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Author(s): Roderich Ptak

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Chinese Documents in Portuguese Archives: Jottings on Three Texts Found in the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon

Roderich Ptak, Munich[1]

I

On the history of Macau and Sino-Portuguese relations there exists a large number of published Chinese sources which have been put to use by various Western and Chinese scholars. But only a small fraction of all published Chinese source materials has ever been translated into Portuguese, French, German or English. Perhaps the best-known works of this kind are the *Aomen jilüe* [澳門紀略] and the *Ming shi* [明史] chapter on the "Folangji" [佛郎機] and their respective Portuguese and French versions by Luís Gonzaga Gomes and Paul Pelliot.[2] Recently more Chinese materials were collected and published, including a collection of several volumes prepared by the Academia Sinica in Taipei – an important work with much of the Chinese diplomatic correspondence on the Sino-Portuguese treaties of the last century and the negotiations on Macau's borderline.[3] More works are to appear soon, especially on the eighteenth and nineteenth century on which, generally speaking, less research has been done than on Macau's golden age, i.e., the period from the city's foundation in the 1550s to the end of the Japan trade, in 1639/40.

[1] Paper presented to an international symposium "Orientalismo e Arabismo em Portugal", Lisbon, May 1997, and revised in July 1997.

[2] On the different editions of the *Aomen jilüe*, see Zhang Wenqin [章文欽]: *Aomen yu Zhonghua lishi wenhua.* Macau: Aomen jijinhui 1995, pp. 139–145. For the translation, see Luís Gonzaga Gomes, *Ou-Mun Kei-Leok* (*Monografia de Macau*). Rpt. Lisbon: Quinzena de Macau 1979. For the *Ming shi* chapter, see, for example, Zhang Weihua [張維華]: *Mingshi Ouzhou siguo zhuan zhushi.* Rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 1982; Paul Pelliot: *Le Hoja et le Sayyid Husain de l'Histoire des Ming.* In: T'oung Pao 38 (1948), pp. 81–292.

[3] Academia Sinica, Jindaishi yanjiusuo (ed.): *Aomen zhuandang* [澳門專檔]. Taipei: Academia Sinica 1992– (*Zhongguo jindaishi ziliao huibian*), several volumes, three seen by the present author.

Apart from published Chinese sources historians dealing with Macau may also consult a large stock of unpublished Chinese archival materials. To a great extent these sources are scattered over different libraries and archives in Lisbon. Only a few documents, it seems, are available in archives outside Lisbon. The most impressive collection is the one preserved in the Torro do Tombo. It contains more than 1,500 pieces. PU HSIN-HSIEN and TANG SI PENG were among the first to sight these documents and to briefly describe their contents.[4] The period they cover is the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century (with two or three exceptions), i.e., roughly up to the times of Ferreira do Amaral who governed Macau from 1846 to 1849. They deal with a num-

[4] PU HSIN-HSIEN: *Resumen del comércio internacional de Macau en el siglo XVIII según los documentos en chino del Arquivo Nacional da Torro do Tombo.* In: Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do V Centenário da Morte do Infante D. Henrique (ed.), *Congresso Internacional de História dos Descobrimentos. Actas.* Lisbon 1961, vol. 5, pt. 2, pp. 195–205; TANG SI PENG: *Fontes chinesas arquivadas na Torro do Tombo.* In: *Iº Seminário Internacional de História e Cultura de Macau, Actas das Comunicações.* Macau: Instituto de Estudos Culturais 1994, pp. 41–43. – For a modern catalogue of documents on Macau in the Torro do Tombo, see, for example, ISAÚ SANTOS: *Macau e o Oriente nos Arquivos Nacionais Torro do Tombo.* Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau 1995. This is practically all on Portuguese language documents. The Chinese documents available in the Torro do Tombo are listed in another catalogue: ISAÚ SANTOS and LAO FONG (LIU FANG [劉芳]): *Chapas sínicas. Macau e o Oriente nos Arquivos Nacionais Torre do Tombo.* Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau 1997. This work of which there is an identical edition in Chinese (*Hanwen wenshu. Putaoya Guoli dongbota dang'anguan guizang Aomen ji dongfang dang'an wenxian*) gives the date of each document and one or two lines with comments on the contents. – For a recent collection of archival sources on nineteenth century Macau – this includes translations of some Chinese primary materials –, see ANTÓNIO VASCONCELOS DE SALDANHA (ed.): *Colecção de fontes documentais para a história das relações entre Portugal e a China.* Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1996– (several volumes planned, three seen by the present author). The first volume covers the period from 1843 to 1846, the second and third volumes mostly deal with the period from 1853 to 1873, especially with correspondence related to the treaty of 1862. Also see the appendix to SALDANHA's *Estudos sobre as relações luso-chinesas.* Lisbon: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas and Instituto Cultural de Macau 1996, pp. 372 et seq., and his *Putaoya zai Hua waijiao zhengce, 1841–1854,* trans. by JIN GUOPING [金國平]. Macau: Fundação Macau 1997, various chapters, all based on the previous title. – Recently SALDANHA and JORGE MANUEL DOS SANTOS ALVES also published a collection of relevant articles, called *Estudos de história do relacionamento luso-chinês, séculos XVI–XIX.* Macau: Institvto Portvgvês do Oriente 1995 (Colecção Memória do Oriente).

ber of topics that merit careful research. Among the interesting things are such issues as Britain's temporary occupation of Macau in the early nineteenth century, Sino-Portuguese joint projects to fight Chinese pirates and rebels off the Guangdong coast, the activities of Ferreira do Amaral and the reactions of the Macanese and Chinese towards the implementation of his policy, certain questions concerning the structure of Macau's trade, and so on. Some documents are official notes sent by local Chinese government bureaucrats from Guangdong to Macau and Lisbon, others were written by Chinese merchants residing in Macau. To what degree the views reflected in official correspondence were the same as the ones found in private letters, has yet to be determined.

