. C. Tata of the Jamshedji Tata family traded chiefly in Indian and Japanese yarns, manufactured piece goods and sundries, in which he continued a successful business that later became Tata, Sons & Co. The Tatas are still active in business in Hong Kong.⁴⁰

EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES

Until the late nineteenth century, Hong Kong had a small College of Medicine and the Queen's College that catered to the advanced educational needs

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of the port city. When the medical college was incorporated in 1907, the then Governor Sir Fredrick Lugard proposed that Hong Kong should establish its own university.⁴¹ It would provide a unique opportunity to assist China in the acquisition of modern technical and scientific knowledge. Lugard's appeal for funds did not at first attract much support; many Chinese were still suspicious of Western learning, while most European businessmen felt that a university was an unnecessary luxury. Hormusjee Naorojee Mody offered \$150,000 for the building and \$30,000 as an endowment. This munificent gift is Hormusjee's noblest and most enduring gift to the city that had made him successful and prosperous. His generosity received much praise and appreciation from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Viceroy of Canton. His Majesty King Edward VII appointed him Knight Bachelor for this excellent philanthropy. Governor Lugard made this announcement in 1910 before a large distinguished gathering at the time of the laying of the foundation stone of the University. Mody's example inspired others, and at the time of the foundation itself over \$1,250,000 was promised for various faculties of the University.

Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee, who was among the earliest Parsi traders to purchase land in Hong Kong, transferred Marine Lot 10 to Jardine, Matheson and Co. and promised \$12,000 for the purpose of building a seaman's hospital.⁴² However, when the Hospital Committee tried to secure the money, they were unable to do so as Rustomjee had apparently neglected to transfer the funds to Jardine. However Jardine stepped in to assume responsibility for the contribution and added another \$20,000. It was intended to be named the Heerjeebhoy Hospital but received the somewhat mundane name of Seaman's Hospital, later known as the Royal Naval Hospital. Much later the Hormusjee Ruttonjee family took special interest in the Hong Kong anti-tuberculosis association. When the former Naval Hospital was taken over as a hospital for tuberculosis patients, it received a Parsi name—the Ruttonjee Sanatorium—after the family of the principal donor.

MISCELLANEOUS

When industry began to develop in Kowloon, Dorabjee Naorojee made his outstanding contribution

to Hong Kong by starting the Kowloon Ferry Company that later developed into the present Star Ferry Company.⁴³ It also contributed greatly to the development of Kowloon as a residential area. Dorabjee was a lover of flowers and had a beautiful garden in Kowloon. He encouraged horticulture and, more than any other resident of the city, promoted the growing of fruits and vegetables. He lived in Hong Kong for fifty-two years, and in his humble and unostentatious way contributed his mite to building this thriving and prosperous city.

Hormusjee Mody of the Hong Kong University fame took a prominent part on the local turf and owned the famous Buxey Stables. He named his ponies after roses and was an outstanding figure at the races, where he entertained friends. This noble and generous-hearted man not only worked for the welfare and prosperity of the people of this colony but also never forgot his co-religionists in India and subscribed liberally for the relief of the Bombay Parsis.

The Parsis made generous contributions to famine relief in China in the form of rice to the starving poor in Canton in 1858, and their good example was followed by others.⁴⁴

One of the earliest contributions of the Parsis to Hong Kong was the provision of a bandstand in the Botanical Gardens, which was opened to the public in August 1864. Surrounded by trees, it is one of the very pleasant but inconspicuous features of the garden now.⁴⁵ The Parsis placed five Victoria Jubilee fountains in 1887 at different spots in Hong Kong. They were ornamental iron, and each cost \$1000. Ten years later, on the occasion of Her Majesty's second jubilee, it was necessary to bring them into functioning order again. In 1911 a question was raised in the Legislative Council concerning their state of disrepair. All of them seem to have disappeared over the years.

The Parsis maintained cordial relations with the British and were genuine in their loyalty to the Crown. Hormusjee Mody donated the great bronze statue of Her Majesty Queen Mary that stands in Statue Square. Several leading Parsi firms raised funds at the time of the jubilee in 1887. A Zoroastrian memorial service was held at the Parsee Club in 1910 to mark the death of King Edward VII.⁴⁶

These are some of the many examples of the significant contributions that Parsis made to the life and growth of Hong Kong. **RC**

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NOTES

- 1 There are several biographies of Sir Jamshetjee Jejeebhoy, such as B. K. Karanjia, *Give me a Bombay merchant—Anytime! The life of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Br. 1783-1859*, University of Mumbai, 1998; C. S. Nazir, *The First Parsi Baronet; Jehangir R. P. Mody Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy: the first Indian Knight and Baronet*.
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- 3 Ruttonjee Ardeshir Wadia, *Scions of Lowjee Wadia*, Bombay 1964, pp. 110-2.
- 4 Edwin Green & Sara Kinsey, *The Paradise Bank: The Mercantile Bank of India 1853-93*, p. 8.
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- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 7 Frank H. H. King, *The History of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation Volume 1 Hong Kong Bank in Late Imperial China on an even keel 1864-1902*, Cambridge University Press 1987, p. 57.
- 8 Anne Bulley, *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833*, Richmond Surrey, Curzon Press, 2000, p. 196.
- 9 R. A. Wadia, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- 11 B. K. Karanjia, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- 12 Ann Bulley, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
- 13 See the discussion in Christine Dobbin, *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities: Conjoint Communities in the making of the World Economy, 1570-1940*, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press Limited 1996, pp. 86-87.
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- 16 Christine Dobbin, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
- 17 "Zenobia Shroff Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy and the Industrialization of Bombay," in Nawaz B. Mody (ed.), *The Parsis in Western India: 1818-1920*, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1998, pp. 146-47.
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- 19 B. K. Karanjia, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-6.
- 22 Kalpana Desai, "The Role of Parsis in the Urbanisation of Mumbai in the 19th Century," in Nawaz B. Mody, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-8.
- 23 R. A. Wadia, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- 25 B. K. Karanjia, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50.
- 26 R. A. Wadia, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
- 27 Christine Dobbin, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- 28 Vispi S. Dastur, *op. cit.*, p. 115, and B. K. Karanjia, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-9.
- 29 Kalpana Deesai, "The Tanchoi and the Garo, Parsi Textiles and Embroidery" in P. J. Godrej and F. P. Mistree (eds.), *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art Religion and Culture*, Mapin Publishing, 2002, pp. 577-603.
- 30 Information on Art and culture also from the Internet.
- 31 Vispi S. Dastur, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-3 and B. K. Karanjia, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- 32 Solomon Bard, *Traders of Hong Kong: Some Foreign Merchant Houses 1841-99*, Hong Kong, Urban Council, 1993, p. 85.
- 33 *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.
- 34 *Hundred Years of Commercial Activities of Parsi Merchants in Hong Kong, by an Old Parsi Resident*, in a Collection of Broadcast Talks from the Hong Kong Studio of ZBW on the Occasion of the Commemoration of the first Centenary of Hong Kong and published in 1941 by The New World News Service, p. 101. The radio talks were broadcast from 18th to 20th January 1941. Hereafter, *Hundred Years*.
- 35 Colin N. Crisswell, *The Taipans: Hong Kong's Merchant Princes*, Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 185; Solomon Bard, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
- 36 *Hundred Years*, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-9.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 Solomon Bard, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Colin N. Crisswell, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
- 39 *Hundred Years*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.
- 40 Solomon Bard, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
- 41 Colin N. Crisswell, *op. cit.*, p. 184; *Hundred Years*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
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- 43 *Hundred Years*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
- 44 Carl T. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 392.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 391.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 392.

Parsee Merchants in the Pearl River Delta

CARL T. SMITH

WHO WERE THE PARSEES?

The Parsees who established themselves as merchants in Macao were descendants of followers of the Zoroastrian faith, which was established five or six centuries before the present Christian era in Persia (Iran). It celebrated the ultimate victory of the power of light over darkness. When, in time, the Muslims came into power in Persia, many Parsees migrated to other parts of Asia. Those that came to Macao were from India, principally Bombay. Through the centuries Parsees maintained a strong sense of identity as a minority religious community with distinctive dress and customs.

The Parsee presence in Macao was preceded by their advent at Canton as merchants.

PARSEE NAMING SYSTEM

They retained the patronymic naming system, which used their father's first name as their last name, therefore no fixed surname was passed on from generation to generation. However, in time and on occasion a fixed surname was adopted, such as Mody, Setna, Cama, Canajee Bottlewalla, Wadia, Buxey,



Illustration by Victor Hugo Marreiros.

Bisney, Shroff, Readymoney, etc. A fixed surname was not universally used in the nineteenth century. Most of the patronymic names ended in “bhoy” and “jee”.¹ These endings usually indicate the individual was a Parsee. The pool of given names was rather restricted. These features of the traditional Parsee naming system make it difficult to establish relationships.

In this article no attempt has been made to standardize the spelling of names. They are given as they appear in the original source.

EARLY PARSEE TRADE TO CHINA

According to W. H. Coates, author of *The Old Country Trade of the East Indies*, Parsees began trading in India in 1735, and in 1755, Mr. Readymoney visited China.² He must have been welcomed with such a propitious name! The Parsees in India owned twenty large vessels.

From the records of the English East India Company at Canton, there are scattered references to several Parsee merchants as well as figures and lists of Parsees which provide information on the growth of the Parsee community in Canton.³

Reference is made in 1819 to Meerwanjee Manockjee, Jehangee Framjee and other unnamed Parsees, along with other British subjects who were trading there without licenses.⁴ In 1825 there were "several" Parsees at Canton.⁵ But in 1829 they become "a considerable number."⁶

The first time the English records have statistics for the Parsee residents at Canton is in 1831. There were twenty-one merchants, eight clerks and fifteen servants—altogether forty-one.⁷

The Anglo-Chinese Calendar for 1832, compiled by John Robert Morrison, has a list of Asiatic British subjects, which includes Parsees, Muslims and Jews. The list is arranged according to the occupants of the different Hong or Factories. Thirty-one Parsees occupied five separate quarters in the foreign factories enclave in Canton.

- No. 3. Pou Shun Hong
 - Framjee Pestonjee
 - Hormasjee Sapoorjee
 - Framjee Heerajee
 - Jamsetjee Bhicajee
 - Pestonjee Rustomjee
 - Dorabjee Byramjee
- No. 1. Chow Chow Hong
 - Dadabhoy Rustomjee
 - Ruttonjee Byramjee
 - Pestonjee Cowasjee (died 1842 at Macao)
 - Jamsetjee Rustomjee
 - Dhunjeebhoy Muncherchee
 - Framjee Merwanjee
 - Cursetjee Bomanjee
- No. 2. Chow Chow Hong
 - Ruttonjee Burjorjee
 - Sorabjee Rustomjee
 - Dajeebhoy Muncherchee
 - Cawasjee Eduljee
 - Limjee Bomanjee
 - Bhicajee Framjee
 - Shaik Hussain Adumjee (the name suggests he was a Muslim)
 - Pestojee Ruttonjee
 - Abadeen Abdoolatil (the name suggests he was a Muslim)
- No. 4. Dutch Hong
 - Ardeseer Jamsetjee
 - Sorabjee Tamooljee
 - Bhicajee Burjorjee

- No. 7. French Hong
 - Hormusjee Cowasjee
 - Nasserwanjee Bhicajee
 - Hormasjee Nowrojee
 - Mahomed Salay Bubool (the name suggests he was a Muslim)
 - Byramjee Hormasjee
 - Bomanjee

1832 = 31 merchants (and clerks?) in five premises

1836 = 62 Parsees. (The second-largest group; first was 158 English)

1838 = 58

1841 = 42

1842 = 35

1843 = 50

1844 = 63⁸

By comparing the lists with each other, one has a reasonable record of the comings and goings in China of the Parsees of that period.

In 1837 the General Chamber of Commerce of Canton had a membership of twenty-four firms, each with two votes, and seventeen individual merchants, each with one vote. There were two Parsee firms, D. and M. Rustomjee and H. and M. Cursetjee, and four Parsee merchants—Framjee Pestonjee, Furdonjee Hormusjee, Cursetjee Furdoonjee and Nanabhoy Framjee—were members of the Canton General Chamber of Commerce.⁹

THREE NOTICES OF TRAGIC EVENTS

A few scattered records provide some details about Parsee life in Canton. The issue of the *Canton Register* for 28 September 1828 reported the death on the 22nd of "Asspundeanjee Mancherjee, a young man. At daybreak, as some of his countrymen went down to the river to pray, found him lying dead close to riverbank in the shoal water. Buried next day on Danes Island."

The mention of praying at the river at daybreak throws light on a religious practice of the Parsee community at Canton. Prayer at sunrise would be an affirmation of the basic belief of the Parsees in the victory of light over darkness and the purifying power of water and fire.

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The usual course of affairs in the foreign factories at Canton ran fairly smoothly. It was, however, a small space shared by people from many different countries and cultures, speaking many different languages. All these created tensions, which were usually repressed, but on occasion could break out into conflict or insult.

A small dispute in 1829 at the Dutch factory about a key ended in a beating from which the victim died. His attackers were three Parsee servants of the merchant Merwanjee Hormusjee. The factory at Canton had two entrances, a private one for quarter number one, the other entrance was to all the other quarters.¹⁰

One of the residents of the Hong, Charles Bovet, had a lock placed on the door that gave entrance to all the quarters but number one. A Parsee who was also a resident asked for a key. He was summarily refused. Angered, he ordered three of the ship's servants to break the lock. Mr. Bovet produced a sword and attacked the Parsees. It was three against one, and the sword was wrested from him. He then tried to run away shouting for help. A ship's captain, Mr. Mackenzie, rushed out armed with an umbrella. He used it to strike one of the Parsees. In retaliation the Parsees used wooden cudgels to strike the captain on his head causing serious wounds, from which the unfortunate man died the next day.

As the deceased captain had been in the employ of the Holland Company, the Dutch Consul at Canton swore in a jury to consider the case. The three Parsees were arrested and confined. Then the Chinese authorities decided to take over the case and pronounce their own judgment on the perpetrators. To avoid this, the three accused Parsees were sent to Bombay. The Chinese authorities had to face the fact that they had been outmanoeuvred.¹¹

The third event was not connected with death but with racial prejudice in the Canton community against the Parsees. It took place at a farewell banquet for William Jardine in January 1839. A detailed account of what happened is in a letter written by Robert Bennet Forbes, an American merchant, to his wife.

A close and long-standing tie existed between Jardine and the Parsee merchant Heerjeebhoy Jamsetjee. They first met when the ship on which they were both traveling was shipwrecked. At the time both were young men launching out in the China trade. In about 1799 he left Bombay for China in pursuit of

profit with only 120 rupees in his purse. His profit from the voyage was not very great, but he did make some good contacts to be used on a future trip. His second trip to Canton was on a vessel of the East India Company. On his third voyage to China in 1805 on the Ship *Brunswick*, he traveled with his uncle. The vessel, however, was seized by a French privateer, and was taken to Capetown in Africa. Undaunted, he tried again. There is a probable connection between Jeejeebhoy Rustomjee of Macao with the Bombay firm of Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy and Co.

A letter of appreciation was presented to Jeejeebhoy Rustomjee. It was signed by forty-two Parsees. The first name on the list was Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee, the agent in China for Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Sons and Co. of Bombay.¹²

In his letter, dated 25th January 1839, Robert Bennet describes how the banquet for William Jardine degenerated into a shambles with insults directed at the Parsees in attendance. This was a sign that under the surface of profitable business relationships there were cultural and ethnic tensions, which in this instance must have surfaced after the consumption by one side of too many glasses of wine and spirits.¹³ The party was held at the East India Company's Hall with one hundred and forty guests in attendance, and among them there would have been most of the forty two Parsees who signed the letter of appreciation to the man being honored. Mr. Forbes' description gives some insights into the lavish hospitality and the quantities of wine that a public social occasion could feature in the bachelor society of the cosmopolitan merchant community at Canton.

After much toasting and drinking, what appears to have been some racial antagonism was expressed against the Parsee attendants, and an ugly scene followed. But first, let us turn to Mr. Forbes' description of the venue at the former establishment of the East India Company. (Jardine, Matheson and Co. were occupying it at the time. It is interesting to note that at this time Jardine's and the Parsees were occupying adjoining quarters of the Palácio of the Baroness de São José do Porto Alegre on the Praia Grande in Macao)

So that his wife could better visualize the proceeding, Forbes drew a rough plan of the dining hall and adjoining verandah. The room in which the dinner was held was about one hundred feet by sixty

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feet and opened upon a verandah of fifty or sixty square feet, which for the occasion was enclosed by cloth and its pillars festooned with evergreens and brightened by blooming flowers in pots on the balustrades. In front of the enclosing fabrics were draperies between the pillars and at one end the letters W. J. in colored lights. The decoration of the porch was to serve as a background for the banquet hall. Later there was dancing on the verandah's marble floors. Since foreign women were prohibited from Canton by the Chinese authorities, the dancing must have been unisex and raucous. A band had been brought up from one of the ships at Whampoa to provide music. Dinner was served at seven thirty. By one in the morning all the regular toasts and songs were finished, but there followed a demand for voluntary toasts. By this time the wine was beginning to take effect, formality had disappeared and boorish behavior began to take over. Volunteers climbed over the tables to make their toasts, Forbes included, though he had drunk moderately, or so he wrote to his wife. His toast was all about "union", but was persistently interrupted by loud shouts and unseemly behavior. Soon, unfortunately, a serious breach of "union" was shouted out by a young inebriated Scotsman, "Let us clear the table and send these damned Parsees home, and then we shall have supper." It was then about three o'clock in the morning.

Things began to get nasty. Forbes, who at this time was acting as Chairman, tried to restore some semblance of order. He stood up on his chair and shouted for support and a cooling of tempers. Twenty cried out "Support the Chair". Twenty more shouted, "Let us have supper". Eventually Forbes restored a degree of order. By that time, only two Parsees remained, he got them to stand up on each side of him and explained that the rude young man had not meant to insult them and made the culprit offer an apology and shake hands with the two Parsees. Forbes informed his wife there was a parting glass of good fellowship and reconciliation. Though the formalities of reconciliation were observed, undoubtedly the episode left its wounds.

PARSEES AND THE OPIUM TRADE

A comparison of the annual import of Malwa and Patna opium shows that between 1800 and 1822 there was more Patna than Malwa brought to China,

but from 1822 to 1839 the balance was reversed in favor of Malwa.¹⁴ The implication is that in the sixteen years preceding the Opium War, the Parsee merchants of Bombay took an increasing part in the trade.

The Bombay Malwa opium syndicate of Jardine, Matheson and Co., Remington, Crawford and Co. and Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Sons and Co. attempted to monopolize the trade. An agency house, such as Jardines, charged a commission. In 1825 the Canton agency houses agreed on the rates to be charged for their services, but these were often undercut by the Parsee merchants on the basis of friendship.¹⁵

From 1820 to 1830 there was a rapid increase in the import of Malwa opium. The British made inroads on the Portuguese by using Lintin Island in the Pearl River estuary above Macao as an anchorage and opium smuggling point.

The first mention of Malwa in the Jardine letters is in 1802 by the Ship *Asia*. In early years the trade was largely conducted by the Armenians, whose purchases dominated the opium sales at Calcutta.¹⁶ There was, however, increasing competition from Parsee and British merchants. In 1820 Magniac and Co. entered into an arrangement with the largest Bombay opium dealers, Motichund Amichand, a Hindu, and Hormusjee Dorabjee and Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, both Parsees.

Meanwhile, the Chinese authorities were increasing their efforts to stamp out the trade. An Edict issued in July 1838 ordered five British and three Parsee opium traders resident in Canton to leave China. The Parsees were Framjee, Hormusjee and Dadabhoy.¹⁷

PARSEE PRESENCE IN MACAO

The first reference to Parsees in Macao is in a document of the Macao Senate dated 20th August 1825. A letter was sent to the Governor calling his attention to J. V. Ribeira having rented a house to Parsees without first getting a license from the Governor.¹⁸ Unfortunately the names of the Parsees are not given, so, at present, they must remain anonymous pioneers.

During the 1830s and 1840s, there were many changes in the foreign trade of China which affected the Parsees, along with other traders. In 1834 the charter of the East India Company trading with China

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was revoked and the India-China trade was dominated by independent merchants. There was a dramatic increase in the import of opium into China. The Parsee merchants of Bombay became very active in supplying the Chinese smugglers of that drug grown in the Bombay region. It was known as Malwa opium as distinguished from the Patna, which was exported from Calcutta. The import of opium to China was illegal. In the closing years of the 1830s the Emperor took strong measures to stop the trade. These resulted in the forced departure of foreign merchants from the foreign factory area of Canton. They removed to Macao and the anchorages at Hong Kong harbor and its neighborhood. The British occupied the island of Hong Kong in 1841, and so began the commercial decline in Macao. In the 1840s there was a small number of Parsee merchants residing in Macao. Their numbers decreased as some departed for the new British settlement or returned to Canton. There was another inflow of Parsees to Macao at the close of the 1850s when war broke out between the British and Chinese. Again, after the end of that war, the Parsees gradually left Macao, and I have found no records of them there after 1890.

The following account of their presence in Macao is based on documents of the period.

The first direct reference of a Parsee in Macao is the burial there of Cursetjee Framjee in 1829. He died 17th March 1829, aged fifty-six. The community needed a cemetery for his burial. For this purpose his fellow countrymen acquired a plot of land in Macao as a place of burial, although this was not the first place of burial for Parsees in China.

The wall and gate of the Parsee Cemetery is on what is now called Estrada dos Parses. The plot extended down the hill to the sea-shore. A notice of Cursetjee Framjee's death was published in the *Canton Register*. It states he died "aged fifty years [sic], of a lingering illness, born in Bombay and an agent of Forbes and Co. [of Bombay] and the nephew of Jamsetjee Bomanjee, the famous ship builder, and Hormusjee Bomanjee. He had been in the habit for several years in visiting China annually for commercial purposes." The uncles of Cursetjee Framjee were of the Lowjee Wadia family.

Hormusjee Bomanjee Wadia had met John Forbes in 1785. Charles Forbes, a nephew of John, became a partner in Forbes and Co. in Bombay in

1789. Hormusjee was a close friend of both the Forbes, and when the broker of their firm died in 1794, Hormusjee became their broker. Through this connection, Cowasjee Framjee acted as the agent for Forbes and Co. in China.¹⁹

Pestonjee Cowasjee bought Marine Lot 7 at the first auction of land in Hong Kong in June 1841. Apparently he changed his mind about moving his business from Macao to the new British settlement on Hong Kong Island. It may well have been he had intimations of his impending death, for on 3th May 1842 he placed a notice in the *Canton Register*, that he had for sale a quantity of granite stones on his Hong Kong lot. Undoubtedly the stones had been intended for the erection of a substantial building on the lot.

Sometime between then and 1844, the lot reverted to the Crown, presumably because Pestonjee Cowasjee's executor did not pay the annual crown lease rent. It was resold by the Government in 1844, under a new crown lease, to Dent and Co. Marine Lot 7 was on the East Side of Pedder Street. On the west side of the street was Marine Lot 66. After Pestonjee Cowasjee's death, his executor Cowasjee Pallenjee registered the lots in Hong Kong in June 1845, in which he transferred Marine Lot no. 66 to Jeehangeer Framjee Buxey, both of Canton. On the same month, Jeehangeer transferred the property back to Cowasjee Pallenjee.²⁰ Cowasjee Pallenjee sold the lot to William Emeny in 1854. From 1845 to 1854 it was rented to a succession of occupants, none of them Parsees.

Pestonjee Cowasjee left a will, but I have found no record of its probate either in Macao or Hong Kong. The name of his executor in China, Pestonjee Cowasjee, indicates that, under the patronymic naming system practiced by the Parsees, he was a son of the testator.

Pestonjee Cowasjee was the founder of the firm of Cowasjee Pallenjee. It became one of the principal Parsee firms trading in China. The obituary of a senior partner of the firm, Cursetjee Bomanjee Sethna, who died in Bombay in 1889, stated that the founder of the firm had been to China in 1833.²¹ However, as mentioned above, his name is listed on the 1832 list of Asiatic British subjects doing business at Canton in 1832. Another member of the family, Cooverjee Bomanjee Sethna, probably a brother of Cursetjee Bomanjee, who died in Bombay in 1903, aged eighty-

Nusserwanjee Maneckjee Wadia, attributed to Spoilum, c. 1800. Oil on primed cloth, 99 x 73.7 cm. Photograph courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum (M245).



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two, had established a branch of the firm in Shanghai in 1849.²² The company's corresponding firm in Bombay was Cawasjee Bomanjee and Co. The Cawasjee Pallenjee firm was still doing business in Hong Kong in 1914.

Pestonjee Cowasjee died in 1842 and was buried in Macao.

The Parsee cemetery contains fourteen marked graves. Father Manuel Teixeira, in his book *A Voz das Pedras de Macao*,²³ has the inscription:

This monument is erected
To the sacred memory of
Pestonjee Cawasjee Darabsh Sethna, Esre. [sic]
The founder of the fir. [sic] of
Cawasjee, Pallanjee & Co.
of China.
Who departed this live [sic]
18 August 42
By his descendants
31st July 1919.

A place name that has disappeared from Macao is the "Horta de Parces" (sic), which I have interpreted to be the Parsee Garden. It was a small strip of land just outside the Campo Gate. On one side it was bounded by the city wall, and on the other side by the Calçada do Poço, which climbed the Monte hill toward a former Chinese Christian Cemetery above the old Chinese village of São Lazaro.²⁴ This description fits an advertisement placed by Framjee Jamsetjee in the Macao paper, *A Aurora Macaense*, on 30 December 1843 for rent of a garden with a small shed or house to the right of the Campo Gate.²⁵

The Parsee Garden reappears in the Macao records in 1877 in connection with the estate of Joaquim do Rozario. It was described as a kitchen garden. It contained eight wood plank buildings and a ruined structure at the top of Escada do Corrector. This street disappeared when the area was redeveloped at the turn of the last century.

Joaquim do Rozario had mortgaged his property, and after his death it was sold at public auction to pay his creditors.²⁶ The purchaser was probably Francisco de Paula das Dores Senna, because when the government expropriated some parcels of land near the old wall of the city in 1908, the owners of one of the parcels were four of his daughters, Anna Maria Senna, Isabel de Senna

Ribeiro, Rosa Maria de Senna Rodrigues and Maria Estella de Senna Mello. Their property was described as "Land next to Campo Gate, formerly Horta dos Parses, now Rua Ferreira do Amaral."²⁷

In the introductory section we have given a brief survey of the arrival and presence of Parsee merchants at Canton. With the seizure and burning of the opium stock of the foreign traders by Commission Lin in 1839, the foreign community left Canton.

On 8th December 1840, the *Canton Register* published a letter from "British subjects now resident at Macao." Among the signatories are the following Parsees:²⁸ D. and M. Rustomjee and Co.; Shavuxshaw Rustomjee; Hormasjee Byramjee; C. Saporjee Lungra; Pestonjee Cowasjee; Hormusjee Framjee; Byramjee Rustomjee; Pallanjee Nasserwanjee; Framjee Jamsetjee; Burjorjee Maneckjee.

Some were only temporary residents, others were more permanent. For most of the above, their stay in Macao was a short one. They were waiting there to return to Canton.

The 1848 *Hong Kong Almanack and Directory* has a tabulation of the number of Parsee firms and the number of their partners and assistants for that year. It clearly shows that the Parsees on the 1840 list did not stay there for any period of time. In fact there is only one Parsee who is listed in the directory as a resident of Macao, namely Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee. Of the other Parsee firms and residents in China in 1848, there was a branch of a Canton firm at Shanghai. The business there was conducted by two assistants, as none of the partners was resident there. For Hong Kong, three firms are listed. However, one of these was not Parsee but a Portuguese Bombay firm, and another had a Parsee owner assisted by a Muslim employee. At Canton, however, there were thirty-one Parsee firms, with 117 resident partners and assistants.

Of those whose names are on the 1840 list, I have found extensive records for some, and for others only a few brief notices, as shown by the following biographical sketches.

D. AND M. RUSTOMJEE AND CO.

This was the only company on the list. Its two principals were the brothers Dadabhoy and Maneckjee Rustomjee, sons of Rustomjee Cowasjee of the Banajee family of Bombay.

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Their father Rustomjee was born in Bombay in 1790. He came to Canton in 1814 and stayed for three years before returning to Calcutta, where he established himself as a permanent resident. He died there in 1852. Through the years he acquired a fleet of vessels that made regular trips to China carrying cotton and opium: the ships *Cowasjee Family*, *Sylph*, *Rustomjee Cowasjee*, *Mermaid* and *Beremer*.²⁹

Dadabhoy was born in 1811. At the age of eighteen he made his first voyage to China on the ship of his uncle Framjee Cowasjee. He arrived at Canton in 1826 and returned to Bombay in 1830. He soon returned to Canton and established there the firm of D. and M. Rustomjee and Co.

Maneckjee Rustomjee was born in 1815. Like his brother Dadabhoy, he came to China as an adolescent to learn the trade. He arrived at Canton in 1830 and returned to Bombay after three years.³⁰

Dadabhoy Rustomjee attended the first sale of land in Hong Kong in June 1841. He bought Marine Lots 5 and 20. On Lot 5, east of Pedder's Wharf, he built a large building. He offered this to the Government as temporary quarter for Commissioner Keying who came to Hong Kong in 1843 to sign the Treaty of Nanking. For some years the building was known as "Keying House".³¹ He never moved his business to Hong Kong, but from Macao returned to Canton. The firm of D. and M. Rustomjee became insolvent in 1851.

SHAVUXSHAW RUSTOMJEE

In 1845 an assistant of Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee in Macao. He first appears in the Canton records in 1835.

HORMUSJEE BYRAMJEE

On Canton records from 1833 to 1845.

C. SAPORJEE LUNGA, or more commonly appears as Cowasjee Saporjee Lungrana

The firm of Cowasjee Saporjee Lungrana is listed at Canton from 1845 to 1848 at No. 5 Pau Shun Hong. In 1851, as representative of the Parsee community in China, he presented a donation of a bamboo water pipe to the Macao Government.³² This gift is further evidence of the importance the Parsee religion places on water as a symbol of spiritual cleanliness and purity. In 1855 he sold Inland Lot 3 in

Hong Kong. At the time he was designated as "of Bombay, but formerly of Canton."³³

PESTONJEE COWASJEE

He died in Macao in 1842 and was buried in the Parsee Cemetery there. His biography appears in the discussion of the establishment of the cemetery.

HORMUSJEE FRAMJEE

He was a partner with Dhunjeebhoy Muncherchee and is listed in 1839 at No. 5 Pau Shun Hong, Canton. In 1840 his partner was Maneckjee Burjorjee. His name appears in 1842 in a petition of British merchants at Canton. He left China for Bombay in January 1843. This is the last mention of him in the China records.

BYRAMJEE RUSTOMJEE

His first appearance in the China records is this list dated December 1840. His name appears again in 1843. Is he the same as Byramjee Rustomjee Cudawana, who in 1845 resided at No. 1 Chow Chow Hong, Canton?

PALLENJEE NASSERWANJEE

From 1835 to 1839, he was doing business at No. 1 Fung Tai Hong, Canton, and in 1846 and 1847 he was at No. 1 Chow Chow Hong, with D. and M. Rustomjee and Co.

FRAMJEE JAMSETJEE

He was a resident in Canton from 1834 to 1839. With other Parsees trading at Canton he moved to Macao at the approach of open hostility between the British and Chinese. He purchased a marine lot at the first land sale in Hong Kong. It was located in Wanchai near Spring Garden Lane and was numbered 36. He improved the lot with a rough sea wall and a brick and mat godown, but he did not leave the settled comforts of Macao for the inconveniences of a new settlement that was hastily being thrown together. He tried to lure a tenant to his Hong Kong investment by advertising it for sale or let in January 1842 and offered to remodel the crude structure on the lot into a proper dwelling.³⁴ The advertisement continued to appear until the end of 1843. By that time, he had strengthened the sea wall and remodeled the godown into a comfortable bungalow but he received no

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acceptable offer for the premises. Finally in May 1844, nearly three years after he had purchased the lot, he reluctantly uprooted himself from Macao and moved to Hong Kong. Within two years, however, he again advertised the sale of the property, describing his property as “that pleasant and healthy residence known as Framjee’s bungalow surrounded by a well stocked garden and commanding a fine view of the bay with a large sea frontage.”³⁵

After his advertisements for the sale or rent of his Wanchai property ceased appearing in the Hong Kong newspaper, he placed an advertisement in the Macao paper, *A Aurora Macaense*, on 30th December 1843 for a garden with a small shed or house to the right of the Campo Gate. Inquiries were to be made to Framjee Jamsetjee, at Rua Formosa.³⁶

He acquired some other properties in Hong Kong but could not dispose of them. He became increasingly dissatisfied with Hong Kong and in 1854 published a “Final Notice”, stating that Framjee Jamsetjee, the oldest resident of Hong Kong, being tired of Hong Kong and being obliged to leave at last, requests all accounts be sent for liquidation.”³⁷ Perhaps throughout his ten-year residence in Hong Kong, even in so pleasant a location, he never adjusted to the faster pace of Hong Kong as compared with the more relaxed style of Macao and even more of being at “home” in India.

BURJORJEE MANECKJEE

In January 1840, with Hormusjee Framjee, he advertised a ship about to depart for Singapore and Bombay. This is the only other reference to him in the China records.

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF THE PARSEE PRESENCE IN MACAO

The main sources to document the increase and decrease of Parsee residents in Macao are directories and the annual lists of foreign residents in China published in the *Chinese Repository* up to 1855.

The previous section concerns the ten Parsees who were in Macao at the end of 1840. After the 1840 list, the next list of Parsees resident in Macao is in 1848 in a list of houses whose occupants maintained an oil lamp outside their houses to illuminate their section of the street. The following

appear on the list. All were resident on the Praia Grande. No. 26. Pallenjee Dorabjee; No. 34. A Parsee – perhaps Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee; No. 60. Cowasjee Pallenjee

In a directory of Macao published in 1848, the only Parsee is Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee, whose name does not appear as one of the street lamp providers. He was probably, however, the unnamed Parsee at No. 34, who lived next to the Governor’s Palace. As can be seen in the account of his life in Macao, he rented premises in the mansion of the heirs of Henrique Hyndman, which was to the south of the Governor’s residence.

COWASJEE HORMOSJEE

His name appears on the 1832 list of Parsees residing at Canton. The next mention of him is in 1845. His house on the Praia Grande is on the list of residents who maintained a street lamp outside their residence as a service to the public. For a number of years in the 1850s, he was an assistant to Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee.

He had some financial reverses in 1851. In February his household effects were sold at public auction in a case brought against him for an un-expired lease of No. 7 Rua Formosa.³⁸ His name appears as a merchant in the 1861 Directory of Macao, but is not in the directory for 1863.

PALENJEE DORABJEE

He lived from 1835 to 1839 at the foreign factories in Canton. He does not appear in the records again until 1848. This suggests that he may have returned to India during the opium war. He was an assistant to Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee in 1850. This is the last mention of his name in the China records.

HEERJEEBHOY RUSTOMJEE

He had close connections with the British firm of Jardine, Matheson and Co. He first appears on China records in 1835 as a resident at the foreign factories compound at Canton. In 1838, 1839 and 1840 he made round trips to India. After his return in 1840, he gave a “splendid quadrille party” at his residence in Macao.³⁹

This was either a card party with tables for four persons played with a deck of forty cards, or a square dance of four couples with eight figures. If it was the

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latter, it raises the question of who were the females. The same question arises for the dancing at the dinner given in Canton in 1839 for William Jardine. In Macao there was a multiplicity of women in the Portuguese community. The selection from the foreign residents was more limited. But even more interesting is that of a dance party with mixed couples being held by a Parsee. The Parsees followed the same practice as Indian Muslims and Hindus of secluding the female members of the family in their own quarters. In India there was strong criticism in the 1860s of a prominent Parsee resident who was seen shopping with his young wife and walking with her on the public streets.⁴⁰ Parsee merchants seldom took their wives with them when they traded in foreign countries. There is no evidence of a Parsee woman living in Macao in the nineteenth century. The first record I found of a Parsee family in Hong Kong records is 1876.⁴¹

Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee traded largely in Malwa opium, and in 1840 was a party in the courts of Macao with Alexander McIntyre over fifty chests of the drug.⁴²

After the British took possession of Hong Kong Island in February 1841, Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee must have considered relocating in the new settlement. He attended the first land sale there in June 1841 and bought two lots. If he had in mind building on them and moving over to Hong Kong, something must have caused him to change his plans, because shortly before 1843 he disposed of Marine Lot 10, located between Pedder and Pottinger Streets. Perhaps he was disgruntled because the Hong Kong administration had repossessed his other lot in order to use it for storage of military

ordinances. This lot was on the north side of the present Queensway.

Shortly after purchasing the two lots, he wrote to Alexander Anderson, Acting Surgeon for the establishment of the Superintendency of British Trade in China, to inform the doctor he had placed \$12,000 Hongkong dollars in the care of Jardine, Matheson and Co. for the purpose of building a hospital in

Hong Kong for foreign seamen. There was a delay in implementing the plan for a

seamen's hospital, but eventually a committee was organized for that purpose. When they applied to

Jardines for the contribution of Mr. Rustomjee, they were informed that Jardines had no record of the sum.

Somewhere something obviously went wrong.

Perhaps the benefactor had for some reason or other neglected to transfer the money to

Jardines. However, they offered to assume responsibility for the

\$12,000 and added to it their own contribution of

\$20,000. It was intended that the hospital would

bear the name of Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee, but

instead it was given the more mundane name of Seamen's

Hospital. The name was changed in 1873 to the Royal Naval Hospital.

Many decades later the site was acquired by the Hong Kong Ruttonjee

family for the Ruttonjee Sanatorium for tuberculosis patients. Thus, after a century, a Hong

Kong hospital bore the name of a Parsee family.⁴³

In Macao Mr. Rustomjee rented premises in the Hyndman family mansion on the Praia Grande. Its neighbor to the north was the old Governor's Palace and to the south the Palace of the Baroness de São José



Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, First Baronet.
Courtesy of Rustom Jamsetjee, Seventh Baronet.

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de Porto Alegre. It was a central and prestigious location. A part of the mansion of the Baroness was rented by Jardine, Matheson and Co. In 1820 the Hyndman property had been rented by the East India Company.⁴⁴

In 1845 Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee was experiencing financial difficulties. He fell behind in his rent and was in default on a mortgage. Both creditors took him to court and asked for an embargo on his moveable property.

João Hyndman, for himself and his sibling, brought an action on 23rd April 1845 for payment of rent due on the residence he had leased from them. He was in arrears for 300 patacas. This was half the annual rent of 600 patacas and covered the six months from 21st July 1845 to the completion of the lease on 21st January 1846. An embargo order was issued on 1st December 1845.

The other creditor was António Gomes, who held a mortgage on the furniture as surety for a loan dated 3rd June 1845. In both cases the court archives contain a list of furniture. They are almost identical. One difference is that the list in the Gomes case gives the contents of each room. So we can enter the house with the guests of the 1840 “splendid quadrille party” into the mansion’s spacious, palatial rooms.

The entrance hall was not overly impressive. It had six rattan chairs, a little table, a wall clock, a square globe lamp and a collapsible telescope. The last item was useful for checking if an expected ship and its cargo had arrived in the Macao Roads. It is not clear whether the remaining rooms were on the ground floor or up a staircase on the upper floor. Usually in the houses of that period the ground floor was occupied by servants, storage and other service rooms.

The furnishings of the visiting or drawing salon showed the refined taste and wealth of the occupant. If our visit is on the evening of the party, a portion of the room may have been rearranged as space for dancing the quadrilles with another space for musicians. The inventory does not include a piano. The light from the chandeliers, wall lamps and candles were reflected in two large wall mirrors. Ten drapes hung at the windows, which meant the room had either five or ten windows. The floor had a large carpet, and a small one was in front of the fireplace. The furniture was elegant and costly. The room

contained two marble tables, a “fancy” gilded sofa, another sofa covered in blue silk with a set of fourteen chairs, a round table of narra wood – the best the Philippine forests had to offer. Less formal than the preceding articles were two “conversation” chairs and a large comfortable rocking chair, an “easy” chair, two covered in chintz, and two chairs without arms. There was a desk for writing notes and letters and a barometer for forecasting the weather. Glass bells were much in vogue as decorative items. There were two each enclosing a vase of artificial flowers and another protecting an elaborate table clock. Scattered around the room were some two dozen knick-knacks of china, bronze and glass, and four little tables with flower vases. On the artistic side were seven portfolios of paintings. On the less refined side were two china cuspidors.

Across from the visiting room was a somewhat similarly furnished smaller room. On the floor was a large carpet, at the windows were twelve drapes—either for six windows or twelve—and on the wall was a round mirror. The room was lighted with a bright light globe. There was a set of a silk-covered sofa and twelve chairs. There was a marble table and five other tables and three settees. For diversionary interests, there was a music box, four English books, two boxes with games and eight china and glass knick-knacks.

The dining room had six windows covered by twelve drapes, a dinner table with its complement of ten chairs, one being large for the head of the table, and two little settees.⁴⁵

The embargoed moveable goods did not include any bedroom furniture, silver, cutlery or dinnerware.

Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee must have arranged for the court orders to be lifted. He continued to live in Macao until 1856 or 1857. In July 1858, It was announced that he had received a lucrative appointment from the Queen of Oudh, a historic region of India in east central Uttar Pradesh with its capital in Lucknow.

COWASJEE SAPOORCHEE TABACK

He appears in records from 1838 to 1845. In September 1839 he was compelled to leave Macao for the harbor at Hong Kong, and from there he was ordered to remove to the Toonkoo anchorage some little distance up the Pearl River estuary. He was a party to the case of Alexander McIntyre at Macao in 1841.

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FRAMJEE HEERAJEE

In the 1832 list of Parsees at Canton he was occupying No. 3 Pau Shun Hong. He appears in the records from 1835 to 1842. In November 1839 he was responsible for goods of Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee on a ship anchored with other British merchant ships at Hong Kong, which were ordered to remove to the Toonkoo. In 1842 he was back with Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee in Macao.

HORMUSJEE CAWASJEE

Associated with Hormusjee Cawasjee, he is listed in the first full list of Parsees at Canton published in 1832. Apparently he returned to India, for he does not reappear on the lists of foreign residents in China until fourteen years later. In 1848 he was one of Macao's public-spirited residents who placed an oil lamp outside their houses to provide guidance for those abroad during the hours of darkness. He was still resident there in 1855. In 1850 he was an assistant to Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee.

HORMUSJEE RUSTOMJEE

From 1852 to 1854 he was at Macao. And in the 1861 *Macao Directory* listed as a merchant. His name is not in the 1863 *Macao Directory*. In the 1880s he sold Sections D, E, F and G of Inland Lot 405 to Chinese spinsters. In 1885 he is listed as a broker with Tata and Company on Hollywood Road, Hong Kong, but is not on the 1886 list.

Between 1848 and 1855, the firm of Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee is listed with two assistants, Hormusjee Cowasjee and Pallenjee Dorabjee. However in 1853, Hormusjee Cowasjee began to operate under his own name, and Pallenjee Dorabjee is not listed as an assistant for Mr. H. Rustomjee after 1852. J. J. de Aquino, a local Portuguese, took his place as an assistant. It was rare that a Parsee merchant had a Portuguese on his staff.

PESTONJEE MERWANJEE

He was living in Macao in 1843. In that year one of his coolies suddenly disappeared along with 124 taels of silver. Pestonjee reported this to the office of the *Procurador*, who liaised with the Chinese mandarin residing in Macao.⁴⁶ Pestonjee Merwanjee and Company appears on the Chinese records from 1842 to 1845.

THE SECOND OPIUM WAR AND THE MOVEMENTS OF THE PARSEES

In 1859 the foreign traders at Canton were forced to leave when hostilities broke out between Britain and China over the "Arrow" *lorcha* incident. At that time some of the Parsee merchants moved to Macao, others to Hong Kong.

An 1859 Hongkong Directory published by the Armenian Press Hongkong lists fifteen Parsees. The following names appear, with the addition of brief biographical notes. These indicate that many of them moved over to Hong Kong or back to Canton between 1859 and 1861.

- Alarkia Patell—no record in my files.
- Bomanjee Muncherjee—with Pestonjee Framjee and Co. (He was with P. F. Cama and Co.) from 1846 to 1848. In 1866 at Hong Kong.
- Burjorjee Nasserwanjee—in 1863 at Hong Kong. He died at Hong Kong, 28th November 1865.
- Poonjeebhoy—There is no record of him in any Parsee file. He may have been a Muslim.
- Framjee Nowrojee—from 1843 to 1845 he was connected with the firm of Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee at Macao. In 1848 he was a witness in a Macao court case concerning unlawful landing of a box of pearls.
- Jamsetjee Eduljee—other than his appearance on the 1863 Directory, there is no other record of him in my files.
- Nanabhoy H. Harda—no record in my files.
- Pestonjee Dinshaw —He is also in the directory for 1861.
- Rustomjee Dhunjeeshaw—from 1850 to 1864 his name appears in Hong Kong land records. His association with P. F. Cama and Co. ceased in 1865. Four years later he was admitted as a partner in the firm of Framjee Hormusjee in Shanghai. The members of this firm announced in 1869 that they had opened an office in Hong Kong. At that time the firm of Framjee Hormusjee and Co. of No. 7 Hollywood Road, Hong Kong, consisted of Rustomjee Dhunjeeshaw and Framjee Hormusjee, with Dadabhoy Muncherjee being authorized to sign for the firm. This suggests that the two partners were not in Hong Kong in 1869.

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- Dadabhoy Limjee—an assistant of Rustumjee Dhunjeeshaw. There is no further record of him in my files.
- Nasserwanjee Cowasjee—an assistant to Rustumjee Dhunjeeshaw. His name is on the Hong Kong Jury Lists from 1860 to 1868, as a merchant of Mehta and Co.
- Rustumjee J. Tavaría (absent)—There is no further record of him in my files.
- Eduljee Dadabhoy, assistant to Rustumjee J. Tavaría—In 1864 he is on the Hong Kong Jury List as a merchant of Eduljee, Framjee and Co.
- Rustumjee S. Mogra—In 1887 his name appears on a subscription list at Canton

After the end of the Second Opium War, a foreign concession for the British and French was created out of a mud flat in the Pearl River at Canton. This new section of Canton City was named Shameen, and in 1861, its lots were put up for auction. Among the successful bidders were three Parsee merchants, P. F. Cama and Co., E. Framjee and N. Kesrojee.

Only three of the thirteen names on the 1859 list appear on the 1861 *Macao Directory*. The other Parsees on the list are Hormusjee Rustumjee, Hormusjee Cowasjee, and an individual with the single name Premjee, whom I cannot identify. It is possible he may have been a servant of Pestonjee Dinshaw.

Hormusjee Rustumjee, if he is the same as the above, reappears on the Hong Kong records as a broker of Tata and Co. In 1885 Hormusjee Cowasjee had been an assistant of Macao's long-time resident Heerjeebhoy Rustumjee, and a sketch of his activities in China follows that of Heerjeebhoy Rustumjee above.

There is only one Parsee on the 1863 Macao Directory. He is Framjee K. Bomanjee, the manager of F. B. Cama and Co. Their office was at No. 11 Praya Grande. The company is listed at the same location in 1866. In 1872 the address for F. K. Bomanjee is Travessa Sto. Agostinho.

There were no Parsees in 1867 Directory listings.

A notice of the bankruptcy of Pestonjee Aspundiarji Mehta, carrying on business in Hong Kong and Macao under the name of P. A. Mehta and Co. was published in the Hong Kong Government Gazette, on 4th February 1871. He then was located on Stanley Street in Hong Kong. In April 1873 Maximiano António dos Remédios, of Macao, brought an action for a debt for \$4,450 patacas in the Macao courts. A

month later Dossabhoy Nesserwanjee entered a similar action against him.⁴⁷ Earlier, before his financial reverses he had been connected with H. B. Cama and Co. since 1864.

The 1872 Directory of Macao lists five Parsee individuals or firms, F. K. Bomanjee, at Travessa Sto. Agostinho, Dadabhoy Nasserwanjee, manager of H. B. Cama and Co., J. B. Colah, at Travessa do Tronco, and Ruttonjee Muncerchee.

In an 1890 property tax list, Nowrojee Pestonjee Dhalle, of Mody and Co., was paying the tax for the property of the Jewish firm of David Sassoon, Sons and Co. on the Praia Grande.

Jamshedji Hormusji Bejonje registered as an individual businessman in Macao in 1923. His address was No. 13 Rua Central.⁴⁸

This is the last mention I have found of a Parsee connection with Macao.

CONCLUSION

The Parsees have had a long history in the Pearl River area of South China. Some of that history has been chronicled in this article. At one period in the first half of the nineteenth century they played an important part in the India-China trade. Like other Asian diaspora communities, they valued their traditions and maintained their identity as a distinct religious group.

Their numbers have lessened. They may find it a struggle to maintain their unique identity under the homogenizing impact of a global culture and economy. The *Directory of Hong Kong Zoroastrians* for 1990-1992, published by the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Fund of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao lists 39 households. A comparison of this directory with that of 1980 illustrates the effect the global economy had on the community. The 1980 Directory also lists 39 households in Hong Kong, but the 1990-1991 Directory includes another list of 19 households and the addresses of "overseas relatives". An analysis of this list shows how widespread was the dispersal of this group.

Under the cloud suggested above, it is important to record the role of Parsees in the formation of modern Asia. It is obvious that the Parsees played an important role in the development of the region. It is now time to include them in the historical discourse. **RC**

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NOTES

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- 4 Morse, 3:348.
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- 6 *Ibid.*, 4:187.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 4:254.
- 8 These records will be found in the "List of foreign residents in China," published in the *Chinese Repository*.
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- 16 "An Eighteenth-Century Macao Armenian Prince," *Review of Culture*, International Edition 6 [2003], pp. 120-129.
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- 27 *Boletim Oficial de Macao*, 13 Aug. 1908. For Senna Family, see Jorge Forjaz, *Familias Macaense*, Vol. III, pp. 537-8.
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- 31 Carl T. Smith, *Sense of History*, p. 394-5.
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- 33 Hong Kong Land Registry, Memorial 947.
- 34 *The Canton Register*, 25 January 1842.
- 35 *Friend of China*, 6 September 1846.
- 36 *Arquivos de Macau*, Series 3, vol. xxxi, no. 3 (March 1979), p. 131.
- 37 *Friend of China*, 22 October 1854.
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Clearing Up the “Seres Misunderstanding” and the Contributions of the Portuguese to the History of European Cartography

HUA TAO*

“Seres” is an ancient geographical term. The literature of the classical Western geographers, such as Ptolemy’s *Geography* and his famous world map, indicated a country in the northern part of East Asia named “Seres,” to the south of which was another country named “Thin” or “Sina.” China and East Asia were thus regarded as two separate

countries for a very long time. This misunderstanding about the geography of East Asia and China lasted for many centuries and can be called the “Seres misunderstanding” (see Map 1).

