



The 1622 Dutch Attempt to Conquer Macao in the International Context of Early Seventeenth-Century East Asia

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ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES

The dawn of the 17th century brought profound changes to the international panorama of East Asia. With the decisive battle of Sekigahara (1600), Japan emerged from a long period of civil war (*sengoku jidai*) and the country was re-unified under the Tokugawa regime (1603). Consequently, the once-aggressive policy of the archipelago, which had culminated with Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea in 1592 and 1597-1598, turned towards a more conciliatory foreign policy under the guidance of the first *shōgun*, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Mainland China was still a little far from the dramatic events connected to the dynastic transition from Ming to Qing. Nevertheless, the Chinese military intervention in Korea against Japan had weakened the Ming court. The Ming dynasty was inexorably declining, while the Manchu menace on its northern frontiers was becoming more serious. Moreover, the central government had almost completely lost control of the coastal areas in the south: despite the opening of Haicheng to maritime commerce in 1567, which had partially mitigated the effects of the ban on maritime trade, illegal commerce had spread vigorously. Meanwhile, representatives of two other European countries had reached the Far East: the arrival of Dutch fleets, followed a few years later by the English, represented a significant turning point in the

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balance of power in the entire setting of South and East Asia. The fierce rivalry that set the Catholic Iberian countries—Portugal and Spain—in opposition to Protestant Holland and England brought European clashes into the seas of the Far East. As we know, exactly in this period, Europe was experiencing the complex historical process that would lead to the formation of the European nation states. Taken together, these factors comprised the very general historical coordinates of the international setting of the Far Eastern seas during the first decades of the seventeenth century.

Nevertheless, to really understand the volatile and multifarious origins and consequences of the Dutch attack on Macao, it is necessary to take into account the maritime activities of China and Japan, the historical circumstances each of these countries found themselves in, as well as the official stances taken by the Ming court and by the Tokugawa *bakufu* regarding questions of foreign policy.

I. The long history of relations between China and Japan, as we know, is an essential part of the more general history of South and East Asia: an uninterrupted flow of trade carried on by Chinese and Japanese merchants, adventurers, and pirates had connected all of the Far Eastern seas for centuries. In particular, when the Europeans reached the Far East, Chinese maritime activities and overseas communities provided the international sea-trade network and routes with their basic structure. Yet Japanese maritime activities were very intense too, as the numerous references found in Chinese sources about the *wokou* (*wakō*) remind us¹. Especially between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the arrival of the Europeans, Sino-Japanese cooperation and competition in maritime activities became fiercer, stimulated by analogous rivalries among the four European countries with a presence in the Far Eastern seas: Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England. All these countries were admitted into Japanese territory at the same time, until the enactment of the so-called *sakoku* policy: this is an important factor in understanding the political position taken by the Tokugawa authorities. Although the ideological menace to *bakufu* stability posed by Christianity should not be undervalued, Japan had to face the more serious problem of protecting its national finances from an excessive export of precious metals, mainly silver. On

the other hand, Japan needed international commerce for her internal market, especially the trade with China. In making decisions, therefore, Japan carefully considered the important role played by the Chinese merchants—“smugglers” and “pirates,” according to the Ming authorities—whose commercial activities provided the archipelago with a constant flow of trades. Many of the *sakoku* ordinances issued by the Tokugawa *bakufu* were deeply concerned with the overseas Chinese in Japan, particularly those settled in Kyūshū, where, not coincidentally, the Europeans had their bases too. In this respect, the birth of the Chinese community of Nagasaki, or more precisely its formalisation in the *Nagasaki Tōjin Yashiki* of 1689, would have been directly connected with the *sakoku*, a concrete result of the maritime policy pursued by the Japanese authorities².

Already in 1543 with the arrival of the first Portuguese in Japan, the intermediary role played by the Chinese was clear: the Portuguese were accompanied to the Japanese coast of Tanegashima by Chinese sea-traders, or more precisely, by Chinese pirates—some serious scholarship argues that one of them was Wang Zhi³—who acted as interpreters for the Japanese. Soon after, Wang Zhi brought the Portuguese to Hirado, where he had one of his bases, thanks to the protection of the *daimyō* Matsuura Takanobu, who was deeply involved in overseas trade⁴. Yet, in those days, Japan was embroiled in civil war, and the *daimyōs* of Kyūshū, still free from control by any central authorities, were all eager to establish trade relations with Portugal. And as we know, the *daimyō* Ōmura Sumitada succeeded in bringing the Portuguese to his domain, offering them Mogi, Yokoseura, Fukuda, and Nagasaki. In 1571, the port of Nagasaki was opened up to the Portuguese and, at the same time, to the Chinese too: for Chinese trade and commodities were essential to Japan⁵. The maritime activities carried on by the Japanese merchants were flourishing and important as well; many *nihon machi*, or Japanese overseas communities, were growing in South East Asia, joining the overseas Chinese communities⁶.

Yet, toward the end of the sixteenth century, the political and military situation in Japan quickly changed: with Toyotomi Hideyoshi's rise to power, the process of centralising the country began, and control over the private maritime activities of Japanese subjects became increasingly strict. Gradually, the *daimyōs* of

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the Kyūshū coasts tried to regain their lost profits by diverting their capital to Chinese sea-traders, and by hiring Chinese fleets and merchants to carry out their affairs. Nevertheless, the Japanese authorities were not blind. Moreover Hideyoshi was planning to invade Korea, and then to proceed on to China. Concomitant with Hideyoshi's requisition of Nagasaki, which came under the sovereignty of the *Taikō* in 1588 (*chokkatsuchi*), there came the first attempt to concentrate the Chinese in Kyūshū around Nagasaki, in order to bring Chinese settlers under tighter control and to use them as interpreters and a kind of "intelligence service" during expeditions to Korea (1592-1598). As we can see, the importance of the overseas Chinese in Japan was not only due to their private commercial function, in the service of the lords of Kyūshū: it was also directly connected to their role as mediators and interpreters, as well as secret informers. Hideyoshi's aim was the reunification of Japan, and he was preparing the way for the Tokugawa shogunate. In this contest, the overseas Chinese had the emerging Japanese authorities as their direct interlocutors⁷.

In order to provide a solid basis for reunification, the Japanese maritime potentialities also had to be brought under Hideyoshi's command: as early as 1592, the *Taikō* invested the Japanese merchants of Sakai, Kyōto and Ōsaka with his official seal (*sankashō shōnin*), and sent them to southeast Asia to trade in the name of the Japanese government. This was the very beginning of the system later called *goshuinsen*, realised by Tokugawa Ieyasu. As we can see, in order to establish a strong central power in the country, it was also necessary to control the commercial activities carried on in Japan by the overseas Chinese. During the first occupation of Korea in 1592, one of the conditions Hideyoshi asked of the Ming court was the reopening of the *kanhe maoyi* (*kangō bōeki*: "Seals Trade System"), which had been interrupted in 1549, with the collapse of official relations between China and Japan.

At the dawn of the seventeenth century, with the arrival of the Dutch and English East India Companies, the Tokugawa *bakufu* was already formally established (in 1600; in 1603 Tokugawa Ieyasu became *shōgun*): the international role of the overseas Chinese in Kyūshū was becoming essential. It was not by chance, in fact, that as soon as Ieyasu rose to power,

he founded the *Tōtsūji kaishō* ("Office of Chinese Interpreters") in Nagasaki (1603-1604). Through that Office, the Japanese authorities could exercise stronger control over the Chinese settlers⁸. Japan pursued a very careful and balanced policy: Hirado, with its important Chinese community, housed the Dutch and the English; Nagasaki continued to deal with Portugal and Spain. During the first decades of the seventeenth century, both ports played a vital commercial function in Japan, as stopping-points in the international sea trade. Very often, the Chinese acted as interpreters between the Europeans and the Japanese authorities, and that gave them significant political power. In Hirado and Nagasaki, the Chinese traders were commercial mediators in the service of both the Europeans and the Japanese *daimyō*. They were also granted official licences of *shuinsen* by the Tokugawa *shōgun*. In this regard, we cannot fail to mention Li Dan (also known as "Captain China"), the head of the Chinese community of Hirado, and his group, who actually "monopolised" the shogunal licences awarded to the Chinese merchants. Moreover, one of Li Dan's brothers was in Nagasaki, acting as a connection with the *bugyō*, or "Magistrate", of Nagasaki, Hasegawa Gonrokurō Morinao. This also meant that the links among the overseas Chinese in Kyūshū were clearly established⁹.