Western research on nineteenth century Macau, to turn to a different subject, sometimes bears an anglophone overtone. One example is the well-known monograph by DIAN MURRAY on the subject of piracy off the China coast. Though generally well-written, this book has not made full use of the Portuguese archival sources.[5] Chinese secondary works covering these and other related matters contain similar weak points; they usually rely on published Chinese works but rarely take into consideration unpublished Chinese documents in Portugal and Portuguese language sources available in Macau and elsewhere. This has led to awkward distortions of important facts. Moreover, some works are help-

[5] DIAN MURRAY: *Pirates off the South China Coast, 1790–1810.* Stanford: Stanford University Press 1987. For a recent complement, see VÍTOR LUÍS GASPAR RODRIGUES: *A acção "concertada" das autoridades de Macau, China e Goa na luta contra os "piratas" dos mares do sul na China em finais do século XVIII, princípios do século XIX.* In: ARTUR TEODORO DE MATOS and LUÍS FILIPE F. REIS THOMAZ (eds.): *As relações entre a Índia portuguesa, a Ásia do Sueste e o Extremo Oriente. Actas do VI Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa (Macau, 22 à 26 de Outobro de 1991).* Macau and Lisbon 1993, pp. 275–307. Another study of some interest is DIAN MURRAY's *Woman and Piracy: An Alternative Route to Power?* In: Boletim do Instituto Luís de Camões 15.1–2 (1981), pp. 115–135. For a Chinese view, see FEI CHENGKANG [費成康]: *Aomen sibai nian.* Shanghai: Shanghai jenmin chubanshe 1988, pp. 230–233; English version: *Macau 400 Years.* Shanghai: The Publishing House of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences 1996, pp. 191–194. – Note: the words "pirates" and "piracy" are not necessarily appropriate labels for the different groups and their activities off the China coast at that time. Some groups could be termed "rebels", others were smugglers. For a study of the terms, not related to the Qing but to the Ming period, see R. P.: *Piracy Along the Coasts of Southern India and Ming-China: Comparative Notes on Two Sixteenth Century Cases.* In: MATOS and THOMAZ (as above), pp. 255–273.

lessly intertwined with Marxist and nationalistic propaganda.[6] Portuguese historians, being much more cautious, have attempted to combine all kinds of Western source materials but often underutilized Chinese texts. In other words, much of Macau's more recent history has, intentionally or unintentionally, been seen with a jaundiced eye and therefore might be taken up again by looking at all sides simultaneously.

My notes are intended to stimulate research in this direction, not by looking at archival sources contained in the Torro do Tombo, but by singling out and discussing three Chinese texts found in the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (now AHU). There is another – practical – reason for doing this: the present author is involved in a translation project. This project, it is hoped, will eventually lead to the publication of Portuguese and English versions of some not so well-known Chinese documents found in the Ajuda library, the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, the Library of the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa, and the AHU – and eventually also to the publication of selected translations from among the large stock of texts available in the Torro do Tombo.

For the purpose of these rather uncoordinated notes the following texts were chosen: (1) a Chinese licence for a seagoing ship, issued by the Guangdong custom-house in Macau (1759), (2) a letter by the merchants and Chinese citizens of Macau to the king of Portugal (1809), and (3) a letter by the Prince Regent D. João to the Jiaqing emperor [嘉慶] (1813).[7]

II

The first piece, the Chinese licence, is one of several Qing documents of a similar kind available in various archives. Recently, for example, a German scholar notified me that he had found a comparable piece in Denmark, a so-called "port clearance certificate" or *hongdan* [紅單], issued in 1850 by the Jiangnan [江南] custom-house, not to a Portuguese vessel but to a British merchant.[8] Other documents of this type may be found in Britain and elsewhere.

[6] See R. P.: *Manipulating History*: *Modern Mainland Chinese Images of Early Qing Macau*. In: Mare Liberum 14 (1997), pp. 63–84.

[7] Here are the code numbers of the AHU: (1) Macau, caixa 30, doc. 47; (2) Macau, cofre, LR 382; (3) Macau, caixa 35, doc. 21 and doc. 22. For listings see ISAÚ SANTOS: *Macau e o Oriente no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino*. Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau 1997, 2 vols.

