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“Siam is the best place in the Indies”. Father Nicola
Cima O.E.S.A. and his memorandum of 1707 for
renewed East Indies trade

Stefan Halikowski-Smith*

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Resumo

O missionário agostinho Nicola Cima redigiu uma ignorada descrição detalhada das Índias Orientais em 1707, destacando Ayutthaya como um reino com interesse para Veneza desenvolver relações comerciais em parceria com a Companhia Dinamarquesa das Índias Orientais. Neste artigo, procuramos relacionar os pormenores da vida de Cima com a sua narrativa textual e questionar até que ponto a descrição, apresentada ao Senado veneziano, se fundamenta em acontecimentos reais do século XVIII ou deriva dos delírios da mente de um missionário.

Palavras-chave: Ordem dos Eremitas de Santo Agostinho, Ayutthaya (Sião), comércio colonial das Índias Orientais, cultura escrita missionária, império veneziano

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Abstract

The Augustinian missionary Nicola Cima wrote a detailed and overlooked survey of the East Indies in 1707, singling out Ayutthaya as a kingdom Venice might like to develop trading links with in conjunction with the Danish East Indies Company. Here we try to map the details of Cima's life on to his textual narrative and enquire to what extent this *relazione*, presented to the Venetian Senate, is grounded in eighteenth-century realities or the delusions of a missionary mind.

Keywords: Augustinian missionary order, Ayutthaya (Siam), colonial East Indies trade, missionary written culture, the Venetian empire

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“Siam is the best place in the Indies”. Father Nicola Cima O.E.S.A. and his memorandum of 1707 for renewed East Indies trade.

Stefan Halikowski-Smith

The Augustinian missionary Nicola Agustin Cima's *Relazione Distinta delli Regni di Siam, China, Tunchino e Cocincina*, a 66 page manuscript completed around 1707, submitted for the consideration of the Venetian Senate, and today kept in the Marciana Library, Venice under the classification Ital Cl. VI. 76 (6036) is both a prescriptive document for the reinvigoration of Venetian long distance maritime commerce put forward for deliberation by the Venetian Senate, and a *tour d'horizon* of the commercial and political possibilities offered in the Orient. One of the underlying themes therein is that Ayutthaya, by which Cima meant Siam, was the best place (*luogo*) for conducting trade in the East, and it is with these ideas in mind that an extract of this text is presented here, accompanied by a critical commentary.

In the existent historiography, Cima is something of an invisible character, appearing only in obscure Italian publications which never made it abroad, or else as an occasional correspondent from the China mission field, that grail of the European missionary career, where the medical attentions he bestowed on the Kangxi emperor were both shortlived, and inconsequential.¹ Cima's fullest editor, the Genoese historian Francesco Surdich, moreover, does not even allow for Cima's first-hand experience of Ayutthaya, although this is not matched by the information Cima himself provides in his account, which I have provided a translation of in my forthcoming book *Between Illusions and Reality. Two missionary accounts of Southeast Asia from the late seventeenth century*. While Cima admits to having said mass in Acheh, Sumatra, he then dwells on his rewarding trip to Siam, where amongst other things, he suggests he was invited to discussions with the Barcalon (Phra Khlung, or official responsible for foreign trade and trading communities). He makes an extensive topographical and ethnographic survey, extols the 'liberty of residence' there and suggests missionaries

¹ Francesco SURDICH, *Fonti sulla penetrazione europea in Asia : Una variante quattrocentesca della lettera del prete Gianni. L'attività di padre Cristoforo Borri nelle Indie orientali in un resoconto inedito. Le [sic] relazione sulle Indie orientali di un frate agostiniano*, Genova, Studi di storia delle esplorazioni, 1979; Nicolas STANDAERT, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2001, vol. 1.

could develop a language seminary of the type young Venetians flocked to in Constantinople. Then, 'the year after that invitation [1703] the Danish Company of the Indies, the Governor and Director of Tranquebar, was stimulated to send a vessel to Mergui under the command of Lord Captain Meijar, and I (*sic*) went there [to Mergui] as ambassador and envoy and then he returned with me to Copenhagen'. Section §4 of this article is devoted to the empirical task of demonstrating, or rather confirming this claim. As we shall see, however, the text Cima left behind presents other problems.