Therefore, the attitude of the Tokugawa *bakufu* toward the overseas Chinese was one of careful concern: the Japanese authorities did not wish to stop or even decelerate the flow of import-export trade carried on by Chinese merchants in Japan; on the contrary, they intended to protect and develop the commercial relations with China. Yet the incomes from international trade, until then in the hands of the coastal *daimyō*, had to be channelled into the national budget. Although Hideyoshi's foreign policy had been an aggressive one, while Ieyasu stood for a pacific reopening of foreign relations—due in part to the different political situation, since by then Japan was an established central power—they both aimed at the same goal: to bring private maritime activities, be they Japanese or Chinese, under government control. In the case of the Japanese merchants, the task was less difficult, because now the Tokugawa regime could exercise its sovereignty over the whole reunified country, and the *shuinsen* system was one of the means for doing so. In the case of the Chinese merchants, the

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problem was a thornier one, taking into consideration the delicate balance that had to be maintained with the four conflicting European countries hosted in Japanese territory¹⁰.

It was precisely during the first decades of seventeenth century that we see a sort of “centralisation” of maritime activities, both Japanese and Chinese. In the case of Japan, this centralisation was guided and “imposed” by the central authorities; in the case of China, it was a sort of “spontaneous” unification of several groups of pirates, smugglers and adventurer-merchants, first under the flag of Li Dan, and, from 1625 onward, under that of Zheng Zhilong and his family.¹¹ And it is noteworthy that the capital invested in Chinese maritime activities by the Japanese *daimyō* and by the European representatives—especially by the Dutch and the English—had been a decisive element in the rise of a “centralised” organisation under the Zheng family command. Therefore, if the Chinese sea-traders were greatly favoured by their unification, the same cannot be said for their Japanese counterparts. The strict control exercised by the Tokugawa *bakufu* over Japanese overseas activities was counterproductive: the overseas Japanese slowly retreated from the South Asian and East Asian seas. The competition with Chinese traders, as well as that with the Europeans, was too fierce¹².

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, another fundamental factor in the international panorama of the Far East had taken on a more concrete and identifiable shape; its embryonic yet unmistakable signs had already appeared in the previous century. Along the northern frontiers of China, the slow process of the unification of nomadic tribes, which had until then been split up into many small tribes, was completed. This process, which had begun with Nurhaci (1559-1626) in the last twenty years of the sixteenth century, was completed by his successors. Because of its strategic importance, the Manchus attacked the Korean peninsula in 1627 and brought it into submission in 1636-37. In so doing, they paved the way for the conquest of China. This dramatic turn of events contributed to making the Ming government seriously ponder, albeit with a sense of impotence, the danger from the South, and all the economic costs that this implied¹³.

In view of the poor results obtained from the rigid policy they had been pursuing, the Ming

authorities began to pay much closer attention to the international maritime situation. The Manchus were already at the northern gates, and in a situation of growing destabilisation, control of the coastal territories was of unquestionable importance. The situation along the Chinese coasts was not exactly favourable for the Ming: the Europeans were exerting ever-increasing pressure, even militarily, whereas mercantile activity had become entirely autonomous and had completely escaped any control by government authorities. Tacit reconciliation with Chinese mercantilism would certainly have offered some promising opportunities: its restoration to legality and to the sovereignty of the Empire would have undoubtedly boosted the strength of imperial fleet under Ming command, which would have been desirable with a view to opposing both the Europeans and, eventually, the Manchus as well. Having tried in vain to conquer and subdue by force the powerful pirate organisation of Zheng Zhilong (who succeeded Li Dan as leader of this organisation), little else remained for the Ming government but to back the *status quo*, conferring official duties on Zheng Zhilong, in the uncertain hope of deriving benefits in some way. By then Zheng Zhilong oversaw the majority of Chinese merchant activities: this official recognition meant that his power was further reinforced, and it allowed the Zheng family to exercise its own genuine “monopoly” on the Chinese maritime trade through the 1630’s¹⁴.

The gradual process of the unification and “centralisation” of Chinese maritime commercial activities had been accomplished; this was meant to coincide with the relentless intensification of European presence and interference. Although this was not the outcome of clear-cut, prearranged decisions or strategies—apart from, say, the final stage with Zheng Zhilong—it did spring from a combination of factors that comprised the complex Far Eastern maritime panorama of the day, one of which the European element was part and parcel. Small but numerous groups of “pirate-merchants” could not have competed with the hardened European Companies, nor resisted them militarily. In order for them to survive, they had to have a huge, united and well-organised formation. And this is precisely what Zheng Zhilong achieved. Under his command, the powerful mercantile organisation “monopolised” Chinese maritime traffic and, at the same time, became an enormous potential

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military force. Moreover, the official investiture conferred by the Ming imbued this economic-military structure with a “political” significance, if only in passive terms, making it a sort of defensive weapon shielding the state from the Europeans and the Manchus. After a series of negotiations, the terms of Zhang Zhilong’s “surrender” to the Ming government were reached, and in the summer of 1628 the superintendent general of the Fujian province, Xiong Wencan, named him Admiral of the Patrolling Forces (*youji jiangjun*), entrusting him with the task of defeating piracy¹⁵.

The above-mentioned historical background and circumstances constituted the complex international setting wherein the Europeans settled: the fierce competition that originated in the aggressive Dutch strategy of penetrating the Far Eastern markets and

undermining the so-called Portuguese “sea-borne empire” was an essential part of this context and directly connected to it. The Dutch-Portuguese rivalry, which culminated in the Dutch attack on Macao in 1622, was the result of complex interactions among several international factors, and proved to be both the cause and the origin of important changes in the Far Eastern seas. The Dutch attempt to conquer Macao, indeed, marked a turning point in the international balance of power in East Asia.

II. The sixteenth century had seen the Iberian presence on the Far Eastern seas, and had been characterised by the Portuguese supremacy. Portugal had in fact reached the Far East at the beginning of the century. After establishing the important bases of Goa (1510) and Malacca (1511), the Portuguese fleet

The Chinese factory at Nagasaki.



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arrived on China's coasts (around 1513-14). A few decades later the Portuguese landed on the Japanese shores of Tanegashima, on board a Chinese ship (1543). In 1557, as we know, the Portuguese settlement at Macao received formal recognition by the Chinese authorities. Soon after, the Portuguese strengthened their positions in Japan, at Hirado from 1550 to around 1564; beginning in 1562, they were hosted by the *daimyō* Ōmura in his territory, and settled few years later at the important base of Nagasaki (1571). In that same year, 1571, Spain reached the Philippines, and established a base at Manila¹⁶.

Already during the last years of the sixteenth century, many attempts had been made by the Dutch Provinces to send ships and cargo to the Far East. Those first attempts were private, autonomous initiatives undertaken by several Dutch companies in order to force open the Iberian hold on East Asia and to enter the golden market of the Far East. The arrival of the Dutch ship *De Liefde* in Japan in the year 1600, coming from the Province of Middelburg (and piloted by the well-known William Adams), was the first concrete achievement made by the Dutch in the Far Eastern seas, and represented the starting point of their aggressive policy of expansion in the Far East. Nevertheless, the existence of several private Dutch companies, engaged in fierce rivalries among themselves for their own sake and profit, was certainly a weak point in the broader objective of undermining Portuguese primacy in the East. It was necessary to unify their efforts and realise a common strategy, *in primis* against the Portuguese, but also against the Spanish. Reaching Japan in 1600 and thereby laying a hand on the lucrative possibilities of the Far Eastern markets clearly demonstrated to the Dutch the importance of pursuing a coherent policy of destabilising the Iberian "monopoly": for in 1602 the Dutch United East India Company was founded. The establishment of the VOC (*Verenigde Oostindiesche Companie*) meant a significant change in the international balance of power in the East Asian seas, as it was the concrete expression of the Dutch strategy of economic, political, and military expansion in *Ooste Indie*¹⁷.

It was in 1601, just one year after their arrival in Japan, that the Dutch fleet moved towards Portuguese Macao. They had obtained a great deal of information on the routes, the main ports, and the Iberian

settlements in the Far East from the famous *Itinerario* by Jan Huighen Van Linschoten. During the last decades of the sixteenth century, Van Linschoten had travelled in the Far East on board Portuguese ships. His *Itinerario* was a precious source of information for Holland. Moreover, the weakness of the Portuguese defence at their settlement in Macao was notorious among the Europeans settled in the East. This military weakness on Portuguese side was due to the delicate relations with the Chinese authorities of Canton. In fact, the Portuguese were not permitted to build forts or military defences at Macao, although they were allowed to reside there. Macao's peculiar "double" administration has given rise to many studies and sophisticated debates on the legislative system and its legitimacy¹⁸.