[8] This is likely to appear in the printed version of STEPHAN DILLER: *Der*

Generally speaking, privately owned merchant vessels sailing to and from China in the late Ming period had to carry certain passports with them. This system has been described by ZHANG XIE [張燮] in his *Dongxiyang kao* [東西洋考] (1617/18).[9] Other types of travel documents were used in tribute trade to China, and in trade based on Japan, the Ryûkyû Islands, Siam, and so on. As far as I know, a comprehensive history of these documents has never been written, nor am I aware of any study which tries to systematically locate them in European and other archives. It might be a rewarding task to undertake this effort because, indirectly, new light might also be shed on the Portuguese system of cartazes. Be this as it may, here we are chiefly concerned with the Qing period and one specific type of passport.

With the Manchu conquest of Ming China in the 1640s, parts of Fujian and other coastal areas of China were torn by a period of unrest which was related to the activities of Zheng Chenggong [鄭成功] (Koxinga) and his clan. After the defeat of the Zheng forces in the early 1680s, the new Manchu rulers gradually re-opened China's ports for private trade. Foreign shipping, however, was mainly going into Guangzhou, directly, or by way of Macau. There then followed a brief period in the early eighteenth century when the Qing curbed private trade for some years, but by the late 1720s, the situation had turned back to "normal", with Fujianese and other junks sailing to various destinations in Southeast Asia and Japan, and Portuguese, English and other vessels going to Macau and Guangzhou.

The Chinese, however, tried to reglement trade to and from Macau by limiting the number of vessels being registered in that port. At around 1725, we learn from the *Aomen jilüe*, the maximum number of ships

Traum vom schnellen Reichtum: Das Ausgreifen der Dänen nach Indien und China (1620–1845), dargestellt im Kontext ihrer europäischen Konkurrenten (doctorial dissertation, Bamberg 1997).

[9] ZHANG XIE (author), XIE FANG [謝方] (ed.): *Dongxiyang kao.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1981, j. 7 (Zhongwai jiaotong shiji congkan); LEONARD BLUSSÉ and ZHUANG GUOTU [莊國土]: *Fuchienese Commercial Expansion into the Nan-yang as Mirrored in the "Tung Hsi Yang K'ao".* In: Revista de Cultura (special number prepared by JORGE M. FLORES) 13/14 (1991), pp. 140–149; STEPHEN TSENG-HSIN CHANG [張增信]: *Commodities Imported to the Chang-chou Region of Fukien during the Late Ming Period. A Preliminary Analysis of the Tax Lists Found in Tung-hsi-yang k'ao.* In: R. P. and DIETMAR ROTHERMUND (eds.): *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, c. 1400–1750.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 1991 (Beiträge zur Südasienforschung, Südasien-Institut, Universität Heidelberg 141), pp. 161–163.

allowed was twenty-five in all. The Chinese custom-house in Macau had to look after these matters, its principal raison d'être being, of course, to extract money from the Portuguese – money which lined the pockets of the mandarins in the neighbouring towns of Xiangshan [香山], Zhongshan [中山], and elsewhere. The Portuguese accepted the rules of this game simply to avoid trouble. As to the procedures of registering ships and levying taxes, this was done in the following way: "The [Chinese] local official [in charge of Macau's port] was instructed to number all ships, to brand the [respective] numbers [on them], and to hand out a document to each vessel, with the names of the owner, skipper, sailors and foreign merchants, and the commander in charge, all of which had to be filled into [this document], so that [this] could be verified, registered and sent to the governor-general [of Guangdong and Guangxi] by the coastal control posts whenever a ship was about to leave a port."[10]

These regulations and other considerations have stimulated mainland Chinese historians to argue that early Qing Macau was under complete control of the Chinese, in every respect and at every point in time. In 1992, for example, HUANG QICHEN [黄啟臣] of Zhongshan University published a long article in which he claims the Portuguese enjoyed but a very limited degree of "autonomy" over Macau, and no more than that (the expression for autonomy, it might be worth mentioning, appears in quotation marks). He even attacked YUAN BANGJIAN's [元邦建] and YUAN GUIXIU's [袁桂秀] Sino-centric survey history of Macau for being too lenient in this point.[11] Curiously enough, HUANG repeated some of

[10] YIN GUANGREN [印光任] and ZHANG RULIN [張汝霖] (authors), ZHAO CHUNCHEN [趙春晨] (notes): *Aomen jilüe jiaozhu*. Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau 1992, p. 73; GOMES: *Ou-Mun Kei-Leok*, p. 112. For some background information, see A. M. MARTINS DO VALE: *Os Portugueses em Macau (1750–1800)*. Macau: Institvto Portvgvês do Oriente 1997 (Colecção Memória do Oriente), p. 71, and documentation in Arquivo Histórico de Macau (ed.): *Arquivos de Macau*, 1. ser. Macau: Imprensa Nacional 1929, vol. I, no. 5, pp. 253–269.