1. An imaginary text?

The distraction from any spiritual purpose to this missionary text is disconcerting, but one's suspicions are further aggravated by Cima's fleeting and extremely speculative recommendations, to be interpreted by psychoanalysts as delusional, both in the sense of a personal *delusion de grandeur*, but also with respect to a shocking ignorance of the political realities around him. One is reminded of a bureaucrat in Madrid who commented that those sent on missions were 'not the most lucid' members of their orders.²

We might take as example the sections regarding Cima's supplications to the Siamese Barcalon to concede a 'place' (*piazza*) for future Venetian traders. These are hard to believe in the light of what we would be tempted to describe as the strongly nationalist turn following the Court Revolution of 1688. The kind of frosty response meted out to Guy Tachard S.J., who visited the court of Phetracha in 1699, is what we should expect: he found 'the city of Siam greatly changed. It is little more than a desert, where there is neither merchant, nor commerce, the Christians, the Moors and the other foreigners have almost all left'.³ When Mgr. Quémener visited in 1701 to present French schemes to build a fort at Mergui, raise that at Bangkok, settle old debts and re-establish trade, he was told by the Barcalon that these suggestions were 'very unreasonable' (*très déraisonnable*).⁴ Even if we were to go along with recent historians, who insist that the court was anti-French but not 'nationalistic' in an age prior to nationalism,

² Letter of Fernão de Matos, in P. Zacañas NOVOA, 'El M.R.P. Fr. Melchior de los Angeles, agustino, primer misionero en Persia', in *Archivo Agustiniiano*, Vol. 45, 1951, pp. 268-9.

³ Guy TACHARD, *Relation de voyage dans les Indes par un Père de la Compagnie de Jésus, 1690-9*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Ms. Fr. 19030 (s.d.), 192r.

⁴ See the biography of Quémener provided by the ARCHIVES DES MISSIONS ÉTRANGÈRES DE PARIS, no. 87, <http://archives.mepasie.org/notices/notices-necrologiques/quemener-1644-1704> (URL accessed 25 June 2015).

port movements compiled between 1676-1702 by Remco Raben only confirm this hostile, anti-business atmosphere.⁵ What little trade there was became monopolised by the king and suffered high duties. Visiting merchants had difficulty in selling their cargo, and their products were often forcibly impounded and their owners remunerated at a lower than market price. Erstwhile friendship with the Dutch, as evidenced by the Opperhoofd Johannes Keijts' *missiven* between 1685-8, vanished when the Thai insisted on payment in kind (sappanwood and tin) rather than in cash for Dutch commodities.⁶

Whilst professing to have invested three years of his life in Ayutthaya before his return to Europe (fol. 43r), it is hard to see how Cima so patently overlooks these political realities of the time. Might his actions have been guided by the nostalgia of a political naïf, or was he a delusionist like Guy Tachard S.J., proposing projects of an ilk which had once been popular, but now stood no chance of welcome with the relevant political authorities?⁷ Alongside Cima's readings or misreadings of business opportunity, we also need to set Cima's idealization of Ayutthaya as a haven of heterodoxy marked by freedom of conscience next to the missionary realities as expressed by other men of the cloth working in that mission field at that time. Here again we can only struggle to reconcile Cima's idealization with, say, the letter the Jesuit Jacques Jarossier sent to de Brisacier and Tiberge dated 13 March 1703, which insisted that: 'To be condemned to live in Siam is the greatest sacrifice there is in the missions, there being nothing here other than the disgusting (*dégoûtant*), troubles, fears, and embarrassments which those here feel only too keenly and which those who are not here are not able to see'.⁸ The 'liberty' of worship often ran into or together with the easy-living in Siam, which was indeed the subject of

⁵ Remco RABEN, 'Ayutthaya, King Phetracha and the world: dynamics of Kingship and trade in late seventeenth century Ayutthaya', in Dhiravat na Pombejra ed., *Proceedings of the International Symposium. Crossroads of Thai and Dutch history*, Bangkok, SEAMEO-SPAFA, 2007, 'Annual Register of arriving and departing ships in Ayutthaya, 1676-1702' – Table 2.

⁶ Ramco Raben, op. cit. François Martin reported a letter from Siam where it was written that the 'Dutch no longer enjoyed their earlier status at court. They had been reproached for not having kept the promises they had made to the King. They had not adhered even to a single one, but their commercial operations continued as before', Lotika VARADARAJAN (dir.), *India in the 17th century: (social, economic and political) memoirs of François Martin*, New Delhi, Manohar, 1981-5, vol. 2, pt 2, p. 1380.

⁷ Anthony REID, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 1999, ch. 11. See also DHIRAVAT NA POMPEJRA, 'Ayutthaya at the end of the seventeenth century: was there a shift to isolation?', in Anthony REID ed., *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power and Belief*, Ithaca NY & London, 1993, pp. 250-72.