The first Dutch fleet approaching Macao in 1601, commanded by Jacob Van Neck, provoked a military reaction from the Portuguese: around twelve Dutch were captured, and most of them brutally executed (only three were spared, of which two were boys). The Dutch continued their reconnaissance and raids around Macao unceasingly in the following years. Dutch fleets harassed Portuguese and Chinese ships along the sea trade routes connecting Macao to Nagasaki, Manila, Goa and so forth. The Formosan strait was under especially strict control by Dutch fleets. At the same time, the Dutch also menaced other Portuguese settlements in the East; in 1605 they captured all the Portuguese strongholds in the Moluccas. This Portuguese defeat was partially vindicated by a victorious Spanish counter-attack, under the command of the Spanish Governor of Manila, Dom Pedro d'Acuná, who regained Tidore and Ternate for the Crown of Spain. Again in 1606, in alliance with the Raja of Johore, Admiral Cornelis Maateliess de Jonge laid siege to Malacca, but this time the victory was Portuguese, with the help of a contingent of Japanese adventurers. But again, in the following year, Admiral Maateliess retook part of Ternate from Spain¹⁹.

According to the aggressive strategy it was pursuing, in these years the VOC was already planning to launch an incisive attack on the Portuguese settlement at Macao. There were several reasons for this plan, and they were certainly all valid. The main Dutch goal was to eliminate the Iberians, and in particular the Portuguese, from the Far Eastern

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markets, in order to affirm the supremacy of the VOC. In this respect, the Portuguese base at Macao was undoubtedly the most important in the Far East: although under close control by the Chinese authorities, it was indeed the sole European settlement allowed on Chinese territory. Such a privilege was extremely precious, if we consider the strict policy enacted by the Ming government: as we know, foreign trade was allowed only under the rigid rules of the tribute system²⁰.

Moreover, the commerce between Macao and Nagasaki was flourishing, and the Portuguese gained huge profits from it. A Dutch base at Macao would have given the VOC the opportunity to take the place of the Portuguese in the trade between Macao and Japan. In fact, a Dutch factory in Japan was about to be established at Hirado (in 1609), thanks to the good offices of William Adams. Taking Macao away from the Portuguese would have weakened the Portuguese presence in Japan as well. At that moment, the Portuguese, by virtue of their personal connections and ties with Japanese local authorities and influential *daimyō*, could still exercise a stronger influence in the archipelago than the Dutch, who had just arrived there. Finally, if the Dutch were able to install themselves at Macao in place of the Portuguese, the Spanish base of Manila would also become isolated and therefore easier to conquer²¹.

The VOC strategy was clearly planned and doggedly pursued. And in this respect, the Dutch were unexpectedly helped by the well-known incident of the carrack *Nossa Senhora de Graça*, also called *Madre de Deus*, which occurred between Captain André Pessoa and the Christian *daimyō* Arima Harunobu.

André Pessoa served in India and the Azores from 1577 onwards, and fought in the defence of Malacca in 1606, where he was wounded in the right arm. He left Malacca for Macao in February 1607 aboard the carrack *Madre de Deus*, escorted by five galleons. A few days after his arrival, the Dutch fleet under Maatlieff's command appeared off the Guangdong coast, with the intention of opening trade with China. Pessoa prepared his squadron and sailed out to attack the Dutch, but Maatlieff avoided the clash and returned to Java. Yet Pessoa, fearing further naval incursions from the enemies, did not depart for Japan during the monsoon as usual. At the end of the following year (November 1608), a Japanese junk

belonging to Arima Harunobu landed at Macao. The crew was arrogant and violent, and started to disturb and offend the local population, walking through town in armed bands of thirty or forty. The local Chinese naturally took alarm at these proceedings, and asked the Senate to curb or expel the Japanese. An armed clash was unavoidable: Pessoa and his squadron were obliged to intervene. The Japanese were asked to surrender. Many of them refused, and were killed; the survivors finally surrendered.

The following year, in June 1609, Pessoa reached Nagasaki, where the Macao incident was not yet known. Nevertheless, the Nagasaki *bugyō* Hasegawa Fijihiro sent off some boats manned by armed guards to board Pessoa's ship, and prevent any person or merchandise from landing without *bugyō*'s express authorisation. This unwelcome attitude on Japanese side was unexpected, and Pessoa refused to accept such humiliating conditions. Nevertheless, after a while the quarrel seemed finally to be solved, and the Portuguese were allowed to land. Yet as soon as they had been lodged and their merchandise unloaded, Hasegawa demanded an inspection of the Portuguese goods, and bought up the best of them at low fixed prices, on the pretext that they were destined for Tokugawa Ieyasu. Pessoa was of course indignant and accused Hasegawa of plotting the ruin of the Portuguese, in conjunction with his colleague Murayama Tōan, the *daikan* of Nagasaki. The situation had not yet calmed down when news of the Macao incident finally reached Japan at the end of 1608. Yet in this episode, Hasegawa sided the Portuguese, defending their position and condemning the arrogant behaviour of the Japanese at Macao. This may have been a political decision, in order not to stress too much Japan's relations with Portugal²².

Meantime, the situation was further complicated by the arrival in Japan of another Dutch ship: in that same year, 1609, the Dutch factory was established at Hirado, to the great pleasure of the local *daimyō* Matsuura²³.

Tokugawa Ieyasu was very pleased as well: the good offices of William Adams, hosted at the Court of Edo, had started to produce concrete results. Ieyasu was a sharp politician and a very attentive observer of the international panorama of East Asia. He was very interested in enlarging Japanese foreign trade, on condition that this trade would be under the central

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control of the Japanese authorities—in other words, under his strict supervision. The possibility of hosting other European countries in Japan represented a good opportunity for him to eliminate the partial dependence of Japan's import-export trade on the Portuguese connection between Nagasaki and Macao, through the (almost) annual voyages of the so-called Great Ship from Amacon. Moreover, according to Adams' explanation, it would not be necessary to accept any more missionaries, because both the Dutch and the English were exclusively interested in commercial questions. In the arrival of the Dutch, Ieyasu saw the possibility of freeing Japan from the complications of Catholicism that the Iberian trade entailed. In fact, as we know, in 1612 Tokugawa Ieyasu promulgated the first edict against the Christian religion, prohibiting its practice and diffusion and requiring them to apostatize. One year later, in 1613, the English East India Company also opened its factory at Hirado²⁴.

In the meantime, news of the Macao affair of 1608 had reached Ieyasu, and Pessoa's episode at Nagasaki was not yet concluded. The *shôgun* reprimanded Hasegawa for not telling him of the situation, and ordered a detailed report. Hasegawa obeyed and presented his report together with Arima's written account. As we can image, these reports were very unfavourable to the Portuguese: Arima pressed for revenge, and Hasegawa too had his reasons to dislike Pessoa. After hesitating for a while, Ieyasu finally ordered the capture of Captain-Major André Pessoa, dead or alive. These events, related to the destruction of Pessoa's ship *Madre de Deus*, have been thoroughly researched by well-known scholar C. R. Boxer: in sum, after three days and three nights of terrible tension, during which it seemed that Pessoa might manage to escape the Japanese attack, the *Madre de Deus* was sunk in Nagasaki harbour, and Pessoa preferred to go down with his ship than surrender to Hasegawa. Diplomatically, both sides—the Portuguese and the Japanese—considered the incident closed with the death of Pessoa: the trade was too important to be interrupted, and from the following year onwards the Great Ship from Amacon continued to land at Nagasaki²⁵.

III. At this point, it must be said that with the first *shôgun* Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), the foreign policy of Japan had changed radically. Toyotomi

Hideyoshi (1536-1598), pursuing the reunification of the country and the centralisation of power in a sole legitimate authority, pursued a more aggressive strategy toward other Far Eastern countries. That had led to a distrustful climate in international relations, primarily with regard to China and Korea, but also with all the countries of South and East Asia. By contrast, as soon as Tokugawa Ieyasu rose to power (1603), he turned the international policy of Japan towards the reopening of relations with other countries: Ieyasu wanted to re-establish peaceful relations and lucrative commercial agreements. Foreign trade was extremely important for the Japanese market. In an attempt to replace the harsh climate created by Hideyoshi with a more peaceful one, Ieyasu sent letters and missives to all the countries in South and East Asia, inviting them to open relations of commerce and trade²⁶.