[11] YUAN BANGJIAN and YUAN GUIXIU: *Aomen shilüe*. Hong Kong: Zhongliu chubanshe 1988; HUANG QICHEN: *Ming Qing shiqi Zhongguo zhengfu dui Aomen zhuquan de xingshi*. In: Zhongshan daxue, Gang Ao yanjiu zhongxin (ed.): *Gang Ao luncong*, vol. 1. Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe 1992, pp. 203–226, especially pp. 203, 220–223, 224 n. 1. The discussion in JIANG BINGZHENG's [姜秉正] *Aomen wenti shimo*. Beijing: Falü chubanshe 1992, especially in part 3 of that book, is less radical but still very biased. Recently, there also appeared a number of works in Macau which touch the issue of China's "control" in Ming and early Qing times. See, for example, HUANG QICHEN and ZHENG WEIMING [鄭煒明]: *Aomen jingji sibai nian*. Macau: Aomen jijinhui 1994, or MI JIAN [米健] et al.: *Aomen falü (Direito de Macau)*. Macau: Aomen jijinhui, 1994, pp. 1–5.

his statements in a monograph published by the Macau Historical Research Society circa two years ago.[12] This book, it may be added, contains a preface by CHEN SHURONG [陳樹榮] and HUANG HANQIANG [黃漢強], the latter being a Beijing-trained expert on Macau matters, whose biographical sketch can be found in various Chinese publications on Macau.

Among the many interesting remarks contained in HUANG QICHEN's work is the observation that Qing China, being "generous" and "conciliatory", applied the old method of "letting barbarians govern barbarians" (*yi yi zhi yi* [以夷治夷]) to Macau.[13] In spite of so much "generosity", some auctoritas (or *wei* [威]) was also needed, since, according to yet another modern historian, HUANG WENKUAN [黃文寬], the Portuguese, "when happy, behaved like humans, but when angry, turned into beasts ... showing their teeth and stretching out their claws". This last passage is again from the *Aomen jilüe*, the interesting point being that HUANG WENKUAN did not bother to indicate his source, nor to put these phrases into quotation marks.[14] HUANG's message, I am afraid, is clear and does not require any further comment; what remains to be studied, however, are the possible long-term effects of such polemics on the historical consciousness of Macau's Chinese population.

Having let my thoughts run astray, for which I must apologize, we may now turn back to the main issue which is no less controversial. Macau's merchants were not satisfied with Qing China's attempts at regulating local trade conditions. The system of licences imposed on them by the mandarins was practically left without any major adjustment to constantly changing market conditions; this inevitably caused endless misunderstandings between both sides. Numerous documents in the Torro do Tombo testify to these troubles.[15]

Another way of putting the problem would be to say that China's officials were somewhat inconsistent in the manner they handled the licence system. A typical shipping licence such as the one preserved in the AHU was a pre-fabricated text with certain blanks. Upon registration of a ship, these blanks had to be filled in correctly, just as indi-

[12] HUANG QICHEN: *Aomen lishi* (*ze yuangu zhi 1840 nian*). Macau: Aomen lishi xuehui, 1995.

[13] HUANG QICHEN: *Ming Qing shiqi*, as in n. 11.

[14] HUANG WENKUAN: *Aomen shi gouchen*. Macau: Aomen xingguang chubanshe 1987, p. 32; *Aomen jilüe jiaozhu*, p. 66.

[15] TANG SI PENG: *Fontes chinesas*, p. 42.

cated in the *Aomen jilüe*. In the case of our document, it was stated, for example, that the ship in question carried "twenty-eight foreign seamen, ten shot-guns, six artillery pieces, and twelve *dan* [石] and six *dou* [斗] of rice" (about 750 kilograms). The licence also specifies the name of the skipper and the ship's destination – in this case, Luzon. In theory, such a licence would exempt the commander of the vessel to be double-taxed in other ports along the China coast, and in the event of shipwreck, Chinese coastal patrols were obliged to help the crew and facilitate overland transport back to Macau.

The licence found in the AHU is accompanied by an old Portuguese translation prepared by Rodrigo da Madre de Deus and two short notes, most likely by Miguel de Arriaga Brum de Silveira, who at one time was the *ouvidor* of Macau and is generally known to have been one of the most illustrious figures in this city.[16] Arriaga's comments on the licence system verify that the Chinese would indeed help sailors in distress but he also indicates that China's coastal officials tended to extort huge sums from any vessel, especially if the captain had lost or forgotten to take along with him the licence issued by the customs authorities in Macau. But this is not all. Arriaga also comments on the details registered in these licences which, as he observes, did not correspond to reality: "The Chinese emperors, since time immemorial, conceded to the Portuguese citizens of Macau that they may employ, to their commercial advantage, twenty-five sail in all, wishing that in the case of all vessels, from the first to the last, there always be listed the same pilot's name, the same quantity of artillery and staff, etc. – just as in the very first instance. This is done in such a way that, when a ship is sold, lost or taken out of service for reasons of age, the [new] vessel filling its position must use the same pilot's name and register the same number of guns and crew, even if it is only a brigg and not a large nau, as in previous times." He concludes: "Taking this in its own light, the owners

[16] On Arriaga, see, for example, MANUEL TEIXEIRA: *Os ouvidores em Macau*. In: Boletim do Instituto Luís de Camões 10.3–4 (1976), and his *Miguel de Arriaga*. Macau: Imprensa Nacional 1966. Also see VASCONCELOS DE SALDANHA: *Estudos*, pp. 94 et seq. (plus references in the footnotes there), and PETER HABERZETTL and R. P.: *Macau: Geographie, Geschichte, Wirtschaft und Kultur. Ein Handbuch*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 1995 (South China and Maritime Asia. 3.), p. 22. On Rodrigo da Madre de Deus, see again TEIXEIRA's *Miguel de Arriaga*, pp. 49–55. – I am grateful to ANTÓNIO GRAÇA DE ABREU for having pointed out to me that the two notes in question must have been written by Arriaga.

and pilots are immortal beings and the crew is unchangeable because it is now more than two hundred and eighty years ago that Macau became a colony of His Majesty, [the king of Portugal], and the individuals referred to are always the same in the minds of the Chinese."