In the Mongol-Yuan period (the 13th-14th centuries), this view was challenged by some European travellers to Asia such as John of Plano Carpini

Map 1. Claudius Ptolemy, *World Map*, in Ptolemy’s *Cosmographia*. Ulm: Lienhart Holle, 1482 (from: Comissão Territorial de Macau para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, *Macau: Cartografia do Encontro Ocidente-Oriente*. Macao, n.d., p. 16).





Map 2. André Homem, *Planisphere* (1559), in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (from: Roncière and Mollat du Jourdin, *Les portulans*, Map 55). The ten pieces into which André Homem's *Planisphere* was cut when reassembled.

(Giovanni de Piano Carpini) and William Rubruck (Guillaume de Rubruques), two papal envoys to the Mongol Empire who reached as far as the northern part of Asia and managed to gain reliable information about East Asia. They were even able to identify the “Seres” of the classical era with “Cathay,” a common European name for China at that time. Later on, Marco Polo came to China, and, after staying there many years, took his experiences back to Europe. In spite of all this, people in Europe still did not have a very clear idea about East Asia. Rather than being challenged, however, their traditional beliefs were often strengthened by the new information these travellers brought back. During the first half of the sixteenth century, European maps still reflected the classical

misunderstanding relating to Seres, as well as a subsequent lack of clarity as to the “Cathay-Mangi” overlap (see Maps 2 and 3).

Europe entered the Age of Discovery at the end of the fifteenth century. Bartolomeu Dias arrived at the southwestern tip of Africa in 1487. Christopher Columbus reached America in 1492. Vasco da Gama sailed to India by way of South Africa in 1497 and 1498. Ferdinand Magellan started sailing westwards in 1519 to find a route to the East, and one of his ships thereby completed the first circumnavigation of the globe. All these voyages were intended to explore new sea routes from Europe to East Asia, and marked the beginning of a new era in which human beings came to a better understanding of world geography. In this research project, I sought to analyse how European understanding of Asia in general, and of China in particular, changed as a result, how the European understanding of East Asia was cleared up and the role the Portuguese played in these historic changes. These are important issues in the field of world history and more specifically the history of cultural exchange between the East and the West. This research aims to answer these questions by studying in greater depth the history underlying the understanding of Seres.

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HISTORIOGRAFIA

The image of Asia in the minds of European people and the history of Seres have long been the focus of attention among a wide spectrum of people, not only historians. In the thirteenth century, when European envoys visited the vast areas of Asia under the control of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, they expressed their concerns over this issue. When Matteo Ricci arrived in China in the late sixteenth century, he also raised this as an important question in his report to the Vatican. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that serious research was conducted on this subject.

The most important research concerning Seres published since the late nineteenth century includes *Cathay and the Way Thither*, by Henry Yule in 1866¹; *Textes d'auteurs grecs et latins relatifs à l'Extrême Orient*, published by George Coedès in 1910²; the research of Paul Pelliot, especially his detailed examination of the study of the origins, development, and main arguments

about “Seres” and “Thinae” (or “Sinae”) in his book *Notes on Marco Polo*³; Donald Lach’s three-volume work *Asia in the Making of Europe*⁴; *Os Descobrimentos Portugueses* by Jaime Cortesão, a scholar of the Age of Discovery⁵; and Armando Cortesão’s *A History of Portuguese Cartography*.⁶ In addition to these works, I have also consulted numerous articles about the activities of the Portuguese and other Europeans in the East during the Age of Discovery published since the 1980s in the *Review of Culture*. Finally, the edition of *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica*⁷ by Armando Cortesão, has been crucial to the present research. In designing this project, I began with the following three research questions:

1. What were the origins of the misunderstanding about Seres and how did it develop prior to the Age of Discovery?

2. What kind of knowledge did Europeans in general, and the Portuguese in particular, have of East Asia when they first set out on the voyages now known as the “Great Discoveries”? More specifically, what was their understanding of Seres?

3. How did the Portuguese expansion in the East contribute to clarifying this issue?

THE ORIGINS OF THE “SERES MISUNDERSTANDING” AND HOW IT DEVELOPED

Our understanding of how the misperceptions relating to Seres originated and developed in the classical era is quite clear, thanks primarily to two books published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Yule’s *Cathay and the Way Thither* (1896), and Coedès’ *Textes d'auteurs grecs et latins relatifs à l'Extrême Orient* (1910). We know that such misunderstandings were bound to occur in exchanges between the Far East and the West in ancient times. In fact, if we were to expand our study, we would find many such examples, not only in the minds of Westerners about the East, but also vice versa. Therefore, the present paper does not delve too deeply into the specific reasons for this particular misunderstanding but rather focuses on two key questions: first, what impact did Arab and Islamic geography have on the Europe of the Dark Ages? Arabia and the Islamic world were situated between Europe and the Far East, and thus were able to obtain more



Mpa 3. André Homem, *Planisphere* (1559), detail (from: *PMC*, Vol. II, Plate 189E). The top right piece of the ten pieces into which Homem’s *Planisphere* was cut. Note that both “Serica” and “China” appear on the map.

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accurate knowledge about the East and convey it to Europe. Secondly, how and to what extent did European travellers to the East during the Mongol-Yuan period influence understanding of Seres?

The Arabs rose to world prominence in the seventh century, when they began to play an important role in the exchange between Europe and the East. At that time, the only way Europeans could get information about the Far East was from the Arabs, who inherited their geographical knowledge from the Greeks and who had direct contact with the East. The research investigated relations between China and the Arabic world during this period, and the records that the Chinese and Arabs kept about each other's countries – particularly Arab geographers' descriptions of, and Arab travellers' reports about, the East. In the Arab mind, there was only one China in East Asia (called "Sin" in Arabic), even though their understanding of China was still rudimentary, and they were strongly influenced by Ptolemy's geographic works (which had been translated into Arabic). Here, I will briefly recount the influence of three important Arab-Muslim scholars: al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, and al-Idrisi.

Al-Istakhri, a well-known Arab geographer of the tenth century, depicted Asia in his book.⁸ From this, we can make a political map of East Asia as it was understood at the time. The map shows that in the Arabic records, China was a unified whole. In their minds as well as in their descriptions, there was no "Seres misunderstanding" such as existed in Europe.

Ibn Hawqal was a tenth-century scholar of the Balkhi school of Islamic geography. The members of this school developed their own style of cartography, in which world maps were usually round in shape. Some scholars point out that medieval European "T-O maps" may have influenced the Balkhi school. But the scholars of the Balkhi School also made regional sketch maps based on the framework of their round world maps. On these round maps (such as those by Ibn Hawqal⁹), although the figure of China did not very closely resemble its form in reality, China was nonetheless an integral country, and there was only one China on the East Asian continent.

Al-Idrisi, a well-known Arab geographer and cartographer, was born in Ceuta, Morocco, in North Africa on the extreme western edge of the Islamic world. He began his extensive travels when he was very young,

and counted among his destinations France, Britain, Spain and even Asia Minor. Al-Idrisi's works and maps, completed in 1154¹⁰ demonstrated not only the Arabs' unprecedented knowledge of Asia, but also the great scientific achievements made by Islamic geography. In al-Idrisi's maps, China was also a unified country.¹¹

Therefore, although Arabic and Islamic geography and cartography were influenced by classical European geography, Arab and Muslim scholars were not affected by any misconceptions relating to Seres. Rather, their work often constituted a direct challenge to it. However, despite the influence of Arab and Islamic learning on Renaissance Europe, when European scholars embarked upon a "new wave" of geographical studies, their interest in reviving the knowledge of the classical era—which included the question of Seres—led them to ignore the correct information provided by Arabic and Islamic geography.

In the early thirteenth century, the Mongols began to dominate the world arena. After unifying the Mongolian Steppes, they swept southwards into China, conquering dynasties and kingdoms including the Xixia, Jin, Dali and Southern Song. Then they sent troops westwards and moved across Central and West Asia into eastern Europe. The war caused great destruction to the countries in Asia and Europe, but at the same time it also provided new opportunities for strengthening contacts between the East and the West.

In 1245, the Council of Lyons, convened by Pope Innocent IV, decided to send ambassadors to the Mongolian king, hoping to dissuade him from invading Christendom. Ridiculous as this decision might sound, it led to the establishment of direct contacts between the East and the West, as well as the opportunity for Europeans to observe first-hand these distant parts of the world. After the Council of Lyons, John of Plano Carpini, a Franciscan, and Friar Stephen of Bohemia, led the first mission to Mongolia. They left Lyons on April 16, 1245, and were joined at Breslau by Friar Benedict, a Pole. They arrived at the Court of the Grand Khan at Karakoram, where they were received by Kuyuk Khan. They began their return voyage on November 13, 1246 and reached Avignon in 1247. Carpini's report, entitled *History of Mongolia*,¹² and an outline of Friar Benedict's journals,¹³ describe the political conditions, ethnography, history, and

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geography of the Mongolian Empire. Carpini's *History of Mongolia* was the first book about the empire compiled by a European based on his own experiences, and was probably very influential at that time.

Soon after Carpini arrived back in Europe, other European envoys were sent to visit the Mongols in West Asia. One mission, led by Simon of Saint Quentin, was sent by Innocent IV to Persia, where a Mongolian commander-in-chief was stationed; another, led by Andrew of Longjumeau, was sent by St. Louis, King of France, to the Mongolian Court in 1248. In 1253, Franciscan William Rubruck (Guillaume de Rubruques) was sent by St. Louis to convert the Mongols to Christianity. Rubruck's mission can be considered the most important of that period. He travelled across the Eurasian Steppes, reached the winter camp of the Grand Khan south of Karakoram at the end of 1253, and was received there by Grand Khan Mangu, who escorted him to Karakoram. After staying in Karakoram for nearly two months, Rubruck returned home, bearing a letter from Mangu to the King of France. On the return journey, Rubruck took a somewhat more northern route, arriving first at Cyprus and then at Tripoli in the spring of 1255.

Rubruck's account of his journey was regarded as "the greatest geographical masterpiece of the Middle Ages."¹⁴ He left a detailed description of his journey as well as of the natural and social conditions in the Eurasian Steppes.¹⁵ For the purposes of this paper, however, the most important aspect of Rubruck's account is his discussion of the question of Seres: "As for the Great Cathay, I think the nation was the ancient Seres. They could produce the best silk (they called it silk), and they were named after one of its cities as Seres."¹⁶

Based on his own experience, Rubruck identified the "Cathay" of his time with the "Seres" of ancient European literature. This identification was a significant advance in European knowledge about the Far East, and especially about China. Soon after Rubruck returned from Asia, Roger Bacon met him in France and asked him about his findings on the trip. Bacon proceeded to include almost every geographic detail he learned from Rubruck in his masterpiece, *The Opus Majus*.¹⁷

However, we should not exaggerate the influence of Rubruck's report. First, like John of Plano Carpini, he lived in an era that was dominated by classical

learning and legends, which must have shaped his understanding of his experiences in important ways. Second, Rubruck did not give up the idea that East Asia was divided into two parts, north and south. He was the first European to mention the term "Mangi," the name given by the Mongols to southern China during the Yuan. Although he did not provide any further explanation of the term "Mangi," Rubruck identified Cathay with northern China, implying that he believed that Mangi was the name of a separate country in the south.

It was Marco Polo who pointed out, for the first time in European records, what "Mangi" actually referred to. Marco Polo lived in Yuan-dynasty China for many years and travelled extensively on missions for the Yuan government. In his descriptions of his trips to the south and southeast, he mentions many Chinese place names. He divided the area over which the Great Khan of the Yuan Dynasty ruled into three parts: Tartar, Cathay¹⁸ and Mangi¹⁹ (sometimes referred to as the "Country of Mangi"). The borderline between Cathay and Mangi was that between Jin and Song.

Marco Polo and other western travellers in the Mongol-Yuan period got to know China on their own. Their records of these experiences greatly enriched European knowledge about the East; however, Marco Polo's report also exerted some negative influence on the advancement of European knowledge about Asia. Cathay had already been mentioned by other European travellers and Rubruck had even identified it with the Seres of the classical era. Meanwhile "Mangi," which figured simply as an ambiguous East Asian place name in Rubruck's report, was described in more detail in Marco Polo's accounts. In fact, China was a unified country during the Yuan period. Although the residents of the territory ruled by the Yuan Dynasty were divided legally into four social classes with distinctive regional characteristics (of which the fourth class referred to the ethnic Han people of southern China, conquered by the Mongols at a later stage), they were all residents of a united country. By identifying southern China as "Mangi," Marco Polo provided new evidence for the existence of Seres. The Seres of the classical age had already been identified as Cathay in the Mongol-Yuan period. Thus "Thin" (or "Chin") of the ancient records was turned into "Mangi" by Marco Polo.

Other European travellers to Asia after Marco Polo also left records of their journeys. Odoric of

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Pordenone (Odorico da Pordenone) began his eastward trip in 1314. The account of his travels was based on what he saw and heard during this trip.²⁰ In his book, whose influence on European views of the East was second only to Marco Polo's, Pordenone divides China into two parts: Cathay in the North and Mangi in the South. Therefore a new layer was added to this misconception, which I call the "Cathay-Mangi" formula. If Tartary in the North were also taken into consideration, the formula would become "Tartary-Cathay-Mangi." Thus the old and new misunderstandings strengthened each other and exerted a great deal of influence over the West. In an age when Europeans, be they scholars or ordinary people, had no direct access to knowledge about the Far East, the reports of these travellers were of crucial importance. They clarified some ambiguities and inaccuracies of the classical era. For example, there was no longer any confusion about how silk was produced, and some oriental customs were described correctly. The legendary Prester John was no longer associated with China, and nomads in the legends of Alexander the Great were no longer identified with the Mongols. But all these travellers divided China into two parts. Therefore, during the Mongol-Yuan period, when travel and contacts between Yuan China and medieval Europe were at their peak, there were new mechanisms and a new impetus allowing this misunderstanding to spread.

PORTUGUESE KNOWLEDGE OF EAST ASIA PRIOR TO THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

The era of the Great Discoveries began in the late fifteenth century. But what did the Portuguese know about East Asia at that time? This was one of the three key questions driving this research, but to answer it we first need to elaborate somewhat on the contributions of the Portuguese voyages of discovery. Therefore, this section is divided into three parts: 1) the voyages of the Portuguese in this period and the impact of these voyages on Portuguese cartography; 2) the influence of traditional Ptolemaic geography on the Portuguese; and 3) the impact that Portuguese voyages around the Cape of Good Hope had on their knowledge about the East.

Two key figures in the history of the Portuguese voyages were King Denis of Portugal (1279-1325) and

Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460). Denis encouraged and promoted maritime exploration in the early fourteenth century, and invited Venetians and Genoans to lead the Portuguese fleet. They introduced the advanced navigational skills necessary to sail around the world – especially the portolan, a kind of navigational chart developed first in the Mediterranean. The use of the portolan was a major development in European nautical science, and later on some world maps were made on the basis of existing portolans.²¹ In 1410, the Portuguese signed a peace treaty with Castile, marking the beginning of its independence and laying the foundation for the development of a nation-state. By that time, the Portuguese had already gained considerable experience in navigation. Under the leadership of Prince Henry, and building on the historic impact of the Muslims who once controlled the Iberian Peninsula,²² in this period Portuguese maritime voyages were launched on an unprecedented scale.

Prince Henry sent ship after ship on voyages of discovery beyond Cape Bojador, south of the Canaries, and westwards into the Atlantic. He also secured the services of the accomplished cartographer Master Jácome of Majorca, son of Abraham Cresques, who had most probably helped his father make the famous "Catalan Atlas" (PMC, vol. xxxi-xxxii). Jacome, a specialist in navigation, came to Portugal in 1420, or soon thereafter, to help improve the nautical charts used aboard Portuguese ships. At the same time, being a geographer, he provided more detailed knowledge about the coastal and inland regions of Northwest Africa; he introduced information about the maritime route from Europe to Asia; and he taught the Portuguese how to build some important sailing instruments. Thus Prince Henry's patronage of these maritime voyages provided an enormous boost to the development of cartography in Portugal. However, at that time the Portuguese voyages were limited to the West African coast and the islands of the Atlantic, not far from Portugal; they had yet to reach the South African coast. The information gained on these voyages made important contributions to the science and practice of navigation in the Atlantic Ocean, but the voyages of the fifteenth century did not have a fundamental impact on European knowledge of Asia in general or China in particular. And it was precisely at that time, during the Renaissance, that Ptolemy's geographic works were rediscovered in Europe.

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Around 1406, Ptolemy's *Geography* was translated into Latin and soon became popular in Europe.²³ *Geography* was not only the most detailed geographic work available at that time, but also the work done by the most famous mathematician and astronomer of ancient Greece. Therefore, it was regarded as one of the most important treasures of the Renaissance period. However, in Ptolemy's book, the world looked considerably different from how people in the fifteenth century conceived it, and especially from how it was described in Marco Polo's accounts.

In spite of this, by adopting Ptolemy's basic principle that all important points of the known world should first be determined by their latitudes and longitudes, and then plotted accordingly onto maps, Europe accepted the world that this book described. Almost at the same time, modern printing technology was developing in Europe and was soon applied in the field of cartography, thus gaining a greater audience for Ptolemy's ideas.

Under such circumstances, the misperception surrounding Seres common in the classical era was not only revived, it was given a basis in science.

However, not everyone agreed with Ptolemy's descriptions. By then, Europeans had already learned of the customs and geography of the East from travellers to the Mongolian empire such as Marco Polo. They had read the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. Thus when the Seres misunderstanding arose again in the Renaissance, Europeans had to revise Ptolemy's map. It was assumed by many that Ptolemy himself

would have approved of these revisions. In the fifteenth century, many cartographers made maps according to Ptolemy's methods and depicted the East or "updated" their own knowledge about the East according to Ptolemy's descriptions. Critical as these cartographers were towards Ptolemy, they still followed his methods in studying the East. By way of example, I will focus on the round world maps made by the famous cartographer Fra Mauro in the mid-fifteenth century.

Fra Mauro depended primarily on Marco Polo's

descriptions in depicting Asia on his map. He was even believed to have improved the maps Marco Polo brought from China. Fra Mauro was the first European to identify Sumatra on a map; he also identified the "isola de Zimpagu"—the island of Japan—on his map. Though its position was entirely inaccurate, it was the first time that Japan was mentioned on a European map. On Mauro's map, the location of China and of Chinese cities, as well as



Map 4. Fra Mauro, *Mappamundi*, 1459, reoriented
(from: CTMCD, *Macau: Cartografia do Encontro Ocidente-Oriente*. Macao, n.d., p. 18).

some annotations and even some figures beside individual cities, were gathered primarily from the writings of Marco Polo. However, Fra Mauro's map differed from the Catalan Atlas of 1375 in some important ways. First, Fra Mauro depicted the coastlines of China as being segmented by a series of long, narrow bays. Second, China's two major rivers, the Yangtze River and the Yellow River, were properly portrayed on Fra Mauro's map, unlike the Catalan Map which depicted China's water system as originating in Khanbalik and flowing towards the

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southeast (Map 4). However, Mauro's map was not without defects. The biggest of these was that south Asia and southeast Asia were depicted as being far larger than they actually are. But considering the limited knowledge about the East at that time, this mistake was quite understandable. The second most significant error was that Mauro failed to obtain the latest information about Africa that the Portuguese had gained on their voyages. At that time, the Portuguese authorities considered new advances in navigation to be "top secret," strictly off-limits to foreigners. The "política de sigilo" (a policy of keeping silent of overseas navigation) was a persistent practice of the Portuguese authorities. This fact may serve as a reminder that when studying the history of European geography of Asia based on their maps, it is necessary to take into consideration the gap between their actual knowledge and that which is reflected on these maps. This is especially so in the sixteenth century, a period in which the Portuguese had gained considerable experience and knowledge of Asia, but continued to depict a good deal of "outdated" information on their maps. We should not come too hastily to the conclusion that European (or at least Portuguese) knowledge about the East was lagging behind.

All in all, the fifteenth century was a rich and eventful one. The expansion of maritime activities and navigational techniques, the development of cartography, and the rediscovery of ancient forms of knowledge paved the way for the Portuguese contributions in the next century.

After King João II of Portugal came to power in 1481, the Portuguese voyages gained new momentum. Bartolomeu Dias departed southwards from Portugal in August 1487, and rounded the Cape of Good Hope in early 1488. This not only realized Portugal's century-long goal of sailing the length of the west coast of Africa, but also confirmed their belief in the accuracy of Fra Mauro's maps, which they had obtained in the mid-fifteenth century. Now they could proudly and confidently declare that their geographic knowledge was correct. At the same time, the King of Portugal sent Pêro da Covilhã to travel eastward by land. Covilhã and his companion Afonso de Paiva left Cairo in the spring of 1488. Travelling through Suez, they took a ship south through the Red Sea to Aden. Then they boarded an Arab ship to Calicut in India. Later they

went to Goa and then back to Hormuz. After Covilhã returned to Cairo, he met with envoys sent by King of Portugal, and asked them to bring back to Portugal his letters reporting on his experiences in India and the east coast of Africa. Covilhã's secret report, however, is no longer extant, so we have no way of knowing whether or not he mentioned anything about China or East Asia. There were quite a number of Chinese businessmen in Calicut and Hormuz, so in theory, even if he did not actually meet any Chinese businessmen, Covilhã could have learned that there was a large country in East Asia that was the source of a wide variety of goods. Like Dias' voyage, Pêro da Covilhã's trip must have taught the Portuguese a great deal about the East and how to get there. It was based on this knowledge that Vasco da Gama embarked upon his famed voyage some years later.

At the end of the fifteenth century, Europeans made great efforts in exploring new routes to East Asia. However, there were two different approaches to realizing this goal. One was influenced by the southward voyages along the west coast of Africa made by the Portuguese, while the other drew on the experiences of Spanish voyages across the Atlantic. In August 1492, it was with this second approach in mind that Christopher Columbus, supported by the King of Spain, led his fleet westward. After an arduous voyage across the Atlantic, Columbus and his fleet arrived at Guanahani Island in the Bahamas on October 12. He returned to Spain at the beginning of 1493. Columbus successfully completed his westward trip, but he mistakenly believed that the place he had reached was his original destination—India—and that the aboriginal peoples he met and brought back to Europe were Indians, a general name used by Europeans at that time for the peoples of both South and East Asia.²⁴

Columbus' success shook the whole world and also aroused conflict between Portugal and Spain. The two countries held negotiations in Tordesillas, where they signed the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. What is pertinent here is that this agreement reflected the geographical mindset of the Portuguese. They questioned whether Columbus had truly reached "India". They still stuck to their idea of sailing eastward to Asia by way of the southern tip of Africa. In other words, what the Portuguese wanted was not to deny Spain's right to sail westward across the Atlantic, but

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rather to define the westernmost limits on Spain's sphere of influence.²⁵ Portuguese ideas about the size of the earth and their general sense of the geography of East Asia were clearly correct, which demonstrates that the Portuguese had already taken the lead in the European field of geography. When Vasco da Gama successfully sailed eastward to "India" by way of the southern tip of Africa, this simply confirmed Portuguese views of geography. It bears emphasis that Europeans, including both the westward-sailing Spanish and the eastward-sailing Portuguese, actually knew very little about East Asia. Their ideas about East Asia were still based on the concepts prevalent during the era of Marco Polo. However, the arrival of the Portuguese in Asia and their activities there had a revolutionary impact on European knowledge of East Asia.

In what follows, I explore the influence of Portuguese maritime voyages on the geographic knowledge of the era through an examination of a variety of maps made after 1500.

As early as 1500, Vasco da Gama's trip was plotted on a world map made by Juan de la Cosa. De la Cosa had once been Columbus' helmsman and was very well versed in the art and science of navigation. On his map, the figure of India was shortened, and Southeast Asia was comprised of two peninsulas, both of which were rather too long. This map also included the *Magnus Golfus Chinarum*, which had once appeared

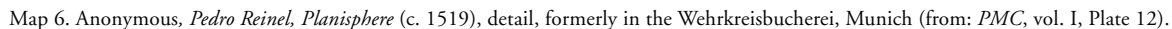
on Ptolemy's map. However, there was an inscription above the depiction of India, which stated that India had been discovered by the Portuguese. By 1502, more detailed European knowledge about the East was clearly reflected on the so-called "King-Hamy-Huntingdon Chart," which shows, for example, Calicut drawn clearly on the west coast of India.²⁶

The *Cantino Planisphere* (or world map) of 1502 further revealed the Portuguese understanding of Asia. At that time, the Portuguese government kept top-secret official maps of the world (called "Padrao"). Whenever Portuguese sailors returned from their voyages, the government would collect from them the geographical information they had learned and include it on these maps. The *Cantino Planisphere* replicated, at least in part, this secret world map (see Map 5).

The Cantino map includes a large amount of the latest available information gained on the Portuguese voyages—especially information about the Far East and the Far West. East Asia on this map differed markedly from how it appeared in Ptolemy's framework. Rather than being a land-locked continent, as it was on Ptolemy's map, here East Asia was surrounded by ocean. There is, however, a short eastward-facing coastline at the top of the coastline that today we recognize as China's. Short though it is, it indicates that the author of the map was perhaps



Map 5. Anonymous, *The "Cantino" Planisphere* (1502), in Biblioteca Estense, Modena (from: *PMC*, vol. I, Plate 4).



Another map that drew upon the same original information as the Cantino map (or was perhaps based on the Cantino map) was the Caveri (or Canerio) world map. The Cantino Planisphere and the Caveri map exerted an enormous influence on the development of European cartography during the following quarter-century.

After Vasco da Gama returned from his Indian voyage, the Portuguese began to expand their activities in the Indian Ocean with explicit plans to establish their dominance in this region. Their activities along the coast of the Indian Ocean, however, provoked resistance from the local residents. With their advantages in terms of weapons and organization, the Portuguese defeated local armies and cruelly reaped profits, revealing the essentially imperialistic nature of their project. However, these Portuguese activities in the Indian Ocean, South Asia and Southeast Asia also augmented Europe's knowledge about the East, especially about South Asia. In this section of the paper, I investigate the impact of Portugal's activities in the Indian Ocean, South Asia and Southeast Asia on the accumulation of Portuguese geographic knowledge about the East.

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sending fleets to the East and stationing troops in India led to the accumulation of Portuguese knowledge about the East. In the first few decades of the sixteenth century, several Portuguese became famous for their activities in the East. For example, Diogo Lopes de Sequeira led a fleet to Malacca; Afonso de Albuquerque, a very cruel governor-general in India, made great contributions to the history of the Portuguese Discoveries; and Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese who once worked for Spain, led his fleet in the first circumnavigation of the globe. The activities of the Portuguese and others in the East had a great influence on their geographic knowledge and cartography. Almost every step of Portuguese progress abroad was reflected on their maps. For example, a Portuguese map of 1510 was the first to reflect advances in the study of geography,²⁸ followed by the maps in the book by Francisco Rodrigues.²⁹ The so-called Reinel maps, including “Anonymous – Pedro Reinel, Chart of c.1517,”³⁰ “Anonymous – Pedro Reinel, Chart of c.1518,”³¹ and part of the “Anonymous – Jorge Reinel Planisphere, 1519,”³² further reflected Portuguese activities in the Indian Ocean, South Asia and Southeast Asia (see Map 6).

However, at this time, such geographical knowledge about East Asia still had yet to attain the status of undoubted truth. In other words, European geography of the East was still at a transitional stage. Any new information would be carefully noted, added to the existing body of knowledge, and reflected on new maps only after being compared with existing data. It was not yet possible for the new information to override or rectify inaccuracies in the existing body of knowledge. Therefore, in the early sixteenth century, while the Portuguese were trying to revise some of the traditional cartographic descriptions based on the experiences of their voyages, most other Europeans were content to improve and add to Ptolemy’s map, rather than scrapping it completely and making a new world map on their own. Because they were primarily interested in modifying and perfecting the Ptolemaic model with newly available information, Ptolemy’s central idea about East Asia—namely the “Seres misunderstanding”—could not be fundamentally challenged. Even some outstanding Portuguese geographers and cartographers in the mid-sixteenth century (to whom we will return later) refused to give up Ptolemy’s ideas completely.

In short, although information gathered in the process of the Discoveries was continuously being brought back to Europe, most European cartographers still clung to the idea that maps should be made according to the basic theories and structures set out by Ptolemy. Through these cartographers and their maps, the “Seres misunderstanding” was perpetuated, in the pattern of “Seres-Chin” or “Cathay-Mangi.” The complete rejection of Ptolemy’s framework would require many more years, and a different approach.

The second issue in this section is the expansion of Portuguese activities in the Far East and their significance. In what follows, I will attempt to answer a number of questions about the Portuguese understanding of the East and about the persistence of the misperception surrounding Seres, through a study of the descriptions of the East on Portuguese maps.

Once they had a foothold in South Asia, the Portuguese continued to push further eastward. Their earliest contacts with the Chinese can be dated to as early as 1500, soon after Cabral’s fleet reached Calicut.

In the study of the accumulation of Portuguese geographical information about Asia, it is helpful to quickly review the development of relations between Portugal and China in the early sixteenth century and the important figures in these events: Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, who led a fleet sent by the King of Portugal to Malacca in 1508; Afonso de Albuquerque, the governor-general of India; Jorge Álvares, the first Portuguese to set foot in China, a businessman who arrived with a Chinese commercial fleet in 1513; Rafael Perestrello, who was sent to China by the Portuguese commander at Malacca; Fernão Peres de Andrade, whose fleet was dispatched to China by the new Portuguese governor-general in India in February 1516 and who established a good relationship with the local officials in Guangzhou; and Tomé Pires, a crew member on Fernão’s ship, who left us an important account, entitled *Suma Oriental*, detailing his experiences in China, especially his trip to Beijing. Through a more detailed analysis of these figures we may have a better sense of the ups and downs of the relationship between China and Portugal. However, what is more important to the present study is that from this point forward, the Portuguese in Europe could observe China more closely and obtain more detailed information about it. Their sources of information included reports from

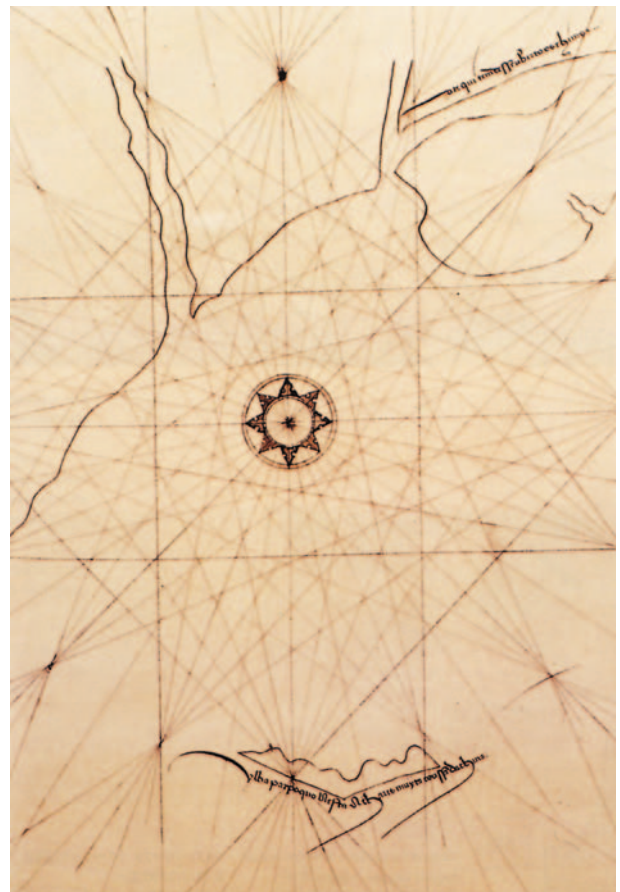
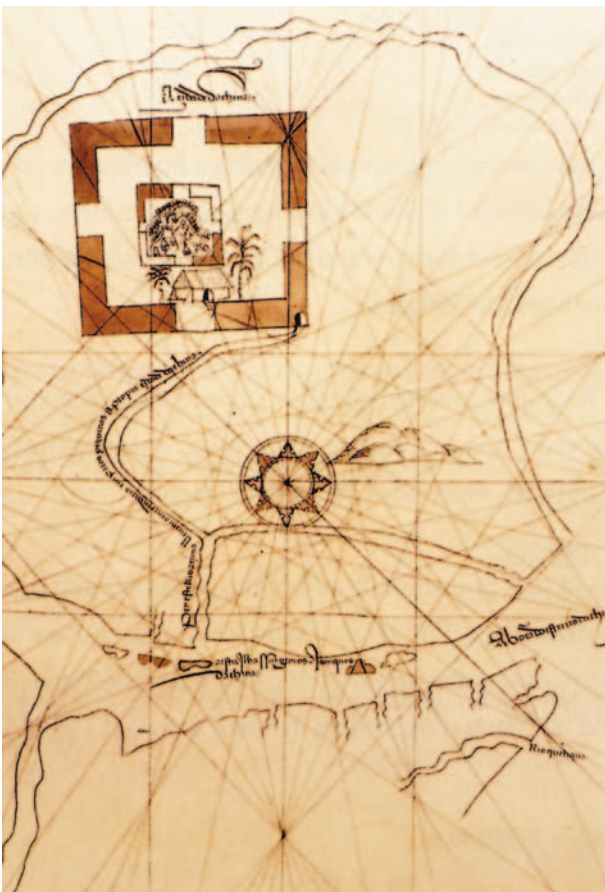
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Portuguese officials and naval officers to the King about the East—especially about the “frontier” that was China—and eyewitness accounts of those who had been there. In these accounts, China was no longer the “Cathay” and “Mangi” described by Marco Polo, nor was it the “Cathay” or “Mangi” of ancient tradition. The real situation in China was communicated to Europeans by travellers who had had their own experiences in the country. Though this information was incomplete most of the time and could not by itself overthrow Europe’s traditional ideas about the East, it did help Europeans gain a better understanding of China, and played a significant role in clarifying the Seres issue in Europe.

The information obtained by the Portuguese in the southern coastal areas of China was soon reflected on their maps. In this study, we have found that an important and often overlooked aspect of the maps

and accounts by Francisco Rodrigues is that he uses the term “China” several times. His book contains a paragraph describing the sea route to China, whose original Portuguese title was “Camynho Da Chyna” – which translates into English as “The Route to China.”³³ Rodrigues also includes in his book some regional sketch maps of China,³⁴ including “The Gulf of Tong King (with Hainan),” “Part of the South Coast of China and some islands, possibly the Philippines,” “Entrance of the Canton River and probably Peking,” “North-east Coast of China, with an island, *Parpoquo*, which may correspond to Japan,” “Island which must represent Formosa.”³⁵ Rodrigues uses the term “da China” repeatedly on his maps; for example, in “Entrance of the Canton River and probably Peking,” he labels one city, generally considered to be Beijing, as “a cidade da China” (see Map 7-1 and 7-2). Rodrigues thus raises a tough question for us: Was “da

Map 7. Francisco Rodrigues, Maps in his *Book* (c. 1513). 1. Entrance of the Canton River and probably Peking.
2. North-east Coast of China, with an Island, *Parpoquo*, which may correspond to Japan, in the Bibliothèque de la Chambre des Deputés, Paris (from: *PMC*, vol. I, Plate 36).



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Map 8. Diogo Ribeiro, *Planisphere* (1529), in the Thuringische Landesbibliothek, Weimar (from: *PMC*, vol. I, Plate 40).

China” his fixed term for China? It should be noted that authors who were contemporaries of Rodrigues, such as Tomé Pires, did not just use the term “China” to indicate that which we would now call China. In fact, Tomé Pires uses several terms for China, such as “Chys,” “China,” “Chijs” and “Chijna.” In addition, we can find “China” in the term “Chinacochim” (Cochin-China) on the Cantino map of 1502. I cannot explain the reason behind the frequent variations in the names for China during this period, but on Rodrigues’ maps, I can sense his persistence in using “China” instead of the other terms. More importantly, however, is that this form, “China,” would soon become widely adopted. If Rodrigues learned and used the term “China” only by accident, his influence on later generations was far greater than he ever could have imagined, since “Seres” and the other names traditionally used for China in Europe were superseded by his unintentional but historic action.

I would also like to take a moment to analyse Diogo Ribeiro’s maps, and the influence Portuguese activities in the East had on geographical knowledge after Rodrigues and Reinel.³⁶ From 1525 to 1532, Ribeiro made five exquisite planispheres,³⁷ whose geographical descriptions were far more accurate than those on the maps by Rodrigues and Reinel. On Ribeiro’s maps, the coastline from Ceylon to Canton was rendered quite finely and precisely. He made some big changes to the shape of the coastline east of Malacca and Malaya, especially that of Indochina, which began to resemble

reality quite closely. Although scholars hold that the Portuguese arrived in China in 1514, there is no proper evidence of this reflected on Ribeiro’s maps.³⁸ In fact, judging from the depictions of East Asia on his maps of 1525, 1527, and 1529, we can see that his knowledge was increasing little by little and his depictions became more and more detailed. Besides, although there is no way of proving that Ribeiro had read Rodrigues’ book, it seems that the way Ribeiro renders the name of China on his maps bears a close resemblance to the way Rodrigues rendered it in his books. On Ribeiro’s map of 1525, China was labelled as “La China”; on his map of 1527, it was “Lachina” (with no space in between); on his map of 1529, it was just “China”; and on another map of 1529, there are some illegible notes below the name “China.”³⁹ Though “Lachina” appears again on his map of 1532, it is quite obvious that Ribeiro was inclined little by little to the term “China.” Ribeiro’s maps exerted an enormous influence on Europe, which might be the reason for the widespread use of the term “China” even today (see Map. 8).

After Ribeiro’s death in August 1533, not much progress was made in Portuguese cartography for the next twenty to thirty years. One of the few achievements was an anonymous map made in 1535. Originally even this date was unclear, but according to Armando Cortesão’s research,⁴⁰ the terminology used on the map can identify it as a Portuguese work completed around 1535. Donald F. Lach believes that this was a very important map, reflecting the progress

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of Portuguese geographic knowledge, particularly in depicting details about the Philippines and Borneo.⁴¹ In addition, I think the descriptions of the Far East and China on this map are also worth remarking. There are few place names on the map, and only one line of words at the entrance to a river (obviously the Pearl River): “Rio de catam a china.” In this respect, it is not even as detailed as Ribeiro’s map of 1529, which notes many place names at the entrance of the Pearl River. However, on the 1535 map, in the Gulf of Tong King, below a cape that juts out sharply from the mainland, there is an island that is very probably Hainan Island. Though the shape of the island is entirely too spindly to correspond to reality, this was the first time that Hainan Island had been properly placed on a European map, which makes this 1535 map significant in the history of cartography in Portugal as well as in Europe. By the mid-sixteenth century, Hainan Island was marked on almost all European maps, and was being rendered in a more accurate shape. Therefore, this map played a pioneering role in this aspect.

Yet with the exception of this anonymous map, the field of cartography in Portugal entered a period of stagnancy after the death of Ribeiro. After the first official contacts between Portugal and China failed in the 1520s, Portuguese official activities in East Asia waned. This may be one of the reasons why there are relatively few extant records, either textual or cartographic, from that period. However, the diplomatic failure of the Portuguese in China did not cause them to retreat back to Malacca. Rather, based on their previous experience, they bypassed Guangdong and went northwards towards Fujian, where they engaged in surreptitious trade with local merchants.

Following Ribeiro’s map of 1529, the next Portuguese world map with a definite date and author was the 1554 map by Lopo Homem. Lopo Homem was an important member of a Portuguese family of cartographers. His map of 1554 was the second largest Portuguese planisphere, and was an exquisite, finely drawn, and accurately scaled work. It was praised by scholars at the time and was often replicated. The map

Map 9. Lopo Homem, *Planisphere* (1554), in the Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, Florence (from: *PMC*, vol. I, Plate 27).



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Map 10. Fernão Vaz Dourado, *Atlas* (1571), in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon (from: *PMC*, vol. III, Plate 284).

depicted all the coastlines in the known world at that time.⁴² In its depiction of East Asia and China, the Lopo Homem map was a vast improvement over Ribeiro's map of 1529 and over the maps made by others in the 1530's. The coastlines of China are extended northward, instead of ending at Fujian; even the area around the Bohai Gulf is depicted, and the peninsula and islands to the east of the Bohai probably represent Korea and Japan. Portuguese flags appear north of Guangdong and Fujian. In addition, the shape of Hainan Island is considerably more accurate than ever before. The Lopo Homem map also indicates the names and positions of some ports and trading cities,⁴³ the most important of which was "Liampo,"⁴⁴ which may reflect the Portuguese activities in Ningbo (see Map 9).

Soon after Lopo Homem completed this map in 1554, his son, Diogo Homem, and another member of the family, André Homem, published another important map. It is remarkable that on Diogo's map, China is called "china" instead of the "sina" used by his father, Lopo.⁴⁵ Diogo's depiction of China also portrays a river whose course and estuary is located considerably further north than the Pearl River had been on previous Portuguese maps; this might be the Yangtze River (or Yellow River?). The peninsula to the east of the Bohai Gulf should be the Korean peninsula. Southwest of the Korean peninsula and north of Taiwan,⁴⁶ there is an archipelago that represents Japan.

However, all of the Homem cartographers—Lopo, Diogo and André—tended to retain use of ancient place names on their maps. They seemed to

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combine traditional knowledge with the geographic knowledge brought back by the Portuguese returning from the East. Thus, in the mid-sixteenth century, when Portuguese cartography was in its prime, there emerged three different phenomena.

First, the overall geographic outline of the world was more or less complete. The improvements in this vein began with the Cantino Planisphere of 1502 and were reflected little by little on successive generations of Portuguese planispheres. On these maps, large geographic figures (e.g. the figures of the continents), large geographic units (e.g. continents), and the relative spatial locations of the different continents and other large geographic units were almost perfect by the mid-sixteenth century. As a result, some details of these maps were also becoming more accurate.

Second, regional maps became more and more precise. Regional maps came into being at a very early stage, since it was easier for people to get information about smaller regions and to make smaller maps. Compared with world maps, regional maps also made it easier for cartographers to add new information about navigation routes and to get rid of the influence of traditional knowledge. The making of regional maps continued throughout this period, and was later promoted even further with the advent of the atlas.

Third, Portuguese maps in the mid- to late sixteenth century still reflected the influence of some traditional knowledge. In fact, even on those maps that we have lauded above, we can find classical place names and traces of other traditional knowledge. This is not only true on the maps of the Homem family, but also on those made by other cartographers.

I once postulated that André Homem's map of 1559 was the last time that the "Seres misunderstanding" was rendered on a European map. But is it now necessary to modify this conclusion? If we do not accept the year 1559 as the date in which this misperception was rectified, what can we make of the relationship between Portuguese activities in the East in the sixteenth century and their maps? How can we understand a phenomenon whereby general progress in the field of geography coexisted in with the continued representation of traditional cartographic knowledge on maps? When in fact was the "Seres misunderstanding" finally clarified, and what was the Portuguese role in it? In this final section, I aim to address this series of questions.

The process by which human beings have come to know the world has been a very long one indeed. Even at present, we dare not say that we know about the world thoroughly, especially the inland areas. In the sixteenth century, European knowledge and descriptions of distant lands was greatly improved by the Discoveries. Not only did the Europeans "discover" the "new continents" of America and Australia, they also improved their knowledge about the East Asian part of the "old continent". The Portuguese took the lead in travelling to Asia, and opened a way to reach East Asia which had been closed to Europeans since the classical era. The outlines of Southeast Asia and East Asia were clearly defined and almost correct. "Seres" and "Chin," which had been the understanding of East Asia in the classical age, and "Catai" (or Cathay) and "Mangi" which had dominated Europeans' understanding of East Asia in the Middle Ages, no longer existed on most maps of China. Though depictions of inland China were still rudimentary in Portuguese maps of the 1550s, China's coastline was almost complete and remarkably accurate. The accuracy of these coastlines left no room for the existence of separate countries such as "Seres," "Catai," "Chin," or "Mangi."

However, there were still many places on the East Asian continent unknown to Europeans. The Portuguese and other Europeans knew little of China aside from its coastal areas: they had not mapped China's inland regions, not to mention its remote western or northern areas. European cartographers in the sixteenth century adopted one of three measures to deal with these gaps in their knowledge of China. One was simply to leave these areas blank on the map and not do anything about them. In the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, quite a number of cartographers adopted this approach in making planispheres. This study has referred to some of these maps for evidence. At that time, most of the inland regions of Asia were unknown to Europeans. If these places had been left unmapped, not only would the limited knowledge of the cartographer have been demonstrated, but the maps would not be aesthetically appealing. Thus the second solution to this problem, and perhaps the best one, was to fill the blank spaces with ornaments, such as drawings of plants, animals, human figures, buildings and cities, all of which could be found on the early Portuguese maps. In Fernão Vaz

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Dourado's atlas of 1580, human figures and animals were drawn in the inland area of the South American continent, Muslims on horseback appear in the inland area of Northwest Africa, and pagodas decorate the inland areas of China.

The third method was to fill the blanks with available but out of date geographical information. Given that European cartographers were still using knowledge from classical authors and medieval travellers greatly influenced by the "Seres misunderstanding", when they used this knowledge to fill in the blank spaces on a map, contradictory situations, such as the coexistence of both "Cathay" and "Seres" on André Homem's 1559 map, could arise. In fact, by the mid-sixteenth century, Portuguese geographers no longer believed that East Asia was divided into two parts, north and south; a great number of their regional maps reflect this. However, they could not get access to any new information about the inland areas. Even Gerardus Mercator, the most important European cartographer of the sixteenth century, complained that he had no access to the new geographical information about East Asia, and that he had to rely for his mapmaking on the accounts of Marco Polo and even of geographers of the classical era.⁴⁷ The combination of the lack of access to up-to-date information, and the convention adopted by many cartographers of filling blank spaces with the information that they did have, thus resulted in a situation in which certain traditional forms of geographic knowledge, including the terminology of the classical era and the Middle Ages, was still being recorded on late sixteenth century maps. So we may conclude that even though the traditional terminology of the "Seres misunderstanding" was still used on these maps, it no longer had the same significance it had once and should therefore not be considered a true continuation of the misunderstanding.

Yet there is another kind of map, dating from the mid- to late sixteenth century and even into the seventeenth century, on which information about Seres is still recorded. These maps were often placed at the beginning of an atlas, or sometimes elsewhere; the world maps included in Diogo Homem's atlases of 1558 and of 1568, and the map in Bartolomeu Velho's *Cosmographia* (PMC, vol. II, Plate 206, Fol. 10v, etc.) are good examples.⁴⁸ These were a kind of sketch map intended to give readers a general overall visual sense

of the world. The information about Seres included in these maps, especially the classical and medieval place names, did not mean that the cartographers still believed in the existence of a country with that name. In fact, if we examine regional maps made by the very same cartographers, we find that they do not include this incorrect information. Therefore these sketch maps should perhaps best be thought of as a kind of historical map. We may suppose that the method of describing the world on the first page of these atlases resembles that in the *Tianxiatu*, a sketch map of the Korean peninsula in the late seventeenth century, whose creation may have been related to the introduction of western cartography into Korea.⁴⁹ If such a relationship did exist, this could provide another perspective from which to understand European cartography at that time.

In short, by the mid-sixteenth century, when Portuguese cartography was at its peak, and when large numbers of regional maps began to be published, the Seres misunderstanding was finally put to rest. The European belief that East Asia was divided into two separate parts, and the geographic terminology that reflected this belief, had become things of the past. Since the 1550s, Portuguese cartographers had published numerous maps that used the name "China" or a close cognate. These maps included the "Map of the Far East" in the 1560 Atlas by Bartolomeu Velho, which includes many place names along the southern coastal regions of China; the "Map of the Far East" in the Atlas of 1563 by Lazaro Luís, on which "China" and "Camtão" are clearly noted⁵⁰; the "Map of China" by Sebastião Lopes, in which the "Cidade de catao" is especially prominent, and the region of Tartaria is marked in the north⁵¹; the "Map of China" in the Atlas of 1568 by Diogo Homem; the maps in the Atlas of 1571 by Fernão Vaz Dourado, in which the "Reinos da China," "Chinche" (Zhangzhou) and "Liampo" (Ningbo) are clearly marked⁵² (see Map 10); the "Map of China" in the 1590 Atlas by Bartolomeu Lasso, in which the entrance to the Pearl River and the "Cidade da Cantão" are clearly marked⁵³; and a specially made map of China, dating from 1575, by Luís Jorge de Barbuda (see Map 11).

Based on the existence of these maps, we can draw the conclusion that by this time the "Seres Misunderstanding" had been replaced by new geographical information on Portuguese maps. At that

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Map 11. Luís Jorge de Barbuda, *Chinae* (c. 1576), in Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum Sinarum regiones, noua descriptio. auctore Ludouico Georgio* (from: CTMCD, *Macau: Cartografia do Encontro Ocidente-Oriente*. Macao, n.d., p. 150).

time, European geographical knowledge about the East as reflected on Portuguese maps was quite close to reality. Taking into consideration both André Homem's Map of 1559 and Bartolomeu Velho's Map of 1561, I think that we can conclude that this misperception was more or less entirely cleared up by the year 1560.

This chronicle of how the Seres misunderstanding was finally cleared up on Portuguese maps of East Asia reveals that Portuguese cartographers changed their views due to the first-hand information gained by Portuguese travellers who had voyaged to the coastal regions of east China. However, it would still be some time before other Europeans—be they cartographers or the general public—would understand the geography of Asia in any detail. This would not happen until a number of Jesuits recounted their own

experiences of living and working in China. The maps of China these missionaries made, such as those made by Michele Ruggieri⁵⁴ and Matteo Ricci, were based on Chinese maps, and would contribute significantly to the development in Europe of the geography of Asia. However, in spite of all this, Europeans who had never been to China, and even those who remained in India, were doubtful about the reports of Jesuits, since there was little exchange between the Far East and the West at that time. Even in the late sixteenth century, when the Jesuits in India heard about a place called “Cathay” in East Asia and thought there might be some opportunities for missionary work there, they immediately sent envoys by way of Central Asia to find this “Cathay,” and to find out what the difference was between “Cathay” and “China.” Matteo Ricci has described this story vividly, and now we can also read

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the notes of Bento de Goes, one of the main protagonists of this journey.⁵⁵ The fact of this journey proves not only that many Europeans at the time still knew very little about East Asia, but also that the Portuguese who travelled to China by sea knew only about “China”—not Cathay—and that the term “China” was already in widespread use in Europe by that time. Though their understanding of China was still far from ideal, Europeans were no longer in the grip of the Seres misunderstanding.