⁸ A.M.E.P. (Paris), file 882, fol. 15.

frequent comment by some observers like the Scottish sea-captain Alexander Hamilton, although other contemporary missionaries like Francesco Maria di San Siro, of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, saw instead of liberty the political instability of the region: how the kingdoms of Pegu, Siam and Tunkin were 'in continuous unrest (*lotta*) amongst themselves', and hence not a place where the Church should seek to build institutional structures.⁹ Cima's dreams of liberty, then, are those of a would-be social tearaway, rather than a missionary intent on harvesting souls.

At this point, I hesitated, thinking that we might here be dealing with a European armchair *compiler*, or else perhaps even a forgery. Might Cima best be assessed in light of the fuss kicked up by David Selbourne's seventeenth-century manuscript purported to have been written by one Jacopo d'Ancona, or the speculation surrounding the *voyage imaginaire* of François LÉGUAT between 1690-98 and the plagiarism bedeviling the *Giro del Mondo* of Gemelli Careri?¹⁰ The detail Cima provides regarding the trades restricted to the King suggests he is well informed, but perhaps Cima errs in his dates, referring to an earlier time period prior to the 1688 court revolution, when as he says, Persian traders were granted export monopolies in the kingdom's products [fol. 31r]. Tumultuous shifts in the political landscape go unmentioned: the new king Prince Sorasak, who took the title of Sanphet VIII (or in Thai, King Süa), acceded to the throne in 1703 following Phetracha's death in February. Presumably, if Cima is accurate in his chronology, his intercession with the Barcalon took place beforehand; otherwise, he would surely have mentioned the change of power and the new ruling administration. Concrete dates do not appear

⁹ Alexander HAMILTON, *A New Account of the East Indies*, London, C. Hitch & A. Millar, 1744, vol. 2, p. 162 ('every one is at Liberty to choose his own Patron or Protector, and worship him according to his own Mind; but none are persecuted for the Opinion of the Way he is to worship'); Pietro DONAZZOLO (dir.) 'Viaggi in Oriente ed in Occidente (Sec. XVII-XVIII) del Fratello Francesco Maria di S. Siro (carmelitano Scalzo, O.C.D.) al secolo Antonio Gorla di Portalbera (Pavia)', *Rivista geografica italiana*, vol. 19, parte II, 1912, p. 434.

¹⁰ David SELBOURNE, *The City of Light*, New York, Citadel, 2000. For a survey of the controversy, see David ABULAFIA 'An amazing journey – or just a hoax', in *The Times*, 1 December 1997, p. 22. Henri DEHÉRAIN, 'Le voyage de François LÉGUAT dans l'Océan Indien: est-il imaginaire?', Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1928; Geoffroy ATKINSON, 'A French desert island novel', *PMLA*, 36, 4, December 1921, pp. 509-28 ; cf. the recent synopsis by Marcel DUCASSE, 'Le voyage de François LÉGUAT dans l'Océan Indien', in *Revue Historique des Armées*, 1, March 1996, pp. 12-20. For Careri, see Alberto MAGNAGHI, *Il Viaggiatore Gemelli Careri (secolo XVII) e il suo 'Giro del Mondo'*, Bergamo, Stabilimento Tipografico Alessandro e fratelli Cattaneo, 1900, and Philippe de VARGAS, 'Le Giro del Mondo de Gemelli Careri, en particulier le récit du séjour en Chine. Roman ou Vérité', in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, V, 4, 1955, pp. 417-451. Selbourne has failed to convince the historical community, but Careri and LÉGUAT are fully vindicated.

frequently in Cima's texts, and the nomenclature he adopts is often unclear. I have been unable to resolve with any great certainty, for example, some of Cima's Southeast Asian place names like 'Lochius' (f. 38r) or 'Porto di Ciaija' (f. 42r), and external reviewers of the book manuscript have suggested Cima may have been using obsolete information plagiarised from earlier European writers. Other details he relates, however, relating to the French agency house in Canton and the officer responsible there (f. 44v), or the seizure of homeward-bound East Indiamen at Saint Helena (f. 5v), do hold up after careful and detailed historical corroboration. China scholars have been able to reconstitute his failed mission to the Kang'xi Emperor, and I have personally gone through his letters to the order in the Fondo degli Agostiniani Scalzi di Gesù e Maria al Corso in Rome.