Yet Japan's most important trading partner was China. At that juncture, however, Ming China was the one country with which it was the most difficult to re-establish official relations. Consequently, the Tokugawa *shôgun* attempted to avoid the problem, giving rise to a policy of welcoming Chinese merchants and sea-traders. Many of these, in fact, were overseas Chinese who had reached Japan's shores despite the Ming laws²⁷. Ieyasu allowed them to trade throughout the whole territory of Japan, under his protection. It was Ieyasu's hope to be able to revive, sooner or later, the system of *kangô bôeki*. In one sense this would have ensured the continuity of the sea trade, so indispensable to the Japanese economy; but at the same time, in another way, it would have guaranteed the *bakufu* authorities, and therefore Ieyasu, complete control and management of this trade and of the proceeds from it. We know now that Ieyasu would never succeed in this larger endeavour, but it was nonetheless thanks to the first Tokugawa *shôgun* that the resumption of maritime trade between China and Japan was so immediate and prosperous, even though it remained informal, or even unlawful, from the Chinese authorities' point of view. Moreover, the intermediate role played by Chinese merchants in the Japanese foreign trade could balance and limit the Portuguese influence on the Japanese market. These were exactly the years during which Li Dan was emerging as leader of a well-organised "piratical" structure centred in Hirado, Taiwan and the Fujian coast, which later would become the backbone of Zheng family's maritime organisation²⁸.

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Virtually nothing is known of Li Dan's early years: his birth-date is unknown, although it has been established that he was a native of Quanzhou. There are some fragmentary pieces of information that show—although rather vaguely—that he was head of the Chinese community in Manila between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century; perhaps a more valid hypothesis is that he was one of the many merchant-pirates of the Far Eastern seas who were trading with the Spanish. As a result of serious disputes of an economic nature with the latter, he was forced to leave Manila, and settled in Hirado, an important stopping-point for international trade²⁹. It was in these years that he made a name for himself, and set himself up as the leader of a group of adventurers who appear in Japanese texts under the name *mitsubōeki shudan* ("group of smugglers")³⁰. When the first English people arrived on the island in 1613, Li Dan was already head of the local Chinese community, and boasted a personal and reciprocally "advantageous" friendship with the powerful *daimyō* Matsuura. He was also on excellent terms with the *bugyō* of Nagasaki, Hasegawa Gonrokurō Morinao. John Saris, whose task it was to set up English branch offices in Japan, rented premises from Li Dan for his house as well as for the headquarters of the English Company³¹.

Li Dan was unquestionably one of the "eminent" characters of the place, notwithstanding—or, better still, by virtue of—his faults. One of his brothers, Li Huayu, known as Captain Whow, acted as his agent in Nagasaki, while another brother who was still living in China acted as the final link in the trade loop; a third brother, known as Niquan, lived in Hirado and helped Li Dan directly. Li Dan's son, Li Guozhu, known in European sources as Augustin Iquan, worked alongside his father in all his activities. We may deduce from this data that the higher ranks of Li Dan's organisation were occupied by close family members, with the exception of Zheng Zhilong, who joined his forces at a later stage³².

In the years between 1614 (19th Keichō year) and 1624 (1st Kan'ei year), covering the whole of the Genwa period (1615-1623), nearly all the shogun licences (*shuinjo*) which the Tokugawa *bakufu* distributed from time to time were awarded to Li Dan, Li Huayu and Niquan; aside from the Li family, there were only three *tōjin* who received the mandate of the *bakufu*. At the

present stage of research it is impossible to establish, or even posit, a link between these other recipients and "Captain China". However, even if we consider the hypothesis that he was not involved, there is no question that Li Dan had almost complete control of mercantile shipments run by the Chinese under the protection of the shoguns of Tokugawa. Li Dan personally obtained shogun licences in the years 1617, 1618, 1621, 1622, 1623, 1624; Li Huayu in 1614, 1615, 1616, 1617, 1618; Niquan in 1617, 1618, 1620³³. There is no mention in these sources of Zheng Zhilong.

The *shuinsei* system, as we have said before, had begun already with Hideyoshi, although it took its formal shape under Ieyasu's leadership. The Tokugawa *shōgun* awarded both the Europeans and the Chinese with the *shuinjo*, and William Adams too received this privilege in 1605. This clearly demonstrates Ieyasu's interest in distributing the Japanese trade more openly among all the European countries hosted in Japan in those years, namely Portugal, Spain, Holland and England. Nevertheless, overseas Chinese, merchants and adventurers—as we have seen—were the key mediators for the Japanese trade. At any rate, Ieyasu wanted to keep a balance on the international commerce of the archipelago: he would not permit the Portuguese to exercise too strong an influence on the Japanese economy. In this respect, his policy gradually turned into a more severe control over the activities of Catholic missionaries, as well as over their personal ties with influential *daimyō* and local Japanese authorities, especially in the Kyūshū region. As we know, exactly during these years, several edicts and restrictions were imposed upon the Christian religion: the Tokugawa government wanted to moderate Portugal's intermediary role in the Japanese sea-trade³⁴.

With regard to this, in fact, it seems that even Spain, from Manila, was taken into consideration by the Tokugawa authorities as a possible trading partner, along with the Dutch and the English, in order to replace, or at least counter-balance, Portuguese commercial activities in Japan. The key question was that of the import of silk: the Portuguese base at Macao—the only such base on Chinese territory—could guarantee a substantial quantity of Chinese silk for Japanese markets because of its direct connection with the market at Canton. The other European bases, which did not enjoy such a privilege, all depended on

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Chinese mediation to obtain Chinese silks: we understand clearly why the Japanese authorities were so careful with the Chinese merchants in Japan³⁵.

Therefore, at this point, the participation of the Japanese military in the Dutch attack on Macao proved to be a logical consequence. Moreover, there was another backstage actor that played an extremely influential but unofficial role: that of Chinese mercantilism, represented by Li Dan's powerful group, which was the key mediator between the Japanese authorities and the Hirado English Company delegates, and had deep connections with the Dutch East India Company as well³⁶. In a way, the Japanese authorities, the Dutch Company, the English Company, and the overseas Chinese in Japan all had a common goal, albeit with different reasons and aims: to eliminate the Iberians from the Far Eastern markets so as to take their place. In this endeavour, the Portuguese, with their essential base at Macao, were enemy number one.

IV. Yet the Portuguese were not blind. The establishment of the Dutch and English Factories at Hirado, in 1609 and 1613 respectively, had already alarmed the Portuguese authorities in Macao. Moreover, in 1619, the VOC had settled its headquarters in Indonesia, at Batavia (also called Djjakatra or Jakarta), strengthening its strategic position in south and east Asia. Meanwhile, in Japan, as we have seen, the Tokugawa authorities put stricter controls on the Portuguese. For Portugal, it was necessary to organise a defensive strategy to face these difficulties. But the local Chinese authorities did not permit the Portuguese to enforce their military defence of Macao, and the Jesuits in Peking were not on very good terms with the Ming court³⁷. Meanwhile, the Manchu menace on China's northern frontiers was becoming increasingly serious. Circumstances had changed so radically on the continent since Portugal had reached the Chinese coast in the previous century, and the Manchus continued to exert such pressure along the northern borders of China, that for the Portuguese to offer aid to the Ming dynasty might have proved a strategically beneficial move since it would have created the conditions for co-operation, even a sort of alliance.

In 1620, Paul Xu Guangqi, the well-known man of letters and government official in the Ming court (who had been converted to Catholicism by Matteo

Ricci), proposed for the first time that the Chinese authorities utilise Portuguese technical knowledge and accept cannons and soldiers from Macao³⁸. In 1621, four cannons and a small team of bombardiers arrived on the continent and headed for Peking, but during the journey a counter-order was issued and the men were sent back to Canton: only the cannons rolled on towards the capital. The Ming fully understood the importance of possessing and using European arms in battle, above all in such an awkward situation, but they weighed the implications of direct Portuguese involvement, and wisely decided to keep their distance. Later, however, they called back the bombardiers to Beijing (in 1623): full, detailed information supplied by the Portuguese was of unquestionable value and had become virtually indispensable. In this regard it is also worth remembering the enlightened missionary work carried out by the Jesuit fathers at the Ming court³⁹.

