

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

International Symposium

AROUND AND ABOUT THE SOUTH CHINA SEA PORTS, ROUTES AND RARITIES INVOLVED IN MARITIME EXCHANGE, C. 1200 - 1750

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Introduction

Roderich Ptak and Ralph Kauz

Hundreds of scholarly works on the history of the South China Sea, or Nanhai/Nanyang, reveal the importance of this maritime space for cultural and commercial exchange between the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean world in medieval and early modern times. Recent research, especially in China, has brought to light new sources related to this fascinating and multi-layered subject. European and other sources also provide a wealth of related information. Put differently, various kinds of texts, maps and material objects tell us that the South China Sea constituted a key element in a chain of maritime spaces linked to each other by the so-called Maritime Silk Route and its many branches. One may investigate this setting from a Braudelian point of view, or individually, through the eyes of those ports, states and ethnicities who partook in material and other forms of exchange along established sailing routes located in the Nanhai.

The principal idea of the conference is to review essential elements of this exchange history in the period c. 1200 to 1750. We shall focus on three aspects: (1) Ports and polities, commercial, religious and other groups maintained all kinds of networks. This is one area of research. One can identify different kinds of ports and classify them according to established categories; that is a further point one may address. How can we explain the rise and decline of individual locations, what kind of substitution effects were at work in particular periods? (2) The production, uses and flow of certain commodities such as silk, silver, copper, ceramics, pepper and cloves have gone through detailed analysis. Other products – for example, precious woods and stones, exotic animals, manufactured items, substances used in local medicines, etc. – have not attracted the same kind of attention; how important were they in terms of commercial value, demand and supply, as cultural items, for everyday life, or as contributing to the formation of local identities? These questions address the issue of “rarities” in the title of the planned meeting. (3) Finally, when historians discuss exchange, both on the local level and internationally, they usually do not care too much about sailing routes. Winds, currents, reefs, seasonal limitations and other “technical” factors were crucial elements in the history of maritime exchange, but we often relegate them to inferior positions in our analysis of these exchanges. There is a large body of nautical texts in different languages and these texts awaits scholarly investigation. That includes a number of Chinese documents from later periods, based on oral traditions of early periods. It would be wonderful, if some of the invited participants could try to look at the nautical material.

Clearly, we sincerely hope that contributors to this meeting can find out something new, mainly based on Asian and Iberian texts and maps, and on particular objects dating from the period in question. Simply redrawing general pictures related to larger constellations, from an established bird’s-eye view, may not be as interesting, unless such contributions follow new models or bring to light hitherto unknown aspects. We may add, in terms of geography, the idea is not to look at an isolated area adjacent to the South China Sea, but to find out how a particular port or coast was in touch with other areas via the sea. Put differently, the focus should be on the links between individual locations. Moreover, while we can easily define the northern limits of the South China Sea (the coasts of Fujian, Guangdong, Taiwan, West Luzon, etc.), scholars may not agree with its southwestern, southern and eastern extension. Therefore, we shall leave that point open. Hence, the Gulf of Siam, the area south of the Natuna Islands down to Java, and the Sulu Sea may or may not form part of a particular topic. Nevertheless, it is certainly advisable not to focus on the area of modern East Indonesia and the regions to the west of Singapore.

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Arianna Magnani (Università degli Studi di Enna “Kore”): “A Global and Interconnected World during the Ming Dynasty: Sailing the South China Sea in Search of Wealth”

The written testimonies of merchants reveal a deeply interconnected world at the end of late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, highlighting a highly advanced and populated maritime roads of global trades, with naval crews made up of expert sailors from different nations, as emerges from the account *Ragionamenti intorno al mondo* written by Francesco Carletti (1573?-1636), a Florentine merchant who traded with Spain, Portugal and their colonies.

By comparing written reports and nautical charts, the paper aims to collect testimonies of contemporary European and Chinese merchants, to trace some of the routes of precious goods circulating in the South China Sea, with particular attention to the international market resulting from these exchanges available in Macau.

Chiara Bocci (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich): “Xu Fuyuan’s 許孚遠 (1535-1604) Memorial: a Plead to Lift the Ban on Sea Trade (*Shutong haijin shu* 疏通海禁疏)”

In 1593, the governor of Fujian Xu Fuyuan penned a memorial to the throne to plead for the lifting of the ban on sea activities (the so-called *haijin* 海禁), which had to be reintroduced after a couple of decades of allowing the circulation of vessels and goods, with great benefits to the people and the government. Works of the past, such as Zhang Xie’s 張燮 famous “Survey on the Eastern and Western Oceans” (*Dongxi yang kao* 東西洋考, 1617) quote ample excerpts from Xu Fuyuan’s writings, showing that they enjoyed the status of authoritative source in all matters related to sea trade. A closer inspection of the memorial has indeed revealed significant historical and literary merits, which make it worthy of renewed attention today.