Europeans gradually built up a more accurate understanding about the geography of the East Asian continent through Portuguese maritime activities there. However, in the first half of sixteenth century, the

Portuguese still considered the information they had collected from their voyages to be a national secret, and made every effort to block the spread of this information, sometimes going so far as to actively distort what they knew. Therefore Portuguese maps reflected only a part of their real geographical knowledge. If the competition between nations had not created this impediment to the free flow of information, the Seres misunderstanding might have been cleared up much earlier. **RC**

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NOTES

- 1 Henry Yule (trans. and ed.), *Cathay and the Way Thither*. London, 1866.
- 2 George Coedès, (trans. and ed.), *Textes d'auteurs grecs et latins relatifs à l'Extrême Orient depuis le IV^e siècle av. J.-C. jusqu'au XIV^e siècle*. Paris, E. Leroux, 1910. (The title was changed somewhat when this work was reissued in 1977: *Textes d'auteurs grecs et latins relatifs à l'Extrême Orient*). Chinese translation by Geng Sheng, Zhonghua Shuju, 1987.
- 3 Paul Pelliot and A.C. Moule (trans. and ed.), *Notes on Marco Polo*, Paris, Impr. Nationale, 1959, Vol. III, pp. 264-278.
- 4 Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1993 [1965].
- 5 Jaime Cortesão, *Os Descobrimentos Portugueses* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1975-1981), 6 v., 1635 pp., [28] p. of plates. Includes bibliographical references and indexes. Chinese translation by Deng Lanzhen et al., Zhongguo duiwai fanyi gongsi, 1996.
- 6 *History of Portuguese Cartography* (Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, Lisboa / Coimbra, 1971).
- 7 Armando Cortesão and Avelino Teixeira da Mota, *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica* (6 vols.; Lisbon, 1960-1962). Reprodução fac-similada da edição de 1960. Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1987 (hereafter *PMC*). The *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica* is a large-scale five-volume atlas of Portuguese historical maps which began publication in 1960. As it is a collection of Portuguese historical maps of the 16th and 17th centuries with a detailed bilingual introduction, its publication is of great significance to the present research. In the microfilm version of this atlas published in 1987, although the maps are monochromatic, there is an appendix by Alfredo Pinheiro Marques that includes maps discovered after publication of the last print edition, as well as a summary of the latest research and analysis of these maps, both of which make this *magnum opus* a work of inestimable value to the present research. I have drawn heavily on this precious resource.
- 8 Al-Istakhri, *Al-Masalik wa-l-Malalik* (*Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, Vol. I), pp. 9-10. Almost the same in Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (*BGA*, Vol. II), Section 12.
- 9 Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-Ard* (*BGA*, Vol. II), pp. 8-9.
- 10 The world map of Abu Abdallah al-Sharif al-Idrisi (c. +1150), made for Roger II, King of Norman Sicily. In Joseph Needham (with the collaboration of Wang Ling), *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 3: *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth*, Cambridge University Press, London and New York, 1959, facing p. 564 (south is at the top).
- 11 This name is translated differently in the different Chinese versions of book.
- 12 Jean de Plan Carpin, *Histoire des Mongols*, translated and annotated by Jean Becquet et Louis Hambis, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1965. The Chinese translation is by Geng Sheng, Zhonghua Shuju, 1985.
- 13 Jean de Plan Carpin, *Mongols* (Chinese edition), pp. 160-165.
- 14 Oscar Peschel, quoted in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*: “Geography and the Church,” www.newadvent.org/cathen/10285c.htm.
- 15 Cf. He Gaoji's Foreword to the Chinese edition of William Woodville Rockhill (ed.), *The Journey of William Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253-1255 as narrated by himself, with two accounts of the Earlier Journey of John of Pian de Carpine*, trans. from Latin and edited with an Introduction Notice by William Woodville Rockhill, London, MDCCC, pp. 155. Yule (Vol. ii) He was considered to be the first western scholar to identify Seres with Cathay.
- 17 *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon, a translation by Robert Belle Burke*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1928, reprint by Thoemmes Press, 2000, p. 387. It should be noted that people soon forgot about Rubruck. His works and knowledge were rediscovered in the sixteenth century.
- 18 Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, translated and annotated by A. C. Moule, and P. Pelliot, London, 1938, vol. I, p. 353.
- 19 Marco Polo, *Description*, vol. I, pp. 304, 309, 353.
- 20 Odoric of Pordenone, *The Travels of Friar Odoric*, translated by Henry Yule, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Michigan, U.S.A and Cambridge, U.K., 2002. Chinese translation by He Gaoji 何高济, Zhonghua shuju, 1981. For background information, cf. Chen Dezhi (ed.), *Zhongguo Tongshi: Yuan Shiqi* 中国通史元时期 [Chinese History: Mongol-Yuan Period], Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1997, p. 81.
- 21 A. Cortesão, *History of Portuguese Cartography*, pp. 38-51 (an important introduction to Portolan maps from 1325 to 1400).
- 22 See J. Cortesão, *Os Descobrimentos Portugueses* (Chinese translation), pp. 196-197 and pp. 222-223 for positive comments on the influence of Arabic geography.

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- 23 There has been some dispute over whether or not the *Geography* and the maps in it were truly Ptolemy's work. However, there is not much debate over the fact that they are, at the very least, based on his views. Cf. Lach, *Asia*, Vol. I, Book One, pp. 67-68.
- 24 *Shijie tan xian shi*, 世界探險史 (Chinese translation by Qu Rui and Yun Hai of Yosef P. Magidovich, *Essays on the history of geographical discoveries*), Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1988), p. 149.
- 25 *Shijie tan xian shi*, p. 161.
- 26 For Juan de la Cosa's maps and the "King-Hamy-Huntingdon Chart," see Lach, *Asia*, Vol. I, Book One, p. 219.
- 27 *PMC*, Vol. I, p. 13.
- 28 *PMC*, Vol. I, Map 9 and pp. 29-31nn.
- 29 For background information on Rodrigues, see *PMC*, Vol. I, pp. 79-84 and Map 34-36; and Armando Cortesão (tr.), *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodrigues*, London, the Hakluyt Society, 1944, especially the Introduction, "The Pilot and Cartographer Francisco Rodrigues" and "The Book of Francisco Rodrigues."
- 30 *PMC*, Vol. I, pp. 33-34 and Map 10. The title of the map is "Anonymous—Pedro Reinel, Chart of c. 1517." The reason it is "anonymous" is because most of Reinel's extant maps carry no signature. But scholars today have no question as to who authored these maps. See *PMC*, Vol. I, p. 19.
- 31 *PMC*, Vol. I, pp. 35-36 and Map 11. For more on the history of research on this map, see *PMC*, Vol. I, p. 36.
- 32 *PMC*, Vol. I, Map 12.
- 33 *Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, pp. 320 and 301.
- 34 The titles of the following maps and their numbers are taken from *PMC*, Vol. I. These titles were not originally given to the maps by Rodrigues.
- 35 The title of this last map is "Formosa" (*PMC*).
- 36 For background on Ribeiro, see *PMC*, Vol. I, pp. 87-94 ("The Cartographer Diogo Ribeiro and his Work"). For an introduction to Diogo Ribeiro's Map of 1529, see Monique de la Roncière and Michel Mollat du Jourdin, *Les portulans: Cartes marines du XIII au XVII siècle*, Office du Livre S. A., Fribourg, Switzerland, 1984.
- 37 *PMC*, Vol. I, Maps 37-41. Map 41 was originally regarded as a separate map, but some scholars have argued that it was in fact part of a planisphere (*PMC*, Vol. I, pp. 107-109). Later, another world map of Ribeiro's (Map 523, made in 1530) proved that the former was indeed part of a larger map. See *PMC*, Vol. V, pp. 5-6.
- 38 Lach, *Asia*, Vol. I, Book 1, pp. 221-222 cites the well-known cartographer Kammerer as saying this. Kammerer's book is not available to me, but obviously he was making comparison between Ribeiro and Rodrigues. Besides, since they had not yet discovered the route to Japan, its location was not clear.
- 39 In the *PMC*, these notes are too small to be read. Lach (in *Asia*, Vol. I, Book 2, p. 816) quotes these notes as saying: "In this Chinese province, there is a lot of silk, musk, rhubarb and china ..." This note appears on the map directly below the name "China."
- 40 *PMC*, Vol. I, pp. 123-124.
- 41 Lach, *Asia*, Vol. I, Book 1, p. 223.
- 42 The central Pacific Ocean, as well as northwest and southwest America, were left off this map. It is hard to understand why the Americas were not included, since by this time they had been depicted on other maps. See *PMC*, Vol. I, p. 67.
- 43 It is very difficult to identify the names of cities in the *PMC*, but Cortesão has made a study of these names. See Armando Cortesão, *Cartografia e Cartógrafos Portugueses dos Séculos XV e XVI*, Lisbon, 1935, Vol. II, Plate XVIII (cited in Lach, *Asia*, Vol. I, Book 2, p. 817).
- 44 For the identification of Liampo, see Comissão Territorial de Macau para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, *Macau: Cartografia do Encontro Ocidente-Oriente*, n.d., pp. 56-57.
- 45 On a map of 1561, Diogo Homem marked a place in southern China that he called "Terra Leucorr;" this may be a reference to "Ryukyu," however, this term is quite confusing. See Lach, *Asia*, Vol. I, Book 2, p. 817.
- 46 On the original map, Taiwan is called "Formosa."
- 47 Filippo Bencardino, "China in European Cartography between the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Review of Culture* (English Edition), No. 34/35, 1998, p. 24.
- 48 Though no information related to the "Seres Misunderstanding" appears on this map, judging from the maps by Velho discussed earlier, it seems reasonable to conclude that he would not have rejected it.
- 49 See Xu Ning 徐宁, *Lichao Houqi de Tianxiatu Yanjiu* 李朝后期的天下图研究 (Research into the Tianxiatu [Korean World Map] in the Late Li Dynasty), unpub. MA thesis, Nanjing University, 2002. Xu Ning studied the relationship between the introduction of European-style world maps (in Chinese translation) to the Korean peninsula and the emergence of the "Tianxiatu." However, by this time, Portuguese and other European maps were already widely used in Japan. Thus Japanese maps in the Portuguese style may have had a more direct influence on the Korean "Tianxiatu."
- 50 Luís renders "China" as "Achina." However, in studying other place names in his atlas, I have found that he often prefixed these names with an "A," such as in "Apersia" (see Map 216).
- 51 See Lopes' world map of 1583 (Map 408 in *PMC*).
- 52 On some of Dourado's maps of China, China was called "Reinos da Chin" only when following "Liampo" (Dourado, 1570, Map 270); on others, he did not provide the name "China" but instead noted only the names of cities such as "Camtam" (Guangdong/ Guangzhou) and "Liampo" (see Dourado, 1576, Map 340 in *PMC*).
- 53 Lasso's maps from 1592 to 1594 provide more detailed descriptions about the entrance of Pearl River, and more place names (see Map 383 in *PMC*).
- 54 See Fernando Sales Lopes, "The *Atlante della Cina*," in *Review of Culture*, No. 34/35, 1998, pp. 7-10; and Michele Ruggieri, "Four Maps of Southern China," in *Review of Culture*, No. 34/35, 1998, pp. 35-37.
- 55 See Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century: the Journals of Matteo Ricci: 1583-1610*, translated by Louis J. Gallagher, S.J., Random House, New York, 1953, Book 5, No. 11 (Cathay and China: The Extraordinary Odyssey of a Jesuit Lay Brother) and Book 12 (Cathay and China Proved to Be Identical). Chinese translation by He Gaoji and others, *Zhonghua Shuju*, 1983. For the same descriptions, see "The Journey of Benedict Goes from Agra to Cathay" in Yule, *Cathay*, pp. 529-591.



Sebastian Munster, *Mapa de Taprobana* (1544).

Um Viajante Imaginário, Iambulo, e um Fidalgo Português Anónimo nas Ilhas do Sudeste Asiático

JUAN GIL*

O homem moveu-se sempre ao ritmo das mesmas esperanças e expectativas. A grande era da expansão europeia não fez senão reactivar ideias, sentimentos e quimeras que durante muitos séculos tinham permanecido latentes ou sonhadas. Consequentemente, às vezes convém olhar para trás, para contemplar os modelos que, a seu tempo, foram criados pela antiguidade clássica para as viagens dos descobrimentos. De todos aqueles modelos, um dos mais sugestivos é, sem dúvida, a literatura fantástica, que inaugurou um género que é mais actual do que nunca. Será bom, então, por um momento debruçarmo-nos sobre uma daquelas viagens imaginárias escritas na época greco-romana, pois não só nos deleitará com a sua frescura, mas proporcionar-nos-á também o contraponto adequado aos sonhos e às aspirações do homem do renascimento.

Observemos uma navegação imaginária ao Sudeste asiático feita por um homem que viveu há muitos anos, muito provavelmente numa cidade do Oriente mediterrânico; de passagem, teremos a ocasião de fazer reviver a figura de um humanista português.

A VIAGEM DE IAMBULO

No final do segundo livro da sua obra *Biblioteca storica*, dedicado à história e à geografia do Oriente,

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Diodoro Sículo, um historiador contemporâneo de Júlio César e de Octávio César Augusto, achou que seria oportuno terminar a descrição da Arábia com a notícia de uma notável descoberta marítima: a viagem feita por um tal Iambulo através do Oceano Índico até encontrar uma ilha fantástica, povoada de homens portentosos. O resumo pobre de Diodoro, feito de extractos mal encadeados, é tudo – ou quase tudo – o que sabemos sobre Iambulo, o protagonista e talvez o autor do livro¹. O nome indica origem semítica, embora não forçosamente síria²: Meissner³ referiu, a propósito, o hebreu *Yabal*, *Yubal*, mas F. Altheim⁴ considerou o nome de origem árabe (*ynbl* ou *ynblw*): Iambulo teria sido um nabateu helenizado. As circunstâncias da sua vida escapam-nos, embora todos os indícios apontem para que o autor não tenha sido muito anterior a Diodoro. De qualquer forma, Iambulo terá residido no Oriente (Síria, ou melhor, Egipto), quando as relações comerciais com a Índia começaram a atingir um nível espectacular ao realizar-se já a navegação desde o Golfo até à costa do Malabar (isto acontece no fim do século III, ou melhor, no século II a.C.)⁵ e não, como antes, contornando a costa até chegar a Barígaza (Broach). Podemos imaginar as conversações dos marinheiros contemporâneos ao chegarem ao porto, fantasiando as suas aventuras para encarecer a mercadoria, referindo mil maravilhas da terra visitada e vangloriando-se da sua destreza e sangue frio, em proezas meio reais, meio sonhadas. Embora mais do que um daqueles intrépidos viajantes pudesse ter-se sentido tentado a escrever as suas peripécias, não há actualmente mais relatos deste tipo do que o lacónico *Périplo do mar Vermelho*, escrito exclusivamente com fins comerciais. Não obstante, a prova de que existiu tal género de literatura é uma obra como esta, na qual a narração é clara, sem tentar iludir ninguém, um périplo imaginário.

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A finalidade do livro de Iambulo, embebido de doutrinas estóicas e cínicas, é mostrar, entre verdades e gracejos, um paradigma de vida ideal, fazendo-nos ver as excelências de um mundo na verdade feliz, embora, e certamente por essa razão, inatingível, e que, por acaso, fica situado nos limites da terra: o melhor encontra-se sempre fora do alcance. Trata-se de um precedente claro da *Utopia* de Thomas More, baseada também no brilho das últimas navegações, as dos portugueses pelas costas da América do Sul e pelo Oceano Índico. Entretanto, toda a imitação, cómica ou séria, requer a existência de um modelo precedente. No exemplo de More constituem o seu ponto de partida as *Navigaciones* de Américo Vespúcio; no caso de Iambulo o precedente tem que ser uma viagem verdadeira à Índia e às suas ilhas.

A fim de acentuar o contraste entre a utopia e a realidade, entre o mundo sonhado e o mundo vivido, o protagonista é um modelo de infelicidades. Trata-se de um homem letrado e sedento de conhecimento, que vê gorada a sua vocação com a morte de seu pai, infortúnio que o força a abraçar o comércio. A sua estrela como comerciante extingue-se ao cair nas mãos de dois bandos de foragidos – árabes, os primeiros e etíopes, os segundos. Com este duplo cativo, obscurece-se ainda mais a sua vida. De sujeito, Iambulo transforma-se em objecto, uma coisa simples que passa de mão em mão sem que ele, na sua condição de escravo, tenha direito a decidir o seu destino. Para agravar este estado de coisas, a viagem extraordinária também lhe foi imposta. Iambulo, como *pharmakós* o bode expiatório, cumpre a ordem de se lançar no oceano e faz, contra a sua vontade, uma grande descoberta marítima, embora seja uma descoberta anunciada: todos os etíopes conhecem de antemão a existência da fabulosa ilha. Finalmente, quando Iambulo se encontra mais feliz e ditoso na sua nova vida, acontece-lhe um último e inesperado infortúnio, pois são os próprios ilhéus que o forçam a sair do país ideal. Iambulo é, consequentemente, um brinquedo do destino, um exemplo de como o Acaso (o *Tyche*) se pode enfurecer com os miseráveis seres humanos. O seu grande mérito consiste, aparentemente, em nunca ter oferecido resistência à adversidade, em ter sabido ser um novo Ulisses caído na desgraça, capaz de ultrapassar os dissabores sem proferir protestos inúteis. Assim, e graças à sua paciência, Iambulo sai vencedor de todos os infortúnios, fazendo jus ao velho provérbio:

ducunt uolentem fata, nolentem trahunt (o destino protege os que aceitam, mas arrasta aqueles que o recusam). A estrutura da obra, tão barroca, recorda a não menos complicada trama das novelas gregas, com as mil peripécias a que são submetidos, contra sua vontade, os amantes que as protagonizam. Nestas novelas de amor, a castidade é a virtude que supera todas as vicissitudes e todos os obstáculos. Aqui o sofrimento humano só serve aparentemente de mero expediente para referir as maravilhas de um país de fábulas e a bondade da sua terra e dos seus habitantes, por contraste com o corrupto mundo romano, Babilónia abominável e poço de todos os vícios.

O PRIMEIRO COMENTÁRIO ERUDITO:
O FIDALGO PORTUGUÊS

Curiosamente, alguns incautos aceitaram a viagem de Iambulo como sendo real. Assim o fez o próprio Diodoro Sículo, de maneira surpreendente (ou será que ele também só teve conhecimento da mesma através do extracto?), embora se deva admitir que a sua credulidade foi extraordinária: como que aceitou sem qualquer reserva a veracidade da narração de Evémero. Para nós, não obstante, tem mais importância o facto de que, séculos mais tarde, na terceira ou quarta década do século XVI, também o avalizou, com a sua autoridade, um “fidalgo português”, o primeiro que analisou este texto de um ponto de vista crítico e com conhecimento de causa. Numa viagem a Itália este fidalgo visitou Veneza, onde se tornou amigo de Gianbattista Ramusio, o grande coleccionador de viagens, com quem manteve doudas conversações sobre o Extremo Oriente. O português conhecia bem o latim e tinha estado, segundo dizia, na Índia e em Malaca. Lamento não poder identificar exactamente a ciência deste personagem, que, embora desconhecido pela generalidade dos historiadores⁶, é introduzido por direito próprio no vasto plantel de cosmógrafos que Portugal deu ao mundo no século XVI. Diversas fontes clássicas tinham incidido sobre a Índia e as suas ilhas. Os portugueses compararam pacientemente as notícias dos antigos com a sua experiência pessoal; o melhor exemplo desta verificação sistemática é-nos dado através do caso de D. João de Castro, que se aventurou pelo Mar Vermelho com as tabelas ptolomaicas na mão para confrontar os dados do alexandrino e para corrigir os

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seus erros⁷. Na verdade, o mesmo fez o fidalgo em questão com a viagem de Iambulo.

A sua idade e experiência no Oriente granjearam grande crédito ao português, quem quer que ele fosse, que, perante a espantada audiência veneziana, fez um comentário ao texto de Diodoro. Além disso, o inesperado professor, desempenhando o seu papel, serviu-se de uma carta de navegação lusa, “muito bonita e singular”, a fim de explicar o itinerário que o suposto viajante tinha feito desde a “Arábia Feliz à costa troglodita⁸”.

De facto, a narrativa de Iambulo começa com a viagem mercantil ao país do incenso (a Arábia Feliz)⁹, no decorrer da qual acontece o primeiro cativo do protagonista quando uns salteadores nómadas assaltaram a caravana. O segundo cativo em poder dos etíopes transfere o cenário para África. O fidalgo português explicou, de mapa na mão, que os raptos

etíopes e com eles a sua presa – Iambulo – tinham passado para a Etiópia troglodita pelo estreito de Babelmandeb, e aventurou mesmo que o porto de onde o grego partiu para a sua viagem maravilhosa poderia ter sido Zeila, o Avalites dos antigos, localizado na costa da Somália¹⁰, ou mesmo Madagáscar, que identificou erroneamente como Opone, actual Hafun¹¹. Não obstante, aqui há alguma distorção da realidade antiga: dos portos da Arábia (Óquelis, Muza ou Cané), e não de África, era de onde partiam os navios com rumo à Índia, aproveitando os ventos propícios da monção de Verão. É provável que o fidalgo português tenha reflectido sobre a situação do seu tempo; os navios da Índia comerciavam no século XVI com as praças litorais da África oriental: existem lá, para o comprovar, os *Baneanes* encontrados por Vasco da Gama em Melinde.

G. B. Ramusio, *Sumatra* (1566).



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Observemos agora uma série de questões específicas delineadas pelos comentários do fidalgo luso. A ilha descoberta por Iambulo media 5000 estádios¹² de circunferência e ficava no Equador, pelo que no seu céu não se viam nem a Ursa Maior nem outras estrelas. Entretanto, também a Taprobana (Ceilão, como sabemos actualmente) estava dividida em duas pelo Equador de acordo com a doutrina ptolomaica – prova de como eram rudimentares e inconsistentes os conhecimentos geográficos do momento –, tinha 5000 estádios de perímetro, de acordo com Onesícrito, e a sua vegetação exuberante tinha proporcionado a alguns autores hipérboles semelhantes às expressas por Iambulo. Com bons argumentos, então, o nosso fidalgo excluiu a hipótese de a ilha em questão poder ser Ceilão, porque Ceilão estava situada a sete graus de latitude Norte e no seu céu ainda se distinguia a Ursa Maior: o paraíso de Iambulo – a Taprobana – tinha que ser Samatra.

Esta conclusão era sustentada pelo facto de que, desde longa data, a Taprobana tinha sido identificada como sendo Samatra. Era uma dedução lógica. Marco Polo, que passou alguns meses¹³ em Samatra (então chamada Java Menor) à espera de ventos propícios para continuar a navegação, escreveu que no seu firmamento não aparecia nem a estrela polar nem o Carro da Ursa Maior. Os astrónomos italianos contemporâneos, como Pedro de Abano¹⁴, tiveram que deduzir por pura lógica que essa ilha grande não poderia ser senão a Taprobana. Assim o indica a tradição posterior. Nicolò di Conti residiu um ano numa cidade da Taprobana, “quae Sciamuthera eorum lingua dicitur”, de acordo com o comentário do viajante, Poggio¹⁵.

No mapa de Frei Mauro¹⁶ uma legenda indica “isola Siamotra over Taprobana” (ilha de Samatra acima da Taprobana), (XIII, 38), e uma outra legenda chega a acusar Ptolomeu de se ter enganado: “Ptolomeu querendo descrever a Taprobana descreveu apenas Ceilão” (XIV, 49). Em 1498, como se tenta demonstrar num outro lugar¹⁷, Cristóvão Colombo tentou chegar à Taprobana navegando para Ocidente pelo Equador. A identificação das duas ilhas transformou-se em norma na cartografia da primeira metade do século XVI. Samatra é a Taprobana nos mapa-mundi de Cantino, Caverio, ou Oliveriano, J. Ruysch (Ptolomeu de 1508)¹⁸, Lopo Homem (1509), J. Schoener¹⁹, Juan Vespucci (1524), F. Le Moyne²⁰, Miguel Servet (Ptolomeu de 1535), G. Mercator (1538) e Apiano (1548). De acordo com

Fernão Lopes de Castanheda²¹, Samatra “é a própria, segundo se crê, a que os cosmógrafos antigos chamaram Taprobana”. A identificação, sustentada por Pigafetta²², foi defendida também pelos cronistas espanhóis das Índias: Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, falando de Samatra, precisou: “que os antigos nomeiam Taprobana”²³; e o mesmo sustentaram Francisco Lopez de Gómara²⁴ e Juan López de Velasco²⁵. Em 1558 Juan van der Sloote também se referiu a Taprobana assim, dos “quae nunc Samataram uocant”²⁶. Existe, pois, quase unanimidade.

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Por conseguinte, não era de modo algum um erro se o nosso fidalgo relacionasse a ilha de Iambulo com Samatra/Taprobana: como se esclarece mais tarde, somente a partir de Samatra teria sido possível demorar quatro meses a chegar ao golfo de Bengala²⁷; além disso, aqueles 5000 estádios que mencionaram os antigos correspondiam às 600 milhas que os portugueses tinham percorrido à volta da costa oriental de Samatra. A ilha de Iambulo, para cúmulo, pertencia a um arquipélago constituído por um total de sete ilhas²⁸. Curiosamente, a Cosmografia medieval também imaginou que Samatra estava assim localizada: “Java Menor, ilha fertilíssima, que tem 8 reinos e é circundada por oito ilhas”, diz Frei Mauro (XIII, 34). De oito era possível, muito facilmente, passar a sete, um número mais carregado de simbolismos mágicos. O fidalgo português pensou, então, com toda a lógica, que este arquipélago eram as sete ilhas perto de Samatra, embora depois Ramusio as tenha distinguido de forma tão absurda quanto repetitiva: Java Maior (Bornéu), Java Menor (Samatra), Bornéu, Timor e as Molucas.

A interpretação do fidalgo português seduziu Lassen ainda no século XIX, que, sem mencionar o

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seu precursor, identificou as sete ilhas como sendo Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumbava, Flores, Celebes e Bornéu²⁹. E o coronel inglês G. E. Gerini³⁰ abonou esta hipótese, adicionando, às similaridades mencionadas, a existência, em Samatra, de fontes termais e de uma planta venenosa, a verticalidade dos raios solares e a falta de sombra no seu solo, o costume, normal entre os Bataques, de escrever em colunas verticais dispostas de alto a baixo e da esquerda para a direita e, finalmente, a relação entre grão e o nome da ilha, em Ptolomeu (*Iabadiu*, isto é, *Yava-dvipa*, ‘a ilha da cevada’); em conclusão, a história de Iambulo resulta em ser “so fabulous as has been hitherto been thought.”

A equivalência da Taprobana com Samatra proposta pelo fidalgo português exclui uma possibilidade sugestiva: a sua identificação com Gaspar Barreiros, o sobrinho de João de Barros, que se interessou muito pela geografia antiga e moderna, como o manifestou na sua *Chorografia*, publicada em Coimbra em 1561, tratado que serve para ilustrar uma viagem de Badajoz a Milão em 1546, quatro anos antes da publicação de *Navigazioni e viaggi* (Veneza, 1550-1559). Barreiros, de facto, não esteve na Índia, tanto quanto sei, e sustentou uma teoria cosmográfica absolutamente oposta à do fidalgo amigo de Ramusio, identificando correctamente a Taprobana com o Ceilão no seu *Commentarius de Ophyræ regione*³¹; é a opinião, por outro lado, que já tinha sido defendida por João de Barros com uma grande quantidade de dados³² e, antes de Barros, por outros eruditos, entre eles Egídio de Viterbo, quando comemorou, em 1507, a chegada dos portugueses a Ceilão³³.

Hoje, admiramo-nos com o esforço do comentador luso para encontrar informações precisas num texto deliberadamente ambíguo, que é realmente uma complicação de tradições orais, deformações deliberadas e paródias evidentes. Muitos outros detalhes em que é pródiga a narrativa, longe de encaixar num lugar concreto, aumentam a nebulosa incerteza sobre a sua verdadeira identidade³⁴. Entre outras maravilhas da fauna, Iambulo menciona uma cana de cujo fruto, parecido à ervilha, se faz pão. A cana parece ser o bambu. As dificuldades começam com a identificação do fruto em questão. O fidalgo luso³⁵ identificou este pão com o milho, semelhante ao grão-de-bico branco, que era o sustento de toda a Etiópia e das ilhas e continente da Índia ocidental, o milho chamado em português milho zaburro: isto é, o maís, segundo

concluiu, por sua vez, erradamente, Ramusio. Alguns filólogos modernos, como Kroll³⁶, acreditaram ter encontrado na descrição de Iambulo uma vaga referência ao arroz. Outros, como Lassen, pensaram que o pão se referia ao *sagu*, cuja elaboração lembra, até certo ponto, o processo aqui narrado³⁷. Mas não se pode pedir a Iambulo exactidão nos dados; fazê-lo, seria tentar seguir à letra as descobertas dos portugueses tomando como base a *Utopia* de More. E esta foi a causa da confusão do “fidalgo português”: a literatura não é ciência.

Por outro lado, é surpreendente que um homem como o fidalgo anónimo, hábil em latim e bom conhecedor do Oriente, tivesse dado crédito, sem mais cuidado, a todas as fábulas, muitas delas inacreditáveis, que Iambulo narra. Este é um bom tema para reflexão. Os espanhóis, na sua expansão pelo Ocidente, acreditaram encontrar todos os mitos da Índia no Novo Mundo. Colombo e os seus homens avistaram – ou pensaram ter avistado – amazonas, ciclopes, cinocéfalos e grifos nas ilhas das Antilhas: essa era a prova de que tinham atingido o seu objectivo. Mais tarde os prodígios e os monstros foram-se afastando para o continente, até se retirarem finalmente para as águas do Oceano Pacífico.

Os Portugueses, entretanto, parece que foram mais racionais e que não se deixaram enganar por miragens. Não obstante, por pouco que se procure, sob uma aparência mais racional escondem-se os mitos e as fantasias. Aqui vemos um homem culto render-se às fantasias de Iambulo e da sua terra mágica; é necessário recordar que, exactamente nas vizinhanças de Samatra, encontraram os portugueses a ilha do ouro, procurada diligentemente durante todo o século XVI³⁸. Todavia, o cosmógrafo italiano Giovanni Lorenzo Anania identificou a ilha de Iambulo com Samatra e Ofir³⁹. É preciso admitir que, em geral, o europeu rapidamente aceita o que lhe é dito sobre o Oriente, por insólito e absurdo que seja. No Oriente, país de fábulas, tudo pode acontecer, de tal maneira que o primeiro embuste seduz o europeu, tenha nascido no século I a.C., como Diodoro, que nunca esteve na Índia, ou no século XVI, como o fidalgo português, que pisou a terra que identifica.

A seriedade, a relação lógica e as considerações do fidalgo português convenceram Ramusio, que introduziu na sua obra o comentário do seu amigo hóspede, mas sem revelar o seu nome. As suas razões

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continuaram a fazer eco num sábio biblicista como o protestante Samuel Bochart, que, em meados do século XVII, reconheceu sem hesitação a ilha de Iambulo na Taprobana, já convertida correctamente em Ceilão: nada menos do que vinte e um argumentos usou Bochart para refutar a opinião dos “insignes geógrafos Mercator, Iulius Scaliger, Rhamusius, Orosius e Stukius”, que se inclinavam por Samatra⁴⁰; e três daqueles vinte e um argumentos (o 17, o 19 e o 20) apoiam-se nos dados, pouco fiáveis, oferecidos por Iambulo. Poucos anos mais tarde, o grande erudito holandês Isaac Voss discutiu com grande detalhe os textos greco-romanos e cingaleses relativos à Taprobana, admitindo também a sua correspondência com Ceilão e rejeitando, com razão, uma possibilidade que João de Barros tinha deixado em aberto: que um cataclismo tivesse afundado no mar a maior parte da ilha, como asseguravam algumas tradições nativas⁴¹; mas Voss não teve dificuldade em admitir que a ilha de Iambulo era a Taprobana/Ceilão⁴², hipótese que manteve P. Wesseling no século XVIII⁴³ e que voltou a ser defendida no século XX por F. F. Schwarz⁴⁴ e W.- W. Ehlers⁴⁵. Mas deixemos isso aos filólogos e às suas interpretações dos textos da Antiguidade e regressemos a Iambulo.

LIÇÕES GERAIS

Esta viagem imaginária oferece-nos algumas lições de carácter geral, pois é como que um refinamento dos anseios e fantasias que movem os descobridores.

I. Os prodígios e os paradoxos acontecem sempre numa ilha, então o mundo insular, fechado e misterioso, favorece a criação do sonho, seja este agradável ou terrível⁴⁶. Assim acontece já na *Odisseia*. As aventuras mágicas de Ulisses acontecem nas ilhas de Calipso, Circe, Polifemo, os lestrigões ou os feaces. S. Brandão vai à procura do Paraíso no Oceano, escondido na ilha perdida e inacessível. Os tesouros das minas de Salomão são protegidos durante toda a Idade Média numa ilha, a ilha de Salomão. E ilhas serão também a fabulosa *Utopia* de Thomas More e a morada novelesca de Robinson Crusoe.

II. A ilha de Iambulo fica situada num lugar da Terra tão mítico como fabuloso: o Equador, onde alguns cosmógrafos famosos tinham situado a Zona Tórrida, inabitável. Lá, onde os dias e as noites têm a mesma duração⁴⁷, instalou a Antiguidade grega, desde

Píndaro, as ilhas dos Afortunados. É no Equador mágico onde se escondem as maiores riquezas do mundo: ouro, prata, pedras preciosas, especiarias. O Paraíso fica situado também no equinócio, de acordo com uma vasta faixa dos intérpretes bíblicos. Não é de estranhar, portanto, que Iambulo introduzisse conscientemente elementos paradisíacos no seu cenário. A vida dos ilhéus decorre deleitosamente nos prados, tal como os afortunados do Elísio se deleitavam cantando e dançando em vergéis encantadores. O fidalgo português, partindo de um ponto de vista anacrónico, que teria feito sorrir Homero, viu muito claramente a ligação do jardim mítico de Alcino com a exuberância infinita da terra equinocial, que ele conhecia de vista. A história leva-nos, pois, a um mundo de fantasia pelo mero facto de nos transportar à ilha equinocial.

III. A ficção pura não existe: ninguém é capaz de a inventar, a não ser num mundo imaginário. A fantasia de Iambulo apoia-se em notícias do Extremo Oriente, retiradas talvez de relatos orais ou de coisas lidas – o que é verosímil – em Megástenes, Onesícrito ou Nearco. Alguns vestígios ou empréstimos são óbvios.

A ilha de Iambulo está consagrada ao sol, a quem os naturais adoram. Uma ilha do Sol aparece já na *Odisseia*. Aqui, não obstante, o culto ao Sol é tanto mais justificado quanto maior é a proximidade da ilha ao nascimento do astro. A Nearco⁴⁸ também foram referidas lendas terríveis sobre uma ilha misteriosa consagrada ao Sol, na qual nenhum homem poderia desembarcar, pois desapareceria para sempre⁴⁹; entre a Taprobana e o continente estava também uma outra ilha do Sol⁵⁰; havia um Porto do Sol na costa oriental da Taprobana⁵¹; e uma fonte do Pancaya mítico chamava-se Água do Sol⁵². O Sol, tem, pois, uma importância extrema na ficção de Iambulo, mas a influência das estrelas não pára aí: os heliopolitanos (Heliópolis, por outro lado, era o nome da moderna Baalbeck: talvez a escolha do nome encerre alguma ironia da qual actualmente não nos apercebemos, talvez denuncie a origem do autor) adoram também o firmamento, “que tudo cobre”. Além disso, a astrologia é uma ciência cultivada laboriosamente pelos fabulosos ilhéus; e aqui é de notar a procurada simbologia planetária da obra, que se reflecte na repetição deliberada do número sete, o “número perfeito”⁵³, ao longo da história: sete são as ilhas do arquipélago

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mágico, sete as letras do alfabeto dos nativos, sete anos que o protagonista passa nelas⁵⁴; o mesmo tempo que Ulisses passou na ilha de Calipso segundo Homero⁵⁵. Esta inclinação para observar os fenómenos celestiais foi atribuída curiosamente pelos viajantes medievais aos habitantes da Taprobana: Nicolò di Conti⁵⁶ escreveu que Ceilão era governada pelos brâmanes, filósofos que durante toda a sua vida levavam uma vida pura e a devotavam à astrologia; segundo Martín Behaim⁵⁷, os cingaleses *sindt gross, stark leut und gut* ‘astronomi’.

Muito característico do Oriente mítico – e da Idade do Ouro – é a longevidade dos seus habitantes. Os ilhéus de Iambulo viviam até aos 150 anos, a idade que Ctésias⁵⁸ tinha atribuído aos indianos. Chegados a esta idade, punham fim à sua existência voluntariamente; da mesma maneira os átaos de Plínio – os habitantes do país mítico de Uttarakuru – deixavam-se morrer devido ao tédio da vida; e o mesmo era dito dos setentrionais. O abandono voluntário do mundo é, pois, uma característica antiga do Extremo Oriente, mas neste caso reflecte também doutrinas contemporâneas de Iambulo sobre o suicídio⁵⁹: o sábio – o estóico, o cínico, o brâmane – põe fim à vida quando não pode ser auto-suficiente, antes que a carga do corpo seja um estorvo para a alma.

Também característico dos habitantes da Índia ou da terra mágica é a sua elevada estatura. Os heliopolitanos alcançam uma altura de quatro côvados⁶⁰, dimensão considerável para o seu tempo. E a maior peculiaridade da sua compleição física é que os seus ossos eram elásticos, detalhe este muito usado nas actuais novelas de ficção científica.

Outras características estranhas podem derivar de um acervo mítico comum. A língua dos ilhéus de Iambulo era bífida, de tal maneira que podiam falar todas as línguas e emitir todos os sons. A lenda remonta a antigas tradições marítimas. De acordo com uma fonte latina tardia, o *Livro dos Monstros*, havia um povo no Mar Vermelho (ou seja, no Mar Índico) que era capaz de falar todas as línguas, e assim enganava os navegadores, que fazia desembarcar para os comer⁶¹. A extraordinária qualidade é usada neste caso em mau sentido, recordando os sons das sirenes ou a habilidade semelhante de um animal terrível chamado “corocota”. É bom recordar, finalmente, que os árabes tinham fama de ter língua dupla⁶²; este adjectivo, “duplo”, parece

designar a maldade e, ao mesmo tempo, a capacidade poliglota do povo em questão. A língua bífida tem correspondência, creio⁶³, com a dupla campainha que os ilhéus têm nas fossas nasais: ambos são órgãos indispensáveis à voz e a sua duplicidade é necessária para os prodígios referidos.

A esse mesmo acervo comum do imaginário pertencem outros detalhes da natureza da ilha. Iambulo fala-nos do sangue de um animal pequeno que tem a virtude de soldar os membros amputados. Pois bem, a versão toscana de Odorico de Pordenone

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e absurdo que seja.*

(XIV, 4) atribui esse poder a um peixe. Provavelmente, trata-se da mesma tradição, mas contada de maneiras diferentes.

O mesmo é possível dizer das portentosas fontes: já Ctésias tinha mencionado nascentes e lagos de virtudes nunca vistas; é uma tradição que se repete várias vezes e se amplia sempre quando se refere à Índia. Por exemplo, havia, de acordo com Ctésias⁶⁴ uma fonte que se enchia todos os anos de ouro líquido, que dava para encher cem cântaros de barro. Uma tradição parecida – a maior proeza dos alquimistas – recolhe Frei Mauro na ilha de Lamori: “in questa ixola se dixe esser una aqua nela qual bagnando el fero el se fa oro” (XIV, 36)⁶⁵ e na ilha de Andamán: “se dice esser un lago in questa isola que metandoli ferro diventa oro” (XIV, 39)⁶⁶.

IV. As Relações de viagens têm geralmente uma intenção moralizante: o encontro com o outro pode fomentar a auto-estima do europeu ou derivar numa apologia do “bom selvagem”. A viagem de Iambulo entra na segunda categoria, como demonstra claramente a referência aos costumes que caracterizam os fabulosos ilhéus. A comunidade de mulheres e a consequente promiscuidade sexual tinham sido um tema favorito da sofística e da filosofia, ridicularizado

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pela comédia: pensemos, para mencionar apenas duas obras significativas, na *República* de Platão ou nas *Assembleia de Mulheres* de Aristófanes. Não é de estranhar, conseqüentemente, que também o povo encontrado por Iambulo tenha tido esta prática, como um meio ótimo para obter a concórdia social: onde os filhos são de todos, não há favoritismos e reina a mais pura fraternidade. Não obstante, pode ser que nem tudo seja ficção. Os viajantes, medievais e modernos, falaram muito da promiscuidade sexual de determinados ilhéus selvagens, com razão ou sem ela. O bom Odorico de Pordenone⁶⁷ ficou horrorizado ao encontrar tão libertinos costumes em Lámori (Samatra). Não menos estupefactos ficaram Conti e Varthema ao ver como as mulheres mudavam libertinamente de maridos em Calecute.

A comunidade das mulheres tem, por conseqüência, não explícita neste caso, a comunidade dos bens, uma outra característica típica das utopias clássicas de Platão. A comunidade agrária, que os Romanos conheceram em povos como os Vaceus⁶⁸ e os Suevos⁶⁹, rapidamente passou a ser idealizada como mais uma vantagem do “bom selvagem”, cem vezes melhor do que o homem supostamente civilizado. O próprio Horácio⁷⁰ enaltecia os citas e os getas porque os homens alternam todos os anos no trabalho do campo, o que é equivalente a dizer que não têm propriedade privada; por essa razão, as suas terras não têm marcos. A mesma comunidade de bens foi atribuída aos habitantes das ilhas Ebudes, uma adição a Solino⁷¹. Esta mistificação do homem primitivo voltou a aparecer, muito significativamente, no século XVI, quando humanistas como Pedro Mártir de Angleria enquadraram a figura do índio das Antilhas, despido e simples como Adão no Paraíso, dentro da estrutura da evocada Idade do Ouro.

Em resumo: na viagem de Iambulo são referidos todos os tópicos das viagens dos descobrimentos, que aqui estão articulados com uma clara intenção moralizadora, mas com o desejo não menos evidente de deleitar o leitor; a obra é um exemplo notável do *delectare docendo* (deleitar, ensinando) da perspectiva clássica. O prestígio da Antiguidade fez com que esta utopia em forma de novela fosse tomada a sério: especialmente instrutiva sob todos os aspectos resulta a fracassada tentativa do fidalgo português para identificar a ficção literária com a realidade vivida por ele no Sudeste asiático.

TRADUÇÃO DO TEXTO

55. Sobre a ilha que foi descoberta no Oceano ao meio-dia e sobre as suas maravilhas tentaremos falar sucintamente, depois de termos exposto claramente a causa da sua descoberta. Um tal Iambulo tinha-se afeiçoado à cultura desde a infância; mas após a morte de seu pai, que era comerciante, também ele se dedicou ao comércio. Subia através da Arábia até à região dos aromas quando caiu, juntamente com os seus companheiros de viagem, nas mãos de salteadores. Inicialmente ele e um outro cativo foram transformados em pastores; mas, mais tarde, ele e o seu companheiro foram capturados por uns etíopes, que os conduziram até à costa de Etiópia. Ambos ficaram cativos a fim de que, sendo estrangeiros, cumprissem a expiação do país⁷². Era, de facto, um ritual dos etíopes dessa região, transmitido desde tempos imemoriais e sancionado pelos oráculos dos seus deuses, que se realizava há vinte gerações, isto é, há seiscentos anos, pois que cada geração se conta por trinta anos⁷³. E como a expiação se fazia por meio de dois homens, tinham preparado um barco do tamanho apropriado, capaz de enfrentar as tempestades do mar e fácil de ser manobrado por duas pessoas. Assim, pois, depois de terem carregado provisões suficientes para dois homens durante seis meses, colocaram-nos a bordo e ordenaram-lhes que se fizessem à vela cumprindo o oráculo; além disso, mandaram-nos seguir rumo ao Sul, dizendo-lhes que haveriam de chegar a uma ilha feliz e de homens afáveis, onde viveriam felizes; e acrescentaram que, se chegassem a salvo à ilha, o seu próprio povo gozaria também de seiscentos anos de paz e de felicidade total; mas se voltassem para trás, estarrecidos perante a imensidão do oceano, incorreriam nas punições mais severas como homens ateus e perniciosos para a toda a cidade. Diz-se que os etíopes, conseqüentemente, celebram uma grande festa à beira-mar e que, no fim de sacrifícios esplêndidos, cobrem de grinaldas os que vão de partida e obrigam-nos a sair para que cumpram a expiação do povo. Estes, após quatro meses de navegação e tempestades no mar alto, chegaram à referida ilha, que tem forma redonda⁷⁴ e um perímetro de, aproximadamente, 5000 estádios.

56. Aproximavam-se já da costa quando alguns ilhéus saíram ao seu encontro e conduziram o seu barco para terra. Os outros, aproximando-se em correria,

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ficaram espantados com a chegada dos estrangeiros, mas trataram-nos afavelmente e fizeram-nos participantes dos bens que a terra dá. Os habitantes da ilha são muito diferentes dos do nosso mundo quer quanto às suas características corporais quer quanto ao seu modo de vida. De facto, todos se assemelham na compleição dos seus corpos⁷⁵ e na altura excedem os quatro côvados, mas podem duplicar a extensão dos ossos e depois retorná-los ao normal, como se fossem elásticos⁷⁶. Têm o corpo excessivamente macio, mas mais vigoroso do que nós: de facto, quando agarram algo, não há quem possa tirar-lho das mãos. Não têm pêlo em parte alguma do seu corpo, excepto na cabeça, nas sobrancelhas, nas pálpebras e também no queixo, mas no resto dos seus membros são assim tão imberbes que não se vê neles nem o mais ligeiro buço. São bonitos e proporcionados na configuração do seu corpo. Têm as narinas⁷⁷, muito mais largas do que nós e nelas nasce, atrás, uma espécie de sinos. Também a sua língua tem uma peculiaridade, em parte congénita, em parte feita deliberadamente como artifício; de facto, é bífida até um determinado ponto, mas, mais no interior, eles próprios a dividem, de tal maneira que têm duas línguas até à sua raiz; consequentemente, são bastante versáteis e não só imitam todas as vozes humanas e articuladas, mas também reproduzem todos os gorjeios dos pássaros e, no geral, toda a espécie de sons e, o que é mais surpreendente, é que podem falar ao mesmo tempo com dois homens, se se encontrarem com eles, respondendo-lhes e raciocinando de acordo com o assunto, falando com um por uma parte da língua e com o outro pela outra. Na sua terra a temperatura é muito moderada, correspondente à de quem vive no equinócio e sem a opressão do calor e do frio. As árvores dão fruto durante todo o ano, como diz o poeta⁷⁸: “a pêra madura sobre a pêra, a maçã sobre a maçã, a uva sobre a uva e o figo sobre o figo”. Os dias são sempre iguais às noites, e ao meio-dia nada faz sombra porque o sol está em seu zénite.

57. Vivem agrupados em famílias⁷⁹, juntando-se os familiares em número não superior a 400. Passam o tempo nos prados, pois a terra fornece muitas coisas para o sustento, dado que graças à generosidade da ilha e da amenidade do clima nascem espontaneamente alimentos mais do que suficientes. No seu solo cresce uma quantidade enorme de uma planta que dá fruto

em abundância, semelhante à ervilha branca; quando o colhem, molham-no em água quente até que alcance o tamanho de um ovo de pomba; depois, esmagando-o e desintegrando-o destramente com as mãos, moldam o pão, de admirável doçura, que comem cozido. Há numerosas fontes, umas quentes, apropriadas para o banho e o descanso, e outras frias, que destacam pela sua benignidade e têm a virtude de estimular a saúde. Têm cuidado com a aprendizagem de todas as disciplinas e em especial a astronomia. Usam 28 letras, para traduzir os sons⁸⁰, embora o número dos caracteres não seja superior a sete, de modo que cada um vale por quatro. Não desenham as linhas horizontalmente, como nós, e escrevem na vertical⁸¹. Os homens têm uma vida muito longa, vivendo até aos 150 anos, sem terem doenças, de uma maneira geral. A quem for mutilado ou tenha qualquer deficiência física obrigam-no a pôr fim à vida por uma lei inexorável. Está estabelecido entre eles viver até um número determinado de anos, e uma vez chegados a esse termo deixam-se morrer de uma morte estranha: na sua terra cresce uma erva peculiar⁸², e quem se reclina sobre ela, cai adormecido e expira de uma maneira suave e imperceptível.

58. Os homens não se casam, mas têm as mulheres em comum, e criam as crianças que nascem como crianças comuns e gostam de todas da mesma maneira; e, quando são pequenos, as mulheres que os amamentam mudam a meio da amamentação, de modo a que nem as mães reconheçam os seus próprios rebentos. Assim, não se levantando entre eles rivalidade alguma, vivem sem discussões internas, valorizando acima de tudo a concórdia.

Têm animais de tamanho pequeno, mas maravilhosos pela natureza do seu corpo e pelo poder do seu sangue; são redondos e muito semelhantes às tartarugas, mas na sua superfície têm em cruz duas estrias amarelas, cujas extremidades são dotadas, cada uma, de olhos e boca; por essa razão vêem com quatro olhos, e servem-se de duas bocas, mas reúnem o alimento numa única garganta, através da qual engolem a comida e tudo conflui num único estômago; da mesma maneira as suas entranhas e todos os seus órgãos internos são únicos. Debaixo da sua circunferência estão providos, à volta, com muitos pés, graças aos quais se podem mover na direcção que quiserem. O sangue destes animais tem um poder admirável: solda de

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imediatamente todo o membro que tenha sido amputado num corpo vivo, e se for uma mão ou uma outra parte similar, cola-a se o corte for recente; e assim acontece também com os restantes membros do corpo, sempre que não estejam em áreas vitais.

Cada grupo cria um pássaro de grande tamanho e de natureza estranha, com o qual põem à prova a força de espírito das crianças pequenas. De facto, põem-nas às cavalitas dos pássaros e, depois do voo destes, criam as crianças que aguentaram a viagem pelo ar e rejeitam as que ficaram aturdidas ou amedrontadas, por considerarem que não terão vida longa e que tão pouco merecem estima pelas outras virtudes da sua alma⁸³.

Em cada grupo comanda sempre o mais velho, como um rei, e todos lhe obedecem; e quando aquele que tem a liderança, ao cumprir os 150 anos, põe fim à sua vida em cumprimento da lei, sucede-lhe no comando quem o segue na idade. O mar que rodeia a ilha, cheio de correntes e sujeito a violentas subidas e baixas da maré⁸⁴, tem um sabor doce. Do lado de cá não aparecem as constelações do lado de lá e de maneira nenhuma as Ursas e muitas outras. As ilhas são sete, semelhantes no tamanho e separadas por intervalos iguais, e todas mantêm os mesmos costumes e leis.