Miguel de Arriaga was well-accepted by the Chinese, even some mainland Chinese historians treated him kindly. Hence, we may ask, if a person of his rank and reputation put in doubt the efficiency of the Chinese licence system, how is one to deal with such works as the ones published by HUANG QICHEN, HUANG WENKUAN, and others? After all, how did the licence system function? Which were the main points of dissent? Why were Chinese officials so inflexible in handling the rules they had set up? – Clearly, it is hoped that a thorough investigation of the Torro do Tombo collection will bring to light more details on these and other questions.

III

The second document refers to the British occupation of Macau in 1808. The historical background of this episode is well known:[17] Already at the end of the eighteenth century the British sought to obtain a trad-

[17] The most recent contribution to this subject is an essay by ANTÓNIO GRAÇA DE ABREU: *Macao, Miguel de Arriaga, and the Chinese: A Note on the Failed British Occupation of Macao in 1808.* In: SABINE DABRINGHAUS and R. P., with the assistance of RICHARD TESCHKE (eds.): *China and Her Neighbours: Borders, Foreign Policy, and Visions of the Other, 10th to 19th Century.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 1997 (South China and Maritime Asia. 6.), pp. 183–198. Similar information, but presented somewhat differently, may be found, for example, in AUSTIN COATES: *Macao and the British, 1637–1842: Prelude to Hong Kong.* Rpt. Hong Kong, etc.: Oxford University Press 1988, ch. 5, and C. A. MONTALTO DE JESUS: *Historic Macao.* Rpt. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press 1984, ch. 14. For a modern background study, see ERNESTINA CARREIRA: *Moçambique, Goa e Macau durante as Guerras Napoleónicas, 1801–1810.* In: MATOS and THOMAZ (eds.): *As relações,* pp. 218–234. Some interesting details are also contained in the following works: ÂNGELA GUIMARÃES: *Uma relação especial. Macau e as relações luso-chinesas (1780–1844).* Lisbon: Edição Cies 1996, chapter IV; M. C. B. MAYBON: *Les Anglais à Macao en 1802 et en 1808.* In: Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient 6 (1906), pp. 301–321; and documents in LO SHU-FU: *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations (1644–1820).* Tucson: The University of Arizona Press 1966, I, pp. 369–377, and II, notes. The coverage in some modern books such as GEOFFREY C. GUNN's *Encountering Macau: A Portuguese City-State on the Periphery of China, 1557–*

ing post along the China coast, but China flatly rejected all proposals to open regular trade relations, the most spectacular British failure being the embassy headed by Lord Macartney. There then followed a brief British initiative to take over Macau in 1802/03. Again, these plans did not materialize and the British were compelled to withdraw. But they returned for a second time in September 1808. This time they did occupy Macau to "defend" the Portuguese, as they claimed, against a conjectured French attack. The real objective was, of course, to gain permanent possession of Macau.

The British intermezzo caused serious problems to the citizens of Macau because Goa had consented to the British move. In spite of these adverse conditions, the Macanese, thanks to Miguel de Arriaga, knew well how to play the few trumps they had left. Arriaga alerted the local mandarins, discreetly informing them about the ways in which Britain had acquired large parts of India. This incited the otherwise phlegmatic Manchu officials to put pressure on the invaders and on the British merchants residing near Guangzhou. Some Chinese troops were mobilized, just as Arriaga had hoped. Admiral Drury, the British commander, being advised by his subordinates that nothing could be achieved, even if the outskirts of Guangzhou were shelled by Britain's guns, eventually decided to leave Macau. He thus withdrew his troops only a few weeks after they had disembarked. No shot was fired, Macau was returned to the Portuguese undamaged, and the Mandarins were satisfied with their grand achievements. The real hero, however, was Miguel de Arriaga who had outwitted two greedy Goliaths by placing himself in the role of a wise David.

Many Chinese secondary works present these events in a somewhat different light. HUANG WENKUAN's book may again serve as an example. Neither does he admit that Qing China was totally ignorant of the European scenario – the Napoleonic threat – and its implications for European policy in the Far East, nor does he tell his reader that Macau played a brilliant round of chess. Instead, he claims, Portugal "had no capacity to resist [the British], ceding Macau with folded hands to them. Therefore, the Chinese government took the initiative and reprimanded the [British] robbers, letting them know that Macau was Chinese [soil] and that, whereas the Portuguese might endure the seizure

1999. Boulder: Westview Press 1996, pp. 46–47, is very short. Of the few modern Chinese accounts, the one in FEI CHENGKANG: *Aomen sibai nian*, pp. 216–220 (English version, pp. 182–186), is perhaps the least biased one.

[of this port], the Chinese could never be cheated. It was only then that [the British] quietly disappeared, returning Macau to China, and that the Chinese continued to let the Portuguese live there."[18] In short, the Portuguese had no will-power to defend themselves and it was exclusively due to China's "initiative" that Macau was saved from disaster. Moreover, after her successful move against the British, says HUANG, China granted the Portuguese "a very preferential treatment", something "that other countries were unable to obtain and that was indeed singular in the whole world"!