Xu’s memorial to lift the ban on sea activities offers valuable information on the status of trade along the coasts of southeastern China, on the economy of those areas and the living conditions and needs of the local people. A special group of traders, mainly coming from Fujian, was formed by the so-called *yadong* 壓冬: those who “press the winter away” on the Philippine Islands; their particular situation of living between two worlds and depending on trade receives special regard by the author.

Finally, Xu’s writing shows appreciable rhetorical skills. Aiming at convincing the court of the impracticability of a total ban on sea activities, Xu tries to use the most persuasive arguments against it, with quotes from past sources and effective similes.

Overall, Xu’s memorial is a piece of writing which leaves a strong impression on the reader, and it seems worth studying more carefully.

Elisabetta Colla (University of Lisbon): “Mazu, Macau and Maritime Exchange: The Spiritual World of Seafarers”

In line with topics already studied and presented in the monograph *The mazu cult: historical studies and cross-cultural comparisons* (2017), this paper aims to revisit the centrality of Mazu goddess as part of a religious system aimed at negotiating the relationship between the thalassographic and the human worlds. In the past, as well in the present, taking the Sea has meant facing perilous waters, the danger of sinking and the eventuality of not getting back home. For many reasons, not least the attack from pirates, sailing along the South China Sea coast in direction of the Southeast Asia, as well as in other long-distance voyages, has being considered by seafarers an unpredictable journey. In this context, one can observe the rise of local cults aimed at respond to the diverse seafarer’s request for protection, suppliant’s appeal addressed to diverse local gods and goddess, among which Mazu has being probably considered the most powerful.

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Elke Papelitzky (KU Leuven): "Sailing around the Philippine Islands according to Chinese Sources"

By the late sixteenth century, Manila had become an important node in connecting the Americas with East and Southeast Asia. In consequence, Chinese traders frequently sailed to the Philippines, following routes that had already been established in earlier times. Several sources from the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century describe these routes in detail. These include the rutter *Shunfeng xiangsong* 順風相送 (late sixteenth century), the *Dongxiyang kao* 東西洋考 (1618), and the Selden Map (early seventeenth century). They describe routes that integrate various ports of the Philippines with other places in East and Southeast Asia, giving detailed information how to use the compass and the time needed to sail between places. In addition, they warn of dangerous spots, the sailors need to be aware of. The described routes mainly link Luzon to Fujian, but several explanations also connect ports in the Philippine archipelago with Brunei, Siam, and Japan. In this paper, I will analyze the routes around the Philippines in these three sources and in particular pay attention to the sections that mention dangerous spots. I will also attempt to draw out "temporal layers" to see if there are changes in sailing patterns before and after the establishment of the Spanish in Manila.

Fabio Yuchung Lee (National Tsing-Hua University): "After the Treaty of Lisbon in 1668: A Preliminary Discussion on the Study of Manila-Macau Retrade in the 1680s"

Since Portugal gained its independence from Spain in 1640, the trade route between Macau and Manila was severed at the end of the year. Afterwards, in the 1640s to the 1680s, although Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Lisbon in 1668 and resumed a normal diplomatic relation, China was in turmoil and the coastal areas were in a state of turbulence, causing trade to grind to a halt, since the Manchu breached the Great Wall in 1644. This was perhaps why it was found unnecessary to resume trade and sailing between Macau and Manila. It was not until the 1680s, when the Qing Dynasty had almost had complete control of the whole of China and the situations had calmed, that the issue whether there should be trade between Manila and Macau started to be noticed by some contemporaries again. This article aims to explore, amid the process of resuming trade between Manila and Macau, who were the persons suggesting it, what were their reasons, what the Manila administration's responses were, and what discussions were being held during the whole process.

James Chin (The University of Hong Kong): "Tanka, Pirates and Eunuchs: Pearl in the Tonkin Gulf"

Gulf of Tonkin of South China Sea had been a famous pearl fishery centre and market for more than 1800 years. All dynasties of imperial China would try their best to control, if not fully monopolize, the pearl fishing industry on China's southern maritime frontier and a large number of eunuchs specialized in overseeing the pearl fishery were thus dispatched to the Tonkin Gulf by the imperial court. While a unique ethnic group floating along the coast of south China named *Tanka* or *Danjia* 疍家 (people living on the water) became the indispensable pearl divers, frequently pirates from nearby Cochin-China of northern Vietnam, Hainan Island as well as Japan were attracted to the Gulf of Tonkin in the hope to grab or share the huge profit generated from the pearl trade. Based on the Chinese court records, memorials and reports submitted to the throne and private accounts, this paper will examine the history of pearl fishery in the Tonkin Gulf with a focus on the roles played by *Tanka* people, imperial government of different dynasties and pearl pirates.