59. Os que aí vivem, apesar de a natureza lhes fornecer em abundância todas as coisas, nem por isso desfrutam delas excessivamente, mas mantêm a moderação e ingerem só o alimento necessário. Preparam a carne e todos os outros alimentos assados ou cozidos; mas não têm noção alguma das iguarias que inventam os cozinheiros, como os molhos e a variedade de condimentos. Veneram como deuses tudo o que abarca o universo⁸⁵, o Sol e em geral todas as coisas celestiais. Pescam com habilidade uma infinidade de peixes de todo o tipo e caçam muitas aves. Ali cresce um grande número de árvores de fruta e aí crescem também, oliveiras e videiras, de que extraem azeite e vinho em abundância⁸⁶. Também há serpentes de tamanho extraordinário que não causam danos aos homens, cuja carne é comestível e deliciosa. Fazem-se roupas de umas canas que têm no seu interior uma pelugem brilhante e suave⁸⁷; cozem-na e misturando-a com conchas marinhas esmagadas, fazem maravilhosos

vestidos púrpura. A constituição física dos animais é diferente, e tão estranha que é difícil de acreditar.

Tudo o que diz respeito à comida se rege entre eles por uma ordem estabelecida, pois nem todos se alimentam ao mesmo tempo nem comem o mesmo. Em determinados dias, umas vezes comem peixe, outras vezes aves, em certas ocasiões animais terrestres e às vezes azeitonas e outros petiscos frugais. Servem-se uns aos outros alternadamente e pescam alternadamente, dedicam-se ao artesanato ou a outro trabalho útil⁸⁸; outros exercem funções públicas periodicamente, com excepção dos idosos. Nas celebrações e nas festas⁸⁹ dizem e cantam hinos e elogios aos deuses, principalmente ao Sol, de quem as ilhas e eles próprios recebem o nome⁹⁰.

Sepultam os mortos enterrando-os na areia durante a maré baixa, de modo a que na maré alta o túmulo fique coberto. As canas que produzem o fruto da sua comida, que têm um diadema⁹¹ de diâmetro, tornam-se mais volumosas, segundo se diz, com a fase crescente da Lua e por sua vez diminuem na mesma proporção com a fase minguante⁹². A água das fontes, que é doce e salutar, mantém o calor e nunca esfria, a menos que se misture com água fria ou vinho.

Após sete anos entre eles, Iambulo e o seu companheiro foram expulsos de lá contra a sua vontade, considerados homens perversos e imbuídos de maus costumes. Consequentemente, depois de terem preparado o seu barco e carregado de alimentos, foram forçados a partir. Após terem navegado mais de quatro meses, foram parar a terras de arreas movediças e de malfeitores da Índia. O seu companheiro perdeu a vida nas ondas agitadas, enquanto que Iambulo, levado para uma aldeia, foi conduzido pelos naturais à presença do rei na cidade de Palfbotra⁹³, que fica a muitos dias de caminho da costa. E como o rei era amigo dos gregos e amante da cultura, julgou-o digno de grande favor. Finalmente, passou primeiramente pela Pérsia com salvo-conduto e mais tarde chegou são e salvo à Grécia. Iambulo entendeu que tudo aquilo merecia ser escrito e adicionou muitas coisas sobre a Índia que eram ignoradas pelos outros homens. **RC**

Tradução de A. Dias

NOTAS

- 1 A obra de Iambulo foi objecto de uma tese de doutoramento de D. Winston (*Iambulus, a Literary Study in Greek Utopianism*, Diss. Columbia, 1956, 136 pp.) a que não tive acesso. Quanto à bibliografia antiga cf. a resenha crítica de R. Münscher, *Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, CXLIX, 183-86. Um bom resumo das questões principais foi feito por Winiarczyk. Uma análise realizada do ponto de vista dos géneros literários encontra-se em N. Holzberg, "Utopias and Phantastic Travel: Euhemerus, Iambulus", em G. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World*, Leiden, 1996, pp. 621ss.; a sua defesa de Diodoro parece-me um pouco ingénua.
- 2 Cf. Rohde, *Griech. Roman*, p. 241 n. 1.
- 3 Apud Kroll, C RE. 683. 23ss.: *Jabbul* poderia originar em grego *Iambulos* (com nasalação da consoante geminada como em *Habbaquq* > *Ambakuk*).
- 4 *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter*, Halle, 1948, II, p. 155.
- 5 H. J. Rose ("The Date of Iambulus", *Classical Quarterly*, XXXIII [1939] 9-10) supôs que a referência à temperatura da zona equatorial fosse um eco de Posidónio (cf. Cleómedes, I 6, 31-2); Iambulo, nesse caso, teria vivido no século I a.C., sendo provavelmente contemporâneo de Diodoro. Mas imediatamente W. W. Tarn ("The Date of Iambulus. A Note", *Classical Quarterly*, XXXIII [1939] 193) rebateu tal hipótese: a mesma doutrina sobre o clima do Equador tinha já seguido Eratóstenes (cf. Estrabão, II 97); Iambulo pertenceu, segundo ele, à época dourada do helenismo, o século III a.C. Mais clarificada está a data a partir da qual: o modelo de Iambulo foi o *Registo sacro* de Evémero, escrito nos últimos anos do século IV, que narrou também uma viagem por mar desde a Arábia Feliz às ilhas do Oceano, uma das quais era Pancaya (Diodoro Sículo, V 41-46, VI 1ss.; Jacoby, F Gr Hist 63 2-3)
- 6 Não o menciona, p. ex., Winiarczyk (p. 139), quando refere a propósito o "Discorso" de Ramusio. Marica Milanesi chega a pensar que esta personagem poderia ser uma invenção do próprio Ramusio, hipótese que me parece gratuita. De acordo com o que me foi referido muito oportunamente pela Prof. Carmen Radulet, o português teve que ser mencionado por Marino Sanudo; a identificação, entretanto, será difícil; J. M.^a García pensava em António Galvão.
- 7 D. João, um homem atento a curiosidades, como bom humanista, mostrou-se receptivo a outras culturas, interrogando uns e outros e tomando nota de tudo. Um dos seus cadernos, contendo uma história árabe, foi conservado por um comerciante, Rafael Gualtieri, e encontra-se na Biblioteca Comunale de Siena (E. Asensio, "Uma história árabe recolhida por D. João de Castro", in *III Colóquio Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros*, Lisboa, 1959, I, pp. 395ss., artigo que conheço graças à amizade de Rui Loureiro).
- 8 Cf. Ramusio, pp. 903ss.
- 9 De acordo com Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 244 n. 1), seguido por Kroll (*RE*, c. 681, 37ss.), a região produtora de perfumes refere-se já à costa da Somália. Assim foi designada esta algumas vezes; mas num contexto mais geral, como o de Iambulo, não é possível entender por *aromatophoros* senão a costa do incenso no Yemen. Por Arábia se decidem também Oldfather (p. 65 n. 2. aceitando a tese de *dià* proposta por Kallenberg) e Winiarczyk (p. 132 n. 15).
- 10 Cf. *Índia y Catay*, p. 526.
- 11 Ramusio, p. 905.
- 12 "estádio" significa medida itinerária equivalente a 125 passos, ou seja, 206,25 metros – Nota do tradutor.
- 13 Dois, de acordo com a versão latina (III 16), cinco, de acordo com as versões em Castelhana. Para as primeiras referências de viajantes ocidentais a Samatra cf. H. Yule-A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, ed. fac-similada Calcutá, 1990, p. 865 b.
- 14 No seu *Liber conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et medicorum* (consultei a edição de Florença, 1520, f. 94r) Abano fez mesmo um desenho ilustrando como era o céu visto por Marco Polo em Samatra.
- 15 Apud Poggio Bracciolini, *Historiae de varietate fortunae libri quattuor*, Paris, 1723, p. 130
- 16 Menciono as legendas servindo-me da transcrição de T. Gasparini Leporace, *Il mapamondo di fra Mauro*, Roma, 1966.
- 17 *Mitos y utopías del descubrimiento. 1. Colón y su tiempo*, Madrid, 1989, pp. 72ss., 130ss.
- 18 No mapa-mundi King-Hamy, conservado na Biblioteca Huntington de Pasadena, encontra-se Ceilão à esquerda do Áurea Quersoneso; o mesmo guia seguem Bernardo Silvano (Ptolomeu de 1508) e Martín Waldseemüller (Ptolomeu de 1513).
- 19 *Luculentissima quaedam terrae totius descriptio cum multis utilissimis Cosmographiae iniciis nouaque et quam ante fuit uerior Europae nostrae formatio*, Nuremberg, 1515, f. CXLIIIv: "Taprobana hodie Samotra" (1523: "Samothra dicta Taprobona").
- 20 Falando de Samatra diz: "manifesto colligi possit, hanc verè Taprobanam esse, licet extensioris magnitudinis quam Ptolemaeus opinabatur" (*De orbis situ ac descriptione*, Ambers, 1565, s. p.)
- 21 *História da Índia*, II, 111 (I, p. 458).
- 22 *Viaje*, p. 184.
- 23 *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, XX 3 (*BAE* 188, p. 236 b), 35 (p. 301 b).
- 24 *BAE* 22, p. 158 a-b.
- 25 *Descripción universal de las Indias* (*BAE* 248, p. 295 a).
- 26 Utilizo a citação do prólogo de E. Asensio à sua edição de Gaspar de Leão, *Desengano de perdidos*, Coimbra, 1958, p. XXI.
- 27 Ramusio, pp. 905ss.
- 28 Sete ilhas são, curiosamente, as ilhas Canárias.
- 29 A identificação feita por Lassen é puro capricho, como já observou Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 252 n.).
- 30 *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, Londres, 1909, pp. 593ss. Devo o conhecimento deste livro à amizade de Rui Loureiro.
- 31 Diz assim: "Somatram insulam, quam multi falso opinati sunt esse Taprobanam; ut enim a nobis in quibusdam nostris geographis observationibus satis disputatum est, constat eam esse insulam Taprobanam, quae his temporibus eodem ipso paene nomine Seilam appellatur".
- 32 *Asia*, Década III, 2 1 (V, pp. 109-10), com referência à sua *Geografia*, actualmente perdida.
- 33 Cf. o Prólogo de E. Asensio ao *Desengano de perdidos* de Gaspar de Leão, p. XVI.
- 34 Cf. *Índia y Catay*, p. 41.
- 35 Ramusio, p. 904.
- 36 Cf. Kroll, *RE*, c. 682, 49ss.
- 37 Contrariamente observa Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 252 n.) que o *sagu* é retirado de uma palma e não de uma cana, sem que haja razão que justifique a menção de um fruto similar à ervilha; é necessário reconhecer, todavia, que existe determinada similaridade entre ambos os procedimentos (cf. a descrição de Odorico de Pordenone, XIV 2 [*Índia y Catay*, p. 467]), e as imprecisões apontadas por Rohde podem ser devidas a um mal-entendido por parte de Iambulo.
- 38 Cf. o meu artigo "Las islas de la India", *Los universos insulares*, Cadernos do CEMYR, III, La Laguna, 1995, pp. 157ss.
- 39 *L'universale fabbrica del mondo, overo Cosmografia*, Venecia, 1582, p. 268: "e di quà [la isla de Sumatra] s'estrahe tanta copia d'oro, che tal volta arriva a due conti l'anno; quindi si puo giudicare questa esser stata, si per ciò, si anco per la lontananza del paese, bisognando girarla gran parte per andar a Singapura, si ancora per la quantità dell'avolio, del legno d'Aloe e dell'altre cose aromatiche l'isola dove Salomone

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- faceva navigare ogni anno la sua flotta per il mare Rosso, dove ancora arrivò Iambolo, che si partì dalla Trogloditica.” Fala, depois, de “Java Menor” (p. 270), sem se aperceber que é a mesma ilha.
- 40 *Geographiae sacrae pars altera, cujus pars prior Phaleg de dispersione gentium et terrarum diuisione facta in aedificatione turris Babel, pars posterior Chanaan de coloniis et sermone Phoenicum agit*, Cadomi, 1646. Utilizei a edição de Franckfurt am Main, 1681, revista por David Clodio, professor de Línguas Orientais em Giessen: Phaleg, II 27 (pp. 160ss.) e Chanaan, I 46 (pp. 770ss.). Bochart identificou também a Taprobana com a bíblica Ofir: o nome Taprobana viria do árabe *Taph Paruan*, ‘a costa Paruan’ (daí o *Peruain* de II Paralipómenos, 3, 6), o porto de Hippuros seria equivalente a Ophir e aos topónimos bíblicos Paz (Cantar 5, 2) e Uphaz (Daniel, 10, 5) corresponderiam ao golfo de Pasis e ao rio de Phasis da ptolomaica Taprobana. P. Wesseling (*Diodori*, p. 471) reprovou a Bochart o facto de ter dado como verdadeiras as fantasias de Iambulo; cf. também Rohde, *Griech. Roman*, p. 256 n.; Winiarczyk, p. 140.
- 41 *Observationes ad Pomponium Melam de situ orbis*, La Haya, 1658, pp. 274ss.
- 42 *Ibidem*, p. 278.
- 43 P. Wesseling, *Diodori*, p. 470: “In insulam Taprobanem, quae nunc Zeilan, non male haec quadrant”.
- 44 “The Itinerary of Iambulus Utopianism and History”, *Indology and Law. Studies in Honour of J. Duncan W. Derret*, Wiesbaden, 1983, pp. 18-55, alegando fontes do tempo dos Mauria e textos medievais para explicar os fragmentos de Iambulo.
- 45 “Mit dem Südwestmonsun nach Ceylon. Eine Interpretation der Iambul-Exzerpte Diodors”, *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, nova série, XI (1985), 73-85.
- 46 Insisti neste ponto em “As ilhas imaginárias”, *Oceanos*, 46 (Abril/Junho 2001), pp. 12ss.
- 47 É a característica também de uma outra ilha mítica, a “insula Solistitionis”, onde não fazia calor nem frio, havendo sempre uma temperatura primaveril (M. C. Díaz y Díaz, *Visiones del Más Allá en Galicia durante la Alta Edad Media*, Santiago de Compostela, 1985, p. 117).
- 48 Arriano, *Cosas de la India*, 31 (cf. *India y Catay*, pp. 351ss.).
- 49 De acordo com Kroll (*RE*, c. 682, 56ss.), este culto a Helios “recorda a antiga crença no jardim do deus do Sol”.
- 50 Plínio, *Historia natural*, VI 86 (*India y Catay*, p. 301).
- 51 Ptolomeu, VII 4, 6.
- 52 Cf. Diodoro Sículo, V 44, 3. Outra fonte do Sol, com propriedades maravilhosas, existia em África (Heródoto, IV 181, 4).
- 53 Assim o designou Teodoro de Samotrácia porque Zeus, ao nascer, esteve 7 dias rindo sem parar (Jacoby, F Gr. Hist 62 1).
- 54 Cf. Winiarczyk, pp. 147ss. A importância do número 7 na vida humana manifesta-se já na distribuição por hebdómadas feita por Solón, *Elegias*, 19 Diehl.
- 55 *Odisseia*, VII 259. Alguns mitólogos ousaram opor-se a Homero: foram cinco anos, segundo Apolodoro (*Biblioteca*, VII 24) e um segundo Higino (*Fábulas*, 125, 16).
- 56 *De varietate fortunae*, p. 130.
- 57 Cf. E. G. Ravenstein, *Martin Behaim, his Life and his Globe*, Londres, 1908, p. 86.
- 58 Cf. *India y Catay*, p. 162.
- 59 Cf. Rohde, *Griech. Roman*, p. 247 n. 1.
- 60 Nota do tradutor: “côvado” (do latim *cubitu*) é uma antiga medida de comprimento equivalente a 3 palmos, ou seja, 66 centímetros, de acordo com o *Novo Dicionário Aurélio*.
- 61 “Numa ilha do Mar Vermelho há um povo de natureza híbrida (*commixtae naturae*) que dizem que pode falar as línguas de todos os povos; consequentemente, aos homens que vêm de longe, uma vez conhecidos, deixam-nos atónitos chamando-os pelos seus nomes, a fim de os enganar e de os comer crus” (*Livro dos Monstros*, 40 [M. Haupt, *Opuscula*, Leipzig, 1876, II, p. 233]. Não me satisfaz a leitura *eorum cognitos*, que traduzo de forma aproximada; talvez seja necessário corrigir *eorum incognitos*, ‘e que desconhecem o seu temperamento’). Cf. Rohde, *Griech. Roman*, p. 246 n. 2.
- 62 *Periplo del mar Rojo*, 20 (*India y Catay*, p. 264).
- 63 Cf. *India y Catay*, p. 41.
- 64 Cf. *India y Catay*, p. 154.
- 65 Tradução: diz-se que nesta ilha há uma água que, banhando o ferro nela, este se transformará em ouro.
- 66 Tradução: diz-se que nesta ilha há um lago que, metendo ferro dentro dele, este se transformará em ouro.
- 67 XII 2 (*India y Catay*, pp. 462-63).
- 68 Diodoro Sículo, VII 50.
- 69 Julio César, *Guerra das Gálias*, IV 1.
- 70 *Odes*, III 24, 9ss.
- 71 Edição de Th. Mommsen, pp. 219, 5ss.
- 72 Iambulo e o seu companheiro transformaram-se em bodes expiatórios ou *pharmakoi*, aos quais já se referiu Hipónax (5-10 West) com informações muito curiosas. O mesmo costume, mas localizado em Marselha, aparece numa passagem, hoje perdida, do *Satiricón* de Petrónio (fragm. I Müller), talvez a imitar Iambulo: o criminoso, após viver um ano a expensas da comunidade, era adornado com ramos e roupas sagradas e conduzido por Marselha entre mil imprecções dos assistentes à cerimónia, de modo a que recaíssem sobre ele todos os infortúnios que ameaçavam a comunidade; e, depois, era atirado, muito provavelmente ao mar, como faziam os etíopes.
- Como refere Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 244 n. 2), em algumas ilhas do Pacífico colocavam no mar, em pequenos barcos, os mortos ou as pessoas gravemente doentes; e o mesmo costume tinham os antigos alemães. Na ilha Hiera (Sagrada), de acordo com Evémero (Jacoby, F Gr. Hist 63 F 3, 4), não se podia enterrar os mortos, que eram levados para uma ilha vizinha. Este costume também está documentado no Ocidente. Na Irlanda, de acordo com Cresques, os homens não morrem (repetição da ilha de Atánato, ‘imortal’, de Solino), pois quando chegam a velhos e estão prestes a morrer levam-nos para fora: “são levados para fora da ilha” (*Mapamundi del año 1375*, Barcelona, 1983, p. 31), isto é, para a ilha dos Mortos (cf. Doménico Silvestri, *De insulis*, s.v. ‘Iberia’).
- 73 É o prazo de tempo confirmado por Heráclito (fragmento A 19 Diels) para o *geneá* ou a geração: o termo cíclico em que um pai pode ver o seu filho também transformado em pai, isto é, o momento de se transformar em avô.
- O prazo da expiação traz à memória a história relatada por Plutarco (*De facie in orbe lunae*, 941 Css.), com origem também, de acordo com H. von Arnim, numa novela de viagens fantásticas: quando a estrela de Saturno entra no signo de *Taurus*, o que acontece de trinta em trinta anos, os homens do Continente (terra firme que o oceano rodeia), enviam por mar uma expedição de modo a que durante trinta anos preste culto a Saturno na ilha maravilhosa consagrada ao deus: depois desse período de tempo os enviados podem regressar à sua pátria, sendo substituídos. Mas neste caso não há uma expiação (*katharmós*), mas uma expedição de delegados (*theoría*), como a que os gregos mandaram a Delos, por exemplo, a fim de honrar Apolo. Chama a atenção para o facto de que esta tradição perdura, embora muito alterada, na mitologia insular dos árabes, de acordo com a qual há uma ilha que um astro – Saturno – reduz a cinzas de trinta em trinta anos: os seus habitantes são forçados a deixá-la nesse momento, regressando à mesma quando o fogo estiver extinto (A. Arioli, *Islario maravilloso. Periplo árabe medieval*, Barcelona, 1992, pp. 50 e 144ss.). O envio de delegados transforma-se em exílio e a ilha de Saturno e o Continente trocam os seus papéis.

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- 74 A forma circular caracteriza as ilhas extraordinárias: uma ilha redonda é também o Paraíso no planisfério de Hereford (s. XIII).
- 75 A similaridade de todos os povos bárbaros (citas e etíopes) entre si é referida várias vezes pelos gregos (cf. Rohde, *Griech. Roman*, p. 246 n.).
- 76 Bochart (*Chanaan*, I 46 [p. 775]) interpretou esta elasticidade relacionando-a com os jograis mencionados por Mercator na Taprobana: os mágicos e os milagreiros de que tinha falado o historiador Eliano (*Varia Historia*, VIII 7).
- 77 Aceito a conjectura “nariz” em vez de “orelha” (assim Eichstädt, Rohde [*Griech. Roman*, p. 246 n. 1], García Gual [*Orígenes*, p. 71]). No caso de manter a outra leitura, poderá talvez referir-se, a propósito, um costume dos negros da costa oriental de África: “os seus reis e chefes trazem pendurado na orelha esquerda um sino de cobre sem badalo” (Bernardo G. de Brito, *História Trágico-Marítima*, Livros de Bolso Europa-América, II, p. 131). Observação do tradutor: a palavra “nariz” não aparece no texto, pois traduzi “Las ventanas de su nariz” por “narinas”.
- 78 *Odisseia*, VII 120-21.
- 79 De acordo com Lassen, há aqui uma referência às castas (por essa razão se decidiu localizar a acção em Bali, a única ilha que, com Java, tem esta organização social). Pelo contrário, e entre outros argumentos, Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 251 n.1; cf. também Kroll, *RE*, c. 682, 35ss.) fez notar que a própria limitação dos componentes do grupo é oposta ao sistema de castas.
- 80 E. Jacquet (*Journ. Asiatique*, N.S., VIII [1831] 20ss.) interpretou *kharaktêres* como ‘consoantes’ e *semainonta* como ‘vogais’. Para Lassen, as consoantes são sete, cuja vocalização dá 28 letras; de acordo com Kroll (*RE*, c. 681. 42ss.), o alfabeto é derivado de sete “tipos originais simples”. São teorias sem fundamento; mas Iambulo tenta procurar uma correspondência – neste caso inexistente – entre letras e fonemas, como já tinha observado Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 254 n.). García Gual (*Orígenes*, p. 72 n. 9) lembra o silabário de nove sinais, com quatro posições cada um, inventado pelo reverendo Evans para os indianos.
- 81 Assim é a escrita chinesa, mas não a indiana.
- 82 Aceito a conjectura *idiophyès* de Dindorf. Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 248 n.): a planta teria duas espécies, recordando que havia duas espécies de mandrágora, provavelmente a planta aqui referida, uma branca (macho) e outra preta (fêmea).
- 83 O pássaro totémico permite fazer esta avaliação, que recorda determinados costumes espartanos, que procuram a eliminação dos fracos.
- 84 Estas marés bruscas são provavelmente uma referência aos macaréus observados na península de Cache pelos navegadores, antigos e modernos.
- 85 Quer dizer, ao céu. A ideia é estóica (cf. Kroll, *RE*, c. 683, 5ss.). Bochart (*Chanaan*, I 46 [pp. 774-75]) comparou com esta passagem de Iambulo um texto de *Viaje* de Benjamín de Tudela, que eu traduzo de seguida de acordo com a sua interpretação: “Na frente do altar do seu templo estende-se um vale grande, onde todos os dias acendem um fogo grande. Chamam-no em árabe de *Alhauta* e fazem passar através dele os seus filhos” (de acordo com Bochart, *alhauta* significa ‘vorago’ e não ‘divinatas’, como tinha transcrito Arias Montano). Mas, em versões modernas, em vez de ‘vale’ lê-se ‘fosso’, aceitando-se por outro lado a acepção dada por Arias Montano a *Elahuta*, ‘divindades’ (assim, p.e, J. R. Magdalena Nom de Deu, *Libro de viajes de Benjamín de Tudela*, Barcelona, 1989). Como se vê, pouco tem que ver o que diz Iambulo com o que diz Benjamín de Tudela; mais perto da relação grega encontra-se o que diz o judeu dos habitantes de Quilon: “pela manhã correm ao encontro do sol, pois em cada templo têm um disco solar feito com artificios de mago” (*ibidem*).
- 86 As ilhas índicas não têm vinho; por essa razão, Lassen interpretou que se tratava do sumo de uma palma (contrariamente a Rohde, *Griech. Roman*, p. 253 n.), e com razão.
- 87 Referência provável ao algodão (assim já S. Bochart, *Chanaan*, I 46 [p. 775]; cf. também Kroll, *RE*, c. 682, 51).
- 88 Quer dizer que não havia escravos, como refere muito oportunamente Kroll (*RE*, c. 683. 9ss.).
- 89 Assim Wesseling corrige; os manuscritos referem “súplicas” em vez de “festas”.
- 90 Talvez chamados *heliopolitai*.
- 91 Respeito com dúvidas a leitura dos códices *stephaniatous*, entendida segundo a versão de Wesseling e Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 245 n. 1). Reiske, seguido por Oldfather e por Kroll (*RE*, c. 683), emendou *spithamiatous*, que seria então “de um palmo”: a cana teria então 23 cm de largura.
- 92 Rohde (*Griech. Roman*, p. 245 n. 1) dá outros exemplos da relação que as plantas e os animais têm com a Lua: entre eles, as prodigiosas árvores do pseudo-Calístenes (II 36), que nascem quando ela surge e morrem quando desaparece.
- 93 A referência a Políbrota (Pataliputra, a actual Patna) deriva em última instância de Megástenes (cf. Kroll, *RE*, c. 683. 42ss.), que viveu alguns anos na corte de Chandragupta.

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A Ásia e a Europa na Formação da Economia-Mundo e da Globalização

Trajectórias e Debates Historiográficos

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A palavra globalização instalou-se para ficar no nosso quotidiano, comparecendo recorrentemente utilizada pelos meios de comunicação tanto como pelo discurso político, a análise social ou o agitado mundo da economia e das finanças. Despida nestes discursos quase de história, a globalização transformou-se em ideia praticamente comum, sendo frequentada longe de qualquer rigor nacional e muito menos de qualquer enquadramento histórico, explicando a sua “genealogia” e o seu funcionamento no tempo e no espaço. Ao vulgarizar-se e ao perder qualificação conceitual, a ideia de globalização alimenta as mais contraditórias causas, aqui concorrendo para explicar uma conjuntura económica desfavorável, ali limitando incapacidades e incompetências de governos e burocracias, mais além justificando as principais modalidades que estruturam as relações políticas internacionais, sublinhando-se a sua novidade global quando, em muitos casos e comunicações, se revisitam velhas formas de dominações e explorações entre territórios e sociedades colocadas em lugares

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F. Braudel e I. Wallenstien na inauguração do Centro F. Braudel na Binghamton Universidade, 15/05/1977.

hierarquicamente assimétricos de um mundo persistentemente atravessado por desigualdades profundas. A ideia de globalização parece impor-se inexoravelmente também nos campos organizados por uma comunicação cada vez mais automática em que a sensação de pertença a um espaço-mundo, da informação à estética, do consumo à imagem, fazem de cada um uma espécie de cidadão, entre espectador e agitador, dessa propalada aldeia da comunicação global. Trata-se, porém, de uma situação perseguindo propositadamente ilusões e alienações simbólicas, privilegiando uma produção virtual que, exceptuando vários mercados especializados, não tem vindo a contribuir para alterar substancialmente as estruturas fundamentais que organizam a divisão e distribuição social e mundial do trabalho e da circulação de bens. Para um camponês mambai das montanhas do centro de Timor ou para um pescador de S. Tomé e Príncipe, tanto como para um sem-terra brasileiro ou para os milhões de desempregados e pobres espalhados pela

maioria do planeta “em desenvolvimento”, a ilusão da globalização não se transforma em trabalho ou alimentação, podendo, por isso, arrolar-se uma demorada literatura científica crítica tratando de demonstrar os efeitos perversos da globalização económica na sorte destas populações afastadas dos centros ocidentais da economia e da política internacional.

A palavra globalização tornou-se cada vez mais co-extensiva com a representação social, económica e cultural que domina a imagem, quase o “design”, das nossas sociedades ocidentais, esse “primeiro mundo” agora apresentado, muitas vezes sem qualquer fundamentação, como verdadeiramente pós-industrial. A globalização serve, assim, já para representar o “nosso” mundo, já para hierarquizar as nossas relações com os outros territoriais, sociais e culturais. Descrevemos a pobreza da África subsariana ou os países e movimentos islâmicos, apresentados como “fundamentalistas” a partir da representação da sociedade global em que julgamos viver, explicando a situação desses outros pelas suas dificuldades ou incapacidades para se desenvolverem no sentido da globalização, perseguindo as nossas próprias representações sociais e comportamentos culturais dominantes. A exportação dessa cultura global cruzando a democracia ou o estado-nação ocidentais, a economia de mercado, uma cultura urbana laicizada ou esse novo capitalismo da dádiva fixado em milhares de ONG e agências internacionais, haveria de constituir a solução para o desenvolvimento económico e social da maioria pobre do globo que encontraria a felicidade num novo tipo de *imitatio occidentis*, recordando uma plurimilenar tendência da história ocidental para cruzar *pax et imperio*. Esta duplicidade da ideia de paz imperial ou da estabilidade oferecida por poderes centrais e dominantes ocorre também nitidamente na construção da ideia de globalização, revestida de uma dimensão dúplice, epistémica e processual. Com efeito, convoca-se epistemologicamente a noção de globalização para destacar o predomínio da ciência e da racionalidade ocidentais que, recobrindo o planeta, concorreriam para aplacar a doença, limitar a mortalidade e a natalidade, “libertar” a mulher ou, entre tantos outros apregoados benefícios, assegurar definitivamente o desenvolvimento que o outro não poderá alcançar com as suas particularidades culturais tradicionais, entre irracionalidade e superstição. Ao mesmo tempo, a

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globalização é claramente o (um) resultado de um longo processo histórico enformando os tempos, espaços e culturas em que nos movimentamos. Da mesma forma que não parece possível discutir a globalização fora do tempo e do espaço, também não parece possível entender a onnipresença da palavra exteriormente a um processo normativo de acreditação da cultura ocidental como a verdadeira racionalidade, sempre progressiva e benigna. Se existe uma ampla investigação científica que foi criticando este optimismo iluminista incrustado nas ideias de progresso e razão ocidentais, desafiado da ecologia aos movimentos de “novas minorias”, são infelizmente menores os estudos sérios que procuram fazer a história da globalização, escrutinando o(s) processo(s) responsável por tornar a ideia em palavra focal do nosso mundo mediático e virtual actual.

Dominada no mundo ocidental pelo prestígio nunca mitigado das histórias nacionais, especializada

nas últimas décadas em vários domínios, modas e muitas micro-histórias, a historiografia contribui hoje escassamente para ajudar a perceber o paradoxo de uma globalização que tornou a informação quase imediata enquanto a pobreza, a doença ou subdesenvolvimento são mediatos, destacando o peso das realidades locais mesmo quando se multiplicam e justapõem em imagens que organizam, pelo paradoxo e contradição, a “missão” global da cultura ocidental no nosso planeta. A historiografia ocidental nunca foi o espaço de conhecimento privilegiado para estudar quer os mundos não-europeus quer as contradições geradas por um processo histórico globalmente entendido como linear e progressivo. Um persistente paradigma de espelho, tratando de ver no outro o reflexo da nossa própria exportação de políticas, economias e culturas, embaraça a contribuição da(s) historiografia(s) para um melhor reconhecimento das diferentes composições que impuseram actualmente uma narrativa falada e visual

Veneza. Mapa turco do século XVII.



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Génova numa gravura do século XVII.

unívoca da ideia de globalização. Este estudo procura seguir algumas das principais trajectórias e debates historiográficos que podem interessar a uma futura história do processo da globalização, da palavra à imagem, da representação à estética, do espaço à periodização.

A HERANÇA DE FERNAND BRAUDEL

As diferentes tradições e “escolas” historiográficas procuraram sempre produzir histórias universais, uma espécie de paixão que se aprofunda nos meios cultivados europeus ao longo do século XIX e das primeiras décadas do século XX com os grandes trabalhos, entre outros, de G. Weber, Oswald Spenger ou Arnold Toynbee. No entanto, a compreensão de que a história

organizava diferentes unidades do espaço mundial – e não *uma* história universal – em tempos longos, reunindo essas unidades em conexões gerais, estratificando relações económicas *globais* tanto como sociedades, políticas e culturas é uma noção muito mais recente. Um dos historiadores que mais contribuiu para firmar uma investigação dos grandes espaços sociais na longa duração, perspectivando as suas conexões e periodizações à escala do globo, foi indiscutivelmente Fernand Braudel (1902-1985). Fruto de vinte anos de trabalho, totalmente reescrito vinte anos mais tarde para contemplar novos problemas e pesquisas, a obra que marca uma ruptura metodológica definitiva com as escalas e metódicas da história tradicional “positivista” é o sempre fascinante *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*¹. O livro navega

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uma perspectiva central sublinhando as relações entre história e geografia, as conexões do espaço e do tempo que se estruturam em ritmos longos, sobrepujando o tempo curto da política e da guerra para poder compreender as dinâmicas mais lentas de longa duração, orientando tanto os tempos da economia, como os dos Estados, das sociedades e das civilizações. Procurando escalas ainda mais demoradas, a obra braudeliana trata ainda de penetrar o tempo quase imóvel dos insistentes retornos e permanências de ciclos incessantemente recomeçados, de que a adaptação ao meio marca o primeiro e mais significativo constrangimento. Estes equilíbrios instáveis mas duráveis entre os homens, o clima, o solo, a terra e o mar, os animais e as plantas fixam as possibilidades e limites de uma civilização². Entre a colecção de novas perspectivas para uma história *global*, o trabalho pioneiro de Fernand Braudel é responsável por escorar metodologicamente uma organização da história em três configurações fundamentais – o *tempo geográfico*, o *tempo social* e o *tempo individual* – que passariam a dirigir sistematicamente as suas principais investigações, incluindo as que tratam das relações entre *civilização material*, *economia* e *capitalismo*³ à escala do mundo.

Neste esforço maior de construção de uma história global, planetária quanto ao espaço, mas limitada cronologicamente a um período moderno estendendo-se de finais do século XV a finais do século XVIII, Braudel começa por estudar os alicerces formados pela vida material, destacando rotinas, heranças tradicionais e realizações antigas. Investiga-se, a seguir, a vida económica enformando um estádio superior do devir quotidiano, destacando-se como um conjunto de regras e de necessidades quase natural.

O tríptico fecha-se, por fim, estudando o capitalismo, entendido espacialmente como uma espécie de grande Mediterrâneo mais recente, um centro englobando através de uma rede de conexões, ao mesmo tempo frágeis e necessárias, os espaços vizinhos dos desertos tropicais, da Europa e do Atlântico recentemente conquistado para se espalhar com a industrialização por todo o globo. Sumariando com mais atenção os principais problemas discutidos nesta obra maior, no volume dedicado à investigação da vida material⁴ persegue-se uma história silenciosa à “escala do mundo”, pesquisando as desigualdades impostas pelo desenvolvimento e os constrangimentos que definem os limites das civilizações. As opções alimentares, os vestuários, o *habitat* ou os meios de transporte realizam bens culturais frágeis, adquiridos com dificuldades, mantidos pela repetição dos mesmos gestos mal permitindo a inovação. Somente a dialéctica do luxo e do aparato, privilégios dos ricos reivindicados e sonhados pelos menos favorecidos, rompe esta monotonia de longa duração, assegurando o avanço lentamente acumulado da Europa sobre o resto do mundo. Esta ideia normativa entendendo o mundo europeu enquanto verdadeiro motor do capitalismo e

Armazéns e estaleiros navais da VOC em Amsterdão.



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Amsterdão, século XVII.

da economia mundial aprofunda-se no segundo volume dedicado aos “jogos das trocas”⁵. Acima do rés-do-chão da vida material situam-se os andares superiores da vida económica e, mais acima, a dinâmica capitalista. A economia começa no limiar do *valor da troca*, especializando uma continuada reunião de verdadeiros sistemas de trocas, dos intercâmbios mais elementares de vizinhança ao capitalismo mais sofisticado à escala global. Através da investigação das regularidades e mecanismos da estrutura das trocas no tempo longo e em unidades espaciais coerentes, Braudel tenta aproximar-se de uma história económica “geral” ou mesmo de uma *tipologia*, um *modelo*, uma espécie de *gramática* capaz de funcionar historicamente como o ponto de encontro nodal do económico, do social, do político e do económico. Metodologicamente, descobre-se uma investigação comparada que, através do tempo e do

espaço, liga a história às outras ciências do homem, entre modelo (do passado) e observação (do presente). Este tipo ou modelo encontra-se precisamente na noção dinâmica de capitalismo que, numa perspectiva de longa duração, concretiza uma ordem milenar, global, mas que se centra progressivamente, entre os séculos XV e XVIII, na Europa para, a partir dela, triunfar globalmente:

“Tal como a Europa, o resto do mundo é há séculos trabalhado pelas necessidades de produzir, pelas obrigações da troca, as precipitações da moeda. Será absurdo procurar, no meio destas combinações, sinais que anunciem ou realizem um certo capitalismo? Gostaria de dizer, como Deleuze e Guattari, que de certo modo, o capitalismo assombrou todas as formas de sociedade, pelo menos o capitalismo tal como o concebo. Mas, reconheçamo-lo sem rodeios, a construção triunfa na Europa, esboça-se no Japão, falha

(as exceções confirmam a regra) em quase todos os outros sítios – melhor seria dizer que não se consuma.”⁶

Investigando, a partir daqui, esta assimetria entre o “sucesso” europeu e as diferentes incapacidades dos mundos não-europeus, Fernand Braudel sublinha que, no caso da China, o obstáculo ao desenvolvimento do capitalismo reside no Estado, na coesão da sua burocracia, na muito longa duração de um sistema de estado centralizador e moralizador. Seguindo os rigores de uma moral confuciana instrumentalizando cultura, ideologia e religião, o próprio Estado, englobando os mandarins de todos os escalões, encontra-se colocado ao serviço de um entendimento burocrático do bem comum⁷. Com efeito, o Estado do grande Império do Meio procura controlar tudo, das cheias à produção agrícola, da administração das cidades às ameaças externas, passando mesmo por um comércio interno e externo sempre estritamente vigiado. Um sistema em que a acumulação só é permitida ao Estado e ao aparelho de Estado, exemplificando a distinção entre a “simples” economia e a “complexidade” do capitalismo. A China exhibe, de facto, entre os séculos XV e XVIII uma sólida economia de mercado em agitados espaços locais, entre grupos fervilhantes de artesãos e milhares de mercadores itinerantes, multiplicando-se lojas e feiras. Na base da sociedade imperial distinguem-se estas trocas animadas, mas nos níveis económicos, sociais e políticos superiores impõe-se a onnipresença do aparelho de Estado e a sua hostilidade em relação a qualquer indivíduo que, simplesmente, enriqueça. Em rigor, apenas se pode falar de capitalismo em grupos muito bem definidos, caucionados e estritamente vigiados pelo Estado. Quando muito, pode com algum esforço reconhecer-se no tempo dos Ming uma certa burguesia e uma espécie de capitalismo colonial que se perpetuou até hoje, sobretudo nos emigrantes chineses do Sudeste Asiático. No Japão, em contraste, um futuro capitalista começa a desenhar-se na época Ashikaga (1368-1573) com o aparecimento de forças económicas e sociais independentes do Estado, das corporações às cidades livres, do comércio longínquo às associações de mercadores. Instalam-se mercados livres, cidades livres, sendo a primeira, em 1573, o porto de Sakai. Poderosas corporações estendem as suas redes e monopólios, enquanto as sociedades comerciais, reconhecidas oficialmente em 1721, assumem por vezes um carácter de companhias

comerciais *análogas às do Ocidente*.⁸ Estabelecem-se ainda firmemente dinastias de mercadores que se prolongam por séculos. Se é certo que os entraves e as restrições impostas ao comércio externo entre 1638 e 1868 retardaram a expansão económica, o Japão soube compensar muito rapidamente o seu atraso, partindo para o seu recente surto industrial imitado do Ocidente mobilizando essa base histórica de um

*A historiografia ocidental
nunca foi o espaço
de conhecimento privilegiado
para estudar quer os mundos
não-europeus quer
as contradições geradas
por um processo histórico
globalmente entendido
como linear e progressivo.*

capitalismo mercantil antigo que tinha sabido construir pacientemente e sozinho. Já em terras muçulmanas, a imagem que domina é a de uma sociedade contida, de vez em quando abalada pelo Estado, mas para sempre separada da terra que alimenta. Em toda a parte o espectáculo é o mesmo, na Pérsia, os *khans* são senhores a título vitalício, como na Índia do Grão-Mogol, ao tempo do seu esplendor. Em Deli, na verdade, não há “grandes famílias” que se perpetuem. A única classe de famílias dominantes que a Índia conhecia era a dos mercadores, fabricantes e banqueiros que, tradicionalmente, de pai para filho, dirigiam tanto a administração como as cidades de negócios, fossem os grandes portos ou uma vigorosa cidade do têxtil como Anmedabad. Uma classe que se defende melhor e mais duravelmente com o que melhor conhece: o dinheiro que corrompe o invasor ao deixar-se corromper por ele. É possível perseguir tratos e intercâmbios nestes mundos, aqui e acolá encontrar capitais e indústrias artesanais poderosas, mas tanto os Estados centralizados como, principalmente, as estratificações sociais segmentadas e militarizadas

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limitam as possibilidades de dinamização de uma acção tipicamente capitalista.

Pode, assim, concluir-se que a dinâmica do capitalismo constitui um processo de conexões sucessivas em que se podem vislumbrar três condições necessárias: (i) a existência com continuidade de uma economia de mercado vigorosa e em vias de progresso pode encontrar-se à escala mundial entre os séculos XV e XVIII, mas sendo condição *sine qua non* não é suficiente para a formação de um processo capitalista. A China é, para Braudel, o exemplo paradigmático de como uma superestrutura capitalista não se consegue instalar apenas a partir de uma economia animada; (ii) torna-se, por isso, condição indispensável contar com a cumplicidade de uma sociedade capaz de preparar a acção capitalista a séculos de distância, nomeadamente favorecendo a longevidade das linhagens e essa acumulação contínua dos grupos sociais superiores sem a qual nenhuma dinâmica do capitalismo é possível; (iii) mas, por fim,

nada seria verdadeiramente possível sem a acção especial e quase libertadora do mercado mundial, da formação das modernas economias-mundo.

É precisamente o *tempo do mundo*⁹ que mobiliza a investigação de Fernand Braudel neste tríptico definitivamente dedicado à história da formação e desenvolvimento do capitalismo mundial, entre os séculos XV e XVIII. Cura-se, precisemo-lo, de uma história do mundo, global, a partir da economia e, ainda mais especializadamente, da noção fundamental de economia-mundo: um bocado do planeta economicamente autónomo com capacidade económica de, no essencial, se bastar a si próprio, potenciando ligações e trocas internas que lhe conferem uma certa unidade orgânica.¹⁰ O estudo braudeliano clássico sobre o Mediterrâneo ofereceria precisamente um exemplo de economia-mundo, de um espaço política, cultural e socialmente dividido, mas expressando uma certa unidade económica que, historicamente, se foi

Londres, século XVII.



construindo a partir de cima, a partir das cidades dominantes do Norte de Itália, Veneza, Milão, Génova, Florença. Esta economia de conjunto não totaliza, porém, a vida económica geral do mar Mediterrâneo e das suas regiões adjacentes, mas enforma antes a sua camada superior cuja acção influencia todo este espaço mediterrânico. A economia-mundo é uma dinâmica, uma colecção de actividades que transcende impérios e mesmo os limites civilizacionais, abarcando as fronteiras políticas e culturais que fragmentam e diferenciam um universo “civilizacional” concreto como o mediterrânico. A partir de um caso exemplar – o Mediterrâneo do século XVI – seria possível perceber que uma economia-mundo é uma soma de espaços individualizados, económicos e não-económicos, agrupados num amplo espaço coerente em determinada época e área do globo, sobrepujando os limites dos outros grupos maciços da história.¹¹

Sempre existiram economias-mundo ao longo da história, o que permite através da comparação sublinhar algumas das suas características tendenciais no tempo e no espaço. Uma economia-mundo implica necessariamente limites espaciais, um *centro* em benefício de uma cidade e de um *capitalismo* já dominante no interior de um espaço hierarquizado que soma economias particulares, umas mais pobres, outras modestas, a uma única relativamente rica no seu *centro*. A economia-mundo não representa, contudo, a única *ordem* a governar a totalidade do social, determinando com exclusividade as outras ordens da sociedade. Antes mistura o espaço que domestica com outras entidades culturais, sociais e políticas, gerando uma *globalidade*, uma sociedade por excelência, o *conjunto dos conjuntos*. Chegados à modernidade, o primado do económico vai-se tornando mais constrangente, orientando, perturbando e influenciando as outras ordens, exacerbando desigualdades, encerrando na indigência ou na opulência os co-participantes na economia-mundo para lhes determinar um papel social de longa duração.



Antuérpia, século XVI (in *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* I).

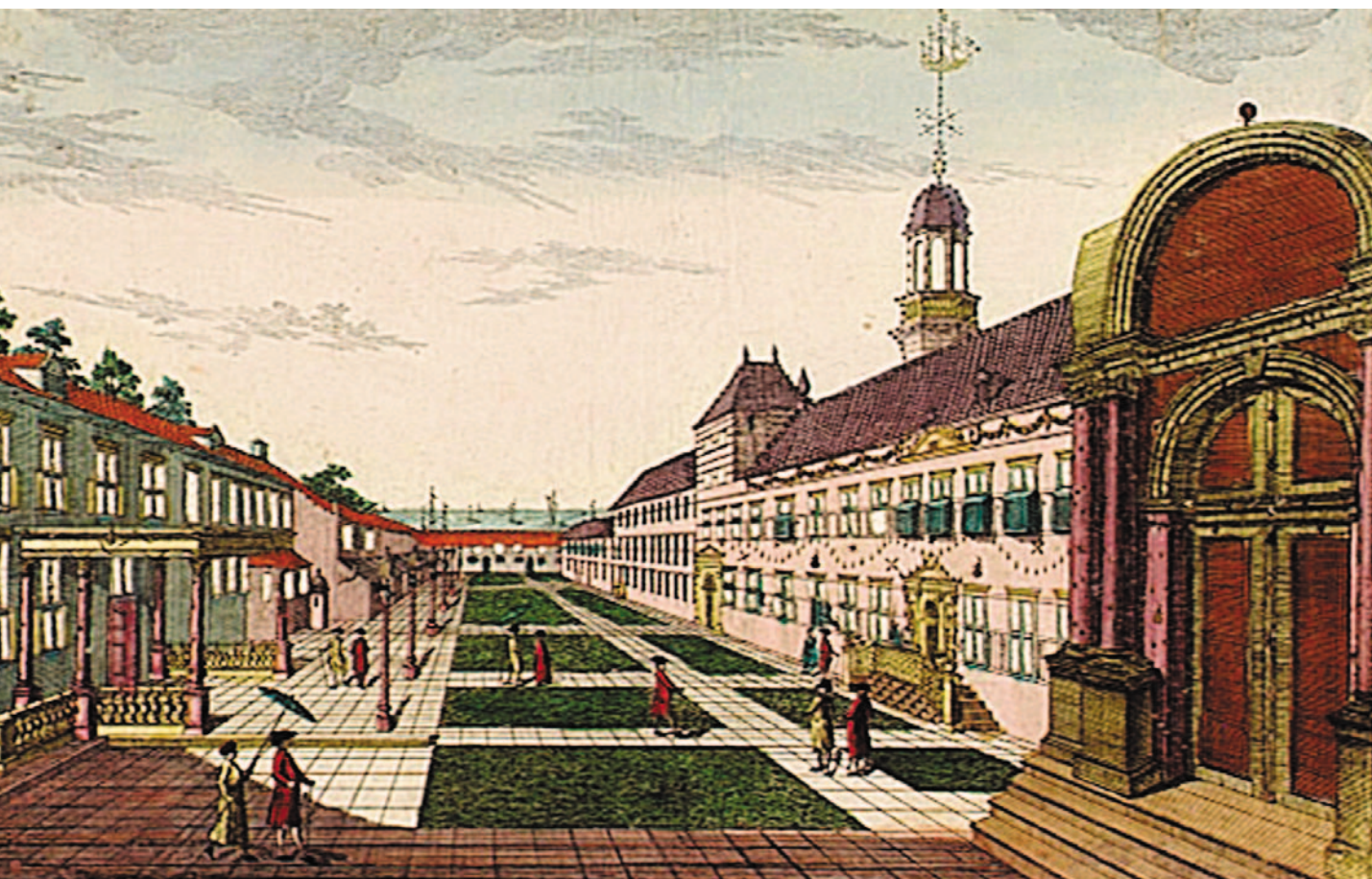
Esclarecido o conceito axial de economia-mundo, este derradeiro volume do tríptico braudeliano traça a periodização da história da economia-mundo europeia. Assim, uma primeira economia-mundo à escala da Europa organiza-se entre os séculos XI e XIII, esboçando uma constelação renovadora de primazias urbanas que englobam vastos espaços de circulação cujas dimensões sociais, instrumentos económicos e lucros comerciais alimentam os espaços urbanos tanto do sul mediterrânico, centrado nas cidades italianas, como desse Norte europeu que foi inventando os Países Baixos ou o surto da Hansa. Esta primeira economia-mundo, influenciando a circulação e os espaços económicas de toda a Europa, acaba por se centrar no final do século XIV nas cidades comerciais italianas, com Veneza firmemente no *centro* do sistema, modelando um império que, apesar de modesto em extensão, domina estrategicamente as rotas comerciais dos tratos do Levante. A seguir, com a expansão ibérica estrutura-se uma segunda economia-mundo europeia centrada não em Lisboa ou em Sevilha, como seria de esperar, mas nessa Antuérpia muito mais perto desses 90% de consumidores da pimenta asiática situados no norte da Europa. Um papel focal que depende mais das oportunidades externas especializando-se, entre 1501 e 1521, sob o signo de Portugal e das especiarias do

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Índico; entre 1535 e 1557, beneficiando dos fluxos maciços da prata americana carregada pela expansão espanhola; e, entre 1559 e 1568, perseguindo um desenvolvimento industrial que comparece como sorte de último recurso para manter uma supremacia em declínio na economia-mundo europeia. Se este século curto de Antuérpia segue a dimensão tradicionalmente consagrada no tema do *século dos Fugger*, os setenta anos seguintes, alargando-se de 1557 a 1627, são um século dos genoveses que, quase discretamente, mobilizam os seus mercadores-banqueiros para arbitrarem os créditos e pagamentos europeus. Cidade *capitalista* por excelência, mudando muitas vezes de rumo comercial, Génova encontra uma vocação central e uma dinâmica claramente capitalista na acumulação dos empréstimos que sustentam a grande política de Carlos V, substituindo, desde 1557, os banqueiros da Alta Alemanha. A cidade italiana tende a centrar a economia-mundo da Europa ao conseguir sustentar a

passagem da mercadoria para a finança, ganhando juros, juros de juros, usuras somadas aos truques dos câmbios e recâmbios que se espalham agora pelos espaços europeus e pelos seus prolongamentos ultramarinos. As galeras carregadas de caixas de reais e de lingotes de prata afluem a Génova desde 1570 e tornam-se instrumento de dominação económica, arbitrando a fortuna da Europa. Nas primeiras décadas do século XVII, o centro da economia-mundo europeia muda-se para ficar em direcção ao Norte da Europa, encontrando em Amsterdão o derradeiro centro, encerrando a era das cidades de estrutura e vocação imperialistas. Amsterdão com as suas companhias capitalistas, bancos, finanças e tratos longínquos esclarece no século XVII uma experiência que se situa entre duas fases sucessivas da hegemonia económica, a das cidades, primeiro, a que segue a dos Estados modernos e economias nacionais. O Norte adquire vantagem sobre o Sul a título definitivo:

Vista do Palácio de Batávia, 1750.