There can be no doubt that Macau was extremely weak when the British arrived, but downgrading or completely ignoring the merits of Arriaga, as HUANG has done, cannot be accepted. The AHU document cited above indicates that Arriaga was held in high esteem by the Chinese business community of Macau. The city's peace, it is said there, "depends completely on the Government of the Celestial Dynasty *and* the energy of ... the *ouvidor* [Miguel de Arriaga]". Our text, it may be added, was signed on behalf of more than one hundred and eighty Chinese shops and enterprises then existing in Macau. Therefore, it probably represents the opinion of most Macau-Chinese traders and businessmen at that time.

Another point is that the AHU text also underlines the harmonious cooperation between the Portuguese and Chinese living in Macau and that it clearly praises the *ouvidor* for his merits. "He is a good and talented man", says the document, "who respects the mandarins of the Celestial Dynasty and who, negotiating with the English general and soldiers, made them understand their errors so that they went back to their country and returned Macau [to the Portuguese king] without causing any violence or destruction." The Chinese merchants of Macau, it is added, assisted Arriaga against the British by sending a petition to the Guangzhou governor, asking him to undertake various measures against the invaders. Hence, as far as China's role in this affair is concerned, it received vital support from the Macau-Chinese merchants – which is quite different from what HUANG WENKUAN seems to suggest, namely, that it were the Qing officials who, all on their own, effected Drury's withdrawal.

Clearly, Qing documents, in particular official notes such as the one presented here, nearly always carry a flattering undertone to please the addressee, in this case the Portuguese king; therefore, not all the prais-

[18] HUANG WENKUAN: *Aomen shi gouchen*, p. 31.

ing words they contain should be taken at face value. Phrases like "we, as Chinese, live together with the Portuguese in Macau, doing business here, in harmony [with each other] and as if we were brothers" today sound like mere conventions and were often intended to convey some deeper message, especially if an important petition was involved. In a certain sense, this also applies to our document, but at the same time there are reasons to assume that the Chinese merchants who signed this letter were quite honest in what they wished to express. The reasons for this assumption are as follows: Arriaga came under attack by internal rivals and, as *ouvidor*, was eventually replaced by João Baptista de Guimarães Peixoto. Although this only occurred in January 1810, several months after the above note had been dispatched, it is very likely that Macau's Chinese merchants knew of the dangers lying ahead and thus thought to protect their candidate as best as they could.[19] The following sentences reflect these thoughts: "As [your country] is far away, beyond rivers and mountains, we are sincerely concerned that you, King of Portugal, may not be fully informed about [our local] events; therefore, we respectfully send this letter, [sincerely] requesting you to keep the *ouvidor* in office, that he may carry on to handle Macau's affairs and not be replaced [by someone else], for [in this way] the Portuguese in Macau and we, the Chinese, would enjoy continued peace and happiness."

Arriaga, it is clear, was of great importance to the Chinese community in Macau. He was seen as the guarantor of stable business conditions, and was also known to be a key figure in local efforts to curb piracy in the Pearl River estuary. The very fact that Macau's Chinese merchants decided to support him – perhaps more than anyone else – had little to do with "abstract" politics, or the "stick and carrot ideology" practised by the imperial court towards all "barbarians"; money was the primary concern of these merchants, and the money should be made by them, in Macau, and not by some rivalling entrepreneurs in Guangzhou, the mandarins in Xiangshan and Zhongshan, or by some pirates off the central Guangdong coast. The Chinese merchants in Macau, it may be surmised, always favoured those who, in their view, were of greatest advantage to Macau's local business interests. Miguel de Arriaga was an excellent example: he wished to do away with the British and hoped to improve Macau's position in international trade just as the local Chinese merchant elite in Macau grew weary of the

[19] TEIXEIRA: *Miguel de Arriaga*, pp. 77–80.

merchants in Guangzhou who were inclined to cooperate with the British, thereby causing damage to Macau. This brings me to my final observation in connection with the above document: The degree of real or potential competition among rivalling Chinese merchant groups is an important aspect in much of Macau's history (even today) and would therefore need to be investigated more systematically. It is possible that the available documentation in the Torro do Tombo will be useful in clarifying this important issue.[20]

IV

The third document on which I shall comment here raises very different questions. To begin with, this text, a letter by the Prince Regent D. João to the Jiaqing emperor (dated 1813), was originally written in Portuguese and only then translated into Chinese, possibly by a clerical in Macau or Rio de Janeiro, where the prince regent resided at that time, due to events in Europe. Both the original Portuguese version and the old Chinese translation are conserved in the AHU. The interesting part about these two texts is that we can compare their style and in this way see how the translation was made to suit the taste of the addressee and certain conventions then prevailing in China.