Jorge Santos Alves (Universidade Católica Portuguesa): "Becoming Macanese: Simão Vicente Rosa and the Building of a Family Business (1738-1773)"

The Vicente Rosa family, established in Macau in the early 18th century, became one of the most influential, ubiquitous, and long-lived families in the history of the city and in the Macanese diaspora to this day. Simão Vicente Rosa (c.1718-1773), nephew of the "founder" of the family, Manuel Vicente Rosa (c.1680-1751), can be a good case study to understand the process of integration into the Luso-

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-Asian elite of Macao. This process of integration, after all becoming "Macanese", was essentially based on four dimensions: business/trade, politics/institutions, marriage, and lifestyle/culture. The main topic of this paper is to reconstruct, with documental support, the consolidation of the Vicente Rosa family business and the decisive role played by Simão Vicente Rosa.

Jorge Semedo de Matos (University of Lisbon): "Portuguese and Spanish Rutters and Routes Related to the China Sea after Ferdinand Magellan's Voyage"

The arrival of Ferdinand Magellan in the Philippines in 1521 opened a sea route connecting Central America and the Philippines, which gained a definitive expression when Lopez de Legaspi established himself on these islands, and Andres de Urdaneta found a sea route back to America.

Especially after Legaspi's establishment in Manila on the island of Luzon in 1571, American silver entered the circuit of Southeast Asian trade. Manila's connections with China were immediate. At the beginning of the next century, the Portuguese, established in Malacca and Macau, entered this circuit in a very close partnership with the Spanish.

This placed the two Iberian peoples on the trade routes that linked the three cities (Malacca, Manila and Macau) and their connection through the Pacific to Central America. New rutters from these routes were written in Portuguese and Castilian languages and related to their navigation technique. I will speak about these rutters and itineraries in my paper.

Li Qingxin & Shen Bin (Institute of History and Sun Yat-sen studies - Center of Maritime History Studies): "China's Foreign Trade and the Export Porcelain Industry from the 16th to the 18th Century"

During the 16th century, the Chinese foreign trade system changed. The tributary trade system was gradually replaced by the legalized private trade and customs system, while Guangdong and Fujian played an especially important role in the institutional transformation.

With the change of foreign markets, production areas of Chinese export porcelain were also shifting from north China to south China, from inland to coastal areas. Porcelain continued to serve as China's main export commodity in the Ming-Qing Period. Jingdezhen in Jiangxi, Dehua and Zhangzhou in Fujian, Chaozhou in Guangdong were the major export porcelain production area in that period. Driven by the export power, production factors such as human resources, capital and technology flowed to southeast coastal China and agglomerated in the commercial centers there. In Guangdong and Fujian, imitations of Jingdezhen and Longquan's porcelain were produced in large quantities, and new technologies combining China and Western production methods and design began to emerge. In the business organizing area, from production to transportation and then marketing, an international business mode has emerged. The painting named "Production and Transportation of Porcelain" vividly shows the whole process of production, transportation and marketing of export porcelain in China.

What we could learn from this story is as follows. Firstly, institution matters. Different trade institution played a key role in the economic growth during the early modern period. Secondly, the rise of China's export porcelain industry was driven by globalization and the power of the market. Thirdly, the kraak porcelain became the symbol of Chinese products which participated in the process of early globalization. This type of porcelain impacted on the culture of distant locations, far beyond the purely economic level.

Luís Filipe Barreto (University of Lisbon): "From Dangerous Outsider to Informal Partner: The Portuguese Connection in the Ming South China Sea"

Five hundred years ago, in 1522, from August 4 to 18, Portuguese and Chinese forces were in "full war" ("total guerra"; João de Barros, 1563). The hostile encounter occurred in the Pearl River Delta, which one may define as an annex of the South China Sea. Four hundred years ago, in 1622, from June 21 to 24, the Dutch and Portuguese were in full war; this happened in and around the Macau Peninsula. During the

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event in 1522 - the first naval clash between a "Western" maritime power and China - the Portuguese suffered defeat. The Dutch assault on Macau in 1622 marked the first major battle between two European rivals in the area around the South China Sea; it ended with a Portuguese victory. Five hundred years ago, in the early sixteenth century, China perceived the Portuguese, or "Folangji", as dangerous outsiders. Four hundred years ago, the Portuguese defended an open Luso-Chinese port, in fact, an international city on Xiangshan Island (belonging to Guangdong province), against an attack of a "Western" naval power. At that time, seen through Chinese eyes, the Portuguese of Macau were no longer the old "Folangji"; rather, they were considered as guests from the distant "Western Sea", from "Pulidujia" (1565), or Portugal. During the period 1621-1647, Macau sent expeditionary forces, in support of Guangdong and the Ming state, to assist the latter against the Manchu-Qing.