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Batávia, 1726.

comercialização rural avançada, riqueza agrícola e uma economia urbana de “alta voltagem”¹² entretece redes de cidades, partilhando organizadamente tarefas, constituindo uma pirâmide de espaços e realizações económicas tendo no seu vértice uma cidade dominante. *Armazém geral do Universo*, como gostavam de proclamar os capitalistas da V.O.C., a grandeza de Amsterdão não radica apenas no comércio internacional das suas Companhias e das suas poderosas frotas, já que a rede económica holandesa estende-se à Zelândia, à Frísia, Groningen e Utrecht. Falha, perde o domínio, quando as economias nacionais começam a impor-se e a ditar a ordem das relações comerciais distantes. É a economia nacional que cria Londres e esta construiu e orientou a Inglaterra. O papel central de Londres na economia-mundo europeia estava já perfeitamente consolidado, dos bancos às produções, das finanças aos comércios coloniais, quando arranca a revolução industrial na Inglaterra, entre 1750 ou 1760. Um processo complexo, estruturando vários níveis, cruzando uma dinâmica de crescimento generalizado a uma industrialização implicando toda a sociedade, a economia, as estruturas políticas, até mesmo a opinião pública e muitos outros sectores e agentes, da agricultura ao crescimento demográfico, das transformações técnicas à vitória do comércio longínquo, passando igualmente pela expansão dos

transportes internos ou por vários ciclos de crescimentos conjunturais. De qualquer forma, é esta, ao mesmo tempo, a principal cesura e transformação que, para a investigação braudeliana, sustenta definitivamente, sem concorrências, o crescimento e o domínio económico mundial da Europa.

Ideia quase historiograficamente comum que se procura comprovar com o interessante estudo comparativo das condições económicas do que Fernand Braudel designa por “resto do mundo”. Um *resto* dividido em cinco grandes apartados: a grande Europa marginal do Leste, essa outra economia-mundo que foi a Moscovia e mesmo a Rússia moderna até Pedro, o Grande; a África Negra que, apressadamente, costuma dizer-se primitiva; a América que, lenta mas seguramente se vai europeizando; o Islão, no declínio do seu esplendor; por fim esse enorme Extremo Oriente.¹³ Descobre-se nestas áreas, segundo Braudel, uma não-Europa que, antes de finais do século XVIII, já não pode ser compreendida fora da sombra que nela projecta o Ocidente europeu, transformando todos os problemas do mundo do ponto de vista do eurocentrismo: a América é um triunfo quase completo da Europa; a África Negra um triunfo mais incipiente do que parece; o duplo caso, com contradições e semelhanças, do império Turco e da Rússia, sublinham sucessos em vias de lenta mas inexorável elaboração;

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no Extremo Oriente, das margens do mar Vermelho, da Abissínia e da África do Sul até à China, ao Japão e ao Sudeste Asiático, ilumina-se um sucesso mais brilhante do que real. Em todos estes espaços se reconhece normalmente a influência da Europa porque a perspectivamos de maneira privilegiada. Se a movimentarmos, por exemplo, para os mares e terras da Ásia, a Europa perder-se-ia, porque, no século XVIII, ainda não tinha adquirido o enorme poder industrial que anulou a desproporção. Mas é do mundo inteiro que a Europa tira força e, sem esta ajuda, teria a Revolução Industrial – a principal chave do seu destino – sido possível a partir de finais de Setecentos?

O MODERNO SISTEMA MUNDIAL
DE IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN

Uma resposta referencial à questão central colocada pela grande investigação do historiador francês frequenta-se no estudo de Immanuel Wallerstein,

sociólogo e africanista, sobre o *moderno sistema mundial* que se começa a publicar em 1974¹⁴, muito influenciando as perspectivas braudelianas sobre as relações entre cultura material, civilizações e capitalismo. Director precisamente do Centro Fernand Braudel para o Estudo de Economias, Sistemas Históricos e Civilizações da Universidade de Nova Iorque, o trabalho de Wallerstein procura reconstruir a história da sociedade capitalista actual privilegiando uma abordagem *globalizante*, expressando-se na interpretação de um sistema mundial que, em detrimento de outros sistemas menores, permite ganhar uma análise integrada e interdisciplinar. Em termos mais concretos, a noção de *moderno sistema mundial* proposta por Wallerstein cruza o tempo e o espaço para caracterizar um demorado período estendendo-se entre 1450 e 1670 depois da “crise do sistema feudal”. A Europa movimenta-se em direcção a uma economia mundial capitalista que procura estruturar um crescimento económico continuado assentando,

Galle, inícios do século XIX.



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duplamente, na especialização de diferentes modos de controlo do trabalho e na criação de Estados modernos apoiados em novas instituições e tecnologias políticas e militares. Respondendo, assim, à crise feudal, começa a emergir sem retorno entre finais do século XV e princípios do século XVI “o que poderíamos designar por economia-mundo europeia. Não era um império, mas no entanto era tão grande como um império e compartilhava com ele algumas características. Mas era algo diferente e novo. Era um tipo de sistema social que o mundo, na realidade, não havia conhecido anteriormente, constituindo o carácter distintivo do moderno sistema mundial. É uma entidade económica e não política, ao contrário dos impérios, das cidades-estado e dos estados-nações. De facto, compreende precisamente dentro dos seus limites – é difícil falar de fronteiras – impérios, cidades-estado e os emergentes “estado-nações”. É um sistema “mundial”, não por incluir a totalidade do mundo, mas porque é maior do que qualquer unidade política juridicamente definida. É uma *economia-mundo* porque o vínculo básico entre as partes do sistema é económico, ainda que esteja reforçado, em certa medida, por vínculos culturais e, eventualmente, por realizações políticas e estruturas confederais.”¹⁵

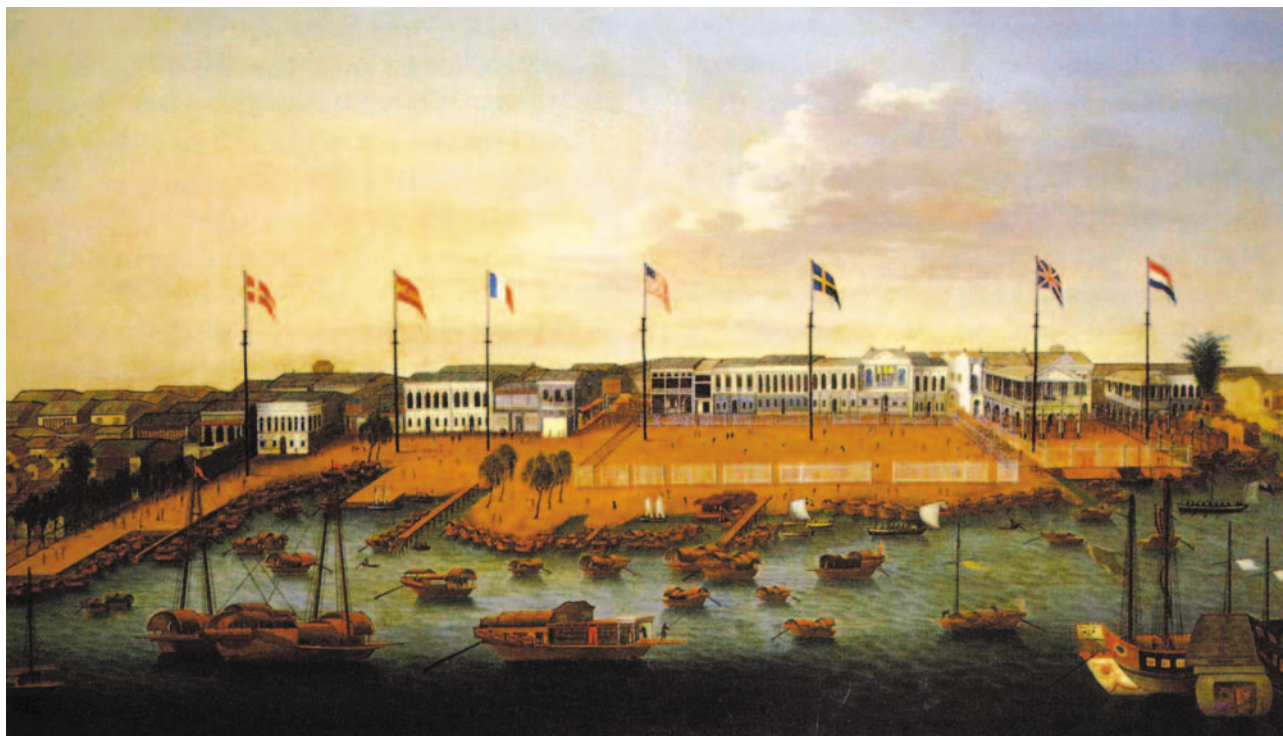
Para esta perspectiva, ainda hoje muito seguida entre os historiadores, trata-se de sublinhar ter sido apenas neste período que, pela primeira vez, um sistema económico tende a espalhar-se pela maior parte do mundo conhecido, estabelecendo comunicações ultrapassando os espaços e fronteiras nacionais para organizar quatro diferentes modalidades de organização e hierarquização destas novas relações económicas universais: *centro*, *semi-periferia*, *periferia* e *zonas exteriores* relacionam definitivamente todas as partes do mundo já não apenas em termos políticos ou “imperiais”, mas numa inteiramente nova economia-mundo à escala planetária.

Seguindo com mais pormenor a proposta de Immanuel Wallerstein, o *centro* desta economia-mundo geral englobava as regiões que mais beneficiavam com o nascimento de uma economia mundial capitalista, reunindo as áreas da Europa do Norte em que pontificavam a Inglaterra, a França e a Holanda: uma espécie de primeiro coração do pulsar do novo sistema mundial. Em termos políticos, os Estados construídos nesta parte “privilegiada” do mundo europeu exibiam governos fortemente centralizados, burocracias cada vez

mais extensas e poderosos exércitos de mercenários. Situações autorizando as burguesias locais a perseguir o controlo do comércio internacional, extraindo lucros deste processo para benefício económico e social próprio. Na margem oposta desta nova relação sistémica mundial encontravam-se as regiões *periféricas*. Descobriam-se neste apartado áreas desprovidas de governos centrais estruturados ou controladas mesmo por outros Estados, exportando matérias-primas para o *centro* e marcadas por práticas coercivas de trabalho. Entre estas regiões opostas, mas com relações complementares de exploração económica, situavam-se as áreas que formavam as *semi-periférias*. Entre finais do século XV e finais do século XVII, a Espanha e Portugal, por exemplo, apresentavam-se precisamente como casos de *semi-periférias*, esclarecendo uma capacidade limitada e, inclusive, em declínio no acesso aos capitais internacionais e à produção de manufacturas de alta qualidade. Diferentemente do *centro*, estas zonas semi-periféricas ibéricas não conseguiram concretizar os seus projectos epocais de domínio do comércio internacional e, desta forma, beneficiar social e economicamente como as regiões centrais. Fora da hierarquia de relações e posições da nova *economia-mundo*, expressando dificuldades sérias na investigação do mundo e das economias históricas asiáticas, Wallerstein colocava espaços que possuíam o seu próprio sistema económico, permanecendo no tocante às comunicações económicas fundamentais *exteriormente* ao sistema económico mundial, como seriam os casos da Rússia e da China, enformando casos de regiões “externas”.

A estratificação de relações económicas, afinal, (quase) “globais” ligava-se ainda no quadro teórico wallersteiniano a uma organizada periodização dos “estádios de crescimento” da economia-mundo. A abrir, as duas primeiras fases de crescimento económico acompanhavam a disseminação de um sistema mundial entre 1450 e 1670. No momento em que o império Habsburgo se mostrou completamente incapaz de converter a economia-mundo emergente num império político mundial, quase todos os Estados europeus existentes tentaram reforçar as suas posições respectivas no novo sistema mundial. Para o conseguir, a maior parte dos Estados investiu na consolidação da sua organização política interna e no desenvolvimento de recursos sociais, cruzando sistematicamente cinco movimentos principais. (i) Um primeiro investimento

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Os *hong* em Cantão. Autor chinês desconhecido, inícios do século XIX.

apostava na *burocratização* indispensável para erguer soluções políticas fortes centradas num super-monarca enquanto poder supremo, polarização do que normalmente se designa como absolutismo. (ii) Um segundo movimento de *homogeneização* das populações locais passou em muitos Estados europeus, incluindo os do “centro”, pela progressiva expulsão e/ou marginalização de minorias sociais e religiosas, destacando tanto o envolvimento uniforme estatal no novo sistema mundial como o apoio ao aparecimento de grupos capitalistas autóctones. Como é tristemente sabido, os judeus viram-se expulsos da Inglaterra, da França, da Espanha e de Portugal, enquanto muitos protestantes que dominavam os tratos comerciais com os espaços católicos se tornaram um alvo perseguido pela Igreja romana saída de Trento. A este propósito, Immanuel Wallerstein recorda acertadamente que a Igreja Católica – a mais importante instituição transnacional epocal – criticou demoradamente o desenvolvimento de uma *economia-mundo* capitalista entendendo-a como uma ameaça às antigas concepções morais que disciplinavam a circulação da economia às éticas da caridade e das obras de misericórdia. (iii) Uma terceira especialização investe sistematicamente na

militarização das monarquias absolutas, somando ao processo de centralização e concentração de poderes a protecção indispensável contra as ameaças externas. (iv) Identifica-se também um evidente investimento político e legislativo na construção *jurídica* da independência do poder monárquico – *ab solutus* –, libertando o *príncipe* das leis feudais dominantes no passado. (v) Por fim, descobre-se ainda um movimento de *diversificação* das actividades económicas, tentando ampliar lucros e reforçar as posições das burguesias locais, vazadas tanto no reforço do papel económico dos Estados, como na multiplicação de companhias mercantis.

À roda de 1640, os estados do Noroeste europeu aprofundaram as suas posições centrais, organizando o centro da *economia-mundo* emergente. A Espanha e a Itália do Norte são arrastadas para uma situação de semi-periferia, ao mesmo tempo que a Europa de Leste e a América Ibérica se tornavam áreas de periferia. O comércio de longa distância com a Ásia e as Américas multiplicou os rendimentos que, afluindo às regiões do centro da economia-mundo, poderiam oferecer facilmente lucros de 200 a 300% mesmo a uma pequena elite mercantil e, ainda muito mais, às novas companhias comerciais, aliando accionistas privados e

interesses estatais. Sucessivamente enriquecida, esta poderosa classe mercantil conseguiria acumular os capitais necessários para a industrialização dos espaços europeus do *centro* da economia-mundo.

A terceira e quarta fases do crescimento do sistema económico mundial, do século XVIII ao presente, viria a estruturar-se, na conceptualização proposta por Wallerstein, em torno do predomínio de um capitalismo industrial em detrimento de um capitalismo agrário. Uma renovada colecção de cinco factores associados permite explicar os sentidos destas fases contemporâneas de crescimento. (i) A começar, os Estados europeus dominando o centro da economia-mundo passam a participar activamente na exploração de novos mercados. (ii) Alguns outros sistemas económicos, como o do Oceano Índico, são absorvidos pela expansão do sistema mundial europeu. Ao mesmo tempo, com a independência dos países da América Latina, tanto estas regiões como outras zonas do interior do continente americano integram-se enquanto periferias na economia-mundo. A Ásia e a África integram-se igualmente ao longo do século XIX no sistema económico mundial como novos espaços de periferia. (iii) Esta inclusão dos continentes asiático e africano multiplicou os excedentes disponíveis, admitindo novas regiões económicas que, como os Estados Unidos da América e a Alemanha, alargam o centro ocidental do sistema mundial. (iv) Durante esta fase, as regiões do centro mudam as suas estruturas económicas de acumulação de uma combinação de interesses agrícolas e industriais para preocupações puramente industriais. À volta de 1700, a Inglaterra liderava claramente a Europa como produtor industrial, mas também no domínio da produção agrícola. Chegados a 1900, apenas uns escassos 10% da população inglesa se encontrava mobilizada para actividades agrícolas. (v) A terminar, ainda nos começos do século XX, as transformações industriais obrigam as regiões do centro da economia-mundo a promover indústrias nos espaços de semi-periferia para puderem vender maquinaria a estas zonas, aliando à exploração económica de matérias-primas o poder industrial e tecnológico.

Em termos conclusivos, o modelo conceptual de Wallerstein centra-se na ideia de que a economia mundial capitalista constitui um sistema dinâmico que se modifica com o tempo, historicamente. No entanto, algumas realizações básicas parece manterem-se, sendo a mais significativa o predomínio das regiões do noroeste

europeu como o centro que mais continuamente beneficia da estruturação de uma economia-mundo a partir do período moderno. Por isso, através dos lucros pingues do comércio internacional e através da troca de produtos manufacturados por matérias-primas da periferia e, por vezes, das semi-periferias, o centro enriquece-se progressivamente à custa das economias periféricas, prefigurando as grandes divisões económicas e sociais que distribuem riqueza e pobreza por espaços opostos do globo.

A ECONOMIA-MUNDO TEM 500 OU 5000 ANOS?

Entre o conjunto actualmente em rápida ampliação de revisões críticas à proposta consagrada por Immanuel Wallerstein destaquem-se as investigações historiográficas do economista alemão Andre Gunder Frank. Tentando re-escalonar a história do sistema mundial e da economia-mundo que foi sendo historicamente organizada, visite-se a interessante e provocadora colecção de estudos intitulada *The World System: Five Hundred or Five Thousand Years*.¹⁶ Em termos gerais, o argumento fundamental deste livro sublinha que, histórica e espacialmente, um contínuo sistema mundial tem estruturado relações globais desde há 5000 anos, e não apenas nos últimos quinhentos anos como tem sido normalmente argumentado pelos teóricos do tema da economia-mundo¹⁷. Acumulação de capital, comércio e crescimento existiam muito antes do período moderno europeu e fora do Ocidente. De facto, o (ou um) sistema mundial não nasceu em 1500, não ressaltou da Europa e não era, muito menos, distintamente capitalista. Pelo contrário, a investigação coordenada por Gunder Frank trata de acumular argumentos, pistas e dados comprovando as manifestações evidentes de um sistema mundial centrado entre a Índia e a China, tanto pré-moderno como pré-europeu, condicionando o apogeu e declínio de outros sub-sistemas económicos, comprovando que as dinâmicas causais se distribuíam a partir do sistema para as suas partes constituintes. Esta pesquisa globalizante procura também criticar definitivamente a interpretação materialista e ortodoxa marxista que, exagerando uma visão eurocêntrica do mundo, resume a história a uma colecção de estádios sucessivos. Criticando a noção marxiana da história enquanto séries de transições de um modo de produção para

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outro, Frank destaca a estruturação de uma economia mundial histórica organizada ciclicamente em torno das diferentes modalidades de pressão e exigência de um mercado mundial continuamente competitivo. Comércio e acumulação de capital baseada em tratos mundiais foram sempre parte integrante da economia global e a competição gerada pela pressão do jogo da procura e da oferta enforma a micro-fundação das mudanças político-económicas. Por isso, a dimensão cíclica da história económica mundial obriga a rejeitar a posição defendendo uma ruptura qualitativa em 1492, com a chegada de Colombo às Antilhas e a subsequente geração de um sistema mundial orbitando o capitalismo europeu.

A crítica ao modelo wallersteiniano prolonga-se com mais veemência, mas também com maior coerência operatória, numa obra mais recente de Andre Gunder Frank, significativa e propositamente intitulada *ReOrient*¹⁸. Trata-se de um trabalho de interpretação que se situa claramente no domínio do *global*: uma perspectiva histórica global é fundamental para se poder investigar mudanças macro-históricas mundiais, do apogeu e queda dos impérios territoriais à revolução industrial, do tema do declínio do “Oriente” ao desenvolvimento do “Ocidente”, passando pelo estudo do colonialismo em África, na Índia ou nas Américas... O todo, o *global*, é maior do que a soma das partes e estas apenas se podem perceber na sua relação com o *global*. Adotar uma perspectiva globalizante não se mostra, porém, uma viragem epistémica fácil de concretizar, atendendo a que a esmagadora maioria da produção científica em ciências sociais e, sobretudo, em história, continua ancorada a uma verdadeira *ideologia eurocêntrica* largamente apresentada e frequentada enquanto ciência normativa universal. Por isso, na sequência de estudos anteriores, *ReOrient* sugere fixar o domínio da Ásia – especialmente da China Ming e Qing, bem como da Índia Mughal – no coração de uma economia mundial interconexa entre 1400 a 1800, devendo perceber-se que, neste período, a Europa era somente um “jogador” marginal no conjunto da produção e comércio globais. A Europa permaneceria mesmo na retaguarda das relações económicas globais face à maior produção e expansão asiáticas até finais do século XVIII, altura em que uma colecção de diferentes factores conjunturais, alargando-se da contracção económica global ao

continuado acesso europeu à prata e ouro americanos, empurraram a economia europeia a ultrapassar o “Oriente” em capacidade industrial. No entanto, o autor sublinha que nada de extraordinário em termos internos, especificamente europeus – a Revolução Industrial, a emergência do Estado moderno ou a reorganização capitalista da economia europeia... – concorreu para firmar este apogeu, vazado antes em mutações cíclicas da economia global somadas a esse progressivo acesso e exploração europeus dos metais preciosos das Américas.

*A economia-mundo não
representa, contudo, a única
ordem a governar a totalidade
do social, determinando
com exclusividade as outras
ordens da sociedade.*

Existe, assim, um esforço geral de interpretação nesta original obra de Andre Gunder Frank visando verdadeiramente *provincializar* a Europa em sede de história da economia global. Recordar-se, a propósito, que a exacerbação do papel central do “Ocidente” na história mundial radica num *sistema de conhecimento*, o eurocentrismo, historicamente específico e com raízes escorando configurações do poder e interesses materiais. Um pensamento eurocêntrico foi-se formando historicamente para atribuir ao “Ocidente” uma missão quase providencial do destino histórico baseada no contínuo avanço da ciência, da tecnologia, da racionalidade, do industrialismo, de instituições políticas, sociais e económicas. Um pensamento que foi perspectivando a experiência europeia como universal, organizando o mundo a partir de um único ponto focal privilegiado que é a Europa. A partir daqui, o mundo é bipartido entre o “Ocidente” e o “Resto” (*“the West” and “the Rest”*, funciona melhor no original inglês...), construindo-se um sistema de conhecimento oscilando em torno de hierarquias binárias em que a Europa invariavelmente ocupa a posição não apenas cimeira, mas também normativa e taxonomizante:

nação ocidental *versus* “tribo”; religião ocidental *versus* “superstição”; capitalismo ocidental *versus* formas tradicionais de produção e subsistência; tecnologia ocidental *versus* artesanato; progresso ocidental *versus* estagnação ou atraso... Um esforço importante de *ReOrient* trata precisamente de visitar criticamente estes mitos eurocêtricos que, ao longo da segunda metade do século XIX, recebem uma consagração científica importante nas obras dos principais historiadores românticos e positivistas, mas estendendo-se igualmente aos trabalhos de Marx e Max Weber. Em rigor, não existe qualquer excepcionalismo europeu: nem o capitalismo descrito por Marx, nem a ética protestante ou a moderna burocracia discutidas por Weber, nem muito menos o sistema de estado “Westefaliano” destacado pela maior parte dos académicos actuais de relações internacionais permitem explicar o crescimento europeu pós-1800 e a configuração ocidental de um sistema moderno mundial.

Em termos gerais, a investigação de Andre Gunder Frank defende que o *globalismo* – e não o capitalismo – tem estado connosco desde sempre. Em consequência, as explicações habituais acerca do desenvolvimento e apogeu da Europa com as concomitantes alterações no sistema mundial deveriam ser refeitas radicalmente, sublinhando que as mudanças sistémicas globais com um centro dinâmico situado na Ásia no começo da época moderna contribuíram decisivamente para a evolução da economia e instituições europeias. Deste modo, este câmbio de posições entre o “Ocidente” e o “Oriente” teria sido meramente o resultado da última alteração continental na distribuição da “fortuna” oferecida pelo sistema mundial existente. Não é este o espaço adequado para discutir demorada e criticamente as teses importantes de Gunder Frank. Muito se poderia debater acerca de uma investigação séria e original, mas que permanece excessivamente marcada tanto pelo domínio social avassalador do económico, como também pela busca recorrente no domínio da história económica do “motor” que dirige histórica e espacialmente – seja por estádios ou ciclos – o desenvolvimento de sociedades e economias históricas. Se privilegiarmos uma abordagem local e territorial, longe das pressões comerciais, financeiras e económicas do global, poderíamos ficar espantados com as capacidades produtivas e culturais do local.

Em muitas sociedades africanas actuais, por exemplo, continua a descobrir-se um mundo rural que funciona e se articula tradicionalmente através de formas de cultura económica que previnem qualquer desastre ou dificuldade conjunturais, especializando solidariedades horizontais que resistem às pressões externas de governos cleptocratas ou à predação das grandes cidades ocidentalizadas. Isto serve para sublinhar que é conveniente não substituir o eurocentrismo ainda hoje dominante da ciência à economia por quaisquer formas de asiocentrismo ou afrocentrismo, neste último caso ligado a muitas modas europeias de invenção de “negritudes” e “africanidades” completamente estranhas às culturas consuetudinárias africanas. As comunicações, desenvolvimentos e vicissitudes que organizaram historicamente relações globais não se centram exclusivamente no interior da Europa, da Ásia ou da África, mas em pontos de conexão exteriores às regiões, enformando espécies de nódulos de integração horizontal que se afiguram ajudar a explicar as coacções presentes ditadas pelo alargamento de um processo de globalização de muito longa duração.

A GRANDE DIVERGÊNCIA.

A CHINA E A EUROPA FACE À MODERNA ECONOMIA-MUNDO

Os principais argumentos que criticam as noções de tempo e espaço vinculadas a uma perspectiva euro-historicista da história do mundo têm vindo a ser discutidos por vários historiadores, geógrafos, economistas e outros cientistas sociais. Mas são, sobretudo, os historiadores asiáticos¹⁹ ou aqueles que, na última década, (re)estudam com novas perspectivas a história da Ásia alguns dos principais responsáveis pela acumulação de evidências factuais e de novas interpretações partilhando a re-orientação sugerida por Andre Gunder Frank. Entre estas investigações mais recentes, destaque-se o importante estudo de Kenneth Pomeranz sobre *a Grande Divergência – China, Europa e a Construção da Moderna Economia Mundial*.²⁰ O objectivo fundamental deste estudo é o de promover uma análise comparativa e integrada numa perspectiva global, rediscutindo e avaliando criticamente a demorada acumulação de estudos europeus que, desde finais do século XIX, tentaram explicar o que normalmente ainda se

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considera como o desenvolvimento económico *único* da Europa. A maior parte da literatura histórica e de outras ciências sociais trata o tema do crescimento económico moderno a partir de um enfoque centrado na Europa, explicando o seu desenvolvimento através do arranque de uma mecanização industrial de larga escala. Alguns autores e obras não deixam de convocar comparações com outras partes do mundo, mas estas digressões comparativistas são geralmente usadas para demonstrar que a “Europa” – ou, em alguns estudos, a Europa Ocidental, a Europa Protestante ou mesmo apenas a Inglaterra – possuíam no seu interior ingredientes domésticos cruciais para firmar o sucesso industrial. Outras explicações, menos seguidas actualmente pelos historiadores e manuais de história europeus, sublinharam a importância das relações entre a Europa e outras partes do mundo, em especial as várias formas de extracção e exploração coloniais. Interpretação seguindo na esteira do que Marx designava por acumulação primitiva de capital através da gigantesca exploração dos Ameríndios e dos escravos africanos, a que se somavam muitos membros das classes “inferiores” europeias, esclarecendo um processo que o marxismo clássico pensava estar na génese de uma acumulação de capital em larga escala. Uma posição que se viria a tornar insustentável à medida que a investigação histórica especializada foi demonstrando a lenta, mas segura, acumulação de excedentes acima da linha de subsistência em muitas quintas, lojas, artesanatos, proto-indústrias e várias outras unidades económicas europeias ao longo do período moderno.



Quentin de Metsys, *O cambista e a sua mulher* (1514).

A investigação de Pomeranz releva o impacto significativo da exploração dos espaços não-europeus e do acesso a recursos ultramarinos, mas não encontra nestes factores o “motor” singular que concorre para o arranque único do desenvolvimento europeu. Reconhece-se também o papel vital do crescimento interno da Europa, mas, neste caso, é possível esclarecer processo similares noutros horizontes geográficos, especialmente na Ásia até praticamente 1800. A Europa ocidental podia ter instituições

mais efectivas para mobilizar largas somas de capital, podendo esperar um tempo demorado pelo seu retorno, mas estas capacidades encontraram poucos usos para além dos investimentos comerciais e coloniais, ao mesmo tempo que o endividamento público era fundamentalmente utilizado para financiar as guerras. É indiscutível que, ao longo do século XVIII, a Europa ocidental se tinha adiantado no uso de várias tecnologias produtivas, mas continuava atrasada em várias outras tecnologias territoriais e agrícolas. Quanto às consequências do

crescimento “malthusiano” europeu, parece evidente que a relação entre demografia e recursos obrigava à mobilização de uma mão-de-obra intensiva, mas esta dialéctica pouco diverge do que ocorreu no mesmo período no Japão ou na China. Se alguns outros factores mais complexos diferenciaram a Europa Ocidental de, por exemplo, a Índia ou a Europa do Leste – como a estrutura do mercado de trabalho – eram, no entanto, razoavelmente similares aos de regiões importantes da China. Conexões que obrigam qualquer investigação comparativa séria a não fixar-

-se apenas na busca da diferença europeia, até porque modelos económicos, sociais ou demográficos comuns nos dois extremos da Eurásia não podem naturalmente continuar a explicar-se como sucessos exclusivos da cultura e história europeias. As semelhanças entre a Europa Ocidental e outras áreas do mundo asiático obrigam-nos a mudar de uma perspectiva simplesmente comparativista, assumindo mundos separados como unidades de comparação, para o estudo das conjunturas globais. O que implica não ser possível perceber antes de 1800 conjunturas globais em termos de um sistema mundial eurocentrado, mesmo quando as conjunturas globais favoreceram frequentemente a Europa, situação não significando imediatamente que os europeus as criaram ou impuseram. Por exemplo, a remonetarização da China com prata a partir do século XV foi um processo anterior à chegada europeia às Américas, mas haveria de se mostrar fundamental para tornar financeiramente sustentável o império espanhol no Novo Mundo, da mesma forma que epidemias dramáticas e mortíferas tiveram um papel crucial na criação deste império a partir das Antilhas. Apenas com os avanços seguros da industrialização ao longo do século XIX parece possível falar-se, pelo menos com rigor económico, de uma hegemonia europeia.

No entanto, o ênfase que os historiadores atribuem à descontinuidade do processo de industrialização europeia tende muitas vezes a modificar as unidades de comparação de forma espacialmente incorrecta. Nalguns casos, as comparações optam por contrastar unidades baseadas nas fronteiras e geografia políticas dos estados-nações actuais, comparando, por exemplo, a Grã-Bretanha à Índia ou à China políticas dos nossos dias. Desculpando a evidência, a Índia e a China são, naturalmente, mais comparáveis em tamanho, população e diversidade interna ao conjunto da Europa do que a países europeus individualizados. A não ser que a política estatal que, a partir do presente, se projecta anacronicamente no passado seja o centro do comparativismo, a nação não é uma unidade que possa viajar os caminhos da comparação global.²¹ Repare-se que várias regiões do “velho” mundo, como o Delta do Yangze, a planície de Kanto, a Grã-Bretanha, a Holanda ou o Gujarat ofereciam realizações comuns que não partilhavam com o resto do continente ou do subcontinente à sua volta:

mercados relativamente livres, indústrias artesanais extensivas e uma agricultura altamente comercializada. Neste caso, porque não comparar directamente estas unidades de espaço económico coerente em vez de introduzir áreas continentais largamente arbitrárias. Baseado nestas opções que se afiguram incontornáveis, o livro de Pomeranz desenvolve uma investigação que compara *partes* da Europa e partes da China, da Índia e de outros espaços asiáticos que se encontravam similarmente posicionados nos seus mundos continentais. Esta mudança de escala faz com que as comparações e as análises de conexões se tornem difíceis de distinguir, porque já não tratam de avisar a singularidade ou a exclusividade eurocêntricas, apesar

... a exacerbação do papel central do “Ocidente” na história mundial radica num sistema de conhecimento, o eurocentrismo, historicamente específico e com raízes escorando configurações do poder e interesses materiais.

de manterem a importância quer descritiva quer contrastiva de uma análise recíproca. A derradeira consequência metodológica implica perceber que a perspectiva normativa de um sistema interconexo em que uma parte (europeia) beneficia mais do que as outras não justifica por si só designar essa parte o *centro*. Pelo contrário, importa assumir a interconexidade como um conjunto de vectores de influência movimentando-se em várias direcções.

A IMAGEM COLONIAL GLOBAL DO MUNDO

A globalização é também, senão essencialmente, representação e imagem. Já não se compra apenas um objecto – da cadeira ao sofá, da mesa ao automóvel, de um simples copo à última versão de uma qualquer marca de automóveis, passando pelo vestuário, pela

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bebida ou mesmo pela apresentação do que se come... – mas o *design*, a construção estética do objecto que, sublinhando quanto é mais importante parecer do que ser, funciona mesmo para validar a dimensão pós-industrial das nossas sociedades ocidentais, claramente mais dominadas para estas concepções pelo serviço, pela gestão, pelo *marketing* ou pelo *design* em detrimento da produção industrial indiferenciada que ainda nos vem dos outros mundos não-europeus. A noção de que a globalização oferecida pelo mundo ocidental é, sobretudo, uma construção imagética, um verdadeiro desenho normativo do mundo, é um tema actualmente em crescente pesquisa e debate historiográfico. Um dos estudos mais importantes da última década, colaborando no alargamento desta problemática, encontra-se no livro de J. M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's model of the world*.²² O objectivo fundamental deste estudo referencial consiste em procurar dissolver uma das mais poderosas crenças do nosso tempo acerca da história e geografia mundiais: a noção comum e “científica” de que a civilização europeia – o “Ocidente” – sempre acumulou vantagens históricas, uma qualquer especial qualidade de *raça*, cultura, ambiente, conhecimento ou *espírito* que investiu esta comunidade de uma permanente superioridade em relação a todos os outros espaços e sociedades humanas ao longo dos diferentes períodos históricos até ao presente. Trata-se, de acordo com esta perspectiva, de uma *crença* “duplamente histórica e geográfica. Os europeus são entendidos como os “fazedores da história”. A Europa avança eternamente, progressa, moderniza-se. O resto do mundo avança vagarosamente ou estagna: é a “sociedade tradicional”. Em consequência, o mundo tem um centro geográfico permanente e uma periferia também permanente: um interior e um exterior (*inside/outside*). O interior lidera, o exterior atrasa-se. O interior inova, o exterior imita.”²³

Uma concepção que, no domínio dos conceitos, enforma não apenas um evidente *difusionismo*, mas um assumido *difusionismo eurocêntrico* com pretensões a uma universal normatividade: os processos culturais históricos estariam pautados por uma dinâmica global fluindo generosamente das regiões europeias para o resto do mundo não-ocidental, estatuidando as primeiras em fonte e os outros em recipientes. Apesar das raízes teológicas e escolásticas profundas do difusionismo, pode destacar-se no campo da historiografia essa noção

de manual iluminando um “milagre europeu” conseguido em torno de 1492, inaugurando um período em que a Europa exibiria um evidente avanço e progresso renascentistas em relação às outras áreas culturais do mundo. Um “milagre” que, concretizado ainda antes do período do colonialismo, expressaria uma superioridade escorada em qualidades europeias internas, não somando ainda os resultados económicos da interacção com as sociedades de África, da Ásia e das Américas. A partir deste núcleo de ideias não são raras as opiniões que, estendendo-se dos mundos das ciências sociais às políticas europeias, explicam não ter sido, afinal, o colonialismo e a sua exploração económica factor decisivo para a modernização da Europa, impondo-se mesmo uma difusão e acolhimento universais da civilização ocidental. As consequências em termos historiográficos deste entendimento etnocêntrico do difusionismo civilizacional europeu são, entre outros constrangimentos epistémicos e metódicos, a especialização de um verdadeiro “túnel do tempo” de que os nossos manuais e enciclopédias de história ainda não se conseguiram libertar.

Caso frequentássemos uma escola na Europa ou nos Estados Unidos da América há 150 anos atrás, por volta de meados do século XIX, ainda aprenderíamos na maior parte dos espaços escolares uma *História* ensinando que Deus criou o homem na região da grande Europa²⁴, podendo mesmo alguns professores sublinhar que apenas as populações deste espaço eram verdadeiramente humanas, sendo todas as outras hierarquicamente inferiores, jazendo quase na fronteira da sub-humanidade. Professores tanto de ciências naturais ou físicas como de história concordariam que os não-europeus se mostravam menos cultivados, honrados e corajosos do que os habitantes da Europa. Se tivéssemos ainda a sorte de estudar *Geografia* ouviríamos falar dos povos vivendo na África e na Ásia: os primeiros geralmente apresentados como “selvagens” cujo único destino aceitável era serem cristianizados e firmemente obrigados ao trabalho; por sua vez, as populações asiáticas, sobretudo da China e da Índia, tinham por qualquer razão desconhecida erguido civilizações *bárbaras* próprias, mas que se encontravam mergulhadas na estagnação e no declínio resultantes dos cruéis “despotismos orientais” que tinham construído no passado. Apenas os europeus conheciam

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a verdadeira liberdade... Ideias e categorias que se foram modificando, pelo que, se entrássemos no mundo escolar cinquenta anos mais tarde, à volta de 1900, frequentaríamos perspectivas bem mais seculares de uma história avisada pelos sabores do evolucionismo darwiniano: a Terra é extremamente antiga, assim como a vida ou a nossa espécie. No entanto, tudo o que historicamente foi decisivo continuava a ensinar-se ter ocorrido na Grande Europa. O primeiro verdadeiro homem, o Cro-Magnon, viveu na Europa. A agricultura foi inventada na Grande Europa, talvez mesmo no continente ou, pelo menos, nessas terras bíblicas formando o coração cultural do mundo. Estudaríamos em “história universal” que os começos pré-clássicos da civilização tinham ocorrido nesses férteis espaços bíblicos assistindo ao aparecimento dos dois povos caucasianos que passaram a dominar a *História*: os semitas foram inventores de cidades e impérios, legaram-nos o monoteísmo e o cristianismo, mas depois caíram numa irremediável decadência oriental; os arianos ou indo-europeus construíram a partir destas fundações, espalhando-se pela Europa do Sudeste e pela Ásia ocidental para levantarem a primeira sociedade genuinamente civilizada: a Grécia Antiga. A seguir, os romanos desenvolveram uma civilização mediterrânica que obrigou a história a caminhar para noroeste. Se o aluno vivesse neste período nas Ilhas Britânicas aprenderia até que a história caminhou do “Oriente” (das terras bíblicas...) para Atenas, Roma, a França feudal e, finalmente, instalou-se na Inglaterra moderna – uma espécie de estranho “Expresso Oriente” definitivamente ocidentalizado. Cinquenta anos depois, no final da Segunda Guerra Mundial, as mudanças no ensino da História e da Geografia universais não seriam estranhamente muitas. O primeiro verdadeiro homem continuaria a ser o Cro-Magnon europeu. Agricultura e civilização tinham sido inventadas nas terras bíblicas. E a verdadeira civilização marchava de Atenas para Roma, Paris e Londres, talvez agora navegando também para Nova Iorque. A História e a Geografia que se ensinavam na altura da última guerra mundial esclareciam uma espécie de túnel histórico que praticamente ignorava o mundo não-europeu, iluminado apenas graças às actividades coloniais ou a um passado integrado na história de um império europeu.

Depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial, o mundo não-europeu começou firmemente a invadir a

consciência ocidental após a guerra com o Japão, a intensificação dos movimentos de descolonização, as lutas pelos Direitos Civis nos Estados Unidos e o acesso à independência de numerosos países africanos e asiáticos. Muitos novos manuais escolares alargaram a discussão acerca da história não-europeia e começaram a contemplar preocupações em direcção às realizações das culturas não-europeias. As escolas encontram-se quase sempre atrás do presente quando se trata de ensinar novos tópicos e ideias, pelo que não é ainda possível declarar que as noções de interno *versus* externo (*inside/outside*) são simplesmente artefactos de museus, antes persistem em muitos manuais e escolas por razões que se não se podem apenas atribuir às relações de distância entre investigação e pedagogia, entre local e universal. Muitos livros escolares e de divulgação de história tem vindo a ser escritos por investigadores consagrados, mobilizando metodologias tão rigorosas como noutra qualquer ramo do conhecimento, tentando evitar anacronismos e preconceitos grosseiros, sendo actualmente difícil encontrar nas historiografias europeias distorções e manipulações propositadas de eventos e periodizações. O problema reside principalmente no âmbito da causação e das conceptualizações propostas para se explicar longas durações e amplas regiões, crises e revoluções que, como a industrialização, ditariam a medida da superioridade do desenvolvimento ocidental. No capítulo das explicações, o eurocentrismo continua, de facto e quase *de iure*, a exercer uma influência importante tanto no discurso social comum, como no discurso político oficial ou mesmo no discurso científico que, muitas vezes, continua a convocar teorias pobres, quase sumárias, longe de evidências contrastivas e de um sentido da globalidade. Permanece fortemente enraizada a *crença* de que os acontecimentos e funcionamentos que transformaram a história ocorreram nessa grande Europa, da revolução neolítica à emergência das primeiras cidades e estados, da invenção grega da democracia ao desenvolvimento das ciências e da filosofia, passando, evidentemente, por essas criações decisivas que inventaram quer o Estado moderno como a genialidade da Revolução Industrial.

A crítica, frequentemente violenta e radical, ao eurocentrismo espalha-se hoje em dia por diferentes domínios do pensamento social. Alguns estudos mais

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avisados esclarecem que o eurocentrismo não é apenas um preconceito, uma atitude errónea que pode ser facilmente eliminada do iluminado pensamento actual, da mesma forma que foram eliminadas outras relíquias como o colonialismo, o racismo ou o sexismo. O eurocentrismo representa um problema científico, académico, sendo frequentemente uma opção do conhecimento informado e, mesmo, especializado. Em rigor, o eurocentrismo organiza disciplinarmente uma colecção de *crenças* que categorizam realidades empíricas, ideias educadas e evidências que muitos europeus sem quaisquer preconceitos aceitam como conhecimentos válidos e absolutamente suportados por “factos”. Grande parte dos profissionais de história europeus dos nossos dias explicarão que não têm quaisquer preconceitos etnocêntricos – e muitos, em rigor, não os têm... –, pelo que, quando ensinam terem sido os europeus a inventar a democracia, a verdadeira ciência, o feudalismo, o capitalismo, o moderno estado-nação ou as sociedades capitalistas industriais defendem estas noções *evidentes* porque acreditam que são rigorosamente “factos”. Podemos mesmo tentar dissolver todos os preconceitos sociais e culturais do mundo, mas continuar a frequentar o eurocentrismo enquanto sistema de conhecimentos empíricos. O que obriga a discutir não os preconceitos, mas os *factos*, as *evidências factuais*, que fundam os principais temários e conhecimentos que historicamente organizam o eurocentrismo.

Como é que ideias históricas eurocêntricas que não são confirmadas pela evidência ou se encontram mesmo contraditadas pelos factos podem continuar a ser aceites pelo pensamento histórico europeu, sobrevivendo como *crenças* larga e demoradamente aceites durante séculos e gerações? Trata-se de um problema crucial para a epistemologia da história hoje.

Os investigadores sabem actualmente que, ao contrário do que predominava há algumas décadas atrás, os conhecimentos empíricos, as *crenças* factuais da história, da geografia e das ciências sociais, no geral, ganham aceitação frequentemente por razões que têm muito pouco a ver com a evidência. Os conhecimentos académicos e científicos encontram-se mergulhados em cultura e comportamentos culturais, são mesmo organizados pela cultura e pelas suas práticas. O que ajuda a explicar porque é que, paradoxalmente, as *crenças* eurocêntricas são tão persistentes como os mitos que continuam a ser frequentados muito depois da *razão* para a sua aceitação e rejeição. Novos candidatos a *crenças* ganham consistência longe da evidência se tiverem um suporte propriamente etnocêntrico; as *crenças* eurocêntricas como um todo continuam a reter demorada persuasão e poder. Mais ainda, o eurocentrismo é um conjunto *único* de *crenças* singularmente poderoso porque representa a racionalidade intelectual e académica que convalida *cientificamente* interesses sociais importante das elites europeias. O colonialismo europeu não apenas iniciou o desenvolvimento da Europa – e o subdesenvolvimento dos espaços não-europeus –, mas também, desde esse período moderno, a riqueza obtida na não-Europa através do colonialismo sob as suas diferentes formas, incluindo modelos neocoloniais, tem sido uma base tão necessária como decisiva para o continuado desenvolvimento económico europeu e o contínuo poder das suas elites. Por esta razão, o desenvolvimento de um *corpus* de *crenças* eurocêntricas, justificando e assistindo as actividades coloniais europeias, tem sido de frequência fundamental, da escola à política: o eurocentrismo é simplesmente o modelo do mundo do colonizador. Será também assim com a *globalização*? **RC**

NOTAS

- 1 Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Paris : A. Colin, 1966. A primeira impressão da obra data de 1949, mas é preferível seguir esta segunda edição que alarga a versão original nos domínios da investigação dos Estados, das civilizações e da demografia, tratando também mais demoradamente essa outra parte do mundo mediterrânico que é o Império Otomano.
- 2 Maurice Aymard, *Fernand Braudel*, in Le Goff, Roger Chartier e Jacques Revel (dir.), *La nouvelle histoire*. Paris : CEPL, 1978, p. 84.

- 3 Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme (XVe-XVIIe siècle)*. Paris : A. Colin, III vols., 1967-1979 (tradução portuguesa Lisboa: Teorema, 1992-1993).
- 4 Fernand Braudel, *Civilização Material, Economia e Capitalismo (Séculos XV-XVIII)*. *As Estruturas do Quotidiano*. Lisboa: Teorema, 1992.
- 5 Fernand Braudel, *Civilização Material, Economia e Capitalismo (séculos XV-XVIII)*. *Os Jogos das Trocas*. Lisboa: Teorema, 1992.
- 6 Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

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- 7 Apesar de não utilizar literalmente as suas teorias e categorias, este debate acerca da economia e sociedade chinesas mostra-se bastante devedor da obra de Max Weber, *Confucianisme et taoïsme*. Paris: Ed. Gallimard, 2000. Trata-se, como se sabe, de textos publicados por Weber, a partir de 1915, sob o título geral de *Ética económica das religiões mundiais* em que viria também a estudar o budismo, o hinduísmo e judaísmo antigo.
- 8 Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 527.
- 9 Fernand Braudel, *Civilização Material, Economia e Capitalismo (Séculos XV-XVIII)*. O Tempo do Mundo. Lisboa: Teorema, 1993.
- 10 Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- 11 Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- 12 Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
- 13 Fernand Braudel, *op. cit.*, p. 331. Não se percebem estas divisões, manejando noções continentais, religiosas e espaciais extremamente diferentes, não concretizando minimamente os critérios teóricos para a definição de uma economia-mundo anteriormente apresentados.
- 14 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern world-system. Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth century*. Nova Iorque: Academic Press, 1974. Utilizamos também a primeira edição espanhola *El moderno sistema mundial. La agricultura capitalista y los orígenes de la economía-mundo europea en el siglo XVI*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1979.
- 15 Immanuel Wallerstein, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- 16 Andre Gunder Frank e B. K. Gills (eds.), *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* Londres / Nova Iorque: Routledge 1993. Veja-se também do mesmo autor um título anterior que prepara alguns dos debates que estamos a sumariar: *World Accumulation 1492-1789. On Capitalist Underdevelopment*. Bombaim / Nova Iorque: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- 17 Esta tese discute-se também no trabalho importante de Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony. The World System A.D. 1250-1350*. Nova Iorque / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- 18 Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- 19 Vejam-se, entre tantos outros títulos mais recentes, os trabalhos de K. N. Chauduri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed. Historical Change and the Limits of European experience*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- 20 Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence. China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. Princeton / Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- 21 Algumas destas questões encontram-se também discutidas na obra de R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed. Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- 22 J. M. Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World. Geographical diffusionism and eurocentric history*. Nova Iorque / Londres: The Guilford Press, 1993.
- 23 J. M. Blaut, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 24 O autor esclarece este conceito significando o continente europeu, mais – para os tempos antigos – as “terras bíblicas” do Norte de África à Mesopotâmia –, mais – para o período moderno – as regiões de colonização europeia como a América do Norte.

高雨松庭柏
翠呼童間掃
落花紅
穰 吳歷



Landscape executed in the style of Zhao Danian / scroll / colour on paper / 58.6x35.5 cm.

文學生吳先生象



Wu Li

In Search of the “Western Lantern”

CHRISTINA MIU BING CHENG*

INTRODUCTION

Wu Li 吴历 (1632-1718), also known as Wu Yushan 吴渔山, was an accomplished painter, poet and calligrapher. Critics and art historians have hailed him as one of the “Six Masters of the Early Qing” of the Orthodox School of Chinese painting.¹ The “Orthodox School” was also known as the Southern School, as this group of scholar-official painters favoured the gentle and misty scenery of the areas around Lake Tai 太湖 in Jiangsu 江苏 province, located in southern China.² Almost all the literati painters of the Orthodox School focused on the study of the classical forms and structures of ancient paintings. They concentrated on the works of the great masters who lived prior to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), in order to avoid any political persecution by the newly established Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The golden era of the Orthodox School was during the second half of the seventeenth century, when the “Six Masters of the Early Qing” rose to

prominence in the art world. Their dominant “orthodox” status ultimately overshadowed those who strove to attain artistic excellence outside the mainstream.