In the developing international arena of those years, the situation for Spain and Portugal did not look at all promising. As stated previously, right from its entry into the Far East, Holland initiated an aggressive policy of destabilisation towards its rivals and had first implemented this strategy by launching attack after attack on Portuguese strongholds. The base at Macao was under constant threat and reinforcements, even from Portuguese bases in Japan or from their Spanish allies in Manila, were not only difficult to set in motion, but considering the distance as well as the Dutch and English patrols of the surrounding sea, they would have been totally inopportune. Yet neither did backing from the Ming, which in itself would be an exception, guarantee military protection. The hope that the imperial fleet of China, although hostile to all other European countries, would come to the defence of Macao was a slender one—except, perhaps, in the event of a Dutch victory and subsequent settlement, in which case it would have been too late. The Portuguese in Macao could rely only on themselves.

Already in January 1614, Jan Pieterszoon Coen had written a report to the Directors of the VOC, advocating attacks on Manila and Macao, and adding that it would have been easy to obtain a large number of Japanese mercenary soldiers for service in such an expedition. He strongly urged the VOC to take the decision to conquer Macao. But the Dutch Company authorities did not take his suggestion quite yet. In 1620, the formal alliance between the Dutch and the

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English led to the birth of the “Fleet of Defence”. In September 1621, Richard Cooks, the Governor of the English Company at Hirado, wrote:

“It is very certen that with little danger our fleet of defence may take and sack Amacon in China, which is inhabeted by Portingales. For the towne is not fortified with walls; neither will the King of China suffer for them to doe it, nor make any fortifications, nor mount noe ordinance upon any platforme, [...] and, had they taken this fleet, the Portingales trade in these parts of the world is quite spoiled, both for Manillas, Malacca, Goa, and else wheare. And the King of China would gladly be ridd of their neighbourhood; as our frendes [Li Dan] which procure our entry for trade into China tell me, and doe say that he wished that we could drive them for thence”⁴⁰.

As it can be easily understood, Li Dan was playing his cards with the English: he was the most important trade mediator for the English Company, and Richard Cooks trusted him completely.

Richard Cocks, the last Governor of the English Company based in Hirado, placed his complete confidence in Li Dan, appreciating his services as interpreter and mediator of English trade: when the Company left in 1623 there was a very high credit never collected by Cocks from Captain China⁴¹.

A serious mistake, indeed: the English East Company of Hirado went bankrupt and was obliged to close its Factory in 1623, mainly because of Li Dan. For “Captain China”, the elimination of the Portuguese from Macao represented the possibility of gaining a stronger influence over maritime commerce. In fact, Li Dan was playing a double game with all his commercial partners: his aim and primary interest was to exercise control over the sea trade, and therefore obtain enormous profits. He was very close to the delegates of the Dutch East India Company as well⁴².

Finally, in 1622, the VOC decided to attack Macao, partially involving the Fleet of Defence. The English, however, were not allowed to join Dutch ships in the true battle against the Portuguese; they had to keep to the rear guard, patrolling the seas to protect the Dutch fleet. The VOC did not want to share Macao with their English allies. A Japanese squadron took part in the attack as well. Cornelis Reijersen commanded the fleets. His orders were to secure a base on the China coast at any cost. Irrespective of whether or not Macao was attacked—the final decision on this matter was

left to the commander and his council—he was instructed to establish a fortified settlement in the Pescadores, which Coen considered to be even better-situated from a strategic viewpoint.

Cornelis Reijersen left Batavia on 10 April 1622; William Janszoon, admiral of the Anglo-Dutch Fleet of Defence, was sent to Manila, in order to stop any help from the Spanish side. The fleet arrived in sight of Macao on the 21st June, where it was joined by the four ships of Janszoon’s blockading squadron. Reijersen was now in command of a force of thirteen ships and around 1300 men. The Portuguese organised their defence with all the forces they could muster, but their possibilities were rather limited. Everybody took up arms: the Jesuits, the friars, the slaves of the Portuguese, and of course the Portuguese soldiers. Captains Lopo Sarmento de Carvalho and João Soares Vivas served with particular distinction, although the sources do



Paul Xu Guangqi, in Jean Baptiste du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise*, Paris, 1735.

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not agree about the details of their heroic actions. C. R. Boxer conducted extensive research on this topic, and it is well known that the Dutch defeat was terrible⁴³. According to the instructions received by his superiors, Cornelis Reijersen proceeded to the Pescadores, and settled there⁴⁴.

The Dutch occupation of the Pescadores (Penghu) had forced the Ming government to intervene in defence of its sovereignty over the islands: but this sovereignty had not been declared over Taiwan. At first the diplomatic route was chosen, but this proved fruitless; the Chinese authorities therefore prepared a military expedition to expel the Dutch from the Penghu islands. Faced with the most concrete and dangerous initiative so far undertaken by the Ming, the United Company finally decided to negotiate "privately" with Li Dan for the transfer of its bases from the Pescadores to Taiwan, in order to avoid direct military confrontation with China. The local government officials were fully aware of the activities of Li Dan and his group, including his friendly and profitable relations with the Dutch Company, just as they knew the names of his business intermediaries living on the continent: in fact, Xu Xinsi, Li Dan's main trading partner in Amoy (Xiamen), was taken hostage by the Chinese authorities. In exchange for the release of his most important collaborator, Li Dan was requested to effect the transfer of the Dutch from the Pescadores to Taiwan. In response to this, Li Dan temporarily abandoned the Japanese base of Hirado and settled on the island of Formosa from 1623-24, in order to conduct the necessary negotiations. He also managed to convince the Dutch Company take on Zheng Zhilong as its Portuguese interpreter, so that he would have a trusted source for information on the plans and movements of the Dutch. Certainly such close collaboration with the United Company came at a very advantageous moment for the pirate organisation run by Li Dan. In 1624, construction on Fort Zeeland was begun in the bay that is known today as Tainan⁴⁵.

In that same year, 1624, Japan prohibited Spain from entering Japanese territory. This was a serious blow to the Iberians: the Catholic alliance was growing more precarious day by day.

In August 1625, Li Dan died. Zheng Zhilong was presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: to replace Li Dan as leader of the organisation. He did not let it slip away. In 1626, Zheng cemented a deal

for reciprocal collaboration with the Dutch Company, supplying it with several ships that had belonged to Captain China's fleet. The Dutch intended to use these ships to attack the Chinese merchant ships that ran between Manila and Xiamen, while never losing sight of its ultimate goal of destabilising the Iberian trade. In the same year, 1626, Spain established a base in the north of Taiwan. In 1627, Zheng Zhilong asked the authorities at Amoy for amnesty. After a series of negotiations, terms of "surrender" to the government were reached, and in the summer of 1628 the superintendent general of Fujian province, Xiong Wencan, named Zheng Zhilong Admiral of the Patrolling Forces (*youji jiangjun*), entrusting him with the task of defeating piracy. It was a golden opportunity⁴⁶. This imperial backing was the Ming's last hope, since it had by then lost all capacity of intervening in the maritime activities of the coastal areas. In particular, Fujian province had become Zheng Zhilong's "kingdom", just as he kept tight control of the Chinese community in Taiwan. The Formosa Strait consequently came under the hegemony of Zheng's fleets⁴⁷.

With official recognition conferred upon Zheng Zhilong, the Ming court set two immediate policy goals: to restore the vast Chinese trade network to the sovereignty of the empire, and to have at its disposal a fleet capable of pushing back the interference of the Europeans, particularly the Dutch. In this regard, the strategic policy of the Ming did not fail. Recognizing Zheng Zhilong as Admiral of the Patrolling Forces of the imperial fleet, and then as Vice Military Commander of Fujian, was, at least nominally, tantamount to creating a vast military power in the Far Eastern seas. The imperial backing of the Ming formally marked the moment of transformation of Chinese mercantilism into a complete organism and, consequently, into a source of economic, military and, in the final analysis, political support. Therefore, the years between 1624 and 1636 were those of Zheng Zhilong's rise to power, of his established position, and of "centralisation": he had to assert, firmly and totally, his control over the China trade before being able to establish his supremacy in the Far Eastern seas. Decorated with his official appointment by the Ming, Zheng Zhilong asserted himself unquestionably in the China seas as the only possible partner for maritime trade with the continent⁴⁸.