2. A missionary with a business orientation

Further difficulties arise if only because Cima's memorandum is so devoid of any great religious reflection or sense. At first glance, priestly discourse seems at best to be a rhetorical flourish, though he does propose some useful institutions like a language school for prospective China missionaries in Siam [top fol. 33v], that in Taiwan having been dismantled, and appears to have a realistic grasp of the struggle in converting Thai. The whole text is otherwise basically a business proposition to the Venetian Republic at a time when that Republic's energies were both dissipated, and increasingly localised. Davide Scruzza's arguments about Venice replacing its world-leading economic position by becoming at least a centre of map-making and cosmographical reflection is of interest here.¹¹ The Accademia Cosmografica degli Argonauti was, of course, set up in 1684, although even this phase seems to have come to an end with the eclipse of its leading light Vincenzo Coronelli's career in 1704 and his suspension from the Franciscan religious order by order of the Pope: we are reminded how, 'within a generation, he [Coronelli] had been almost forgotten'.¹² Thereafter, eighteenth-century Venice became increasingly a centre of lavish partying and self-indulgence, the Venice of *fasti*, much commented upon and indeed the reason for attracting foreigners on the Grand Tour.¹³

¹¹ Davide SCRUZZA, *Eine Stadt denkt sich die Welt : Wahrnehmung geographischer Räume und Globalisierung in Venedig von 1490 bis um 1600*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2010.

¹² Helen WALLIS, 'Coronelli's Libro dei Globi', in *Der Globusfreund* [Wien], 18-20 May 1970, p. 128.

¹³ Giulio LORENZETTI, *Feste e Maschere veneziane*, Venice, C. Ferrari, 1937.

For art historians, the eighteenth-century is the age in which Venice 'acquired, alongside Paris, the rank of artistic capital', a perspective celebrated in the rich collections of the Ca' Rezzonico and Fondazione Querini Stampalia.¹⁴ Scruzzi's argument is that increasingly Venetians were only duping themselves of their position in world politics and trade.

Some sense might be made of Cima's business orientation from the context of his Order. The Abbé Carré had been scandalised by the Augustinian mission in Persia during his journey of 1672-4 where he accused the priests, on the arrival of the Portuguese Indies fleet, of receiving the sailors 'as one would in France in an academy (*académie*) or a games hall (*berlan*), where they spent whole days practising things little conducive to the respect and modesty owing in a religious establishment'. In Isfahan, the Augustinian Residence had become a dissolute place, described in one document at the turn of the eighteenth century as 'a tavern and a place of business (*un lieu de négoce*)' partly as a result of debts which the Order had incurred.¹⁵ It was precisely through this mission that Cima had travelled, and forced to linger in the midst of *eorumque tribulationum*, although not for a whole year as the 'Lett. ad Ill.mum Car. Aug. Fabroni', dated Foochow-Fu, 15 September 1699, suggests.¹⁶ As an Order, the Augustinians were suffering the ultimate disgrace in the Middle East by way of renegade priests (Father António de Jesus, Father Manuel de Santa Maria), and in Thailand remained a controversial presence, thought by the Portuguese community there to be 'harmful' to the common peace, whilst there were fears triggered by their proximity to Phaulkon and jealousies that they might be selected to make an embassy to Portugal.¹⁷ They were isolated by the Missions Étrangères de Paris for refusing to take the Oath of Submission to the new French Vicars Apostolic, but were actively involved in worthwhile social institutions like hospices dedicated to the

¹⁴ Roberto LONGHI, *Viatico per cinque secoli di pittura veneziana*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1946; see also the exhibition catalogue *Il Settecento Italiano*, Venezia, Carlo Ferrari, 1929.

¹⁵ The Carré quote is taken from VAN DER CRUYSE, *Le noble désir de courir le monde: voyager en Asie au XVII^e siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 2002, p. 315. For some context, see Fortunato de ALMEIDA, *História da Igreja em Portugal*, Coimbra: Imprensa Academica, 1919-30, vol. III/1, pp. 758-62; cf. the edition produced at Porto, Portucalense, 1967-71, vol. III, pp. 295-6.

¹⁶ Anastasius VAN DEN WYNGAERT e Georgius MENSAERT (dir.), *Sinica Franciscana*, here *Relationes et epistolae illmi D. Fr. Bernardini della Chiesa, O.F.M.* vol. V, Rome, Collegium S. Antonii, 1954.

¹⁷ Francis RICHARD, 'Un Augustin Portugais Renegat Apologiste de l'Islam Chiite au Début du XVIII^e Siècle', in *Moyen Orient et Ocean Indien*, 1, 1984, pp. 73-85; for the Augustinians in Ayutthaya, Stefan HALIKOWSKI SMITH, *Creeolization and Diaspora in the Portuguese Indies. The Social World of Ayutthaya, 1640-1720*, Leiden Brill, 2011, pp. 164-168.