The content of this document is related to Macau's role in fighting various pirate groups in the Pearl River estuary, the most important events occurring in late 1809 and early 1810:[21] Following the withdrawal of Admiral Drury's fleet from Macau, pirates and rebel forces opposing the Qing government once again became more active in the area. This led to a Sino-Portuguese agreement signed by Miguel de Arriaga, José Joaquim de Barros and their Chinese counterparts on behalf of the Macau governor and the governor in Guangzhou. The agreement stipulated seven points: Among other things, Macau was to equip six ships to assist regular Chinese forces in combat against sea marauders; China had to pay 80,000 *tael* to the Portuguese as compensation for the military aid it received; the old privileges formerly granted to Macau were

[20] For a recent monograph on the Chinese merchants in Canton, see Weng Eang Cheong: *The Hong Merchants of Canton. Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade.* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press 1997 (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series. 70.).

[21] This mainly follows Rodrigues: *A acção "concertada"*, who indicates all important sources.

to be reinstalled after the accomplishment of all military objectives.[22] These old privileges consisted of various rights, for example the authority to punish Chinese residents living in Macau, and so on. To some extent the inclusion of this point in the agreement was superfluous because the Portuguese handled most things according to their own gusto anyway. But in view of growing British influence in the area, and the rapidly spreading practice of defining rights and competences through written agreements, the Portuguese wanted to play things safe and therefore also wished to consider this point.

After the defeat of the pirates, dissent between Miguel de Arriaga, the Macau governor and others, it seems, contributed to the fact that China did not keep all the promises laid down in the agreement of 1809. Certain details are still unclear, but this does not need to concern us here. The important point is that the Portuguese prince regent in Brazil obviously knew what had happened near and in Macau. Apparently he thought the Chinese side had not fulfilled its obligations, in spite of the assistance it had received from his subjects. Therefore, he decided to bring this case to the attention of the Jiaqing emperor, hoping the latter would intervene in favour of the Portuguese.

One of the interesting aspects is that, as in so many similar cases, the Portuguese court obviously thought its counterpart, the Beijing court, would be well-informed about and interested in all major events connected with the affairs of central Guangdong and Macau. But the agreement cited above was made on the local level, between the representatives of two governors, and not between the heads of two central governments. Local agreements of this type, between Guangdong and Macau, sometimes worked out well. However, the Beijing court was not always consulted prior to decision-making in Guangzhou and if, later on, the far north was notified on what had occurred in the deep south, its representatives in Guangzhou and Xiangshan did not necessarily receive the kind of support they might have wished for. This being so, there was little hope for any superior Portuguese authority to ever move the bureaucratic agencies in China's imperial capital beyond the point of merely pocketing valuable toys and other gifts reminiscent of tribute goods. Hence, writing to the Chinese emperor and addressing

[22] See, for example, JÚLIO FIRMINO JÚDICE BIKER (ed.): *Collecção de tratados e concertos de pazes que o Estado da Índia Portugueza fez com os Reis e senhores* ..., vol. 11. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional 1886, pp. 251–252, and TEIXEIRA: *Miguel de Arriaga*, pp. 62–63.

him as equal, hoping he would ask his own subjects to fulfill a local agreement, made little sense, unless the entire effort of doing so was simply understood as an act of courtesy.

At this point some general observations may be added. First, as late as the early nineteenth century, agreements did not mean very much to the Chinese court. China treated all Westerners as inferiors, quite in contrast to the Portuguese kings (and some other European sovereigns) who politely addressed the Beijing emperors as mighty equals. For the government in Guangzhou all this meant that local contracts with the Portuguese could be exploited to Guangdong's own advantage but, legally, they rarely had any binding effect. Beijing was the ultimate authority and if Guangzhou did not wish to fulfill certain demands, then Beijing could be called in for assistance, i.e., Guangzhou could turn a blind eye on the Portuguese, pretending that there was no need for action vis-à-vis an "inferior border town". Macau was not in a position to play a similar game, all it could do was to avoid unnecessary friction, establish personal ties across the border (as, quite obviously, Arriaga had done), and, at the same time, capitalize on possible dissent within the Chinese camp.

The above, it is clear, rarely shows up in modern mainland Chinese publications on Macau. Communist historians practically never think about rivalries within China, nor do they look at the relations between the northern court and the southern metropolis which, very clearly, had a certain influence on the relations between Guangdong and Macau. Moreover, as has recently been demonstrated, for example, by Geoff Wade, mainland historians sometimes continue to employ the old rhetorics today, seeing things from the angle of the central authorities, so as to legitimize past policies of expansion.[23] The very fact that China's feudal lords and emperors were, in Marxist terms, "reactionary exploiters", is brushed away by these same historians once it comes to the issue of defending national interests – or, for that matter, pseudo-national ones, since the Qing were not Chinese.

With these ideas in mind we can return to our document. Portuguese monarchs, we may surmise, were not too well-informed about the technical difficulties in coming to terms with Chinese government institutions, especially with the court officials in Beijing. They would thus

[23] Geoff Wade: *Some Topoi in Southern Border Historiography during the Ming.* In: Dabringhaus and R. P. (eds.): *China and Her Neighbours*, pp. 135–158.

write to a Chinese emperor as if they wrote to a European sovereign. Of course they knew well they had to be more polite than usual which, as our document demonstrates, indeed they were. Generally speaking, in official Portuguese correspondence, China's emperors were praised, perhaps more than any European ruler ever was, but, as I have said, China's monarchs were addressed as "counterparts" and thus treated as equals – quite in contrast to what China expected. The Chinese translation of the document we are dealing with tries to maintain this tone, but it is distinctly different from the original in that it downgrades the role of the Portuguese king. The translator, it is clear, knew that these "adjustments" were a conditio sine qua non, if diplomatic complications were to be avoided.