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In the light of these events, the Tokugawa authorities had to make a decision: for in the atmosphere of fierce competition that existed on the Eastern seas, Japan was a loser, and the continuous flood of silver was threatening the national economy. They realized that it would be necessary to reduce the flow of international trade. Already in 1616, the Tokugawa *bakufu* had restricted international commerce to the ports of Hirado and Nagasaki: the first open to the Dutch and the English, the second to Portugal and Spain, in both cases together with the Chinese communities. Previously, in 1612, the *bakufu* had issued the first formal veto on the Christian religion. In 1623 England retired; in 1624, Spain was expelled. Japan had started this defence policy in order to protect her economy. In 1633 came the first promulgation of the *sakoku* ordinances (*sakokurei*). These ordinances were issued five times between 1633 and 1639 (in the years 1633, 1634, 1635, 1636, 1639), remaining essentially unchanged, with some exceptions. From 1633, Japanese merchants were forbidden to go abroad, and overseas Japanese were ordered to return to Japan: this was the end of the *shuinsen* system. In 1635, the *bakufu* restricted the arrival of Chinese fleets to the sole port of Nagasaki. This was a significant decision, made in order to concentrate in Nagasaki the Chinese settlers of Kyūshū. Another restriction concerned which Japanese merchants would be allowed to buy Chinese commodities: only merchants from Sakai, Kyōto, Ōsaka, Nagasaki and Tōkyō (*gokashō shōnin*), who had been granted official licences, were allowed to buy the Chinese merchandise, according to the fixed prices established by the authorities in accordance with the *itowappu* system (*pancado*)⁴⁹.

Spain and Portugal had not surrendered easily: in 1626, the Spanish had settled in northern Taiwan; in 1630, Portugal had sent a military expedition led by Gonçalves Teixeira and Antonio del Campo to help the Ming⁵⁰. At the same time, again in 1630, Holland threatened the Spanish base at Taiwan with an unsuccessful attack. In Japan, the situation came to a head: in an extreme move, Portugal incited the revolt of Shimbara (1637-1638). On this occasion, the United Company's military intervention alongside the Japanese government militia sealed a pact between Japan and Holland: in 1639 Portugal was expelled forever from the archipelago. Again in the same year, at the

instigation of Zheng Zhilong, the Chinese community in Parian rebelled violently against the Spanish authorities in Manila. Two years later, in 1641, the Dutch United Company was forced to move from Hirado to Deshima (Nagasaki). With the third *shōgun*, Tokugawa Iemitsu, Japan had entered the so-called *sakoku*. In Nagasaki there were only two foreign settlements: the Chinese community and the Dutch.

The mercantile organisation of Zheng Zhilong, the Dutch East India Company, and the Tokugawa *bakufu*, which were normally embroiled in bitter commercial rivalries and mutual mistrust, seemed for once unusually allied. They shared the same aim: to remove the Iberian presence from the Far Eastern market, thus have one fewer opponent to compete with.

Following another vain attempt in 1640, Holland finally managed to expel Spain from Taiwan in 1642. In 1643, in a valiant effort to defend its position, Portugal sent cannon to the continent at the request of the Ming and, in 1646, launched the last military expedition worth mentioning: 300 men, led by Nicolao Ferreira, were sent to fight the Manchus. After conquering Peking in 1644, the Qing had by then taken Nanking (1645) and advanced south: all Portuguese military interventions came to an end, in fact, in concomitance with the surrender of Zheng Zhilong to the Manchus (1646)⁵¹.

Spain and Portugal, both defeated, could only retreat to their defensive positions and try to hold on to their bases in Manila and Macao for as long as possible. Undisputed in the previous century, Iberian supremacy in the Far East had reached its end. Although the Dutch were defeated by the Portuguese, their 1622 attack on Macao represented the peak of Holland's aggressive strategy to undermine Portuguese supremacy, and it resulted in significant changes in the international balance of power in the East Asian seas. From 1622 onwards, the fiercest rivals for supremacy over the international sea trade network in south and east Asia were the Dutch, represented by the VOC, and the Chinese maritime traders-pirates-adventurers, under the flag of Zheng Zhilong's unified and well-structured organisation. 

Author's note: This text was written with a Research Scholarship granted by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao S.A.R. Government.