Wu Li was born into a chaotic era, when the Ming dynasty was under siege from both internal rebels and foreign invaders. He was only thirteen years old when the Manchus took over the throne from the Ming court in 1644. The fall of the Ming dynasty into the hands of these foreign invaders was followed by brutal massacres in Yangzhou 扬州, Jiading 嘉定, and Jiangyin 江阴, not to mention humiliating forms of cultural oppression.³ The newly established Qing Empire must have been aware of hostile feelings on the part of the general public. Hence, they employed heavy-handed censorship on scholarship and on literature of all forms that contained provocative ideas or signs of contempt for the new rulers. For this reason, like most literati elites, Wu Li diverted his expressive genius to the established format and style of painting. He emulated the archaic style that can be traced back to the Tang dynasty (618-906). He was particularly noted for painting landscapes in the manner of Wang Meng 王蒙 (c. 1308-1385) and Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301-1374), both of the Yuan Dynasty. Their stylistic influences were expressed in Wu Li’s densely textured rocky masses and compact composition. His interests extended to

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the painting styles of both the Northern and the Southern Schools, thus enabling him to attain stylistic versatility in his work.

Painting was the safest form of artistic creation, in the sense that it provoked the least surveillance and suspicion from the Manchus. But, needless to say, the political and social chaos had an immense impact on Wu's intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Throughout his life, he had yearned for a "Land of Peach Blossoms"—a paradise on earth—and had ventured to discover life's truths in different schools of thoughts. In his early life, he was in close contact with Buddhist monks and Daoist friends. It was not until around the age of forty-five years old that he drew closer to the Christian converts and Jesuits in Changshu. At the age of fifty, he arrived in Macao to study the Western *Tao* 道, that is, Christianity. Wu Li's travel to Macao not only opened up a new horizon of contacts with Western culture, but also provided his innovative mind with a chance to explore new forms of religious fulfilment. Metaphorically, he was searching for a "Western lantern" to revivify his religious vision and illuminate his inner self. The lantern or the lamp symbolizes intelligence, learning, immortality, guidance, knowledge, and above all, the word of God (Olderr, 1986:77 and Vries, 1976:290).

Wu lived in a time when religious syncretism⁴ among the Three Teachings had become a prevalent phenomenon in China, and when the Rites Controversy was poised to break apart the Catholic Church along faultlines of theological sectarianism. This paper traces Wu Li's religious experience and focuses on his fervent quest for spiritual awakening among the various religious systems he explored. After he entered the Jesuit seminary in Macao as a novice, and later as God's "shepherd" in China, he composed an extensive collection of poems and verses about his inner journey to enlightenment. These literary texts give us a lucid portrayal of his struggle to lead an authentic and meaningful life. As he had once been a syncretic believer in the Three Teachings, did he become a religious traitor when he converted to Christianity? What Macao did he see, and how did Macao serve as a religious centre in his time? How did he survive the lonely days as a rural priest in his final years? Would the "Western lantern" he found truly light up his life and fulfil his dream of attaining spiritual transcendence?

A HIGHLY CIVILIZED CITY

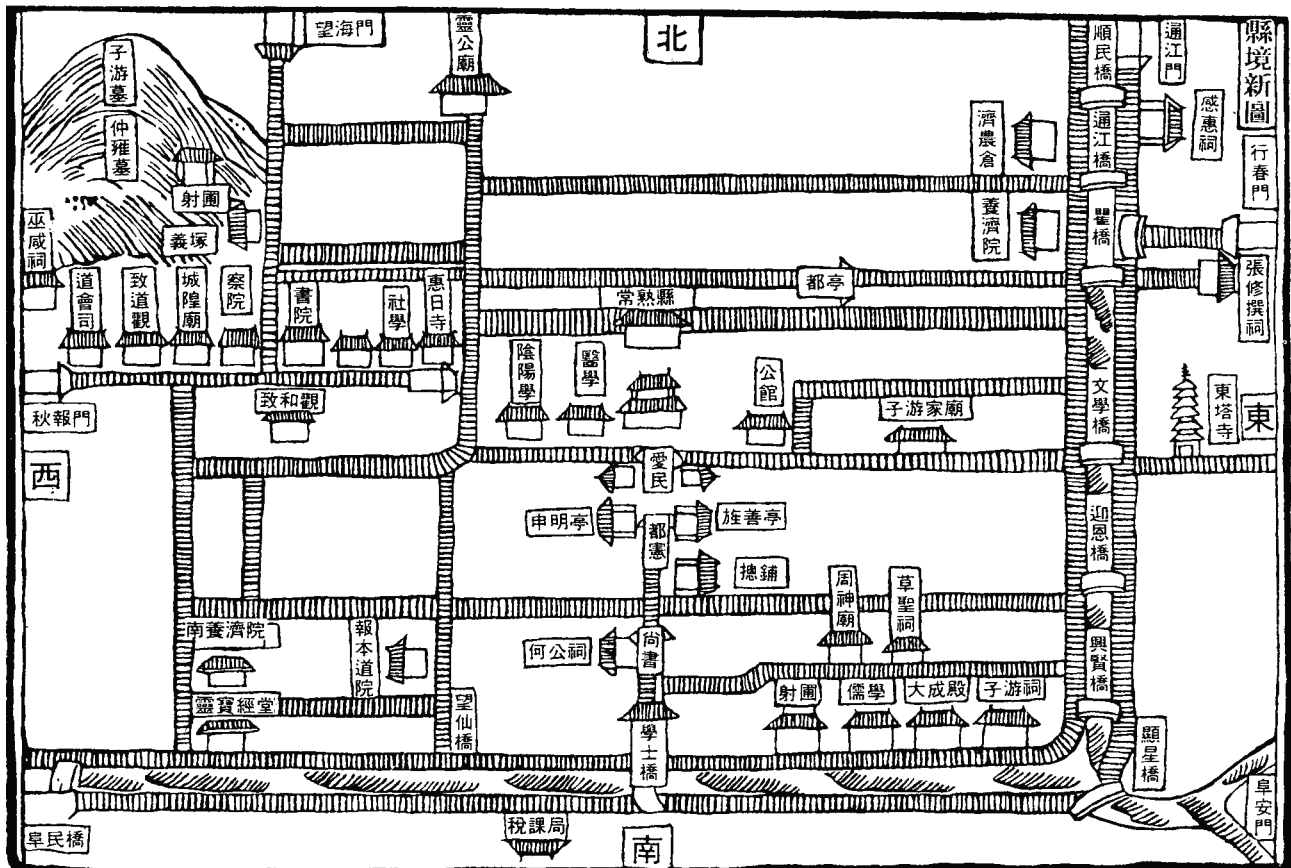
Wu Li was born in Changshu 常熟, Jiangsu province. Changshu was a prosperous place and had a long tradition of cultural accomplishment. It was a highly civilized city, which in many aspects was an excellent example of the Confucian elite culture of the time. Its historical importance was also enhanced by its status as the hometown of Yan Yan 言偃, also known as Yan Ziyou 言子游 (b. 506 BC). Yan Yan was an outstanding disciple of Confucius (551-479 B.C.), some forty-five years his junior. Given his scholarly proficiency, he was given an honourable name, Yanzi 言子 (Master Yan). In the town centre stood two temples dedicated to Yan Yan: an ancestor temple, called Ziyou Ci 子游祠, and a house temple, called Ziyou Jiamiao 子游家庙. On the outskirts of town was Yan Yan's tomb. Most significantly, near the Wenxue Bridge 文学桥 in Ziyou Lane 子游巷 stood the old house of Yanzi, right next to Wu Li's house, where the Wu family had resided for generations since the beginning of the Yuan dynasty (Chen, 1937: 2b-3a). Inside Yanzi's house, there was a famous well. As the water was like ink, with a fragrance that could seep into the heart, the well was called the *Yanzi Mojing* 言子墨井 (the Ink Well of Master Yan), or *Shengjing* 圣井 (the Holy Well) (Li 1909:7). The Ink Well perhaps alludes to a source of literary inspiration and is emblematic of literati culture. As we can see, Changshu was a culturally dynamic city sprinkled with the vestiges of Yanzi (Fig. 1) and immersed in Confucian pride. Yanzi also came to be Changshu's enduring icon.

At the end of the Ming dynasty, however, Yanzi's historic house – a prominent symbol of Confucianism – was converted into a Roman Catholic church (Chen, 1937:2b). The transformation of this Confucian residence into a church metonymically foreshadowed Wu Li's conversion to Catholicism. In his study on Wu Li, Lin Xiaoping states that he converted to Christianity in the mid-1670's (Lin, 2001:xvii, 61). However, a letter dated 3 October 1688 from the first Chinese bishop of the Catholic Church, Luo Wenzao 罗文藻, baptised as Gregory Lopez,⁵ to the Holy Council in Rome reveals that Wu Li had been Catholic when he was a boy:

"On 1st August of this year, with God's grace, I was able to ordain three Chinese Jesuits to the

Not only was Wu Li introduced to Christianity as a result of the geographical accident of proximity to a church, but he was also able to receive a good education from a group of prominent scholars who were either local residents or hailed from neighbouring districts. He studied painting with the two leading

landscape masters—Wang Shimin 王时敏 (1592-1680)⁷ and Wang Jian 王鉴 (1598-1677)—two of the “Six Masters of Early Qing”; poetry with Qian Qianyi 钱谦益 (1582-1664); music (the lute) with Chen Min 陈岷 (active 1643-1654); and Neo-Confucianism 理学 (*lixue*) and literature with Chen Hu 陈瑚 (1613-1675). All these were great masters in their fields at that time,⁸ and under their tutelage Wu Li was well trained in literary and artistic traditions. He became a full-time professional painter in the 1640’s and 1650’s, and was also an accomplished calligrapher, emulating the handsome calligraphic style of Su Shi 苏轼 (1036-1101). He excelled in scholarly pursuits, and his virtuosity in the arts was praised highly by both his teachers and his peers. Changshu was indeed a centre of scholarship where young Wu Li was both nurtured by the Chinese intelligentsia and impressed by Christian missionaries. This ancient city also served as a meeting point for Chinese classical knowledge and “nascent” Western science and philosophy.



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A JOURNEY OF SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION

Being a traditional *wenren* 文人 (literatus), Wu Li was also a spiritual explorer. He possessed an innovative mind that incessantly explored new ways of seeing things and of reflecting upon various religious doctrines. As he was entangled in the bitter realities of political turbulence and social turmoil, he embarked on a spiritual journey to free himself from the shackles of the secular world.

Despite his early baptism, Wu Li was not a practising Catholic, and was alienated from the church. In his youth, he strove to broaden his spirituality in Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Even though he studied Neo-Confucianism under Chen Hu from 1659 to 1675, he adopted a Daoist theme in one of his early paintings. In 1659, at the age of twenty-eight, he painted 'Growth of Auspicious Fungi' [*Chan zhi tu* 产芝图] (now in the National Museum in Kyoto). The motif of fungi is a popular Daoist symbol for longevity. Perhaps as a sign of respect and reverence to Yanzi, and certainly in order to associate the Ink Well with his artistic endeavours, Wu called himself *Mojing Daoren* 墨井道人 (Daoist/Buddhist Disciple of the Ink Well).⁹ This pseudonym, which he signed to some of his artworks, embraces an amalgamation of Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist connotations.

Wu Li had long envisioned a paradise on earth, or *taoyuan* 桃源 (the Land of Peach Blossoms), and often adopted the theme of *taoyuan* in his paintings. This imaginary utopia is a direct reference to a prose piece, "Record of the Land of Peach Blossoms" [*Tao hua yuan ji* 桃花源记], written by the pastoral poet Tao Qian 陶潜 (372-427 A.D.) of the Eastern Jin 东晋 dynasty. It depicts a long-forgotten place where a group of people have retreated to lead a secluded life beyond the reach of the despotic rule of the Qin 秦 dynasty (221-206 B.C.). In this Land of Peach Blossoms, there is no war and everyone lives happy, self-sufficient lives. Wu Li's pictorial rendition of *taoyuan* illustrates his fantasy of a peaceful land, and hints at his desire to evade the autocratic rule of the new regime.

In addition, before the age of thirty, Wu composed a collection of poems grouped under the title "Taoyuan ji" 桃溪集 ("Anthology of the Peach Blossom Stream") (Chen, 1937:55a).¹⁰ *Taoxi* was

actually the name of a stream at the rear of his house (Chen, 1937:29b-30a). Perhaps *taoyuan* came to be a substitute for the utopia for which he yearned, because he began to use another penname, *Taoxi Jushi* 桃溪居士 ("Buddhist Devotee of the Peach Blossom Stream"), to sign his paintings. His preference for the imagery of *taoyuan* and *taoyuan* may speak to his desire for a symbolic escape to a visionary Shangri-la.

In 1665, at the age of thirty-four, Wu travelled to nearby Suzhou 苏州 and became a good friend of the Buddhist abbot, Morong 墨容, of the Xingfu Monastery 兴福精舍. He stayed there for two months, and Morong may have inspired him in metaphysics, philosophy and the transience of life. In 1666, Wu painted an album of beautiful landscapes for Morong (now in the Palace Museum, Beijing) as a gesture expressing their intimate friendship. Thus before the age of forty-five, Wu had been in close contact with Buddhist monks (Fang, 1971:135), and had sought an "awakening" from this mundane life.

No doubt, Wu Li was well acquainted with Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist doctrines, and traversed the boundaries among different beliefs in order to seek divergent views from these religious systems. The religious systems of Confucianism,¹¹ Buddhism and Daoism have long been known in China as the *san jiao* 三教 (the Three Teachings, Three Great Religions, or Three Doctrines), and have dominated almost the entire spectrum of China's religious history. Not long before Wu Li was born, Ming China witnessed a period of spiritual renaissance, and the syncretic forces of the Three Teachings were advocated. Religious practices, beliefs, and traditions tended to react to and absorb into themselves selected elements from other philosophies and sects. The most important syncretist of this period was Lin Zhaoen 林兆恩 (1517-1598), a native of Fujian 福建 province, who zealously advanced the theories of *san jiao he yi* 三教合一 (the religious syncretism of the Three Teachings). Lin developed a well-defined system of study and practice for spiritual cultivation. It was through a process of reconciliation and the selective incorporation of diverse elements from a variety of religious praxes that a tradition emerged and was soon widely accepted.¹² This syncretic impulse soon spread to the provinces of Jiangxi and Zhejiang, and to the Nanjing region. Many literate elites at that

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time, like Wu Li, were eclectics¹³ and favoured the principle of religious syncretism as a way to derive the essence of a variety of doctrines and ideas. Zhang Wenqin even contends that literati in the late Ming and early Qing period were proud of their syncretic knowledge of the Three Teachings (Zhang, 2002: 157).

The Chinese syncretic accommodation neither constitutes religious treason nor does it shatter existing traditions. Rather, it is a process of religious interaction and exchange. Judith A. Berling has concisely defined religious syncretism as "the borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition into another by a process of selection and reconciliation" (Berling, 1980:9). In this way, the dynamics of syncretism allow a reformulation and substitution of traditions in religious experience. The harmonization of the Three Teachings thus engendered toleration, compromise and respect among different belief systems. Most crucially, the Chinese syncretists believed that all doctrines were reconcilable, because in the history of humankind there was only one **Truth** (or "Way"), which had evolved into many manifestations. Hence, the Three Teachings actually taught the same Truth but in different ways. This syncretic outlook immediately puts to shame the hostile history of religious wars and persecution (as evidenced in the Crusades and the Inquisition) in the West, not to mention the calamitous Rites Controversy that raged on Chinese soil.

Lin Zhao'en was a contemporary of Francis Xavier (1506-1552); both of them dedicated themselves to pursuing spiritual truth. Xavier was the exemplification of the lofty spirit that marked the inception of Portuguese evangelisation in the East. He set out for Asia in 1541 but died on Shangchuan Island 上川島 (or, in English, St John's) near Macao in 1552 – the very year that Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) was born. Ricci fulfilled Xavier's dream of going to the Orient to spread the word of God. In 1582, Ricci arrived at Macao, and in 1601 reached Beijing. No sooner had Ricci and the Jesuits begun their evangelising mission than the harmonization of the Three Teachings became a popular phenomenon in Ming China. For the Chinese intellectuals, the Christianity introduced by these European missionaries was merely another of the worldly doctrines that would lead to the same Truth. As Jacques Gernet has aptly pointed out:

"For the Chinese, it was more a matter of different groupings of philosophical, moral, religious and—on occasion—technological teaching. And the Chinese of the seventeenth century considered the teaching of the missionaries from precisely that point of view, giving it the very general name of *tianxue* (heavenly studies), which applied to the sciences and technology just as much as to ethics and religion". (Gernet 1985:65)

Given these syncretic attitudes, the delineation of religious faiths did not usually dominate the common people's consciousness; rather, they embraced a pantheistic spirit through religious inclusion, compromise and syncretism. As a result, most Chinese at that time would transgress religious boundaries rather than adopt a permanent religious affiliation. In this respect, Gernet goes on to argue, "What the academician Xu Guangqi 徐光启, Ricci's most famous and best educated disciple, was advocating was not the pure Christian doctrine, but an amalgamation of Confucianism and Christianity similar to that which had emerged in the sixteenth century between Confucianism and Buddhism" (Gernet, 1985:66). Wu Li's inner journey of religious exploration could perhaps reflect this specific cultural phenomenon. Like other Christian proselytes among the literate elites, he might have expected to achieve a kind of synthesis with Christianity itself. In other words, he was not a religious traitor;¹⁴ rather he sought religious assimilation and reconciliation.

A "LOST SHEEP" RETURNED

In Europe, the sixteenth century was an era of religious repercussions. Soon after the religious revolution—the Reformation—led by Martin Luther (1483-1546) in 1517 followed the Counter-Reformation. Two of the chief manifestations of the Counter-Reformation were the foundation of the Society of Jesus by Ignatius Loyola in 1534, and the Council of Trent (1542-1563). In light of the religious reshuffling in the West, European missionaries were moved by a renewed ecclesiastical passion to turn Asia into the West's "Eastern stage" for religious reconfiguration, as the modern era began at the dawn of the seventeenth century.

In addition to Beijing, Changshu was a centre of missionary activities during the late Ming and early

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Qing period. Christianity was first brought to Changshu by a Chinese convert, Qu Shigu 瞿式谷, in 1623, nine years before Wu Li was born. Qu then introduced the first foreign priest, the Italian Jesuit Jules Aleni, S.J. (known in Chinese as Ai Rulue 艾儒略), to this ancient Confucian city to launch a *mission civilisatrice*. At the time, Chinese official-scholars nicknamed Aleni “the Confucius from the West” (Lin, 2001:83). In China (and in Macao), Jesuit missionaries espoused the “Policy of Accommodation,”¹⁵ and conformed to Chinese manners and customs for the purpose of proselytisation.

Wu Li’s spiritual journey in search of enlightenment and fulfilment in life came full circle back to Catholicism, to which he had been introduced as a boy. His departure from lay Buddhism occurred when he accompanied a close friend, Xu Zhijian 许之渐 (twenty years his senior) to Beijing in the summer of 1670. Xu Zhijian, an imperial censor at the Qing court, was an acquaintance of the German Jesuit Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591-1666, known in Chinese as Tang Ruowang 汤若望), who was then serving as the director of the Imperial Bureau of Astronomy. Though Xu was not a convert, he had contacts with Christian missionaries and wrote the preface to a book, *Tian xue chuan gai* 天学传概, which advocated Christianity. During the early 1660’s, Yang Guangxian 杨光先 (1597-1669), a high official in Beijing, initiated a campaign against the Western missionaries, accusing Schall and his Jesuit colleagues of plotting against the Chinese state. Consequently, in 1665 Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1662-1723), the greatest of the Manchu monarchs, issued an edict forbidding the teaching of Christian doctrines. All churches in China were forced to close and the Jesuit missionaries were expelled to Macao. Because of his involvement with the missionaries, Xu Zhijian was dismissed from the imperial court and ordered to leave Beijing. In 1669 the accusation against Schall was finally dropped. As a survivor of this political intrigue, Xu was asked to return to Beijing in 1670.

This trip to Beijing was a milestone for Wu Li. His sojourn in the imperial city (1670-1672) coincided with Kangxi’s 1671 edict permitting Jesuit missionaries to return and reopen their churches. It was a new era of peace and religious toleration, following years of political turmoil and social upheaval. The capital he saw was a city of prosperity

and grandeur. Moreover, he must have witnessed the Jesuits’ passionate efforts to introduce scientific knowledge and Christianity. Most especially, Beijing had an impressive skyline of Baroque churches.¹⁶ What he saw and heard in Beijing might have inspired him to seek new values that were distinct from the traditional ones he knew.

Wu Li left Beijing and returned to Changshu in 1672. He soon began to develop closer relationships with Christian friends, especially with Francois de Rougemont, S.J. (1624-1676), a Belgian Jesuit (known in Chinese as Lu Riman 鲁日满). Along with Ricci and Schall, Rougemont is considered to be part of the “generation of giants” of the seventeenth century, the generation that “laboured patiently to achieve a synthesis of Chinese and Christian culture, with respect for the understanding of the former without injury to the latter” (Dunne 1962:368). Rougemont came to China (via Macao) in 1659, and was sent to Changshu in 1662 to administer the city’s religious affairs. At that time, Changshu was already a flourishing Christian city with 20,000 Catholic converts, and Rougemont alone administered fourteen churches and twenty-one chapels (Tam, 1986:42-69). However, because of the 1665 edict proscribing the preaching of Christianity, he was forced to leave Changshu and was exiled to Macao. He returned after Schall was vindicated, and made Changshu his regular residence until his death in November 1676.

The year 1676 was a turning point for Wu Li. Rougemont found this “lost sheep,” and became Wu Li’s “shepherd” and spiritual instructor. Extant and clearly dated records indicate that in the spring of that year, Wu Li accompanied Rougemont to visit a Mr. Chouhan 畴函先生¹⁷ in Loushui 娄水 – a visit that was apparently of no small significance to Wu, since he inscribed a record of this visit in his celebrated landscape painting, ‘Spring Scene of Lake and Sky’ [*Hu tian chun se tu* 湖天春色图] (now in the Shanghai Museum) (Fig. 2). The beginning of the colophon (or inscription) reads:

“Mr Chouhan, a man of wisdom, has lived in seclusion at Loushui for a long time. I have long yearned to pay him a visit but have been unable to do so. It was not until the spring of the year [*bing*] *chen* 丙辰 (that is, 1676) that I accompanied Mr Lu 鲁先生 from the Far West 远西 to call at this gentleman’s house...” (Chen, 1937:22b)



Fig. 2 - Spring scene of lake and sky (Shanghai Museum Collection).

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From the colophon, we can see that Wu Li had a close connection with “Mr Lu,” that is, Father Rougemont. The visit to the venerable Mr Chouhan (a Catholic) with Father Rougemont must have been an impressive and unforgettable occasion, inspiring Wu to paint such a beautiful hanging scroll and to inscribe it with an original poem commemorating this visit. He must have felt real solidarity with these two friends, who represented to him a kind of spiritual emancipation.

Increasingly unconvinced by the classical learning, Wu Li tried to explore a different type of humanity and seek the sublime meaning of life. His perplexity was inscribed in a hanging scroll, “Hazy Mountain after Rain” [*Yu san yan luan tu* 雨散烟峦图] in the 8th lunar month of 1676:

“I toil and labour in this mundane world. Every time I wet my brush and dilute the ink, I think of the transcendent world...” (Chen, 1937:23a)

This colophon plainly suggests that he was in the grip of a spiritual crisis, engaged in an inner struggle for spiritual exploration and transcendence in life.

A NEW CHRISTIAN WORLD

Wu Li's yearning for spiritual breakthrough became increasingly intense after the deaths of his mother (1662), the Buddhist priest Morong (1672), and his mentors Chen Hu (1675) and Wang Shiming (1680). Later, his wife died too, and he decided to join the priesthood (Li, 1909:1b). Given the reality of emptiness and desolation facing him, Wu sought spiritual consolation through the ontological and philosophical quest for life's meaning. Christianity thus served as Wu Li's solace, and his means to search for the ultimate conditions of existence.

Enmeshed as he was in spiritual doubt and questioning, Wu began to see a silver lining when another Jesuit missionary, Philippe Couplet S.J. (1623-1693, known in Chinese as Bo Yingli 柏应理, came to Changshu in 1677 as Rougemont's successor. Through his zealous evangelisation, he attracted more Christians and built more churches there. In 1680, he was appointed Procurer of the Vice-Province and Deputy to Rome. He soon became Wu Li's spiritual mentor. Under Couplet's guidance, Wu rendered his services to the church as a catechist.

From two sources—the “Sanba ji” 三巴集 (Wu 1909:12) and *Wu Yushan xian sheng nian pu* 吴渔山

先生年谱 (Chen 1937:26)—we understand that in 1681 Couplet was called to go to Rome, and that Wu Li, at the age of fifty, planned to go with him to the “Great West” 大西 (or Europe). When they arrived at Macao, Wu Li abandoned his ongoing journey—but why? In the *Mojing ji*, Li Di has argued that “the Rector of the Collegiate Church of St Paul's knew of his intention but invited him to study and meditate in Macao instead of trudging for several hundred thousand miles to Rome. He consented and gave up the trip to the West” (Li, 1909: 2a). Wu Li was thus “stranded” in Macao, but his status as a painter and scholar¹⁸ perhaps helped pave the way for his admission to the Society of Jesus as a novice in 1682, at the age of fifty-one.

Wu Li's physical travel from his hometown to Suzhou, then to Beijing, and subsequently to Macao constitutes a metaphor for his intellectual travel. His mind “travelled” with various religious doctrines as he visited different places and contemplated the Way that would lead to spiritual enlightenment. Eventually, his physical/spiritual journey reached its final destination in Macao.¹⁹ Macao was a spectacular religious stage that fascinated Wu Li, and that allowed him a glimpse of the vitality of a new Christian world.

The seventeenth century was the golden age of Macao. What Macao did Wu Li see when he arrived? Antonio Cardim, an Portuguese Jesuit and the Rector of the Collegiate Church of St Paul's, provided in 1644 a portrait of the Macao that Wu Li perhaps saw:

“Macao is put together of very fair buildings and is rich by reason of the commerce and traffic that go on there by night and by day; it has Noble and Honourable Citizens, it is held in great renown through the whole Orient inasmuch as it is the store of all those goods of gold, silver, silk, pearls, and other jewels, of all manner of drugs, spices, and perfumes from China, Japan, Tonkin, Cochinchina, Siam, Cambodia, Macassa, Solor, and above all for that it is the Head of Christendom in the East”. (Cardim, quoted in Francis, 1930:2)

Thus Macao was not merely a prosperous commercial centre with good people; it was also extolled as the “Head of Christendom in the East.” As a religious citadel, it has been hailed as the “Rome of the Far East” and the “Mother of Missions in Asia” by Manuel Teixeira (1912-2003), a Jesuit historian in Macao (Cremer, 1987:43). Above all, it was the *de facto* “bridgehead for Christianity” in China.

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After the Diocese of Macao was established in 1576, the Portuguese enclave became a strong Christian community, where various religious orders founded branches during the third quarter of the sixteenth century. The Jesuits, who were often called "Paulists" in the East, first built the Collegiate Church of St Paul's in 1594. After two fires, in 1595 and 1601 respectively, it was re-built in 1602. Peter Mundy (1608-1667), an English trader and traveller, wrote in 1637 that the excellent workmanship of the roof of the Church of the Mother of God was the fairest arch that he had ever seen (Mundy, 1919:162). In 1640, a magnificent façade was added to the Church of the Mother of God (now better known as the Ruins of St Paul's).²⁰

The College next to the Church was considered the first European-style university in the Far East, for it conferred the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctorate. It was established well before either the University of Santo Tomas in Manila (1619) or the University of Hong Kong (1911). The Jesuits brought with them 7,000 volumes of Western books to Macao, and the College offered a variety of subjects which included Latin, Greek, grammar, humanities, arts, theology, rhetoric, philosophy, arithmetic, music, and above all, Chinese studies. Father Morales proudly described it as "a house of knowledge, a garden of sanctity and a school of apostles" (Morales, quoted in Lam, 1970:830).

Lu Xiyan 陆希言 (1631-1704), another Chinese proselyte, who came to Macao with Couplet and Wu Li in 1681, wrote an essay entitled "A Note on Macao." Here is an excerpt:

"... It [Macao] is like a fine landscape in a dream... There are scholars who dress elegantly and recite poetry without end; they come and go from the Catholic churches, reading books and discussing the *Dao*... There are different Catholic churches around [the town]... The most towering and magnificent one is Sanbasi [the Church of St Paul's], whose construction was a great achievement and thus appears different from all others..." (Lin, 2001:113)²¹

Lu Xiyan's depiction of Macao suggests a kind of "new world" beauty. The Macao Wu Li saw was precisely in its heyday, full of churches and God's "chosen people." The splendour of a Christian city must have captivated his eye. Seventeenth-century Macao was perhaps an Arcadia on earth, not yet defiled by any human foolishness and greed.

"FROM FAR AWAY I COME TO STUDY THE DAO AT SANBA"

As his "dream" to go to Rome remained unrealised, Wu Li studied *tian xue* 天学 (heavenly learning) in Macao. The Chinese called Catholicism *tian xue* or *xi xue* 西学 (Western learning). Western learning, introduced by the Jesuits, was a mixture of Christian theology, Greek (especially Aristotelian) philosophy, and science and technology. In the "Sanba ji", (collected in the *Mojing ji* 墨井集), Wu Li recorded aspects of his daily life, his aspirations, his feelings, and above all, Western customs, in a collection of thirty poems that he called "Ao zhong za yong" 澳中杂咏 (or "Rambling Songs on Macao").²² Here is the first poem on Macao:

I have passed the Barrier Gate²³ and arrived on
the flat sand beach,
关头粤尽下平沙，
The mountain of Haojing [Macao] looks like a
flower.²⁴
濠境山形可类花。
Residents here are not surprised at my arrival,
居客不惊非误入，
From far away I come to study the *Dao* at Sanba.
远从学道到三巴。

"Sanba" 三巴 is the Chinese transliteration of S. Paulo (Saint Paul in English). The Jesuit College next to the Church of the Mother of God was called St Paul's.²⁵ It was at St Paul's College that Wu Li studied the *Dao*. Given the proximity of the College and the Church, the Church was also taken for St Paul's, and the Chinese called it Sanba Si 三巴寺 (S. Paulo Temple) or "Da Sanba," 大三巴, meaning "Big S. Paulo." What kind of *Dao* did Wu Li study in Macao? The Chinese concept of *Dao* (meaning the Way, or the divine intelligence of the universe) embraces cosmic reason. It is the ultimate principal of universal reality. In Daoism, *Dao* is the unitary first principal and the eternal order of the Universe. In Confucianism, *Dao* is the right way of life, the path of virtuous conduct, and the universal criterion of right and wrong. The early Buddhists also made use of Daoist terminology to express their ideas, and saw *Dao* as the Way to *Nirvana* 涅槃 (Schuhmacher 1994:356-7).²⁶ As Wu Li was already a syncretic thinker in the Three Teachings, he came to

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the Portuguese enclave to study the Western *Dao*, that is, Western knowledge and Christianity.

From poem number seventeen of the “Sanba ji,” we can tell that he stayed on the second storey of the seminary (although this could mean the first floor, in European parlance):

From the second storey I can listen in three
directions;
第二层楼三面听，
Though there is no wind, sea waves still roar like
thunder.
无风海浪似雷霆。

There is also a passage in “Mojing hua ba” 墨井画跋 in which Wu Li reveals his inner conflict in the seminary:

“The Mojing Daoren [Wu Li himself] has reached the age of fifty, and has studied the *Dao* at Sanba for five months. He sleeps and dines on the second storey [of the seminary], and whiles away his time watching the tides of the sea... He does not know whether he was wrong in the past, or if he is right at present... Those who possess the wisdom of the *Dao* should be able to enlighten me”. (Wu, 1995:206)

The imagery of waves, tides and sea suggests regeneration and purification. The sea, in particular, is a symbol alluding to the longing for adventure and spiritual exploration (Olderr, 1986:95 & Vries, 1976:406). In this seminary near the South China Sea, Wu Li contemplated his spiritual journey while watching the tides of the sea, but was ambivalent and still doubtful whether his decision to stay in Macao had been the right one.

What did Wu Li learn in Macao and what did the college/seminary look like? Anders Ljungstedt has given us a clear picture:

“Jesuits had, at an early period, settled at Macao, for the sake of teaching religion. Devotees furnished funds for the purchase of a house contiguous to the ancient church; in this house infidels were instructed and young vassals of Portugal were educated. This had, before 1594, been converted into an extensive Seminary, where, often more than ninety children of the inhabitants were taught the rudiments of learning. A “College” was afterwards founded. It had two classes for Latin, two chairs for theology, one for philosophy, and one, for belles letters. The circuit of the Seminary contained a large hall for the library, one for astronomical purposes,

and an apothecary shop. Missionaries going and coming were lodged in the Seminary, which could accommodate 70 or 80 individuals”. (Ljungstedt, 1992:32)

Ljungstedt’s account complements Wu Li’s description in the twenty-fifth poem of the “Sanba ji.” He may well have been one of the oldest novices in the class, and must have had to exert extra effort to study under foreign mentors and with a group of youngsters, both morning and afternoon:

I have a rare opportunity to study “natural
philosophy”²⁷ with teachers from overseas;
性学难逢海外师，
The vassals from afar are all children.
远来从者尽童儿。
The daily lessons are divided into morning and
afternoon,
何当日课分卯酉，
Listening to the gentle ringing of the bell, we go
to class at those two times.
静听摇铃读二时。

He also described the difficulties of a mission education in Poem 26 of the “Sanba ji”:

In front of the door people speak different native
languages,
门前乡语各西东，
If they cannot understand one another, they can
communicate in writing.
未解还教笔可通。
I write Chinese characters like a fly’s head, while
they write like a bird’s claw,
我写蝇头君鸟爪，
Looking at them horizontally or vertically, it is
difficult to understand.
横看直视更难穷。

Wu Li would certainly have had to learn Latin, which was a totally alien language to him; he found the curvy lines difficult, being so different from the square Chinese characters he was accustomed to. In Poem 28 of the “Sanba ji,” he showed his utter frustration at his slow progress:

When one grows old, who can make up the loss
of youthful days?
老去谁能补壮时?

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Everyday I study hard for fear that my progress
is too slow.
工夫日用恐迟迟。
When I think of my old habits, I would rather
burn my ink-slab;
思将旧习先焚砚，
And put an end to painting and composing
poems.
且断涂鸦并废诗。

It is true that he scarcely painted while he was a novice, but he never stopped composing poems. In fact, his reputation as an orthodox painter obscured his literary achievement as a poet, even in his own lifetime. In a study on Wu Li's poetry, Jonathan Chaves points out that he created something totally new in Chinese literature: a Chinese Christian poetry. His creative originality lies in the unprecedented boldness of composing poetry based on orthodox Christian theology but in classical Chinese poetic forms (Chaves, 1993:xii, 47). In addition to the eighty poems on religious themes, called the 'Sheng xue shi' 圣学诗 (Poems of Holy Learning), in the "Sanba ji," Wu Li's other religious poems and verses, written at various times, were compiled into an anthology called the "Sanyu ji" 三余集 (collected in the *Mojing ji*).²⁸

Wu Li obviously could not forget Rome; he still yearned for this "dreamland" in his poem entitled "The Western Lantern" 西灯 (in the "Sanyu ji"):

The lantern from afar is different,
灯自远方异，
The fire after the Cold Food Festival is rekindled.
火从寒食分。
I try to imagine the scenery of Rome,
试观罗玛景，
And read Latin on horizontal lines.
横读辣丁文。
A moth hovers around the light, unable to come
closer,
蛾绕光难近，
Rats peep out from the shadows, but not in a
group.
鼠窥影不群。
I am excited to see the arrival of letters from the
West,²⁹
惊看西札到，
And to learn of things I never heard of before.
事事闻未闻。

Though he could not go to the Far West to seek out the "Western lantern," he eventually found it in Macao. Symbolizing the word of God, the "Western lantern" illuminated his inner self, lit up his life, and provided new concepts of humanity that were completely different from that of Chinese culture. Having found the "Western lantern," was he able to live up to his own expectations as one of the "enlightened," and as God's "shepherd"?

"FOR WHOM DOES MY CHURCH BELL TOLL NOW?"

After a four-year novitiate in Macao, Wu Li returned to China in 1684.³⁰ He was probably granted a dispensation (since he had been married twice and had two sons, thus violating one of the three vows of the priesthood, namely, chastity) and was ordained as a priest in Nanjing on 1 August 1688, at the age of 57. In one stanza of the poem "Song of my Sixtieth Birthday" [*Liu shi yin* 六十吟] (in "Sanyu ji"), it is clear that he had entered a new phase of life:

I have already forgotten the names of old familiar
things,
所遇故物亦忘名，
By chance if I meet prominent officials, I do not
bother to greet them.
偶逢冠盖无烦见。
I live in seclusion to fulfil my desire to study,
闭影潜修素愿欲，
Yet still cannot concentrate enough on the
Western Learning.
西学日究犹未足。

Wu Li wanted to sever the links with his past, and forsook his "old self." For the last thirty years until his death in 1718, he was fully engaged in mission work in Nanjing, Shanghai and Jiading. As a rural priest going from one place to another, he had to face insurmountable difficulties. In a verse 词 (*ci*) style, "The Shepherd" [*Mu yang ci* 牧羊词] (in the "Sanyu ji"), uses a Biblical metaphor to express his ambivalent feelings:

I cross the Pu River to the rural area to pasture
sheep,
渡浦去郊牧，

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What a big flock it is!
 纷纷羊若何?
 The corpulent sheep are few,
 肥者能几群?
 But the lean ones are numerous!
 瘠者何其多!
 The grass is poor and the pasture distant, I seem
 to have tended late,
 草衰地远似牧迟,
 Yet only I know well the sickness of my sheep;
 我羊病处惟我知;
 Singing and leading them forward tirelessly,
 前引唱歌无倦惰,
 Watching my flock and protecting them from
 wolves, I often do not sleep,
 守栈驱狼常不卧。
 I wish I might remain strong for many years to
 tend to them,
 但愿长年能健牧,
 I go southeast in the morning and northwest in
 the evening.
 朝往东南暮西北。

The “corpulent sheep” is obviously a reference to pious Christians, while the “lean sheep” are those who refuse to receive the word of God. This verse succinctly reveals his dedication and the evangelising zeal he felt on his arduous mission travels in the absence of his Western colleagues.

In 1695, Wu Li wrote a disheartened poem, complaining a shortage of funds for the repair of the dilapidated church where he worked in Jiading. The building was old and leaky, with stains on all four walls; half of one corner of the roof had crumbled. Inside the church, it was cold and dark and moss was growing. Even worse, the promised repair work was only empty talk. The last stanza of “Song of a Shabby Church” [*Po tang yin* 破堂吟] (in the *Mojing ji*, Vol. 5) reads:

For years Western missionaries have come and
 gone,
 常年西士曾来往。
 They feared the dampness after the pouring rain.
 畏湿阴阴雨多注。
 Now I can only cut the wild grass,
 我今但能理荒荆。
 But I cannot have the church repaired within
 days.
 不能使修不日成。

At times, Wu Li felt frustrated, lonely and even depressed at being a rural preacher. In 1698 he expressed his melancholy in the poem “The Sound of the Chiming Clock”³¹ [*Zi ming zhong sheng* 自鸣钟声] (in the “Sanyu ji”):

The hair on my temples is scarce and gradually
 grows like snow,
 两鬓荒荒雪渐盈,
 For ten years I have not found a way out of this
 city of distress.
 十年无计出愁城。
 Yet the clock does not know the depths of my
 distress,
 钟声不管愁难度,
 It chimes day and night for itself.
 日夕回环只自鸣。

The clock is the symbol of the passing of time (Hall, 1995:72). Here, Wu Li adopts the image of the pendulum clock as a metaphor, deploring that time had flown and he was getting old. He even admonishes himself for failing, after ten years as a priest, to feel fulfilled by his evangelising work.

In quite a different tone, the poem “Ten Years in Shanghai” [*Shi nian shang hai* 十年上海] (in the “Sanyu ji”), expresses Wu’s fulfilment and contentment in the project of evangelisation. The second stanza reads:

I am delighted by the mission of proselytising,
 道化欣相得,
 I often greet peasants I have known.
 土依熟便招。
 In ten years I have never tired,
 十年劳未倦,
 I forget that my hair and beard have grown hoary.
 忘却须霜凋。

While these two poems indicate Wu Li’s passionate zeal for preaching Christianity, they also reveal his grief at the aging process. In a poem entitled “Deplorable” [*Ke tan* 可叹] (in the “Sanyu ji”), he exclaims how short life is and how time passes like a flying arrow. He laments that villagers (mostly fishermen and farmers) only worry about worldly matters, not the transcendent truth. The last stanza reads:

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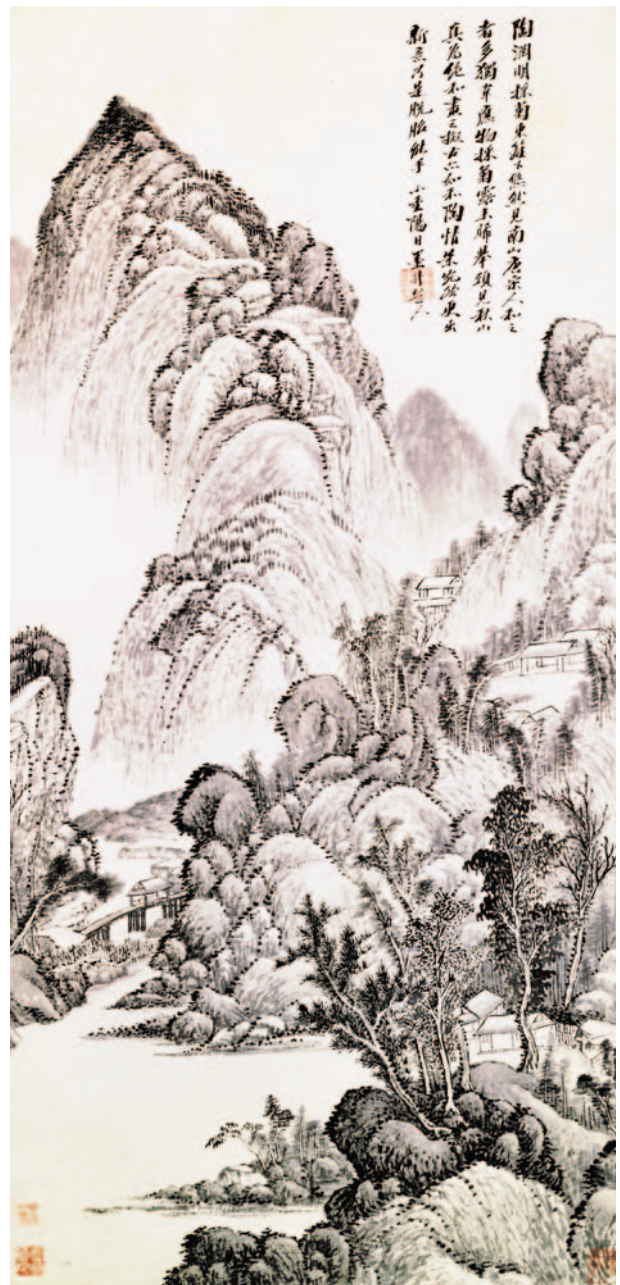
For whom does my church bell toll now?
 予今村铎为谁鸣?
 I have laboured alone tirelessly for ten years,
 十年踽踽无倦行。
 In the hope that among the thousands upon
 thousands of villages,
 安得千村与万落，
 Everyone will turn to Catholicism for spiritual
 enlightenment.
 人人向道为死生。

Wu Li uses the bell as a metaphor in this stanza. The sound of the bell symbolizes a call to worship. Hence it is intended to call hearts to the Awakening (Vries, 1976:44). The question "For whom does my church bell toll now?" poignantly refers to the scarcity of Christian followers. Wu Li was apparently upset by the unenthusiastic response to his "civilizing mission," and was tormented by loneliness as an itinerant priest in the countryside. Though the church bell could not awaken the "lost sheep," he was still full of hope, and demonstrated great stoicism. But in what socio-political context did he pour out these deplorable sentiments?

A SETBACK TO CHRISTIAN PROSELYTISING

Wu Li's religious poems reflected a tumultuous epoch of Christian proselytising in China. His helplessness, frustration, depression, and above all his sense of fruitlessness, were a testimony to an era of religious clashes between East and West. His last thirty years (1688-1718) as a Catholic priest were in an era of repression of the Christian faith in China, which coincided with the disgraceful Rites Controversy.

Long before Kangxi issued the "Edict of Toleration" in 1692, permitting his subjects "to go to church freely to worship God" (Panikkar, 1959:286-7), the prolonged Controversy on the Chinese Rites had already begun.³² The Rites Controversy was at first an internal and inter-missionary dispute, among different monastic orders, over concepts of philosophy, theology, and eschatology. However, it later turned into an open political and religious power struggle between the Holy See in Rome and the Middle Kingdom. The dispute reached a boiling point in 1700, when the Jesuits sought to skirt the Papal authority. In 1715, Pope Clement XI decreed a Papal Bull, *Ex*



Landscape in a style after the ancients and breaking away from them / scroll / ink on paper / 65.5x32.2 cm.

Illa Die, which prohibited Chinese converts from honouring Confucius, and condemned ancestor worship as an idolatrous and superstitious practice.³³ For the Qing government, the Holy See's prohibition and condemnation of these practices directly undermined autochthonous Chinese spiritual discourse and the concept of filial duty, thus threatening the socio-political structure. Wu Li died three years later,

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in 1718, and must have lived in agony as a lonely Jesuit priest during these crucial years, involuntarily caught in the vortex of this collision between this-worldly and other-worldly interests.

Jesuit missionaries were torn between the Church and China. On the one hand, the Holy See accused them of violating the central missionary tenet of Catholicism that forbade any toleration of heathen faiths. On the other hand, “heathen” China blamed them for upsetting traditional beliefs and stirring up the common people. Even though Christianity had developed monotheistic doctrines that proclaimed universal and eternal truth, the concept of one transcendent and immutable truth was alien to Chinese thought (Gernet, 1985: Chapter 2). Chinese religious sentiments clearly articulated a synthesis of differing doctrinal elements and embraced pantheistic beliefs. The differences in the religious traditions of East and West created an unbridgeable gap between the two approaches.

Christian proselytising in Japan shared the same fate. The Japanese government believed that Western missionaries were attempting to override local political authority, instigate internal dissension, and disrupt Japan's traditional social fabric. The Qing government even regarded Christianity as a *xiejiao* 邪教 (a deviant sect) riddled with subversive intentions. Christianity was thus classified in the same category as the heterodox *Bailianjiao* 白蓮教 (White Lotus Cult), an underground Buddhist sect.³⁴ Just as the Japanese government took a first step towards expelling missionaries from Nagasaki in 1635 and had codified this expulsion policy into law in the Sakoku edict of 1638,³⁵ likewise the Qing authorities condemned Catholicism as a threat to social stability. Evangelisation was completely suppressed soon after Wu Li's death.³⁶

The Rites Controversy constituted part of the tragic history of Roman Catholicism, and led not only to a setback in the propagation of Christianity, but also to the disintegration of the Society of Jesus. Lasting well over a century, the story of this Controversy is indeed a long and intriguing one.³⁷ But in short, it was a religious struggle that took place within the framework of a single common ideal – the conversion of China to Christianity. Out of an overwhelming desire to introduce the “true” and “transcendent” religion into China, Western missionaries ironically played havoc with Chinese cultural matrices, and came to a dead end of theological sectarianism.

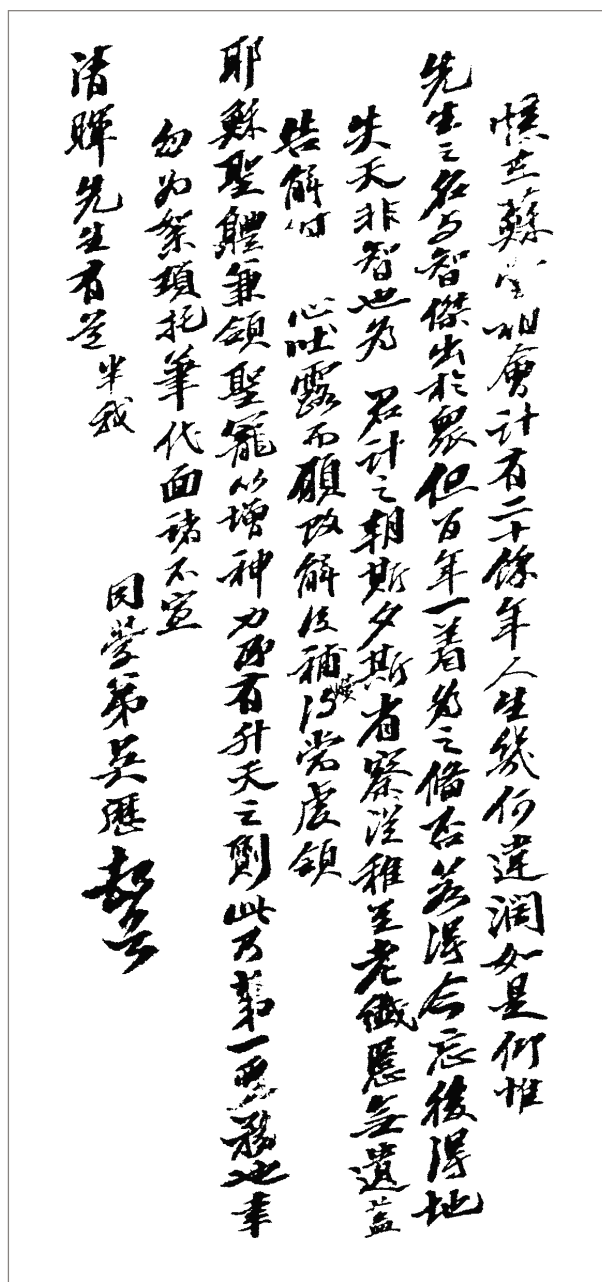


Fig. 3 – Wu Li's letter to Wang Hui (now in the National Museum, Kyoto), around 1712.

Just as the Ruins of St Paul's (the Façade) is a testimony to the heyday of Macao, Wu Li is a witness to the glory and the fall of the Jesuits in Macao and China. While the fire-baptised ruins of the Façade now evoke an eerie feeling of emptiness and loneliness, Wu Li's literary works leave a trail of intense desolation and melancholy. The Façade and Wu Li constitute a most haunting allegory of the

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Jesuits' mission in the East: the extent and intensity of their evangelical efforts, and their ultimate frustration in the face of the Rites Controversy and the proscription of Catholicism by the Chinese authorities.