Translators fulfilled an import role. They pleased both sides by constantly "adjusting" official texts to the conventions of the addressees. In theory, a bad translator could cause enormous damage to either side if, intentionally or unintentionally, he transgressed these conventions. Historians dealing with official correspondence, and even with treaties, have to keep these observations in mind. Modern Chinese historians in particular should not exclusively rely on official Chinese text versions received by Chinese government authorities, or on statements found in official printed sources. These text versions are usually based on the implicit assumption that China was the only civilized nation and thereby superior to anyone else. Portuguese text versions are much more balanced and generally devoid of such fallacies.

The two texts we are dealing with here are "borderline" cases. The original Portuguese version opens by politely pointing out that Sino-Macanese joint efforts have led to victory over pirate fleets and that Macau has fulfilled all its treaty obligations – this refers to the agreement of 1809. The Chinese translation transfers the initiative for this joint operation to the governor in Guangzhou, stating he had "invited the foreign officials in Macau" to participate therein. It then continues by saying, "[the Chinese officials] also promised that if [my (= Portugal's) vassals] would demonstrate sincere efforts [in this matter], they (= the Chinese) would then, upon completion of the military campaign, immediately report their merits to the throne, [thereby] asking for permission that [Macau] be given anew the privileges formerly granted at the mercy of the Great Emperor of the Celestial Dynasty". The original Portuguese text sounds less submissive. It addresses the merits of Macau's soldiers in an open but very polite way; it does not leave the evaluation of their performance to the mercy of the mandarins; and it

reminds the Chinese emperor, firmly but at the same time in a very cordial tone, that some items of the aforementioned agreement still await their fulfillment.

The Chinese version introduces some other aspects: it states the Portuguese "were not only willing to follow the noble instructions of the governor-general [in Guangzhou]", they went far beyond his proposals, taking high risks on their own, thereby showing their sincere loyality to the Chinese emperor; it is, nevertheless, politely left to the Chinese side to evaluate the behaviour of the Macanese. In addition, the Chinese version puts much more emphasis on the virtues of the emperor; it tactfully alludes to the expectation that he, due to his extraordinary "generosity" and "justice", might effect the restoration of the former privileges. The implied meaning is, of course, that it would be incompatible with his fine reputation if he, contrary to all expectations, would break his word, or, more correctly, the "word" of his subjects in Guangzhou. Such an allusion, however, bore certain risks: the court might either accept it, or else, become infuriated, particularly if it thought its own local officials had not acted correctly. To avoid this last possibility, the Chinese version vaguely states the Guangdong "officials have already sent a memorandum, taking care of these matters and promising to restore the old favours". A statement such as this would not escape the court's attention because it concerned the internal workings of the Chinese administration; moreover, the foreign king's letter, so the court probably thought, was written with bona fide, hence it was impossible to fully ignore it.

Both text versions end by referring to the cordial relations between Portugal and China; in the Portuguese version, however, the prince regent indicates his appreciation of the Jiaqing emperor's "friendship", in the Chinese translation this expression is omitted because it would presuppose a certain degree of equality between both sides, moreover, possible Chinese words for "friendship" might bear an informal connotation not acceptable to the Chinese court. Instead, the Chinese text, once again, conveys the idea that the Portuguese sender was in a somewhat inferior position, although – which is equally important to note – he never speaks of himself as China's vassal. Finally, the very last sentence of the Portuguese version – "May the peace of God be with you" – comes out as "I wish the Great Emperor a myriad joys and strong health". There are two reasons for this: first, it was a Chinese convention to use the latter phrase and, second, in some sense the Chinese expression for "God", *shangdi* [上帝], i.e., "Superior Lord", contra-

dicted the idea of the emperor being the highest "lord", a symbol for Heaven, or Heaven's representative on earth.

More official notes of which we have two versions, a Portuguese and a Chinese one, could be analyzed in similar ways. A catalogue of terms and expressions, either courteous, derogatory, or "neutral", could be compiled and related to certain situations depicted in these texts. There was, to be sure, a "standard inventory" of Portuguese and Chinese phrases and words with – it might be worth closer examination – possible variations depending on the rank and level of the sender and addressee, or more simply, depending on whether a note was dispatched to the ruler or just to one of his subjects. Linguistic research of this kind, I am afraid, will have to start in Lisbon or elsewhere in the West; mainland Chinese historians are too deeply caught in their own rhetorics and would be impaired by the risks of breaking with their own tradition.

V

The above were merely a few uncoordinated jottings on three Chinese documents of which two are from the "Arriaga era". They nevertheless may have shown some of the difficulties and peculiarities pertaining to this type of documentation and given some hints at the direction future philological analysis of such texts might take. It is not impossible that a number of suprises are awaiting the historian as he works his way through the enormous body of Chinese materials in the Torro do Tombo. What I would like to suggest, is to group the existent material according to meaningful topics, relying not exclusively on either Western or Asian sinologists, but on both, and to start the tedious effort of translating certain compounds of texts so as to facilitate further studies of their contents.