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NOTES

- 1 With regard to the *haikou* and *wokou* (in Japanese *wakō*) activities during those years, see the selections from *Ming shiliao* published in Zheng Liangsheng (ed.), *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, Taipei 1987 (5 vols.). In particular, the *Wuzong shiliao* and *Shizong shiliao*, covering the Zhengde and Jiajing periods, deal with the maritime situation along the Chinese coast at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese and the first phase of their settlement: *Wuzong shiliao*, *Shizong shiliao*, in Zheng Liangsheng (ed.), *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, Vol. I, pp.145-156 and 157-412, respectively; see also Vol. III, among the *benji*: *Wuzong benji*, *Shizong benji*, pp. 841-845. Finally, cf. *Mingshi*, Beijing 1974, 322 (20/III): 8341-60.
- 2 With regard to Japanese foreign policy, see: Yamamoto Kitsuna, *Nagasaki Tōjin Yashiki*, Tokyo 1983; Arano Yasunori, *Edo bakufu to Higashi Ajia*, Tokyo 2003; Kamiya Nobuyuki, Kimura Naoya (eds.), *Kaikin to sakoku*, Tokyo 2002; Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, Murai Shosuke (eds.), *Ajia no naka no Nihonshi*, Tokyo 1993, 6 vols.; Nagazumi Yōko, *Kinsei shōki no gaikō*, Tokyo 1990.
- 3 Many passages in the Ming sources mention Wang Zhi's illicit activities as a pirate: what follows are merely a few examples. *Shizong benji*, Jiajing era, 32nd year, 3rd month, in *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, Vol. III, cit., p. 842; *Guangdong tongzhi*, *haikou* section, Jiajing era, 33rd year and 37th year, in *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. IV, pp. 1265-1266. See also: Tang Shu, *Yubo jizhu*, in *Ming jingshi wenbian* (*Huangming jinggshi wenbian*), Vol. IV, zhuan 270, Beijing 1997, pp. 2849-2859.
- 4 "Hiradohan no seiritsu to hatten", *Hiradohan*, in *Nagasaki kenshi* (*Hanseihen*), Tokyo (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan) 1973, pp. 386-396. "Kenryōku kyōka no hōshiki to Chōsen shuppin", *Hiradohan*, op. cit., pp. 397-403. "Nōson shihai no henka to gaikoku bōeki", *Hiradohan*, op. cit., pp. 403-412. Toyama Mikio, *Matsuurashi to Hirado bōeki*, Tokyo (Kokushō kangyōkai) 1987, pp. 109-120.
- 5 In this regard, see the interesting description of the situation by Hu Zongxian, *Hu shaobao haifang lun*, in *Ming jingshi wenbian* (*Huangming jinggshi wenbian*), Vol. IV, zhuan 267, Peking 1997, pp. 2822-2830. See also Wang Yu, *Wang sima qinshu*, in *Ming jingshi wenbian* (*Huangming jinggshi wenbian*), Vol. IV, zhuan 283, Beijing 1997, pp. 2983-2998.
- 6 Yamawaki Teijirō, *Nagasaki no Tōjin bōeki*, Tokyo 1964 (reprinted in 1983). Yamamoto Kitsuna, *Nagasaki Tōjin Yashiki*, Tokyo 1983, pp. 30-50. Iwao Seiichi, *Shuinsen to Nihonmachi*, Tokyo 1960. The author of the present paper has already dealt with this topic in a previous publication: Patrizia Carioti, "The Portuguese Settlement at Macau: the Portuguese policy of expansion in the Far East in the light of Chinese and Japanese historical intercourse and maritime activities", *Revista de Cultura* (Review of Culture), April 2003, International Edition no. 6, pp. 24-39.
- 7 Fujiki Hisashi, *Tōyotomi heiwaeri to sengoku shakai*, Tokyo 1986. Concerning the overseas Chinese in Japan, see: Luo Huangchao, *Riben huaqiao shi*, Guangdong 1994.
- 8 E. Kimibiya, *Yakushi Tōfu*, 1897; *Tōtsuji kaisho nichiroku*, in *Dai Nihon kinsei shiryō*, (Vol. 7) Tokyo 1959. See also: K. Sadamune, "Kinsei Chu-Nichi bōeki ni okeru tōtsuji", *Shigaku kenkyū*, LXXV, 1959, pp. 51-66; I. Matsumoto, "Tōtsuji no kenkyū", *Hōsei shigaku*, X, 1952, pp. 111-117; T. Nakamura, "Sakoku jidai no zai Nichi kakkyō-tōtsuji no kenkyū", *Shigaku kenkyū*, XXX, 1952, pp. I-XX; A. Chang, "The Nagasaki Office of the Chinese Interpreters in the Seventeenth Century", *Chinese Culture*, XIII,/3, 1972, pp. 3-19.
- 9 As we know, at that time many Chinese sea-adventurers used multiple names. According to the seminal research by Iwao Seiichi, it seems that Li Dan and Yan Siqi were the same person. Not all the scholars agree with Iwao's theses, however. See Iwao Seiichi, "Li
- Tan, Chief of the Chinese Residents at Hirado, Japan in the Last Days of the Ming Dynasty", *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, XVII, 1958, pp. 27-83; Iwao Seiichi, "Minmatsu Nihon kyōgo Shinajin Kapitan Li Tan-kō", *Tōyō gakuhō*, XX/3, 1936, pp. 63-119; Leonard Blussé, "Minnan-jen or Cosmopolitan? The Rise of Cheng Chih-lung alias Nicolas Iquan", in E. B. Vermeer (ed.), *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (*Sinica Leidensia*, XXII), Leiden-New York-København-Köln 1990, pp. 245-264; id., "The VOC as Sorcerer's Apprentice", in W. L. Idema, *Leyden Studies in Sinology*, Leiden 1981, pp. 87-105.
- 10 On the *shuinsen* system, see: Nagazumi Yōko, *Shuinsen*, Tokyo 2001; Iwao Seiichi, *Shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū*, Tokyo 1958; Iwao Seiichi, *Shuinsen to Nihonmachi*, op. cit.
- 11 See Lin Zaifu, *Minnanren*, Taipei 1992; in particular, the section "Yan Siqi yu Zheng Zhilong," pp. 101-108 and following; Wu Fengbin, "Zheng Chenggong fuzi shidai yu Riben huaqiao", *Nanyang wenti*, III, August 1983, p. 17.
- 12 Cf. Patrizia Carioti, "The Zhengs' Maritime Power in the International Context of the 17th Century Far Eastern Seas: The Rise of a 'Centralised Piratical Organisation' and Its Gradual Development into an Informal 'State'", in Paolo Santangelo, (ed.), *Ming Qing Yanjiu*, Napoli - Roma 1996, pp. 29-67.
- 13 See *Nan Ming shiliao*, *Taiwan wenxian congkan*, n. 169 (4 vols.), Taipei 1964, *Ming Qing shiliao* (vols. 10), Shanghai 1951; Lynn Ann Struve, *The Southern Ming*, New Haven - London 1984.
- 14 About Zheng Zhilong, see *Qingshi liezuan Zheng Zhilongzhan*, in Zhu Jia (ed.) *Zheng Chenggongzhan* (*Taiwan wenxian congkan*, 67) Taipei 1960; Patrizia Carioti, *Zheng Chenggong*, Napoli 1995.
- 15 Cao Litai, *Jinghai jilie*, *Taiwan wenxian congkan*, n. 33, Taipei 1959, p. 11.
- 16 Concerning the earliest period of the Portuguese presence along the Chinese coasts, see, for example: *Shizong shiliao*, Jiajing era, 8th year, 10th month, in *Ming shiliao leizuan*, *Guangdong Hainan zhuan*, Wuhan 1993, pp. 382-383; *Shizong shiliao*, Jiajing era, 9th year, 10th month, in *Ming shiliao leizuan*, cit., p. 383; *Shizong shiliao*, Jiajing era, 44th year, 4th month, in *Ming shiliao leizuan*, cit., pp. 386; *Mingshi*, cit., *Folangji zhuan*, 325 zhuan. See also: Wu Guifang, *Yizu Aoyi jingong shu*, in *Ming jingshi wenbian* (*Huangming jinggshi wenbian*), Vol. V, zhuan 342, Beijing 1997, pp. 3662-3673. Finally, see the important work *Zhongxi jiaotong shiliao huibian*, by Zhang Xinglang, annotated by Zhu Jieqin, in 5 volumes, published in Beijing in 2003; in particular, Vol. I, Chapter 6, pp. 421-459.
- 17 Leonard Blussé; Jaap. de Moor, *Nederlanders Overzee*, Gethoorn-Meppel 1983. Femme E. Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC*, Leiden 1991. C. R. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie in War and Peace 1602-1799*, Hong Kong / Singapore / Kuala Lumpur 1979; C.E.S., 't Verwaarloosde Formosa, Amsterdam 1675.
- 18 See: Wu Zhiliang, *Segredos da Sobrevivência. História Política de Macau*, Macao 1999. See also: Deng Kaisong, Wu Zhiliang, Lu Xiao, *Yue Ao guanxi shi*, Beijing 1999, in particular pp. 87-152.
- 19 C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, op. cit., pp. 47-71. With regard to the conflictual relations between the Portuguese and the Dutch, see the important guide to the primary sources: Ernst van Veen, Daniël Klijn (eds.), *A Guide to the Sources of the History of Dutch-Portuguese Relations in Asia (1594-1797)*, Leiden 2001.
- 20 Regarding the general situation at that time, see for example: *Xiangshan xianzhi*, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 4. pp. 1355-1356; *Yue daji*, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 4. p. 1357-1374. With regard to the Portuguese in Macao, their arrival and settlement, see: *Guangdong tongzhi*, Zhengde era, 11th year, 4th month, *Mingdai*