CONCLUSION

Wu Li was a man of profound aspirations, determination, courage and perseverance. At the age of fifty-one, he left behind his career as an eminent painter-scholar to start a new life as a Jesuit novice in Macao. His dedication to Christianity, it might be argued, was a kind of escapism from a grim reality: the haunting memory of an unpleasant childhood under despotic Manchu rulers; the moral pressures of a Neo-Confucian scholar; the intense feeling of emptiness after the death of his mentors, friends and beloved. However, another decisive factor could well have been his spiritual disappointment in Buddhism and Daoism; Catholicism offered a new humanity in which he could find spiritual emancipation and enlightenment.

Though he worked alone as a rural priest and encountered enormous impediments to his evangelising, he never gave up his faith. Quite the contrary: in a letter to Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), he expressed his full confidence in God. Wang Hui and Wu Li were good friends throughout their lives. They were born in the same year, came from the same native town, and trained as painters under the same masters – Wang Shiming and Wang Jian. While Wang Hui received recognition, honour and glory as a painter in the Qing court, Wu Li rejected worldly fame but tirelessly sought a transcendent life. Wang Hui is generally considered the most renowned of the "Six Masters of Early Qing."


The letter (ink on paper) was written around 1712 (now in the National Museum, Kyoto) (Fig. 3); in it, Wu Li calls Wang Hui "*banwo*" 半我 (my other half) and urges him to repent and come back to God. The tone of the letter is just like that of a kindly priest to a lapsed Christian. Here is an excerpt:

"Let me plan it for you: examine yourself from morning to evening, and from young to old and don't hide anything [from God]. When receiving the Sacrament of Penance, you should make a sincere confession and be willing to repent of your sins. After that repentance is well completed, you will receive the Holy Communion of Jesus as well as other Holy favours in order to increase

the power of God. Thereafter, you will have the capacity to ascend to Heaven". (Lin, 2001:157)

Wang Hui may have been baptized, like Wu Li, when he was a boy in Changshu. Whether he took Wu's counsel and received the Sacrament of Penance before his death in 1717 is not known. But we know that Wu Li sincerely wished his "other half" to share with him the joy he envisioned in the next world. Despite their different aspirations, achievements and religious beliefs, they treasured their friendship and respected each other.

Contrary to the Catholic Church's belligerent righteousness in negating any form of thought that was outside its belief structure, Wu Li's tolerant attitudes toward Wang Hui well illustrate the dynamics of religious toleration. The Holy See's negation of cultural and religious relativity reveals its overweening pride and inability to accept another system of knowledge or to compromise with another kind of humanity. The history of missions in China would be written quite differently had not the cultural repercussions of the Rites Controversy been so deep. In a rare breach of papal infallibility, on 24th October 2001, the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Matteo Ricci in Beijing, Pope John Paul II sent an apology to the Chinese people, expressing his "deep sadness for these errors and limits of the past" (*International Herald Tribune*, 26th October 2001). The unfathomable impact of the Rites Controversy may well provide a vicarious lesson for today's evangelisers.

Being a literate elite during a turbulent period of political transition, Wu Li painted for us, through his literary works, a vivid picture of his religious experience in seventeenth-century China. Though he was caught in the vortex of the doctrinal clashes of the Rites Controversy, his unyielding quest for spiritual enlightenment set a fine example of human solidarity. Having a chance to study under a group of remarkable intellectuals in his youth, and later under learned Jesuit missionaries, he possessed the acute desire to search for a meaningful life and a true inner self. By the light of the "Western lantern," he saw the word of God and found the Land of Peach Blossoms in his enlightened mind. 

Editor's note: This paper is based on a conference delivered by the author at the International Symposium organised last November by Macau Ricci Institute, entitled "Culture, Art, Religion: Wu Li and his Inner Journey".

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NOTES

- 1 The other five Masters were: Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642-1715) and Yun Shouping 恽寿平 (1633-1690). Wang Shimin was Wang Yuanqi's grandfather.
- 2 By contrast, the styles and techniques of other great masters who were inclined to depict the austere and rugged scenery of northern China were grouped as the Northern School.
- 3 For instance, as a measure of cultural control, a "Hairstyle Decree" was issued, ordering Chinese men to adopt the Manchu hairstyle (a shaved forehead and long braided queue), or be executed as rebels.
- 4 The term "syncretism" denotes the reconciliation or fusion of conflicting religious beliefs or principles.
- 5 Luo Wenzao, a Dominican, was ordained in Macao as the first Chinese Bishop on 8 April 1685.
- 6 This was the first time in the history of the Jesuit mission in China that three Chinese priests were ordained. The other two were Liu Yunde 刘蕴德 (age 59, who was also called Blaise Verbiest) and Wan Qiyuan 万其渊 (age 53, known also as Paul Banhes). For the Chinese text of the letter (translated from Latin), see Fang 1971b: 133.
- 7 Neo-Confucianism was a synthesis of fundamental Buddhist ideas and those of the classical Chinese tradition, though it had originally represented a reaction against Buddhism and Daoism. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) was the architect of Neo-Confucianism in the Song dynasty (960-1279).
- 8 For biographies of Wu's teachers, see "Sanba ji" in Li 1909, Vol. 1. For the English text, see Tam 1986:47-58.
- 9 *Daoren* 道人 literally denotes those who have practised and attained the Dao (Way). The term *daoren* can refer to both Daoist and Buddhist followers. During the Jin and Song period, Buddhist monks were generally called *Daoren*. See *Ci hai* 辞海, p. 1326.
- 10 The poems in "Taoxi ji" are collected in Li 1909, Vol 2: "Mojing shi chao" 墨井诗钞.
- 11 It has been argued that Confucianism was not a full-fledged religion in the theistic sense, since it sets up no god as the premise of its teachings, and its basic principles were developed mainly from pragmatic considerations. Rather, Confucianism is generally regarded as a socio-political doctrine with religious qualities. See Yang 1970: 26-27.
- 12 On Lin Zhao'en's contribution to religious syncretism, see Berling 1980, Chapter VIII: "The Legacy of Lin Chao-en."
- 13 The term "eclecticism" denotes the selection of doctrines or elements from various and diverse sources for the purpose of combining them into a satisfying or acceptable style.
- 14 In the West, where religions frequently clashed over doctrinal, hermeneutical, and ritual issues, an attempt to reconcile doctrines across sectarian lines was tantamount to religious treason. See Berling 1980: 4.
- 15 Ricci's policy of accommodation can be thought of as a set of "permissions" and "omissions": permitting new converts to continue practising the Confucian rites and traditional Chinese customs, and "omitting" the propagation of some central Christian dogmas that would be alien to Chinese beliefs. See Minamiki 1985, Chapter 2.
- 16 In 1652, Father Johann Adam Schall von Bell built the first Catholic church in Beijing, which was called Nantang (South Church). Later another church was built and called Beitang (North Church).
- 17 In Lin Xiaoping's study on Wu Li, he transcribes "轉函" as Daohan, but the Chinese word "轉" should be pronounced "*chou*" rather than "*dao*." See Lin 2001, Chapter V.
- 18 Contrary to the approach of the Dominican and Franciscan friars who entered China as mendicants identifying themselves with the lower social classes, the Jesuits tended to attract the intelligentsia and officials.
- 19 On the chronology of Wu Li's stay in Macao, see Wang 1971: 147-149.
- 20 The façade of the Church of the Mother of God is perhaps the most frequently mentioned landmark in Macao nowadays. It is a unique piece of art, resplendent with a diversity of cultural overtones and ethnic elements. See Cheng 1999: 83-100.
- 21 For the Chinese text, see Fang 1988: 250-252.
- 22 The "Sanba ji" was actually comprised of a total of 110 poems. Thirty poems were grouped as the 'Ao zhong za yong' 澳中杂咏 and first published in 1719; the remaining eighty poems, mostly about the church and religion, were called the "Sheng xue shi" 圣学诗 (Poems of Holy Learning). These eighty poems were not published until near the end of the Qing dynasty (1909), by Li Di. See Fang 1971c: 104-5.
- 23 The Barrier Gate was first built in 1573 and served as the "border" between Macao and China.
- 24 Macao's cartographic shape was often likened to a lotus flower. The lotus has now been adopted as the flower of Macao, and is featured on the flag of the Special Administrative Region.
- 25 St. Paul was regarded as the first great Christian missionary, and was a patron saint of Macao and Goa.
- 26 *Nirvana*, or salvation, is the ultimate state of attaining Buddhahood.
- 27 The Chinese term *xingxue* 性学, used by the Jesuits, was translated as "natural philosophy" rather than "theology." See Chaves 1993: 152.
- 28 The calligraphic manuscripts of the "Sanba ji" and the "Sanyu ji" by Wu Li were collected by the Hong Kong Museum. Both were published in Tam 1986: 352-361. On the annotation of the poems in the "Sanyu ji," see Fang 1971d: pp. 85-102.
- 29 It has been suggested that "the letters from the West" may well have been written in Chinese (not Latin) by Father Couplet to Wu Li, since Couplet was well trained in the Chinese language. See Fang 1971b: 139.
- 30 Lin Xiaoping believes that Wu Li stayed in Macao from 1681 to 1686. However, others argue that he was there at most four years, from 1681 to 1684. Also, during his sojourn, he returned briefly to China at least twice. See Fang 1971a: 120-1.
- 31 Lin Xiaoping translated the title of this poem as "The Sound of [the Church] Bell." However, "The Sound of the Chiming Clock" is more appropriate, since a bell cannot chime "for itself." See Lin 2001: 131.
- 32 The Rites Controversy began shortly after Ricci's death in 1610 and ended when Pope Benedict XIV issued the decisive Bull *Ex Quo Singulari* in 1742.
- 33 It was not until 8 December 1939—224 years later—that Pope Pius XII lifted the prohibition on the Chinese Rites.
- 34 Embracing apocalyptic beliefs, *Bailianjiao* was blamed for provoking peasant revolts as early as the Ming dynasty, in 1622.
- 35 The suppression of Christianity in Japan prompted many Japanese Christians flee to Macao during the first quarter of the seventeenth century; Japan terminated its trade with Macao in 1639.
- 36 In 1724, Emperor Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1723-1736) officially proscribed the preaching of the Christian religion, and expelled all foreign missionaries. The final blow came in 1762 when the Portuguese Prime Minister, the Marquis de Pombal, ordered the Jesuit Missionaries out of Macao as part of the worldwide vendetta against this Order, charging them with disobedience and revolt against the Papal authority. In 1784, Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736-1796) issued an Imperial Edict forbidding all missionaries to enter China from Macao, under pain of execution.
- 37 See Minamiki 1985.

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Carlos Marreiros
Os Macaenses
 Acrílico sobre madeira
 e escultura em pasta
 de papel aramada.
 1999, 180x180 cm.

Pintura Contemporânea de Macau

ANTÓNIO CONCEIÇÃO JÚNIOR*

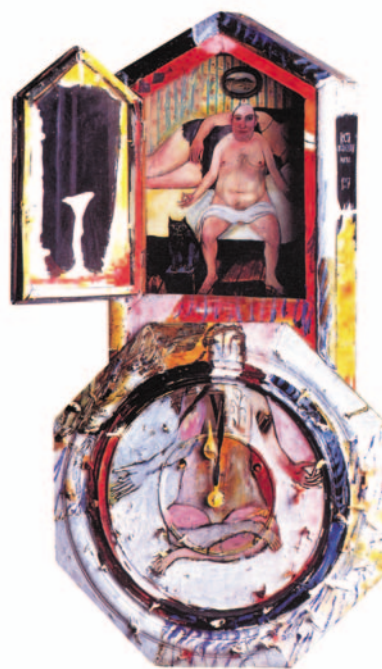
Situada nas margens do Império do Meio, Macau sempre se vocacionou para a permuta, lugar transmutado em palco de todas as ficções, encruzilhada de todos os caminhos, utopia de todas as realidades, igualmente cenário também de todos os sorrisos cépticos de todos quantos desistiram de sonhar.

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– secretamente instituído –, individual e colectivo, entre os seus mais representativos autores através dos tempos, de geração em geração.

Toda a exposição, cuja característica é a linguagem contemporânea qualitativa, não pode senão constituir uma simples amostragem do espólio artístico e criativo de cada um dos autores presentes e de outros que estarão patentes com a rotatividade da mostra.

Desde os princípios do século XVII que Macau se tornara no ponto de preparação dos missionários para a China. Por volta de 1610 chega a Macau o jesuíta Francesco Sambiasi, missionário e pintor que se iria expressar na China, seguindo-se-lhe um préstito significativo de missionários artistas de várias origens em que pontificaria o também italiano Giuseppe Castiglione, cuja longevidade artística percorre os reinados de Kangxi, Yongzheng e Qianlong.

Macau torna-se assim, bem cedo, nesse Entreposto de saberes e engenhos que do Ocidente se irão encontrar com os da grande China, face à sua particular posição geográfica no quadro geográfico chinês e mundial.

Daí que, sendo porta de entrada – lugar de contacto e permanência temporária ou definitiva –, a cidadezinha se tenha constituído numa arqueologia de memórias que se iriam acumular pelos tempos, mais-

Konstantin Bessmertny
Exact time house. Óleo sobre relógio. 1997, 65x26x10 cm.



Mio Pang Fei, *Palma*. Mixed media. 2001, 140x200 cm.

-valia cultural acessível a todos quantos percebam a importância da abertura ao Outro, da troca encetada, ganho que desconhece perdas, caminho para um mundo equilibradamente global.

Retomando, contudo, o fio à meada, surgem e saltam à memória os nomes de Auguste Borget, George Chinnery, Thomas Boswall Watson, todos estrangeiros, vivendo num século XIX cujo testemunho nos chega pelas imagens das suas obras e pelo óbvio interesse na demanda de *La Chine et les Chinnois* do pintor francês, e da presença da *East India Company* então sediada em Macau, a que os dois restantes artistas e amigos, residentes em Macau, se encontram associados.

Assim é que, de uma primeira leva missionária para a China imperial, em que Macau é cidade e ponto de passagem, de adaptação e aprendizagem, se irá constituir como tema, cenário dos olhares ávidos de Borget e do deambular quotidiano de Chinnery e das influências que o conhecido artista teria, não só sobre o seu médico Thomas Watson, mas também sobre Lam Qua e Marciano Baptista, contribuindo decididamente, por simpatia, à emergência do estilo comercial virado para o consumo ocidental de um estilo mais em matéria de tópicos que de técnica, que viria a ser conhecida como *China Trade*.

A sombra e legado de Chinnery iriam atravessar o século seguinte para se deter, sem esquecer outros artistas mais discretos, em transmissão de testemunho, no nome longo de uma presença breve: George Vitalievitch Smirnoff que residiria temporariamente em Macau, como refugiado de guerra, entre 1944-45.

Com Smirnoff termina um modo mais realista de retratar Macau, na senda do que os artistas do século XIX tinham vindo a realizar.

Indelevelmente marcado, no início da sua aprendizagem, por G. Smirnoff, emerge a figura marcante de Luís Demée que se iria afirmar incontornavelmente como um dos grandes artistas portugueses, ainda que de forma discreta pelo seu próprio carácter recolhido.

Entretanto, na pobreza-ausência de espaços adequados de exposição, situação que se vai arrastando até aos anos 80, artistas como Kam Cheong Leng, Tam Chi Sang e Kuok Si teimam persistentemente em resistir às dificuldades, pintando juntamente com Herculano Estorninho, em torno do Grupo Arco-Íris, constituído fundamentalmente por meritórios autodidactas.

A IMPORTÂNCIA DOS ANOS 80

Indeclinavelmente, os anos 80 marcam o fim definitivo de um tempo e o nascimento de outro, feito de sinergias e conjunções diversas.

Gente nova, ideias novas, voluntarismo, sede de informação, abertura e solidariedade marcam aquela que hoje é a geração de base da pintura contemporânea de Macau, num momento em que chegam a Macau diversos artistas de formação tradicional cuja incapacidade de se integrarem no movimento de renovação os não exclui de uma convivência com a linha menos tradicionalista.

O panorama artístico local vai-se alargando e definindo com a emergência de Ung Vai Meng e a confluência de outros artistas de desígnios semelhantes, como braços de delta de proveniências várias, convergindo para o rio do sonho. Kwok Woon e Joana Ling aqui se estabelecem em 1980, Mio Pang Fei e sua mulher Ung Chi Iam chegam por volta de 1983, coincidindo com o regresso a Macau de Carlos Marreiros e a subsequente criação do Círculo dos Amigos da Cultura.

Se, por um lado, as ideias e conceitos tradicionais vão sendo *combatidos* pela necessidade de uma contemporaneidade que as galerias oficiais existentes – geridas pelo Leal Senado – desde sempre reconheceram na sua programação, por outro, o tempo encarrega-se de modificar o modo de olhar as coisas, ao qual também não terão sido estranhos o incontornável apoio do Instituto Cultural de Macau e as inúmeras exposições trazidas do exterior, além dos intercâmbios e viagens realizadas.

São os aludidos anos 80 determinantes para o presente das artes plásticas em Macau, cuja memória se traduz já na consagração do registo de uma inevitável reflexão sobre a dimensão cultural da cidade, pelo recurso à manipulação de signos, ícones e linguagens pluriculturais, expressos de modo díspar por cada autor, oscilando sempre na bivalência saudavelmente insólita do pioneirismo, que legitimará depois todas as linguagens a haver.

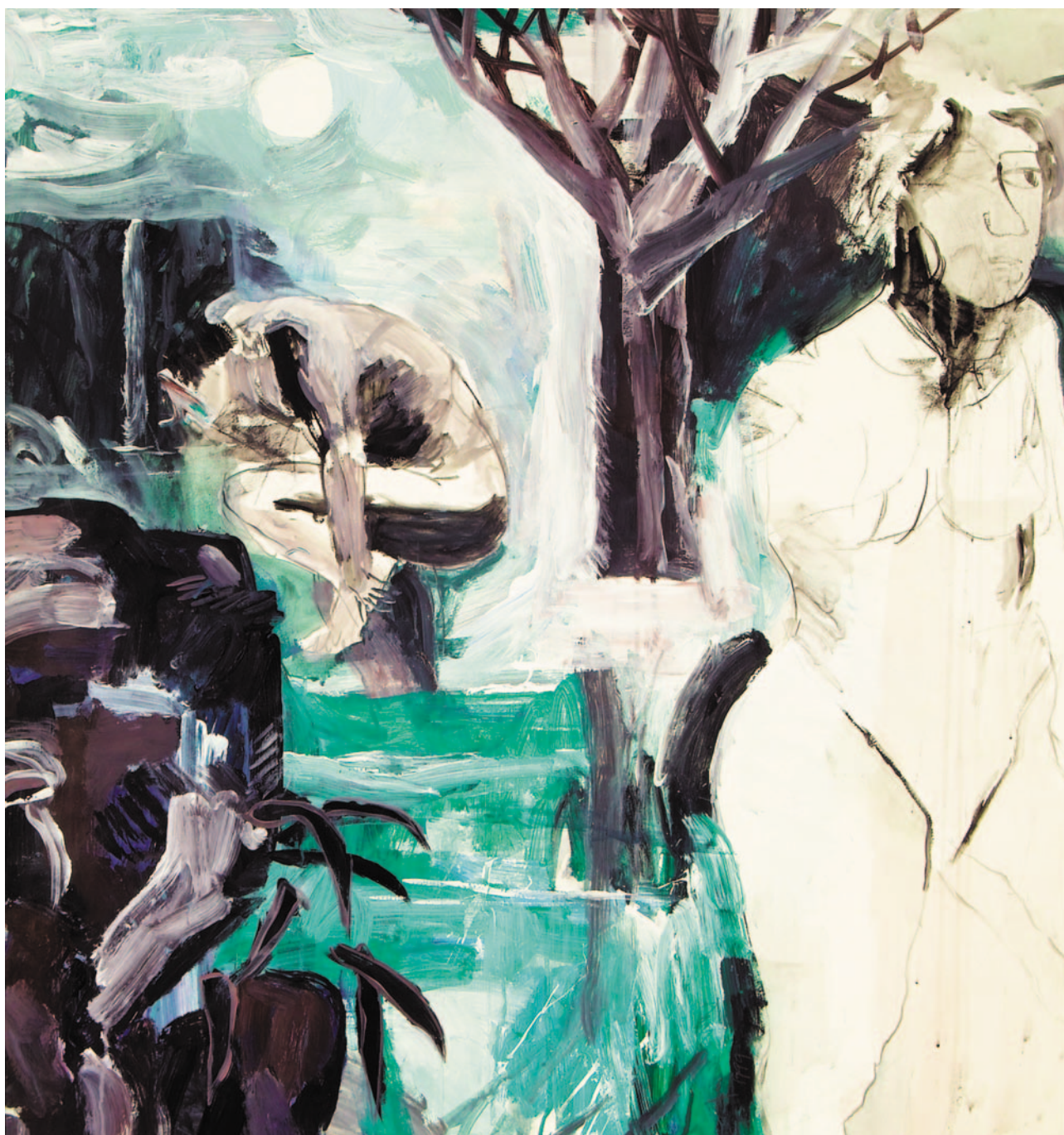
Ao longo dos anos, nomes como Nuno Santiago, Joaquim Franco, Konstantin Bessmertny, Fernanda Dias, Frederico George, Lok Tai Tong, Lio Man Cheong, Lei Tak Seng, correspondentes a diferentes tempos, emergem e afirmam-se dentro dessa enigmática amplitude definidora de *artista de Macau*.

ARTE

É chegada, assim, a hora de distinguir alguns dos artistas que pessoalmente considero mais representativos da contemporaneidade plástica de Macau.

Ung Vai Meng emerge em princípios dos anos 80 com desenhos sobre Macau que rompem com a tradição, mas suficientemente arrojados e seguros para o colocarem já na prateleira dos cronistas de Macau na tradição dos séculos XIX e XX. Esses desenhos, *desobedientes* em relação à estética então ainda vigente, iriam ser determinantes na primeira forma de expressão

plástica dos seus trabalhos a óleo, que iriam sofrer grande evolução ao longo dos anos, acumulados pelas experiências de viagens associadas a um espírito insatisfeito, sempre em busca de mais, que o tornam também num dos mais prestigiosos *designers* gráficos. As suas experiências plásticas conduzem a que Júlio Pomar assista e o felicite na inauguração de um painel que realizou para o edifício da Biblioteca de Macau. Mergulhar nos seus livros de desenhos é navegar na aventura do puro prazer do desenho inteligente, espontâneo e liberto.



ART



Carlos Marreiros vem trazer com o seu regresso a Macau, em 1983, uma nova dinâmica no campo das artes plásticas, fundando o Círculo de Amigos da Cultura. Autor versátil, *constrói* desenhos a tinta cuja linearidade plástica é de grande detalhe e se cumpre numa narrativa que o colocam também no âmbito dos cronistas de Macau, dentro de uma leitura onírica e gradualmente mais simbólica, onde Camilo Pessanha se vai tornando no centro das suas referências. Na pintura mostra, sobretudo, enorme versatilidade, evoluindo do abstracto para o neo-figurativo sempre marcado pela bivalência cultural inerente a Macau. A sua inventividade eclode surpreendentemente em cada exposição.

Ung Vai Meng, *Nova vida*
Acrílico. 1999, 66,5x92 cm.

Carlos Marreiros, *Pessanha e máscara*
Acrílico sobre tela. 1986, 124x124 cm.

Mio Pang Fei, *Flores*
Técnica mista. 1996, 180x141 cm.

Mio Pang Fei, proveniente de Xangai, chega discretamente a Macau onde se insere com sua mulher, Ung Chi Iam. Professor da Escola de Artes Aplicadas de Xangai, encontra em Macau campo aberto para se exprimir plasticamente.

A sua pintura, que a quer sempre identificada com a expressão chinesa, se por vezes raras recorda Zhou Wo Ki, é quase sempre caracterizada por uma enorme densidade pictórica e matéria na qual não se esquece de enfatizar essa sua linguagem neo-orientalista, se classificativos requer a beleza da escrita chinesa, conferindo ao seu todo uma dimensão arquetípica de alguém que, sendo profundamente chinês, o afirma, na diversidade de Macau, por via do óleo de origem ocidental, em alternativa ao *shui-mo* tradicional. Mio constitui hoje notável referência na história da contemporaneidade chinesa.



ARTE



Kwok Woon radica-se em Macau com sua mulher Joana Ling em 1980, continuando o exercício da pintura como seu único mester, desmultiplicando-se em experiências em variados suportes, que apenas terminariam com o seu último suspiro, exalado ainda neste ano de 2004. Homem de grande inquietação artística, militância, trato afabilíssimo, a obra de Kwok Woon constitui hoje rico património e testemunho da condição especial de Macau. A homenagem que merece será realizada em breve.

Nuno Santiago viveu em Macau alguns anos da década de 80, tendo realizado obra de grande beleza plástica, inventando técnica própria que lhe apurou a linguagem. O recurso à hibridez dos materiais só poderia ter acontecido em Macau.

Fernanda Dias residente há cerca de duas décadas em Macau, o seu percurso tem vindo a sofrer sucessivas transformações no seu diálogo íntimo entre a pintura, a gravura, a prosa e a poesia. Do seu percurso são de assinalar fases em que recorre inteiramente a um universo chinês decorado com elementos alentejanos para depois se situar nos antípodas geográficos.

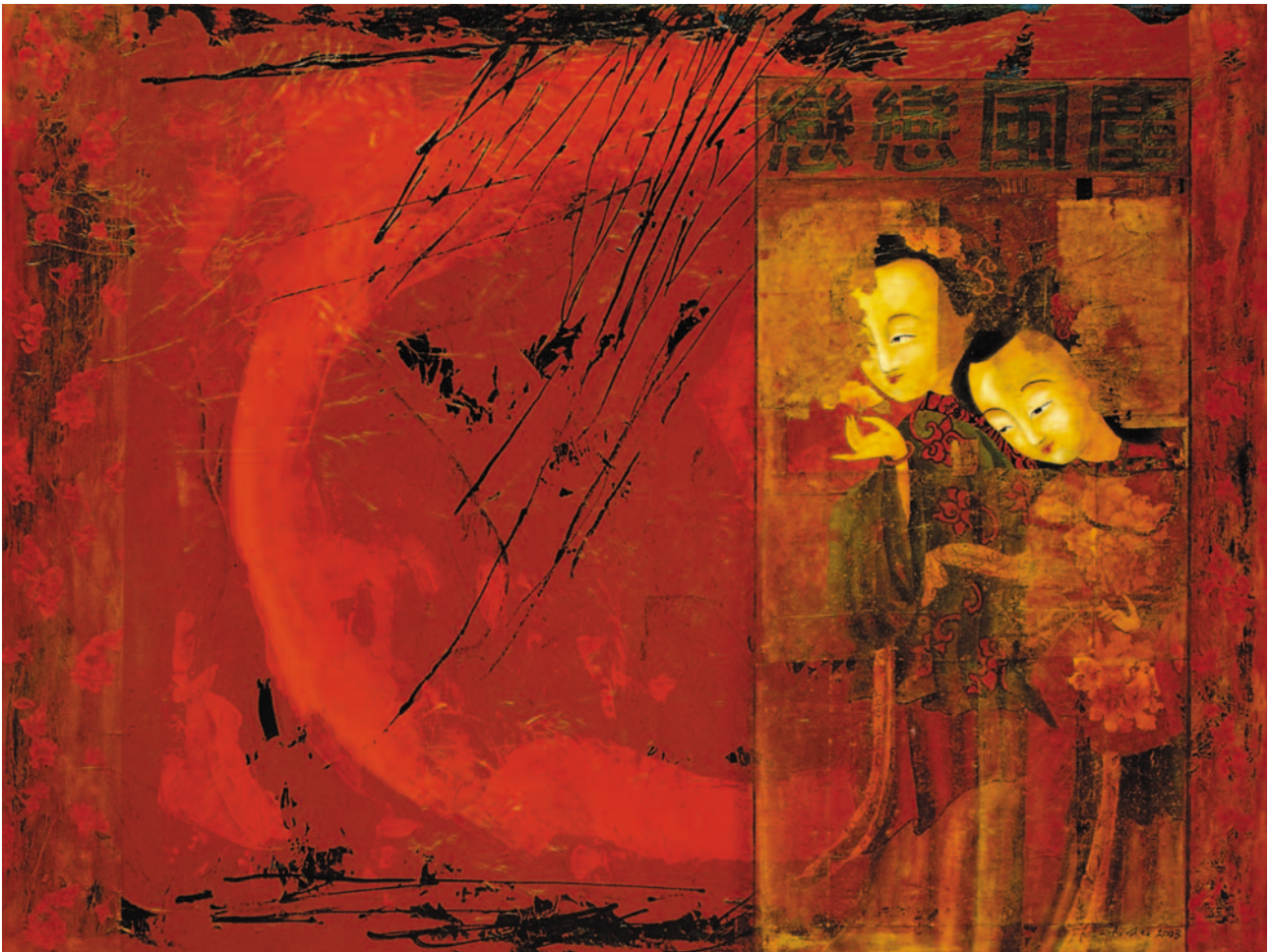
Joaquim Franco é antigo residente de Macau, tendo caminho feito na área da gravura onde se especializou. Merece destaque o seu sacerdócio em prol da difusão da gravura como meio de expressão.

Kwok Woon, *Installation*
100x100x35 cm.

Nuno Santiago, *Sem título*
Acrílico sobre papel chinês.

Fernanda Dias, *Old poster on scarlet wall*
Técnica mista, 146x110 cm.

ART





Konstantin Bessmertny, *Dim sum. Quattro stagioni. Summer*, 1998, 59x48 cm.

ART



Lok Tai Tong, natural de Xangai, licenciado em Belas-Artes pela Universidade do Leste da China, chega a Macau em 1983. A sua exposição ao ambiente dos artistas mais progressistas acentua a sua tendência para a expressão contemporânea. É assim que, em 1987 e 1996, obtém o 1.º Prémio de Pintura de Expressão Chinesa na Colectiva de Macau realizada na Galeria do Leal Senado. Mantendo-se fiel à técnica do *shui-mo* Lok Tai Tong desenvolve uma expressão muito peculiar, sem nunca recorrer à cor, fiel também à memória de uma caligrafia que se afirma na ausência da sua perceptibilidade.

Lok Tai Tong, *Work V*.
Tinta-da-china sobre papel de arroz, 2001.

Konstantin Bessmertny nasceu em Blagovestchensk. Estudou na Faculdade de Belas-Artes do Instituto Pedagógico de Khabarovsk e posteriormente no Instituto de Belas-Artes de Vladivostok. Chega a Macau em 1993 e rapidamente se integra. A sua obra é de uma invulgar riqueza implosiva. Tomando decisivamente por temática a realidade de Macau, recorda por vezes obras como *Provérbios Holandeses* ou o *Casamento Camponês* de Pieter Bruegel. Porém, em muito transcende o velho mestre na fina ironia. A sua obra é um olhar cirúrgico sobre o lado oculto de Macau, uma sátira e uma análise realizadas com enorme inteligência. Konstantin Bessmertny será, hoje, um dos mais conhecidos pintores a nível internacional a residir em Macau.

ARTE



Jorge Smith, *Têrmos Culturais*. Mixed Media. 2001, 180x180 cm.

Denis Murrell, *Um encontro no mar*. Mixed media sobre tela. 2001, 160x140 cm.



Denis Murrell, australiano de nascimento, residente em Macau desde há quase duas décadas. Por vezes a sua obra recorda-me uma geografia e as memórias de uma visita ao jardim de água de Monet,

em Giverny, enquanto, por outro lado, me recorda a pintura chinesa de flores. O que ressalta é a simbiose, a mútua contaminação desses elementos ou memórias havidas nesta vivência de Macau.



Lio Man Cheong, *Pátio do Cotovelo*. Aguarela. 1998, 31x25 cm.

ART

Lio Man Cheong começou a expressar-se como pintor de cartazes de cinema e aguarelista. Há muito que observava o seu estilo peculiar na interpretação plástica dos filmes em cartaz, admirando a lucidez do seu trabalho. Em 2001, sou confrontado com uma obra de grande qualidade e beleza plástica que ganha o 1.º Prémio na modalidade de Pintura Ocidental da XVIII Colectiva de Pintores de Macau. Apercebo-me que assisto à intuitiva maturidade feita do recurso a todos os seus passados e novamente, em 2004, sou confrontado com nova obra feita de uma conjugação de memórias de Macau. Em ambas se nota a

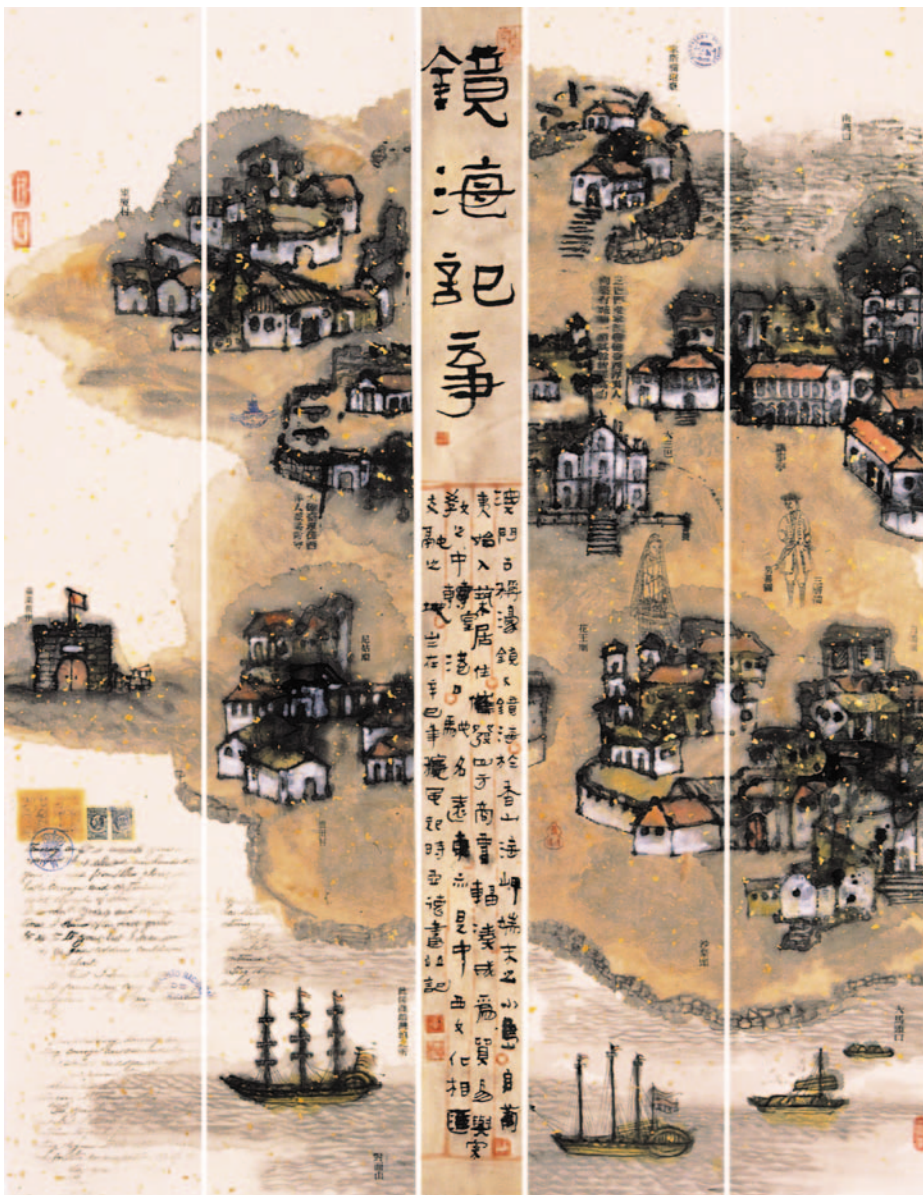
apropriação denotativa do trânsito de memórias comuns por um autor de etnia chinesa sobre a realidade de Macau, organizadas segundo uma hierarquia de significantes.

Lei Tak Seng, artista da nova geração, ganha o 1.º Prémio na modalidade de Pintura Chinesa em 2001 e, depois, novamente em 2003 nas Exposições Colectivas de Artistas de Macau.

Mantendo a tradição do *shui-mu* como suporte, também Lei Tak Seng convoca e manipula referências muito concretas ligadas a Macau de um modo singular que advém da sua autenticidade como autor.

Mostrada, assim, breve panóplia com naturais omissões, produto da falta de dados existentes à data deste escrito, constata-se à saciedade que, por si, Konstantin Bessmertny constitui a metáfora da vida artística de Macau, seu poiso e fonte temática para, de aqui, partir para o mundo. E se Konstantin corporiza a leitura do lado oculto, ele é, juntamente com todos os outros pintores que têm com a cidade que os acolhe, ou foi berço, a face exposta da utopia que clama por maior apoio, porque qualidade é coisa que não falta. Assim a educação artística se manifeste não apenas no Museu e o seu ensino saiba reconhecer que, em arte, apenas há uma nacionalidade. Qualidade. **RC**

Lei Tak Seng, *Anotação sobre Macau*. Aguarela sobre papel. 2001, 130x100 cm.



Exorcismos e Exorcistas em Macau

Sobrevivência de Antigos Rituais

ANA MARIA AMARO*

A prática dos exorcismos é muito antiga na China. Tanto os bonzos tauistas como os budistas, e ainda alguns letrados confucionistas, eram frequentes vezes chamados para exorcismar alguém. Aliás, os exorcismos confucionistas eram, nos antigos tempos, considerados os de maior poder, de acordo com a seguinte associação de ideias: considerando que o próprio Imperador representa na Terra o *Dao* 道 (o Absoluto da filosofia tauista) e o caminho para o *ren* 仁¹ da ética confucionista, sendo a fonte de todo o Bem contra a origem de todo o Mal, necessariamente o Filho do Céu também será, na sua própria pessoa, um exorcista. De facto, bastas vezes, ao longo da história da China, o imperador interveio com o seu poder concedido pelo *Alto* para livrar o povo de grandes calamidades.

De acordo com esta ideia, os altos funcionários, mandatários do imperador, podiam actuar também, regionalmente, em nome daquele, intimando os “maus espíritos” a desistirem das suas más influências e ameaçando-os com grandes penalidades.

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O povo admitia que os “espíritos malignos” receavam essas penas e era, por isso, que um cartão de visita de um mandarim ou um papel com o seu selo era considerado um poderoso talismã e ao mesmo tempo um demonífugo capaz de exorcismar as más

influências que, porventura, entrassem numa casa ou numa pessoa, provocando-lhe grandes infortúnios ou misteriosas moléstias.

Este poder, ao que hoje se crê, está, também, associado ao aspecto mágico atribuído pelo povo à própria escrita cujo conhecimento, na China arcaica, estava limitado a um pequeno número de eleitos.

Tal era considerado o poder da escrita contra as forças do Mal que a acção exorcista estendia-se ao próprio pincel usado por um letrado. Por exemplo, um destes pincéis, colocado sobre o abdómen dum doente, podia produzir a sua cura. Dantes, também o povo mais crédulo ingeria, com água quente, os cartões de visita dos magistrados, reduzidos a cinzas, como se fossem um verdadeiro *fu* 符, isto é, um tipo de amuletos que, ao que se crê, foram inventados por Zhang Tianshi 张天师, o primeiro patriarca tauista, considerado o expoente máximo dos exorcistas chineses.

Com igual função de esconjuro eram procurados cartões deste tipo para acompanhar as noivas nas suas cadeirinhas no dia do casamento, quando se dirigiam a casa dos noivos, para evitar que fossem molestadas por qualquer “mau espírito” e perdessem a sua virgindade.

Pincéis antigos, manuscritos de estudantes por eles apresentados nos exames oficiais ou pincelados como exercícios para aqueles, livros clássicos e em especial de doutrina tauista, e até folhas rasgadas destes livros eram usados também, noutros tempos, nas aldeias chinesas, como demonífugos defensores da saúde e da felicidade e igualmente como remédios, uma vez reduzidos a cinzas.

Esta última utilização corresponde à antiga ideia de que a doença resulta da acção de um “mau espírito” que se introduz ou que actua no corpo de alguém e que as cinzas dum demonífugo têm poder exorcismático uma vez ingeridas.



Bonzos tauistas numa cerimónia fúnebre. In José Neves Catela, *Memórias Reveladas*, Macau, FCDM / CMMP, 2001.

Esta fé no poder dos livros clássicos como esconjuro é, aliás, muito antiga na China, pois consta de documentos datados da dinastia Han 漢 (século III a.C. - século III d.C.).

Por isso mesmo, só os letrados, pelo poder que o domínio da linguagem escrita lhes conferia, se atreviam a permanecer em lugares escuros onde os “espíritos do mal” são considerados mais perigosos. Considerava-se, também, que a sua imunidade seria acrescida se recitassem frases de Livros Sagrados² que sabiam de cor.

Em Macau, os luso-descendentes filhos-da-terra ainda nos anos 1960-70, em percentagem considerável, temiam o chamado “bagate”, crença que ainda subsistia nos grupos etários mais elevados em 1991-92.³

Uma forma de “bagatear” alguém⁴ consiste em introduzir-lhe no corpo um *gui* 鬼 (*kwai* em cantonense) ou “alma erradia”. Essa prática, por analogia com a magia ocidental, poderia ser considerada “magia negra”, embora, à luz das concepções orientais, se possa aparentar com “magia simpática”, porquanto se pode fazer e quase sempre se faz, em presença duma fotografia da pessoa visada.

Este tipo de “bagate” só pode ser anulado por meio de rituais muito semelhantes ao que, no Ocidente, é considerado esconjuro ou exorcismo.

ANTROPOLOGIA CULTURAL



“Que os cinco trovões protejam a casa. Ordem”.

Os exorcismos são práticas que remontam à mais Alta Antiguidade, encontrando-se espalhados por toda a Terra.

Nos velhos rituais mesopotâmicos incluíam-se, já, os “encantamentos” e as “manipulações” como formas esconjuratórias. Considerava-se, relativamente a estes dois factores de magia, que o nome duma pessoa ou coisa, pronunciado ou escrito, tal como o gesto, podiam actuar por contágio ou analogia. Eram, por isso, frequentemente usados para esconjuros entre estes povos, a par dos amuletos e dos encantamentos, já atrás citados.

Nestas práticas nomeavam-se primeiro os “génios”, descrevendo-se a sua natureza e poderes, do que resultava ficarem aqueles à mercê do sacerdote que os invocava. Seguiu-se a “maldição”, em nome dos deuses, acompanhada de litanias e refrães, nos quais se invocavam o “Espírito do Céu” e o “Espírito da Terra”

além de outros, à medida que se davam pancadas no local que o sacerdote marcara como sede do “Espírito Maléfico” ou “Génio Malfazejo”. Por fim, procedia-se ao ritual, seguindo-se complexas prescrições tradicionais. Todo o cerimonial era acompanhado por música de harpas e percussão de tamborins. Para evitar o retorno do “mau espírito”, o paciente deveria passar a usar amuletos, geralmente escondidos, que tinham a forma de pequenos cilindros de barro ou de pedra com símbolos esconjuratórios gravados. Nesta prática, magia e religião estavam, como se vê, estreitamente ligadas e confundidas.

Na Mesopotâmia tal como na China Arcaica, era principalmente a Astrologia que desempenhava um papel político importante, porque nenhum empreendimento se fazia sem se consultarem os astros. Aliás, as práticas de esconjuro mesopotâmico atrás descritas são, curiosamente, muito semelhantes às práticas dos exorcismos do tauismo popular dos chineses que ainda se praticavam em Macau nos meados do século XX.

No caso de doença provocada por espíritos, durante os exorcismos ou esconjuros da Suméria eram recitadas fórmulas mais ou menos complexas e depois aplicados remédios, alguns deles muito repugnantes, cujo papel devia consistir, talvez, em afugentar o espírito causador do mal, enauseando-o.⁵

Para os persas, o Universo constituía um “campo de batalha” onde se degladiavam os princípios do Bem e do Mal acompanhados de milhares de “génios”.⁶ Cada doença era produzida por um destes “génios”, consistindo, pois, o diagnóstico em averiguar qual a terapêutica específica para contrariar a sua acção.

Os “magos” que exerciam a arte médica dividiam-se, então, em três categorias, como, de um modo geral, ainda hoje entre os povos da Eurásia se podem encontrar: os que faziam esconjuros, os que ministravam mezinhas, os cirurgiões ou endireitas.

Naquela altura, os “magos” do primeiro grupo eram, entre os persas, os mais importantes.

Tal como durante a Idade Média a própria medicina sacerdotal o fez na Europa e ainda hoje sucede entre o povo, as benzeduras eram, também, sobremaneira estimadas.

No *Zend-Avesta* pode ler-se: “Se muitos médicos se apresentam, um que trate pela faca outro pelas plantas, outro pela palavra divina, este será o que melhor curará entre os que curam.” A prática deste

último consistia, afinal, em exorcismar os Espíritos do Mal para que abandonassem o doente ou pedir a intervenção dos Espíritos do Bem. Estes esconjuros dos antigos persas, são, aliás, práticas de todos os tempos e comuns a todos os povos.

Uma vez que um “espírito” entre numa pessoa, quer seja um *gui* quer uma entidade abstracta, noções que se confundem entre a população de Macau, onde diferentes culturas deixaram traços marcantes, pode provocar diferentes doenças; porém, as principais consistem num “lento definhar” ou na “loucura”, podendo passar pela histeria ou pela epilepsia.

Algumas ideias sobre a possessão e sobre o valor dos exorcismos, que perduraram entre a população portuguesa de Macau, se, por um lado, revelam a influência das concepções chinesas, revelam, por outro, as concepções dos próprios padres católicos características da Idade Média, mas que em Macau vingaram durante todo o século XVII e pelo século XVIII adiante, operando curas maravilhosas e logrando mesmo impor-se igualmente à crédula população chinesa como consta das Cartas Anuais dos padres jesuítas.⁷

Segundo J. Le Goff (1983),⁸ eram consideradas na Europa medieval diferentes categorias de loucos:

- “Furiosos e frenéticos”, cujo tratamento era tentado ou que, mais frequentemente, se fechavam em hospitais especiais, como, por exemplo, o de Bedlam em Inglaterra, que ficou famoso nos finais do século XIII;
- “Melancólicos”, cuja bizarria era, por vezes, também física e relacionada com os “humores malignos”, mas que precisavam mais dum padre do que dum médico;



Mural da dinastia Yuan (1271-1368) no Yongle Gong (Templo da Eterna Felicidade), famoso templo tauista em Ruicheng, Shanxi.

- A grande massa dos “possessos”,⁹ que só o exorcismo poderia libertar do seu perigoso hóspede: o “Maligno”.

Em Macau, o respeito pela loucura resultante da possessão levou, certamente, à crença nas curas miraculosas por meio do esconjuro e da água benta. Possivelmente, certas doenças do foro neurológico e psicológico teriam sido tratadas, assim, com êxito, mercê duma psicoterapia social ou de grupo, com notável valor, o que mais fortalecia a crença na eficácia do processo exorcismático.

O episódio bíblico de Jesus expulsando uma legião de demónios dum endemoninhado gadareno (São Marcos, 4, 5)¹⁰ revela a antiguidade da crença no valor dos exorcismos entre os hebreus e a razão da perpetuação de tais práticas entre os cristãos, práticas que chegaram aos nossos dias. Acerca do valor dos exorcismos realizados por um padre católico, uma

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senhora de Macau, ainda não muito idosa e duma classe social elevada, afirmou-nos que, “no caso de ser o exorcismo feito por um padre pouco virtuoso, o doente, em transe, declararia, em público, toda a vida privada do exorcista”. Por isso, nem todos os sacerdotes se atreviam a exorcizar.

E a verdade é que esta prática continua a gozar do favor de muitas pessoas quer dos meios rurais quer mesmo dos urbanos.

Em 15 de Fevereiro de 1986 foi difundida, pelos órgãos da comunicação social, a notícia de que, “na sequência dos muitos pedidos de exorcismos, tinham sido nomeados exorcistas pela Igreja italiana, para ‘expulsar o Demónio’, pelo qual muitos fiéis se diziam possuídos”.

Na mesma data o Padre Dr. António Rego, entrevistado pela RDP (Antena 1) sobre a prática de exorcismos nos nossos dias, afirmou que a “nomeação dos ditos exorcistas pelo Arcebispado de Turim era uma medida prática e funcional exigida pelo quotidiano”. No dizer daquele eclesiástico “a prática de exorcismo foi exercida por Cristo há 2000 anos. E, aliás, hoje, a Igreja considera que a Ciência tem muito a dizer sobre vários assuntos, mas há muitas coisas que não consegue explicar. A possessão diabólica por práticas satânicas não está excluída pela actuação científica”. Segundo o mesmo padre “é preciso compreender: é um caso de auxílio a pessoas psiquicamente afectadas neste momento. Quanto ao facto de haver pessoas preparadas para exercer este mister, a Igreja não vê nada de negativo nisso”.

Acerca dos exorcismos, a Igreja esclarece ainda que, nestas práticas, não se atribui ao Demónio qualquer tipo de superioridade.

Segundo São Marcos (capítulo primeiro dos Evangelhos), Cristo expulsou um “espírito imundo” do homem que vociferava contra Ele no Templo, prática que depois repetiu e cujo poder comunicou

aos seus discípulos (Mat. 10, 1; Luc. 9, 1; Marc. 6, 12-13).

A prática do exorcismo, depois dos Apóstolos, continuou através dos tempos, mantida pela Igreja e surgindo como o símbolo do Catolicismo vencedor do Demónio – o “Anjo Caído”, o “Senhor das Trevas”, o “Espírito do Mal”. Aliás, o sinal da cruz era considerado bastante para o afastar. Ficou na História e na lenda o Milagre de Sto. António, numa das escadas da Sé de Lisboa. Ali pode ver-se, ainda, a

mais ou menos delida marca duma cruz, por ele traçada na pedra, para afastar Lucifer, que lhe apareceu numa escada daquele templo para o fazer cair em tentação.

Antigamente, os sacramentos menores podiam ser inventados pelos Bispos, mas o Código Canónico actual reserva essa faculdade ao Sumo Pontífice (Cânon 1145). Contudo, este nome de “prática sacramental” que abrange os exorcismos remonta apenas ao século XIII e

refere-se a “coisas ou acções que a Igreja costuma usar imitando algum Sacramento para alcançar, por sua impetração, efeitos sobretudo espirituais” (Cânon 1144). No século XVIII incluíam-se nesta rubrica “Cruz, água, nomen, edens, ungens, benedicens”, mas o novo Código menciona apenas como “sacramentais” as consagrações, as bênçãos e os “exorcismos”, não sendo Sacramentos, senão por extensão, as procissões, as exéquias, a esmola (por amor de Deus) bem como a confissão geral.