How could all these changes happen? How did the role of the Portuguese in the South China Sea progress? - Perhaps we should move back in time to explain these developments: With the opening of the Cap Route, the Portuguese had entered the Indian Ocean, reaching Calicut in 1498. There, they had collected early information on Zheng He's expeditions, South China and Guangdong province. They had also learned about Melaka and the vital role of Chinese consumption goods all across Asia. In sum, we may say, this marked the first step of a long trajectory characterized by building connections and by accommodation. The purpose of this paper is to look at some of the central features of this process.

Marília dos Santos Lopes (Universidade Católica Portuguesa): "Rarities in the Maritime Exchange at the South China Sea: Caspar Schmalkalden and his Travel Writing"

Maritime contacts across the South China Sea proved early on to be a decisive and very special driver of a wide and diverse network of business relationships. Favoured by a geography conducive to the international market, the South China Sea was a vital element and agent for the urban and political growth of this region. Located at the centre of one of the main international trade routes, between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean and between China and Japan, the South China Sea was also the main source of goods, especially of those in greatest demand in world markets: pepper, cloves, and nutmeg. In the 15th and 16th centuries, there was a big explosion in the European demand for spices, the so-called "age of commerce" (A. Reid), so, from works such as the travel report of Caspar Schmalkalden we will try to map the routes and flow of important commodities such as the spices through the South China Sea.

Ralph Kauz (University of Bonn): "At the furthest end of the "Nanhai": Some final (?) remarks on Hormuz"

When discussing Hormuz in Chinese texts some twenty years ago, Roderich Ptak and the author did not consider the narrative "styles" and "modes" underlying these sources. To some extent this issue will be taken up in the present paper, and other, non-Chinese sources shall be included to get an entire image how this entrepôt was presented to various readers.

Following the example of the *Gudai Nanhai diming huishi* 古代南海地名汇释, the Nanhai 南海 will be regarded as the entire Indian Ocean, stretching from the South China Sea to the waters around the Arab peninsula, and Hormuz is thus seen as a part of the Chinese "Nanhai perception".

However, the paper will not include sources related to the "re-discovering" of the Indian Ocean by the Portuguese around the year 1500 when a new age of European relations with Asia commenced.

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Roderich Ptak (Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich): "At the Southern Rim of the Nanhai: Chinese Routes through the Singapore-Riau-Lingga Area and the Terms / Names "Guanchang" 官廠 and "Guanyu" 官嶼 (15th and 16th Centuries)"

The so-called "Zheng He map", *Zheng He hanghaitu* 鄭和航海圖, presumably drawn in the early fifteenth century, shows two locations called *guanchang* 官廠 and three locations defined as *guanyu* 官嶼. It seems that these are all terms, not names. One of the two *guanchang* appears near Melaka. Two of the three *guanyu* are placed in the area to the east / south of modern Singapore.

The present paper discusses the Melaka *guanchang* and the two *guanyu*. This relates to geographical issues, the question of sea straits in the Riau-Lingga area, to navigational issues, and other aspects. It also relates to the ongoing debate on Longyamen 龍牙門, often equated with Singapore Strait, and to a group of small islands in front of old Melaka, then usually named Wu yu 五嶼.

The principal question is what kind of places are we looking at in the case of the Melaka *guanchang* and the two *guanyu*. Literally, *guanchang* means something like "official factory" and *guanyu* "official island". However, such translations do not adequately mirror the possible functions of these locations. This draws in some general ideas about the logistics of Zheng He's voyages, the nature of foreign "establishments" in distant ports, and how one may categorize them. As the presentation will show, most questions remain open. Written sources do not allow us to give definite answers. This opens the way for all kinds of interpretations, which one can easily instrumentalize for specific purposes.

Rui Manuel Loureiro (ISMAT/Portimão & CHAM/NOVA): "Trade routes, exotic commodities and printing strategies: Seville as a centre of information about East Asia between 1560 and 1580"

Between 1560 and 1580, in the wake of the establishment of the Portuguese in Macau, there was in Seville a particularly active Oriental conjuncture, characterized by the production and widespread, sometimes printed, dissemination of news about East Asia. The discovery of the route from the Philippines to the New World stimulated Spanish interest in Asian matters, bringing together a network of politicians, diplomats, cosmographers, naturalists, who looked with interest to East Asia, not only seeing transcendental opportunities to promote knowledge but also possible strategies for Spain to expand its geographic area of influence and intervention from the New World to the Philippines, and from there to China. Portuguese materials were, of course, paramount in this Sevillian conjuncture.