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- wokou shiliao, cit., Vol. 4, p. 1252; *Guangdong tongzhi*, Zhengde era, 11th year, 4th month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 4, p. 1297; *Guangdong tongzhi*, Jiajing era, 2nd year, 2nd month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 4, p. 1274. See also: *Aomen jilu* (reproduction from Guangxu 3rd year edition), in *Linghai yiwen lu*, Wang Youli (ed.), *Zhonghua wenshi congshu*, n. 108. Finally, see: Luo Wei, *Guangdong wenxian zonglu*, Guangdong Conghua 2000.
- 21 On the flourishing commerce between Macao and Nagasaki, see: Huang Hongzhao, *Aomen shi*, Fuzhou 1999, pp. 169-172.
- 22 C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, op. cit., pp. 47-71.
- 23 "Hiradohan no seiritsu to hatten", *Hiradohan*, in *Nagasaki kenshi (Hanseihen)*, Tokyo (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan) 1973, pp. 386-396. "Nōson shihai no henka to gaikoku bōeki", *Hiradohan*, op. cit., pp. 403-412. Toyama Mikio, *Matsuurashi to Hirado bōeki*, Tokyo (Kokushō kangyōkai) 1987, pp. 109-120. *Hollanders in Hirado, 1597-1641*, Haarlem (s.d.).
- 24 Anthony Farrington, *The English Factory in Japan, 1613-1623*, London 1991, 2 vols.; John Saris, *The Voyage of Captain John Saris to Japan, 1613*, London 1900. W.Z. Mulder, Richard Cocks, *Diary of Richard Cocks 1615-1622*, (Vol. 3) Tokyo 1980. "Calendar of Japan Papers", in *Letters Written by the English Residents in Japan, 1611-1623*, Tokyo 1900.
- 25 C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, op. cit., pp. 47-71.
- 26 Cf. *Tokugawa Ieyasu monjo no kenkyū*, Vol. III [part 1st], Tokyo 1960; Kimiya Yasuhiko, *Nichi Ka bunka kōryūshi*, Tokyo 1989. Tsuji Zennosuke, *Kaigai kōtsū shiwa*, Tokyo 1942. A. L. Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Tokugawa Ieyasu*, Tokyo 1989, pp. 233-253.
- 27 With regard to Chinese illicit migration and settlement in Japan (considered related to the *haikou* and *wokou* activities), the Chinese sources are numerous; see for example: Xu Fuyuan, *Sutong hajin shu*, in *Ming jingshi wenbian (Huangming jingshi wenbian)*, Vol. V, *zhuan* 400, Beijing 1997, pp. 4332-4342; Nan Juyi's comment, reported in *Xizong shilu*, Tianqi era, 5th year, 4th month, in *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. II, pp. 828-829.
- 28 *Xizong shilu*, Tianqi era, 5th year, 4th month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 2, pp. 828-829. P. Carioti, "The Zhengs' Maritime Power ...", art. cit., pp. 29-67.
- 29 *Xizong shilu*, Tianqi era, 5th year, 4th month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 2, pp. 828-829. Cf. Emma H. Blair & James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, Cleveland 1903-1909 (vols. 55), XVI, p. 197.
- 30 Cf. S. Yobuko, *Kaizoku Matsuuratō*, Tokyo 1965, pp. 229-232.
- 31 "The 16th (June, 1613) I concluded with Captain Andace (Li Dan), Captain of the China quarter heare, for his howse, to pay 95 rials of 8 for the monsone of 6 monethes, he to repare it at present and we to repare it heare after, and after what we pleased, he to furnish all convenient roomes with matts according to the fashion of the Counterye. (...)" Cf. J. Saris, op. cit., p. 88.
- 32 Cf. S. Iwao, "Li Tan, Chief...", cit., *passim*.
- 33 Cf. S. Iwao, *Shuinsen bōekishi* ..., cit., pp. 184-185 and the related table.
- 34 Cf. Shimizu Hirokazu, *Kirishitan kinsei shi*, Tokyo 1988.
- 35 Huang Hongzhao, *Aomen shi*, cit., pp. 169-172.
- 36 *Xizong shilu*, Tianqi era, 5th year, 4th month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 2, pp. 828-829; Nagazumi Yoko, *Kinsei shoki no gaiko*, cit., pp. 132-136.
- 37 Fei Chengkang, *Macao 400 years*, Shanghai 1996, pp. 76-89.
- 38 Many texts written by Xu Guangqi are collected in *Ming jingshi wenbian (Huangming jingshi wenbian)*, Vol. VI, *zhuan* 488-493, Peking 1997, pp. 5375-5471.
- 39 C. R. Boxer, "Portuguese Military Expedition in Aid of the Mings against the Manchus, 1621-1647", *Tien Hsia Monthly*, VII/1, August 1955, pp. 24-31 [1-13].
- 40 Quoted from: C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
- 41 "Calendar of Japan Papers", in *Letters Written by the English Residents in Japan, 1611-1623*, Tokyo, pp. 274-277.
- 42 Anthony Farrington, *The English Factory in Japan, 1613-1623*, cit., *passim*; Leonard Blussé, M. E. Van Opstall, & Ts'ao Yung-ho (eds.), *De Dagregisters van het Kasteel Zeelandia, Taiwan 1629-1662*, Vol. I, cit. *passim*. Both the important collections of primary sources—English and Dutch—refer very frequently to Li Dan and his relations with them. See also: J. A. van der Chijf (ed.), *Dagh-Register gebouwen int Casteel Batavia want passerende daer ter plaatse als over geheel Nederlands-India. Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Companie*, (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, n.112), I, II, III, 's-Gravenhage 1964.
- 43 C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, cit., pp. 73-74, *passim*.
- 44 *Xizong shilu*, Tianqi era, 3th year, 8th month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 2, pp. 824-825; *Xizong shilu*, Tianqi era, 3th year, 9th month, *Mingdai wokou shiliao*, cit., Vol. 2, p. 826. See also: *Ming tongjian*, Ming Xizong Tianqi era, 3th year (1623), Vol. III, Beijing 1997, pp. 2506-2505.
- 45 Cf. Wm. Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch*, TaiBei 1987, pp. 25-35; S. Iwao, "Li Tan, Chief...", cit., pp. 62-63; L. Blussé, "Minnan-jen or Cosmopolitan?...", cit., p. 254. See also: L. Blussé, "The VOC as Sorcerer's Apprentice", in W. L. Idema (ed.), *Leyden Studies in Sinology*, Leiden 1981, p. 93.
- 46 Cao Litai, *Jinghai jilüe* [second half of 17th century] (*Taiwan wenxian congkan*, n. 33), TaiBei 1959, p. 11.
- 47 *Zhengshi shiliao chubian* (*Taiwan wenxian congkan*, n. 157), TaiBei, 1962, pp. 1-2; Wong Young-tsu, "Security and Warfare on the China Coast: the Taiwan Question in the 17th Century", *Monumenta Serica*, XXXV, 1981-83, p. 124. See also: Fang Hao, "Chongzhenchu Zheng Zhilong yimin ru Taishi", *Fang Hao liushi zidinggao*, TaiBei, 1969, I, pp. 659-662.
- 48 *Zhengshi shiliao chubian*, cit., pp. 88-90, 94-95; Shen Yun, *Ming Qing shiliao* (*Taiwan wenxian congkan*, n. 15), TaiBei 1958, pp. 6-7; L. Blussé, M. E. Van Opstall, & Ts'ao Yung-ho (eds.), *De Dagregisters van het Kasteel Zeelandia*, cit., 2nd October 1633, pp. 137-38.
- 49 Concerning the *itowappu* system, see: Nakamura Tadashi, *Kinsei Nagasaki boeki shi no kenkyū* Tokyo 1988, pp. 84-132. About the *sakoku*: *Sakoku minaosu*, *Kokusai kōryū*, LIX (*tokushū*), 1992; see also note n. 2.
- 50 C. R. Boxer, "Portuguese Military Expedition...", cit., pp. 24-31 [1-13].
- 51 P. Carioti, *Zheng Chenggong*, cit., pp. 63-86.



A Navegação Portuguesa e o Comércio Asiático em Macau

na Visão de Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho

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Com o presente artigo pretendemos alertar para a importância do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa, para a História de Macau, através da divulgação de um dos seus códices com especial interesse para História do sistema mercantil asiático: “Relação do commercio em os diferente portos da Azia (incluindo) Breve e util ideia de commercio, navegação e conquista d’ Ásia e d’África, escripto por meu pay Dom Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho, 1779”. Este códice, apesar de conhecido, tem sido insuficientemente analisado ou mesmo esquecido. Assim, queremos colmatar esta lacuna, analisando este texto no que à História de Macau e da China se refere.

O grande interesse deste códice e diversidade de assuntos abordados leva-nos a analisá-lo detalhadamente: começamos por fazer um levantamento biográfico do autor e analisamos o texto deste códice na sua globalidade. Segue-se a análise dos instrumentos e sistemas de apoio ao comércio utilizados em Macau e na China, como o seu sistema monetário, as unidades de medida na China e Macau e suas correspondências no Índico. Analisamos e comentamos igualmente as referências de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho sobre a navegação de e para Macau, a indicação das rotas e periodicidade das navegações, em particular sobre os direitos alfandegários aí cobrados, a identificação das importações chinesas (de Portugal e Europa) sobre as exportações chinesas, em especial de Cantão e Macau, para a Ásia, África e Europa através da rede mercantil portuguesa. Finalizamos com a visão geo-estratégica e mercantil de D. Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho e as suas propostas para resolver a fragilidade e limitações do sistema mercantil português no Oriente, enquadrado no sistema económico-mercantil asiático de meados do século XVIII.

Natural será, antes de analisarmos o texto em si, começarmos por saber quem foi Francisco Inocêncio



de Souza Coutinho, no sentido de tentar percepcionar o indivíduo e a sua obra, no seu tempo. Concluiremos este primeiro ponto tentando averiguar da motivação do autor para escrita deste texto-memória.

I - DO AUTOR

Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho foi um nobre setecentista de mentalidade esclarecida e moderna, que se integrou no espírito renovador da política ultramarina do Marquês de Pombal. Não é conhecida a data do seu nascimento, em Lisboa, na família dos Conde de Redondo, nem a data da sua morte, em Madrid¹. Filho de D. Rodrigo de Sousa, irmão do 2.º conde de Redondo e de D. Maria de São Boaventura e Meneses. Casou com D. Ana Luisa da Silveira Teixeira de Andrade. Desempenhou as funções de embaixador de Portugal. Sabemos que desenvolveu a sua carreira d’armas, fazendo um tirocínio por diversas fortalezas do norte de Portugal, como Bragança, Miranda, Almeida e Chaves, tendo participado inclusive (como coronel) na campanha militar de 1762, no contexto da Guerra europeia dos Sete Anos.

Cremos poder considerar que a ilustre tradição familiar de ocupação de elevados cargos ultramarinos – seu trisavô, Fernão de Souza, foi um dos grandes governadores de Angola – não terá deixado de influenciar Francisco Inocêncio de Souza Coutinho.

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