Na sua forma actual, os exorcismos são fórmulas ou actos que a Igreja manda empregar para expulsar o Demónio das pessoas, das coisas e dos lugares. Se bem que no princípio da Igreja qualquer cristão pudesse exorcismar, segundo a fórmula de S. Marcos *in nomine meo daemonia ejicient*, no século III passou a ser reservada a uma ordem especial chamada dos “Exorcistas”. Actualmente só os sacerdotes com licença do Ordinário do lugar (Cânon 1151) podem fazê-lo.



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Os chineses, tal como os ocidentais, admitem a possessão e o valor dos esconjuros sempre que um *gui ru shen* 鬼入身, isto é, um “espírito entre no corpo”.

Para os grandes mestres tauistas, equiparáveis por alguns sinólogos aos ecologistas, ou melhor, naturistas místicos ocidentais, a magia é uma imitação sistemática da Natureza. E isto porque faz variar arbitrariamente as condições de realização dos processos naturais, podendo conduzir à procura de fenómenos físico-químicos, através de métodos de alquimia experimental.

O período áureo do tauismo na China estendeu-se do século III a.C. ao século VII d.C. Das “Cem Escolas” do período dos Reinos Combatentes (220-285), o tauismo era a mais próxima da Natureza favorecendo, por isso, o desenvolvimento da medicina e da farmacopeia com base nos elementos naturais.

No entanto, posteriormente, as práticas tauistas degeneraram em fantasiosos passos de magia, dos quais o exorcismo é o mais espectacular.

Para os chineses de Macau e para muitos filhos-da-terra, como já se disse, a crença nos *gui* ou “espíritos erradios” ou “famintos” é obsessiva. Nada há que mais aterrorize um chinês do que um *gui* pedindo desforço. Daí, terem surgido seitas budistas votadas, apenas, ao culto dos “espíritos erradios”, seu apaziguamento e esconjuro.

Além destes bonzos são os tauistas os mais procurados, sendo, aliás, muito diferentes as suas técnicas.

A diferença que existe entre uma “benzedura” e a “magia simpática” consiste, apenas, no oficiante. No primeiro caso, esse é, sempre, um especialista, um bonzo ou grupo de bonzos, ou uma mulher de virtude, que serve de *medium* e que incarna uma divindade invocada pela consulente ou em seu nome. A “simpatia” é uma espécie de benzedura secularizada. Qualquer pessoa pode realizá-la. O povo crê que a “simpatia” cura, protege e previne. É um ritual acompanhado de mímica e de rezas especiais. Por vezes, as palavras não têm sentido e as frases parece não terem qualquer nexo. Porém, foi a tradição que as consagrou e a experiência revelou que são eficazes. São exemplos destas práticas o “balouçar do porquinho” de Macau¹² e as rezas contra quebranto ainda muito frequentes em Portugal.

Numa destas sessões a que assistimos em Macau nos anos 1960, num oratório budista do Bazar, vimos

inexplicavelmente água a ferver numa redoma de vidro colocada sobre uma mesa de sacrifício, precisamente à meia noite do último dia do período de rezas dedicado ao apaziguamento dos *gui*.

As benzeduras e as invocações não podem ser transmitidas a qualquer pessoa. No caso das *pai shen po* 拜神婆 (*pai san po*) os respectivos poderes são mesmo intransmissíveis. No caso dos bonzos, as práticas fazem parte da sua aprendizagem.

Porém, a “simpatia” pode, pelo contrário, ser transmitida em qualquer altura e por qualquer pessoa, a outra, sem que qualquer mal daí advinha e sem que a prática ganhe ou venha a perder nos seus resultados.

Os Oito Imortais. Da esquerda para a direita e de cima para baixo: Zhongli Quan, Lu Dongbin; Li Tieguai, Zhang Guolao; Lan Caihe, Cao Guojiu; Han Xiangzi, He Xiangnu.



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A mais importante prática da medicina mágica por “simpatia” em Macau é a defumação das crianças contra o “mal de susto”, o “balançar do porquinho” atrás referida, sendo a mais frequente “benzedura” o exorcismo.

Contudo, na China Imperial e mesmo depois da implantação da República, eram os bonzos tauistas os mais procurados para este fim, tanto pela população

Capa de um *Tong Seng* para o corrente ano.



rural como pela urbana, tal como sucedia em Macau ainda nos meados do século XX.

A magia de que se impregna o Tauismo consiste quase sempre no recurso à análise dos astros e sinais fornecidos por estes (*magis astrologica*). E é por isso que nenhum chinês deseja que seja conhecido o dia e hora exactos do seu nascimento. E isto porque à consulta das “tabelas astronómicas”, que permitem horóscopos individuais, podem seguir-se as preces para que os espíritos protectores da região permitam a alteração no curso dos acontecimentos, prejudicando a vida das pessoas a quem se pretende fazer mal. Além destas preces, tanto budistas como tauistas, praticam rituais exorcistas tal como os padres católicos e quase todos os feiticeiros e sacerdotes das mais diversas civilizações espalhadas pelo Mundo. É em casos como estes, por exemplo, que se põe em dúvida e se discute até que ponto magia e religião se confundem, ou qual é a real fronteira entre elas.

A Luís Gonzaga Gomes¹³ deve-se uma pormenorizada descrição dos exorcismos realizados pelos bonzos tauistas em Macau, descrição que a seguir se transcreve:

“... Se se trata de uma forma benigna exorcisma-se abanando o paciente com um almanaque (*Huang li* 黃历 ou *Tong Seng* 通胜, nome local) ao mesmo tempo que se recita o seguinte conjuro:

Fei - lói - fân
Tchóng - lói - fan
Tchóng - sân - tch'ák - kâu - fân
Tch'át - tchau iáp - ié fan
Kái - t'âu lou- mei fân
Kâp - fân mân- fân
Tông - fông fân
Nám - fông fân
Sài - fông fân
Pâk - fông fân
Si - fông fân sán
Tch'ók - hei, tch'ók- hei

Isto é:

“Espíritos malignos que aqui adejam para te incomodar,

Demónios que vagueiam em volta,

Almas de casas novas e de casas velhas que vão ser arrasadas,

Malévolos espíritos da manhã e da noite,

Espectros sujos das entradas das ruas e das saídas das estradas,

Criaturas imprudentes e madraços do mal,
Demónios do leste,
Belzebus do sul,
Gnomos de oeste,
Diabos do norte,
Malignos espíritos de todas as direcções,
Dispersai imediatamente, desaparecei sem demoras.”

Acabado o esconjuro, coloca-se o almanaque voltado ao contrário no edículo de Tu Di 土地 (Tou Tei em cantonense), o Espírito tutelar do Solo, que, por este acto, terá de presumir que foi invocada a sua protecção e, por isso, não deixará de remover, do corpo do possuído, todas as influências nefastas que o estão a afligir.

Ora, desde que os exorcistas possuam tão grandes poderes que lhes permitam controlar as vontades dos espíritos invisíveis, não é de admirar que os bonzos tauistas gozem de certa consideração no meio social chinês e que a magia seja respeitada e, por muitos, mesmo venerada.

Por este motivo, não há cidade ou aldeia chinesa que não tenha o seu *nán mu lao* 南无佬 (*nám-mou-lou*) ou *nán mu xian sheng* 南无先生 (*nám-mou-sin-sâng*), isto é, o “mágico tauista”, bem como, a sua *shen po* 神婆 (*san po*) ou *wen xiang po* 问香婆 (*mân-héong-po*) – termos de Macau –, termos impropriamente traduzidos por bruxa ou feiticeira, que são constantemente consultados e chamados para esconjuros dos “espíritos maléficos que povoam a terra, o ar e a água”, com o fim de perturbarem o sossego dos mortais, quer causando-lhes doenças, quer transtornando-lhes os seus negócios ou mesmo a vida conjugal.

“Além do exorcismo, recorre-se muitas vezes aos serviços destes adivinhos para desvendar certos casos de impossível explicação, como sejam os desaparecimentos de objectos preciosos, ou para, em desafronta de sevícias recebidas, fornecer elementos que sirvam para prejudicar um terceiro, ou ainda para, por meio do mesmerismo, efectuar curas miraculosas [...]

Aos tauistas são atribuídas, aliás, outras formas de exorcismo. De facto são estes os bonzos mais procurados para este fim porque são os profissionais que agem com maior aparato. Alguns apenas sopram sobre os pacientes, outros agitam e perseguem os maus espíritos com hissopes de salgueiro, enxota-moscas ou simples ventarolas de folha de palmeira. Espectro



Representação popular de Tu Di (Deus da Terra), em traje de mandarim.

que seja exorcismado por um tauista nunca lhe resiste e acaba, sempre, por lhe cair aos pés pedindo-lhe perdão.” (Luís Gonzaga Gomes, 1952).

Manuel da Silva Mendes descreveu, também, como se segue, um esconjuro para tratamento de febre tifóide, que se considera causada por “espíritos do frio”¹⁵ e que, a seguir, transcrevemos:

“O bonzo tauista devidamente paramentado vai esconjurar os diabos do frio para que deixem a sua vítima. [...]

Primeiro os espíritos de todos os vulcões do Oriente, depois os espíritos das grandes rodas de fogo do sul, depois Cheng Wu o verdadeiro fogo, o fogo em pessoa; por fim os licornes do fogo do centro, que queimam sem dó nem piedade todos os diabos que estiverem ainda na casa.

Este esconjuro termina por estas palavras: ‘Dragão de fogo, sus, coragem, corta o pescoço a todos os diabos que ainda por aqui estiverem; apaga todos os vestígios de febre nesta casa; restitui ao doente a saúde, a paz, a felicidade! Amen’. E em seguida recebe boa espórtula.” (M. da Silva Mendes, 1949).

Em casos menos graves não se chama o bonzo. Compra-se um papel (amuleto) com os esconjuros escritos – os tão celebrados *fu*, pincelados ou

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xilografados em papel vermelho ou amarelo com auspicioso cinábrio neste último caso. Este papel pode colar-se na parede, reduzir-se a cinzas em caso de doença ou dobrar-se em forma de triângulo e usar-se pendurado ao pescoço ou preso na roupa por meio dum alfinete.

Há autores que admitem que o uso dos panchões (“estalos da Índia”) é também uma prática mágica, uma espécie de esconjuro, uma vez que se destinam a afastar os maus espíritos existentes num determinado local.

W. F. Meyers (1869-70)¹⁶ considera que a intenção original dos chineses ao criarem estes ruidosos panchões foi imitar o estalejar do bambu a arder, que acreditavam ter a virtude de afastar certos demónios que admitiam ser os causadores de febres intermitentes nos habitantes das regiões pantanosas da China Ocidental.

N. B. Dennys (1876)¹⁷ sugere que, podendo ser esta a origem dos panchões, estes ter-se-iam tornado num bom profiláctico, empiricamente usado e seleccionado positivamente pela experiência de muitos séculos. Actualmente, são usados apenas como sinal de regozijo por ocasião das grandes festividades, nos casamentos, inaugurações de lojas e para saudar alguém importante que chega ou parte. No fundo, porém, mantém-se, de certo modo, a crença mágica de que serão afastados, assim, os “espíritos do mal” que podem prejudicar as pessoas em causa. Por isso, quando uma fiada de panchões começa a estalejar e, de repente, pára, não chegando ao fim, tal acontecimento é considerado um mau presságio. A ideia do exorcismo fica assim ligada, de certo modo, ao estalejar ruidoso e alegre dos panchões, particularmente queimados em Macau, de dia e de noite, durante as festividades do Ano Novo Lunar.

Queimar panchões tornou-se, assim, uma prática paralela ao estalejar dos foguetes nas festas e romarias das aldeias portuguesas, mas com um significado que, nos nossos dias, é bem diferente mas que, no fundo, é uma forma de exorcismar as más influências.

Sendo os exorcismos correntes entre o povo chinês quando os primeiros missionários chegaram à China, não admira que tenha sido esta uma das práticas que, indirectamente, lhes facilitou a sua aceitação.

Pela leitura das Cartas Ânua das Jesuítas, já atrás citadas, pode concluir-se a grande importância que as “curas prodigiosas” feitas por meio de rezas e água benta tiveram na sua acção missionária.

Na sua Ânua de 1616,¹⁸ os padres jesuítas referem-se à doutrina feita nos hospitais e no Tronco, e afirmam que “Nosso Senhor tem nela (cidade de Macau) obra por intercessão de Nosso Santo Padre Inácio por meio do qual tem N. Senhor livrado algumas mulheres do perigo dos partos. Estando hum menino de idade de dous ou três anos muito mal com hua tosse que o hia consumindo e tendo já tomado muitos remédios sem nenhum lhe aproueitar mando o pay pedir a este Collegio hum relicário de reliquias do Santo que aqui está guardado para semelhantes necessidades em a pondo no menino doente logo dali por diante começou a melhorar e sarou de todo com muita alegria dos paes.”

Na Carta Ânua do Colégio de Macau, de 1620¹⁹ diz-se que, durante os partos, encomendando-se as mulheres ao Beato Santo Inácio e pondo ao pescoço a sua firma, que naquele colégio tinham 17, ficavam livres de perigo. A uma mulher dum nobre da Cidade. inchou-lhe, depois do parto, o corpo todo, e estava “muito afligida e desconsolada e como lhe não aproveitassem os remédios humanos, procurou os divinos e foi pedir ao celestial médico que por interceção do Sto. Pe. Ignacio, cuja devota era, a livrasse daquela enfermidade, em aplicando a firma do Santo a olhos vistos se foi diminuindo a dita inchação e em breve tempo ficou sã dela. A esta mesma mulher inchou hum peito com três buracos os apostemas não fechavam e não saia leite e o peito inchava e por mais que se fizesse não se curava e purgava delas. Não podia mexer o braço. A parteira e outras pessoas foram de parecer que se lhe aplicassem mezinhas por cuja virtude o leite saísse ou recolhesse. A mãe sabendo, disse que tinha maior confiança na obra do Beato Pe. Ignacio que em quantos remédios havia no mundo. Pediu a saúde ao santo e sarou como da vez anterior por virtude da sua firma.”

Em relação aos chineses, há uma grande lista de curas maravilhosas igualmente registadas nas Ânua dos padres jesuítas. Na Ânua de 1652²⁰ afirmam: “No Reino da China foge o diabo da água benta como da Cruz.” Ao longo dos tempos, aliás, foram dezenas as curas miraculosas que registaram nas suas Ânua. Das curiosas descrições que assim nos legaram extraímos algumas que, a seguir, transcrevemos, a título exemplificativo:

“Entrou o Diabo em hua gentia de pouca idade com os effeitos q costuma os Pays gentios,

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determinarão Chamar o Padre logo o Diabo disse: Vós chamais gente da Igreja, o de Grande Senhor pois ja me vou e assi não tornou mais, vindo o Padre catequizou a todos os daquela casa, e receberão o Santo baptismo”.

“Outra gentia mais molestada destes inimigos invisíveis teve noticia da ley de Deos, e soube como prohibe adorar pagode cheya de zelo, logo se arremessa aos q tinha em casa, a hus queimou, a outros fez em pedaços; no mesmo ponto se sentio livre dos Demonios, que erão três, e forão-se recolher, e entrar em tres molheres vesinhas fazendo grandes queixas da Catechumeno; que recebo o Santo baptismo”.

“... Hua molher grave 13 annos avia q era affligida do Demonio; via os de casa como tigres, e assi sempre que se andava escondendo. Como era nobre, e de Pays ricos não ouve superstição, q não fizessem, nem feiticeiros, q não chamasse nada aproveitava. Ouvio da Ley de Deos dezejou myto recebello nunca lhe quiserão dar licença Pays, e Marido, antes como gentios aversos disserão muyto mal da Santa ley, e dos que apregavão: e para lhe meter mais medo, acrecentarão, q o Emperador mandara aos Mandarins, q os Matassem. Não se esfriou esta Senhora com semelhantes dittos, antes se acendeo em mayor amor de Deos e dizia q ja folgava de ser Christa para morrer com os mais Christãos per fe de Chrysto. Ja não fazia reverencia cos pagodes por mais q a molestassem os seus dizendo que adorasse os Demonios de quem tanto mal recebo. Teve modo para um Christô lhe dar as Santas Imagens, com q grandemente se chegou, e começou logo melhorar; o porque lhas tomou, e recebo e totalmente lhe tirou as esperanças de ser Christã. Tomou tal sentimento darribar destas couzas a filha, q se lançou em hum poço com a cabeça para baixo, no ponto que hia cahindo, soou hua voz q dizia sequessee nagoa. Achou no fundo assentada sem trabalho algum nem dor. Tirão-na e admirados de tal maravilha, dam-lhe licença para ser Christã mas hinda dessimulando, e passando o tempo: disse a cathecumena vereia q não comerey jamais ate morrer, ou ser christa. Rendidos os gentios chamarão o Padre baptizou-se, sentiose Livre do Demonio, mas dizia q ainda lhe ficava no peito hum ardor, que a abrazava, deu-lhe o Padre hua reliquia de nosso Santo Patriarcha Ignacio: applicou-a, e logo o ardor foi para outra parte, mas hindo em seu alcance com a Santa Reliquia totalmente ficou sam. Na noite seguinte lhe appareceo

nossa Senhora com o seu Minino nos braços, e mostrando-lhe hum Diabo, disse este he o q te molestava [...] tinha o demónio preza por hua cadea de ferro hua gentia, e no pescoço se lhe via hum grande vergam da cadea, baptizou-se ella e depois de Aguas insistencias do inimigo, fazendo-lhe o Padre os exorcismos o deixou de todo e desapareceo o sinal do pescoço”.

“... Andando o Padre em Missam entrou em hum lugar onde não avia ainda noticia da ley de Deos, no principio encontrou hum lavrador, q se queixava dos trabalhos que o Demonio lhe dava ha hua sua filha de idade de 13 anos ao lavrador e lhe disse, q tinha singular mesinha para aquella doença: alegrouse o home muyto, e levou o Padre a sua casa, achou a Moça sem falla tolhida de pes e maos, lançou agoa benta, e disse ao Diabo, q se fosse. Logo tornou ansi a moça; o Padre pergou a todos a ley de Deos. Na noite seguinte tornou o demonio posto no tecto da casa acenava a enferma o seguisse, deceo e posse ao pe do leyto; o Pay conforme a ordem q o Padre lhe deixara lançou agoa benta, e logo o Diabo fugio, por tres vezes veyo, e tantas se tornou. Pela manhã foi o lavrador avizar o Padre, neste tempo se apoderou o demonio da Moça e a deixo como morta; chegou o Padre Mandou tirar do aposento os pagodes, collocou a Santa Imagem vey a enferma todo o rosto com mordeduras como de cam, começou os exorcismos, fallava tanto o Demonio, que estorvava o Padre mandou lhe q callasse calou não se querer ir, tornou o Padre a resar os exorcismos; e antes de acabar se foi o Demonio, ficando a Moça em seu perfeito juizo, adorou o Salvador e com todos os seus recebo o Sagrado baptismo.”

Estas descrições parecem em contradição com o saber actualizado dos médicos e boticários jesuítas e com a riqueza dos seus hortos e boticas, mas a verdade é que se impunha, para a conversão dos gentios, realizar as curas como consequência da acção Divina, aliás dentro do espírito da época, como já atrás ficou exposto. E muitos dos padres e dos irmãos estariam, certamente, convencidos de que sem esse auxílio, dada a insuficiência dos seus conhecimentos e as características das novas doenças, na maior parte das vezes desconhecidas, para as quais ensaiavam as suas mezinhas, não poderiam ter qualquer êxito.

Aliás, o simples esconjuro em doença psicótica ou neurótica era e continua a ser usado, no próprio Ocidente, com êxito de cuja autenticidade a

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psicoterapia de grupo dos nossos dias e os estudos da Etnopsiquiatria, feitos em sociedades sem escrita não permitem duvidar.

Apesar de todas as proibições que no período maoista incluíam as práticas esconjuratórias no grupo das condenadas “Quatro Velharias”, a verdade é que muitas lograram manter-se até aos nossos dias, muito embora, a modernidade pareça tender a fazê-las

desaparecer do imaginário colectivo. Macau não foge à regra e muitos serão aqueles que continuarão a consultar homens e mulheres de virtude e a utilizar as suas rezas e os seus amuletos esconjuratórios, muito embora os antigos rituais exorcismáticos, tanto de eclesiásticos católicos como de budistas e tauistas, tenham perdido a sua espectacularidade e grande parte da sua antiga clientela. **RC**

NOTAS

- 1 *Ren*, a ideia fundamental do Confucionismo, é um termo de difícil tradução que tem sido interpretado em diferentes acepções pelos sinólogos do Ocidente. Segundo Anna Cheng, a tradução mais correcta deveria ser humanismo.
- 2 Cópias de sutras e outros textos budistas, *Tao De Jing* 道德经 a “bíblia” do Tauismo e *Yi Jing* 易经, o Livro Clássico das Mutações, entre outros.
- 3 Resultados do inquérito dirigido à população macaense de luso-descendentes, em 1991-92 (amostragem de 350 inquéritos num universo de c. 6 000 indivíduos).
- 4 Termo local de origem indiana que corresponde a “enfeitiçar, praticar bruxaria” (v. “Bagate” in Ana Maria Amaro, *Aquarelas de Macau (1960-1970): Cenas de Rua e Histórias de Vida*, Macau, Comissão Territorial de Macau para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses e Fundação Macau, 1998, pp. 87 e ss.
- 5 G. Conteneau, *La Magie chez des Assyriens et les Babyloniens*, cit. por Marguerite Rutten in *La Science des Chaldéens*, p. 59.
- 6 É de comparar esta concepção com o imaginário chinês no que se refere às batalhas lendárias que precederam a dinastia Zhou (1066-221 a.C.).
- 7 *Jesuitas na Ásia*, Manuscritos da Biblioteca da Ajuda, Cód. 49-V-7, fls. 99 e 176 e Cód. 49-V-2, fls. 381 a 475.
- 8 Jacques Le Goff, *A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval*, p. 79.
- 9 É de notar que os possesores eram, por vezes, comparados com os próprios feiticeiros.
- 10 *A Bíblia Sagrada*, tradução de João Ferreira de Almeida, Lisboa, Sociedade Bíblica, 1968, p. 47.
- 11 Referência à cruz que, traçada por Santo António numa parede da Sé de Lisboa para afastar o Demónio que lhe apareceu, tentador, teria ficado ali gravada na pedra.
- 12 Para mais pormenores consultar Ana Maria Amaro, “A queda da alma” e “Mal de Susto e Subissalto”.
- 13 Luís Gonzaga Gomes, “Superstições”, in *Chinesices*, p. 277.
- 14 A transcrição não apresenta sinogramas e a romanização é em cantonense. A tradução é de Luís Gonzaga Gomes.
- 15 Manuel Silva Mendes, *Colectânea de Artigos*, pp. 21-22.
- 16 W. F. Mayers, *Journal of the N. C. B. Royal Asiatic Society*, 1869-70, p. 78.
- 17 N. B. Dennys, *The folk-lore of China and its affinities with that of the Aryan and Semitic races*, cap. V.
- 18 Mss. da Biblioteca do Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, Cod. 49-V-61, 25/10.
- 19 *Ibidem*.
- 20 *Ibidem*.

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RESUMOS

Muçulmanos no Delta do Rio da Pérola, 1700-1930

É de conhecimento geral que os Muçulmanos da Índia tiveram uma longa história de trocas comerciais com a China. Durante a dinastia Tang (618-905) os mercadores árabes deslocavam-se regularmente a Cantão para negociar. Estas trocas influenciaram e marcaram fortemente a cidade com a presença de uma das mais antigas mesquitas do mundo e de um pequeno núcleo de crentes que sobreviveu até aos nossos dias. Contudo, o que poucos sabem é que os Muçulmanos desenvolveram um comércio muito dinâmico com a China durante a dinastia Qing (1644-1911). A partir de finais de 1690 começam a aparecer em documentos estrangeiros relatos sobre a deslocação de Muçulmanos para a China, normalmente designados por “Mouros”, termo genérico para referir quase todos os nativos da Índia, mas querendo geralmente significar os Muçulmanos. Uma vez, chegavam com os seus próprios barcos e mercadores, outras surgiam como “Lascars” (marinheiros) em barcos com destino à China. Em finais do século XVIII e inícios do século XIX, os Muçulmanos tinham-se estabelecido no delta como *serangs* (agentes) que angariavam marinheiros muçulmanos e lhes providenciavam alojamento e refeições em Macau. Outros dedicavam-se a emprestar dinheiro a chineses e estrangeiros e encarregavam-se de carregar as mercadorias nos barcos que faziam a ligação entre a China e a Índia. Esta longa tradição de Muçulmanos no delta do rio da Pérola permanece até hoje. [Autores: Carl T. Smith e Paul A. Van Dyke, pp. 6-15]

Os Parses no Comércio com a China

Os comerciantes e homens de negócios Parses, provenientes de Bombaim e da costa ocidental da Índia, desempenharam um papel extremamente importante nos intercâmbios entre a China e a Índia da época moderna. Porém, essa sua participação no comércio com a China não mereceu ainda a devida atenção por

parte dos académicos, quer orientais quer ocidentais. Tanto na Índia como no exterior, a presença na China dos Parses (e, em geral, dos indianos) tem sido encarada como uma mera extensão ou ramo da presença britânica na China. Este estudo tem por objectivo corrigir essa visão algo distorcida, pondo em evidência as actividades dos comerciantes e homens de negócios Parses em Hong Kong e no litoral chinês, desde os finais do século XVIII até ao início do século XX, distinguindo duas principais fases nas relações comerciais dos Parses com a China: a primeira, baseada no comércio do algodão e do ópio e no transporte de mercadorias, e a segunda, a partir da segunda metade do século XIX, caracterizada pela diversificação dos seus interesses comerciais na China. A actividade do maior comerciante parse na China, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, é analisada com alguma profundidade por nos esclarecer sobre a natureza geral do comércio, especialmente durante o problemático período de meados do século XIX. De uma forma geral, este estudo visa dar uma ideia da grande importância das relações económicas dos Parses com a China, bem como clarificar a natureza das suas relações, na China, quer com os ingleses quer com os chineses.

[Autor: Madhavi Thampi, pp. 16-25]

Contribuição dos Parses para o Desenvolvimento de Bombaim e Hong Kong

Durante os séculos XVIII e XIX, os comerciantes Parses da China operavam na área de Macau, Guangzhou e Hong Kong. Esta actividade envolvia um grande número de comerciantes, sendo elevado o volume de comércio e extraordinários os lucros. Alguns deles estabeleceram-se em Hong Kong para melhor poderem gerir os seus lucrativos negócios. A inclinação natural dos Parses para apoiarem qualquer causa humanitária permitiu-lhes utilizar a fortuna acumulada da melhor maneira e, assim, o desenvolvimento económico e a urbanização de Bombaim e Hong Kong muito devem às suas doações generosas. A

riqueza e o importante estatuto que alcançaram através do comércio com a China reflecte-se na construção de Bombaim, enquanto principal cidade comercial, industrial e financeira da Índia. A influência chinesa está também patente nas actividades sociais e culturais desenvolvidas em Bombaim.

[Autor: Shalini Saxena, pp. 26-35]

Comerciantes Parses no Delta do Rio da Pérola

Os Parses do delta do rio da Pérola eram seguidores da fé zoroastriana. As trocas comerciais entre os comerciantes Parses e a China tiveram início em meados do século XVIII, aparecendo registada no *Calendário Anglo-Chinês* a lista completa dos comerciantes Parses de Cantão. É possível reconstruir as suas actividades na China a partir de várias fontes. Nas primeiras décadas do século XVIII, os Parses dedicavam-se essencialmente à importação de ópio para a China, datando de 1825 o primeiro registo da presença de um Parse em Macau, sendo certo que pouco tempo depois adquiriram um terreno onde os seus pudessem ser sepultados. Um documento datado de 1840 dá-nos conta de uma firma e dos nomes de nove comerciantes Parses residentes em Macau, fornecendo dados sobre todos. Porém, em 1848, apenas um deles, Heerjeebhoy Rustumjee, permanecia em Macau. O senhor Bejonje aqui se registou como homem de negócios em 1923. Os Parses desempenharam também um papel importante na mistura de etnias de comerciantes no delta do rio Pérola. O presente artigo procura registar o papel que desempenharam.

[Autor: Carl T. Smith, pp. 36-49]

O Fim do Equívoco sobre “Seres” e o Contributo Português para a História da Cartografia Europeia

Nas obras dos antigos geógrafos europeus é referenciado, no norte da Ásia Oriental, um país chamado *Seres*, a sul do qual surge um outro, *Thin* ou *Sina*. A China e todo o continente da Ásia Oriental eram considerados dois países diferentes. Este equívoco geográfico, que pode ser

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designado por “equivoco Seres” manteve-se ao longo de vários séculos.

Com a época dos Descobrimentos tudo se vai alterar. Em meados do século XVI, no esplendor da cartografia portuguesa, as novas informações fornecidas pelos cartógrafos portugueses, que claramente referenciavam a palavra China ou outros termos com ela relacionados, vão pôr fim àquele “equivoco”. Tendo em conta os mapas de André Homem (1559) e de Bartolomeu Velho (1561), o autor considera que esta clarificação se terá verificado por volta de 1560.

Os cartógrafos portugueses foram capazes de ultrapassar tal “equivoco” com base em informações obtidas em primeira mão pelos seus próprios compatriotas na China, sendo eles a propiciar aos restantes europeus um melhor conhecimento da Ásia Oriental. No entanto, na altura os Portugueses consideravam a informação recolhida no Oriente como segredo de Estado, não se poupando a esforços para impedir a sua divulgação, chegando mesmo a distorcer a verdade dos factos. O que os mapas portugueses revelavam era apenas uma parte dos seus reais conhecimentos. Se não se tivessem verificado estes entraves, o “equivoco” poderia ter sido clarificado mais cedo.

[Autor: Hua Tao, pp. 50-69]

Um Viajante Imaginário, Iambulo, e um Fidalgo Português Anónimo nas Ilhas do Sudeste Asiático

Iambulo é o alegado autor de um fantástico e utópico relato de viagens, primeiramente divulgado pelo historiador romano Diodoro Sículo. Em meados do século XVI, o compilador italiano Giovanni Battista Ramusio divulgou este texto na sua monumental colectânea *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, acrescentando-lhe alguns comentários críticos da autoria de um fidalgo português que conhecera em Veneza poucos anos antes. Homem com vasta experiência oriental, o anónimo português identifica alguns dos lugares descritos por Iambulo com regiões do Sudeste Asiático que ele próprio visitara durante as suas viagens pelos mares asiáticos ao serviço da coroa portuguesa. O texto que apresentamos nesta edição, para além de apresentar uma tradução e uma

análise do relato de Iambulo, explora criticamente os comentários do humanista e orientalista português.

[Autor: Juan Gil, pp. 70-83]

A Ásia e a Europa na Formação da Economia-Mundo e da Globalização: Trajectórias e Debates Historiográficos

Este artigo procura oferecer um itinerário problemático dos principais estudos históricos que interessam para uma investigação da globalização enquanto processo histórico. Sumariam-se e discutem-se os principais argumentos propostos por Fernand Braudel e Immanuel Wallerstein tratando de situar a formação de uma economia-mundo nos inícios do século XVI, centrada na expansão europeia, a partir de uma especial reunião de factores económicos, sociais e políticos. Esta especialização europeia tem vindo a ser criticada por vários autores e renovadas pesquisas nos últimos anos, destacando-se neste estudo os trabalhos referenciais de Andre Gunder Frank, Kenneth Pomeranz e J. M. Blaut, concorrendo para comprovar que o *globalismo* organiza plurissecularmente as relações económicas mundiais antes e longe de uma totalizante supremacia económica europeia, obrigando definitivamente a rediscutir em sede de estudos comparados os papéis respectivos da Ásia e da Europa na estruturação de um demorado processo de globalização.

[Autor: Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, pp. 84-107]

Wu Li: Em Busca da “Luz do Ocidente”

Wu Li (1632-1718), célebre pintor, poeta e calígrafo, era ainda menino quando descobriu a presença dos missionários jesuítas na sua terra natal, Changshu, na província de Jiangsu. Embora a família Wu já estivesse em declínio, recebeu uma boa educação, distinguindo-se nos estudos e, tal como a maior parte das elites letradas da época, familiarizou-se com os Três Ensinaamentos: Confucionismo, Budismo e Tauismo. Devido à turbulência política e ao desassossego social que se vivia durante o final da dinastia Ming e o início da dinastia Qing, há muito que idealizava uma “Terra de Flores de Pessegueiro” (um

paraíso na terra) e, assim, partiu em busca de iluminação espiritual. Em 1665, viajou para Suzhou e tornou-se amigo íntimo do monge budista Morong. Em 1670, acompanhou Xu Zhijian até Pequim e conheceu os Jesuítas na corte imperial. No início da década de 70, começou a aproximar-se do Catolicismo, que lhe permitiu ver a luz da vida. Em 1681, com 50 anos, partiu de Changshu para Macau em busca do *tianxue* (Catolicismo) e ingressou na Companhia de Jesus, como noviço, em 1682. A sua viagem a Suzhou, Pequim e Macau constitui uma metáfora de uma viagem pelos caminhos do pensamento, isto é, uma reflexão sobre vários tipos de doutrinas religiosas em que procurou incessantemente novos horizontes para expandir a sua espiritualidade. Em 1688, depois de ter sido ordenado padre em Nanquim com 57 anos, partiu para Xangai e Jiading para propagar o *Dao* Ocidental (Cristianismo). Nessa altura, prevaleciam dois poderes religiosos históricos na China: por um lado, a harmonização dos Três Ensinaamentos tornara-se um fenómeno de sincretismo popular; por outro lado, a longa controvérsia à volta da questão dos ritos chineses quase atingira um ponto crítico. Este artigo analisa a busca determinada de Wu Li pelos caminhos da espiritualidade, nessa época específica. Embora Wu Li raramente tenha pintado depois de se ter envolvido na sua missão de proselitismo, deixou uma colecção variada de poemas e versos sobre Macau e sobre religião. Esses textos literários dão-nos uma ideia nítida das dificuldades encontradas por um noviço, avançado na idade, na Igreja Colegiada de São Paulo, de como a “Luz do Ocidente” iluminou a sua vida e de como sobreviveu como padre rural, numa altura em que os missionários estrangeiros estavam a ser gradualmente expulsos da China, após a proibição de se pregar a fé Cristã.

[Autor: Christina Miu Bing Cheng, pp.108-125]

Pintura Contemporânea de Macau

Macau foi, desde o século XVI, sucessivamente trampolim para a evangelização da China por via dos missionários, alguns dos quais também artistas como Sambiasi e Castiglione, e

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encruzilhada de viajantes ou residentes como Auguste Borget e George Chinnery, artistas que, no século XIX, retrataram a cidade, dando início a uma tradição que na primeira metade do século XX iria encontrar em George Smirnoff brilhante continuador. A segunda metade do século mais veloz da história da humanidade iria, até aos finais dos anos 70, encontrar em autores locais como Kam Cheong Leng, Kuok Si e Tam Chi Sang continuadores do registo dos aspectos urbanos de Macau. Os anos 80 abrem-se para a entrada em cena, de uma forma ousada, da crónica gráfica de Macau por via do desenho inovador de Ung Vai Meng e de Carlos Marreiros, dois estilos distintos, derrubando convenções num momento em que as estruturas oficiais promoviam dinâmicas no mesmo sentido. Contudo, existe ao nível autoral um fio condutor que se transforma em linhagem que se desdobra noutras temáticas radicadas numa noção de identidade e sentido de pertença que é assumido por outros artistas que nessa década e seguintes vão constituindo o núcleo duro de uma expressão plástica que se exprime pela convocação de referências locais para se legitimar de modo diversificado, lançando as bases para a autenticidade da pintura que hoje se pratica em Macau, expressão tão diversa e singular como o universo de origens dos seus principais autores. As novas gerações já são herdeiras do trabalho pioneiro ajudando a consolidar a singularidade da expressão plástica contemporânea de Macau.

[Autor: António Conceição Júnior, pp. 126-139]

Exorcismos e Exorcistas em Macau. Sobrevivência de Antigos Rituais

A prática dos exorcismos é muito antiga na China. Tanto os bonzos tauistas como os budistas, e ainda alguns letrados confucionistas, eram frequentes vezes chamados para exorcismar alguém. Aliás, os exorcismos confucionistas são considerados os de maior poder de acordo com a seguinte associação de ideias: considerando que o próprio Imperador representa na Terra o *Dau* (o Absoluto da Filosofia Tauista) e o caminho para o *ren* da Ética Confucionista, ele é também, na sua própria pessoa, um exorcista. De facto, bastas vezes, ao longo da história da China, o Imperador interveio com o seu poder de “Filho do Céu” para livrar o povo de grandes calamidades. As práticas esconjuratórias são, aliás, muito antigas e comuns talvez, mesmo, a todos os povos da Terra, de acordo com a ideia de que as doenças, principalmente as do foro psicológico, eram provocadas por espíritos malignos. Uma vez que um espírito entrasse numa pessoa, quer seja um *gui* quer uma entidade abstracta, noções que se confundem entre a população de Macau, onde diferentes culturas deixaram traços marcantes, pode provocar diferentes doenças, das quais as mais frequentes consistem num lento definhamento ou na loucura, podendo passar pela histeria ou pela epilepsia. Algumas ideias sobre a possessão e sobre o valor dos exorcismos, que perduraram entre a população portuguesa de Macau, revelam, por outro lado, a influência das

concepções dos próprios padres católicos, característica da Idade Média, mas que em Macau vingaram durante todo o século XVII e ao longo dos séculos XVIII e seguintes, operando curas maravilhosas e logrando mesmo impor-se à crédula população chinesa como consta das Cartas Anuais dos padres jesuítas. Em Macau, o respeito pela loucura resultante da possessão, levou, certamente, à aceitação destas curas miraculosas por meio do esconjuro e da água benta. Certas doenças nervosas teriam sido tratadas, assim, com êxito, mercê duma empírica psicoterapia social ou de grupo, com notável valor. O episódio bíblico de Jesus expulsando uma legião de demónios dum endemoninhado gadareno (S. Marcos, 4, 5) revela a crença no valor dos exorcismos entre os hebreus e a razão da perpetuação de tais práticas entre os cristãos, práticas que chegaram aos nossos dias. Na Europa também os exorcismos eram práticas frequentes durante a Idade Média tendo sobrevivido até aos nossos dias em muitas aldeias de Portugal. Os chineses, tal como os ocidentais, admitem a possessão e o valor dos esconjuros sempre que um *gui iap sân*, isto é, um espírito entre no corpo. Em Macau, por influência conjugada das culturas portuguesa e chinesa, o respeito pela loucura resultante da possessão, levou certamente à crença nas curas miraculosas por meio de esconjuro e da água benta praticadas tanto pelos padres jesuítas como pelos bonzos tauistas e budistas.

[Autor: Ana Maria Amaro, pp. 140-150]

RESUMOS

ABSTRACTS

Muslims in the Pearl River Delta, 1700 to 1930

It is well known that Muslims from India have had a long history of exchanges with China. During the Tang dynasty (618-905), Arab merchants came regularly to Canton for trade. These exchanges have left an enduring influence and presence in the city with one of the oldest mosques in the world, and a small group of believers which remains to this day. What is very little known, however, is that Muslims were also very active in the trade with China during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). From the late 1690s onwards, references begin to appear in the foreign records to Muslims coming to China. They are often referred to as "Moors" in the historical records, which was a generic term for almost any native Indian, but usually implied that they were Muslims. Sometimes they show up with their own ships and merchants, and other times they appear as "Lascars" or sailors aboard China-bound ships. By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Muslims had set themselves up in the delta as "serangs" who hired out Muslim sailors and provided room and board for them in Macao. Other Muslims became agents loaning money out to Chinese and foreigners and arranging for cargoes to be ship between China and India. This long tradition of Muslims in the Pearl River Delta has continued to the present-day. [Authors: Carl T. Smith and Paul A. Van Dyke, pp. 6-15]

Parsis in the China Trade

In the interactions between China and India in the modern period, Parsi traders and businessmen from Bombay and the west coast of India have played an extremely prominent role. However, the role of the Parsis in the China Trade has still not received the attention it deserves from scholars both in the East and the West. Both in India and outside, the tendency has been to view the Parsi (and in general the Indian) presence in China as merely an extension or subset of the British presence in China. This paper sets out to correct this somewhat distorted perspective by highlighting the activities

of the Parsi traders and businessmen in Hong Kong and the China coast in the period from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. It differentiates between the two main phases of the Parsi commercial connection with China: the first based on the trade in raw cotton and opium, and on shipping; and the second, which saw a diversification of Parsi business interests in China from the second half of the 19th century. The activity of the greatest of the Parsi China Traders, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, is looked at in some depth for the light that it sheds on the overall nature of the trade, particularly during the problematic period of the mid-19th century. Overall, the paper aims to give some idea of the broad scope of the Parsis' economic interaction with China, as well as to clarify the nature of the Parsis' relations with both the British and the Chinese in China.

[Author: Madhavi Thampi, pp. 16-25]

Parsi Contributions to the Growth of Bombay and Hong Kong

The Parsi traders in China were active in the Macao, Guangzhou and Hong Kong areas during the 18th and 19th centuries. A large number of traders were involved, the volume of trade was extensive and the profits mind-boggling. Some traders made Hong Kong their home to take care of their lucrative business. The Parsi willingness to contribute to worthy charitable causes put their accumulated wealth to good use. The economic growth and urbanization of Bombay and Hong Kong owe much to their generous donations. The wealth and eminence they achieved through the China trade is reflected in the building of Bombay as a premier commercial, industrial and financial city of India. Chinese influences were also reflected in the social and cultural activities of Bombay.

[Author: Shalini Saksena, pp. 26-35]

Parsee Merchants in the Pearl River Delta

The Parsees of the Pearl River Delta were adherents of the Zoroastrian faith. Parsee merchants from India began trade with

China in the middle of the 18th century. A full list of Parsee merchants at Canton appears in the *Anglo-Chinese Calendar*. Their activities in China are reconstructed from various sources. In the opening decades of the 18th century the Parsees were active in the import of opium into China. The first record of a Parsee in Macao was in 1825. Soon after they acquired a plot of land there for the burial of their countrymen. An 1840 document records the names of one firm and nine individual Parsee merchants resident in Macao. Data is given for all of these. In 1848, however, only one of them, Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee, remained in Macao. Mr. Bejonje registered as a businessman there in 1923. The Parsees played an important role in the ethnic mix of merchants in the Pearl River Delta. This article is an effort to record this role.

[Author: Carl T. Smith, pp. 36-49]

Clearing up the "Seres Misunderstanding" and the Contributions of the Portuguese to the History of European Cartography

In the literature of classical European geographers, there was a country named "Seres" in the northern part of East Asia, and another country called "Thin" or "Sina" to the south. China and the East Asian continent had thus been regarded as two separate countries. This geographical misunderstanding of East Asia and China remained for many centuries in the European mind and is referred to by the author as "the Seres Misunderstanding".

The Age of Discovery changed this situation. Portuguese cartography reached its peak in the mid-16th century when Portuguese cartographers presented various maps clearly marked with "China" or terms related with China. Thus the traditional misconception surrounding Seres was replaced with new geographical information on Portuguese maps. From Andre Homen's 1559 map and Bartolomeu Velho's 1561 map, it seems this misunderstanding was clarified in around 1560.

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Portuguese cartographers relinquished this misconception thanks to the first-hand information they had from China. In turn, other Europeans gathered their knowledge of East Asia through the Portuguese. However, Portugal regarded information collected from the East as a national secret and spared no effort in blocking its spread sometimes even distorting it. Therefore Portuguese maps reflected only a part of their real knowledge. If there had been no such competition, the European understanding of Seres might have been clarified earlier.

[Author: Hua Tao, pp. 50-69]

An Imaginary Traveller, Iambulo, and an Anonymous Portuguese Nobleman, in the Islands of Southeast Asia

Iambulo is the alleged author of a fantastic and utopian travelogue, first divulged by the Roman historian Diodorus Siculus. In the mid-16th century, the Italian compiler Giovanni Battista Ramusio published this text in his monumental anthology *Navigazioni e Viaggi* adding to it some critical commentaries, derived from a Portuguese nobleman whom he had met in Venice a few years previously. The anonymous Portuguese traveller, a man with vast experience of the Orient, identified some of the places described by Iambulo as being regions of Southeast Asia that he himself had visited during his journeys across the China seas in the service of the Portuguese Crown. The text presented in this edition, besides offering a translation and an analysis of Iambulo's account of his travels, critically explores the commentaries of the Portuguese humanist and orientalist.

[Author: Juan Gil, pp. 70-83]

Asia and Europe in the Formation of the World Economy and Globalization: Historiographical Paths and Discussions

This paper offers a problematic itinerary following the main historical researches interpretations discussing *globalization* as

a fundamental universal historical process. This debate begins with a panoramic overview of Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein classical studies arguments, stressing the original formation of a modern world-system in the 16th century, centred in European expansion, and a special Western combination of economic, social and political factors. This European early modern specialisation has been criticised in the last decades, namely by the referential studies of Andre Gunder Frank, Kenneth Pomeranz and J. M. Blaut researching a long term *globalism*, shifting from European economic, social and political supremacy to emphasise the crucial role of Asia in the historical formation of *globalization*.

[Author: Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, pp. 84-107]

Wu Li: In Search of the "Western Lantern"

Wu Li (1632-1718), an acclaimed painter, poet and calligrapher, came into contact with Jesuit missionaries in his hometown, Changshu in Jiangsu province, when he was a boy. Though the Wu family was already in decline, he received a good education and excelled in scholarly studies. Like most members of the literate élite of his time, he was familiar with the Three Teachings: Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. Given the political turbulence and social unrest during the late Ming and early Qing period, he had long envisioned a "Land of Peach Blossoms" (a paradise on earth) and sought spiritual enlightenment. In 1665, he traveled to Suzhou and became an intimate friend of the Buddhist Abbot, Morong. In 1670, he accompanied Xu Zhijian to Beijing and made acquaintance with the Jesuits in the imperial court. In the early 1670's he began to draw closer to Catholicism and see the light of life. In 1681 at the age of 50, he left Changshu for Macao in pursuit of *tianxue* (Catholicism) and entered the Society of Jesus as a novice in 1682. His earthly travels to Suzhou, Beijing and Macao constitutes a metaphor for travel of the mind. That is, he cogitated on various

kinds of religious doctrines and incessantly looked for new horizons in widening his spirituality. After he was ordained as a priest in 1688 at the age of 57 in Nanjing, he went to Shanghai and Jiading for the propagation of the Western *Dao* (Christianity). At that time, there were two historic religious forces prevailing in China. On the one hand, the harmonization of the Three Teachings became a popular syncretic phenomenon; on the other hand, the prolonged Controversy dispute on the Chinese rites almost reached a boiling point. This paper examines Wu Li's earnest quest for spiritual exploration in this specific epoch. Although he scarcely painted after he had been engaged in the mission of proselytizing, he left behind a prolific collection of poems and verses on Macao and on religion. These literary texts give us a vivid portrayal of what difficulties an aged novice encountered at the Collegiate Church of St Paul's; how the "Western lantern" lighted up his life; and how he survived as a rural priest when foreign missionaries were gradually expelled from China in the wake of the proscription of preaching Christianity.

[Author: Christina Miu Bing Cheng, pp. 108-125]

Contemporary Painting in Macao

Since the 16th century, Macao has successively been the springboard for the evangelisation of China by missionaries, some of whom, such as Sambiasi and Castiglione, were also artists, as well as the crossroads for travellers or residents, like Auguste Borget and George Chinnery. These artists, who portrayed the city in the 19th century, gave rise to a tradition that would be brilliantly sustained by George Smirnoff in the first half of the 20th century. Native artists, such as Kam Cheong Leng, Kuok Si and Tam Chi Sang, provided continuity in recording urban aspects of Macao during the second half of the swiftest century in the history of humanity, up to the end of the 1970's.

The 1980's opened with the appearance of the innovative drawing of Ung Vai

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Meng and Carlos Marreiros, two distinct styles graphically narrating Macao in bold form, overthrowing artistic conventions at the same time as the authorities were promoting dynamism in the same sense. At the level of authorship, however, there is a line of continuity transformed into lineage, which, while developing other themes, is rooted in a notion of identity and a feeling of belonging, assumed by others, both in this and the following decades, who constituted the hard-core of plastic artists. This form of expression, invoking local references to diversify the means by which it becomes legitimate, launches the basis for the authenticity of the painting practised in Macao today; a form of expression as diverse and singular as the origins of its main practitioners. The new generation has already inherited the artistic legacy of the pioneers, helping to consolidate the singularity of contemporary plastic expression in Macao.

[Author: António Conceição Júnior, pp. 126-139]

Exorcism and Exorcists in Macao – the Survival of Ancient Rituals

Exorcism is an ancient practice in China. Both Taoist and Buddhist monks, and even a number of Confucian sages, were frequently called upon to exorcise someone. Moreover, Confucian exorcisms are considered to be the most powerful according to the following association of ideas: since the Emperor himself is the representative on earth of the *Dao* (the Absolute of Taoist Philosophy) and the way to the *ren* of Confucian Ethics, then he is also, himself, an exorcist. In fact, on several occasions throughout the history of China, the Emperor intervened with his power as Son of Heaven in order to prevent great calamities. Furthermore, conjuring demons is a very ancient practice, and one that would appear to be common to every people, based on the idea that illnesses, especially psychological illnesses, were caused by evil spirits. Once a spirit had entered a person, whether it was a *gui* or an abstract being (notions which are confused among the Macanese, where different cultures have left strong traces) it could cause different diseases, with the

most common being slow wasting or madness, possibly including hysteria or epilepsy. Some of the beliefs about possession by evil spirits and the value of exorcism that have survived among the Portuguese population of Macao reflect the influence of Catholic thought characteristic of the Middle Ages, yet which thrived in Macao in the 17th century and into the 18th century and beyond. Priests performed miraculous cures and even managed to impress the credulous Chinese population, as related in the Annual Letters of the Jesuit priests. In Macao, respect for the madness arising from possession doubtless led to an acceptance of miraculous cures by means of exorcism and holy water. Certain nervous disorders would have also been successfully treated in this way, thanks to an empirical social or group psychotherapy, of obvious value. The biblical episode where Jesus expels a legion of demons who were possessing a Gadarene (Mark, 4, 5) shows the Hebrew belief in the value of exorcism and the reason that such practices continued among Christians, practices that have continued to this day. In Europe, exorcism was also a frequent practice during the Middle Ages, and still exists today in many villages in Portugal. Like westerners, the Chinese believe in possession and the value of an exorcism whenever there is *gui iap sân*, that is, a spirit entering a body. In Macao, the joint influence of the Portuguese and Chinese cultures has created a respect for the madness arising from possession, and this has without doubt led to the belief in miraculous cures using exorcism and holy water as practised equally by the Jesuit priests, Taoist and Buddhist monks.

[Author: Ana Maria Amaro, pp. 140-150]