True Cross. Perhaps their most powerful heartland was in Bengal, where substantial numbers of converts were being made via charismatic preachers like António da Rozário, a convert son of a Bengali raja who was kidnapped as a child, and in which mission field the Augustinians forced the Jesuits into a very secondary role and ultimately, in 1746, retraction.¹⁸ It proves hard, however, as with Morelli, to understand how some of the minor orders, like the Discalced Augustinians, to which Cima belonged, managed their missions, particularly the blurring of the role and identity of the various fractions of the Order, their chrism, rules and habits.¹⁹ These fractions, for example, were referred to sometimes as O.F.E.D.S.A, sometimes O.E.D.S.A., or else O.S.A.D., O.E.E.S.A. or O.A.D., and French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian congregations remained separate. This does not seem, however, to have prevented movements across communities. One of the Augustinian documents uncovered in Rome, a letter, begins ‘Qui stiamo con la speranza della Manila’, which only betrays the excitement and impatience missionaries languishing in that holding cell of Macao must have felt at the prospect of being sent on to that robust and politically secure community of Spanish Augustinians in the Philippines.²⁰

¹⁸ ROZÁRIO was not just charismatic, but also responsible for an important reflective text on western missiology, *Argument and Dispute Upon the Law between a Roman Catholic and a Braman* (writt. before 1680, published at Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1937). See also HALIKOWSKI SMITH, ‘The Catholic mission in Bengal prior to the nineteenth century’, <http://www.colonialvoyage.com/the-catholic-mission-in-bengal/> [URL accessed 25 June 2015]. Outside observers like Fr. Ambrosio de Santo Agostinho from the Augustinian congregation in Goa often fixated on ritualistic aspects like the ‘Mysteries of the Rosary’, which I cannot but believe to be peripheral to Rozário’s recipe for success. Sushanta Sarker, ‘Dom António’, in *Banglapedia. National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 2003, vol. I, p. 226. For the Augustinian-Jesuit conflict in Bengal, see J.J.A. Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, repr. 1998, pp. 103-9.

¹⁹ See Tara ALBERTS, *Conflict and Conversion. Catholicism in South-East Asia, 1500-1700*, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 30 and Ignazio BARBAGALLO, ‘Agostiniani scalzi’, in Guerrino Pelliccia & Giancarlo Rocca eds., *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, Rome, Edizioni Paoline, 1974-2003, vol. I, pp. 404-415. There are at least two periodicals dedicated to this order, *Archivo Agustiniano*, published in Spain since 1960, with a useful digital Table of Contents at <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/revista/10053/V/84>, and *Analecta Augustiniana*, issuing from Rome since 1905.

²⁰ ‘Letter from Sig. Appiani Missionario Apostolico’, dated Canton 1701, ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI ROMA, Agostiniani Scalzi, 96v. Della Chiesa, ‘Epistola ad Cardinales S.C.’, 22 October 1701, in VAN DEN WYNGAERT e MENSAERT, op.cit., p. 431, note 20. The Philippine mission is covered exhaustively in Isácio RODRÍGUEZ e Jesús ALVÁREZ FERNÁNDEZ eds. *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniana del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas*, Valladolid, Ediciones Estudio Agustiniano, 1965-94, 22 vols. Volume V deals with the Japan and China missions.

3. A missionary (as many others) aiming for the China mission field

Cima went out to the East as part of an independent group of Italian Discalced Augustinians, sent out with the blessing of the Propaganda Fide. Cima travelled with Giovanni Mancini from the Basilica of SS. Agostino e Monica, in Rome, who proceeded to the Tonkin mission field, where the Augustinians were responsible for the creation of two flourishing districts, Kê-Sât and Kê-Vân.²¹ The overseas missionary enterprise marked a high point of the Discalced Augustinians, when around 2000 priests belonged to the order.²² On the whole they struggled, however, to create their own overseas provinces, causing a lot of rancour and demoralization amongst their priests.²³ Their missions were blocked by both the Padroado authorities as much as the Order's own Province of Portugal, which did not want to cede them too much independence, particularly given the Pope's refusal to recognize the new king João IV. Thus, as John Flannery has recently shown, Goa remained very much the 'mission hub' even after the founding of the Isfahan mission in 1602, and other centres in Tana, Cochín, Chaul, Melaka, Macao, Muscat, Mombassa, Hughli, Baçaim, Damão, Bengal, S. Tomé de Meliapur, Columbo, Basra, Georgia, Negapatnam and Aspão (probably a confusion with Argão, a place six miles from Chaul in Malabar).²⁴

Cima's journey to the Orient left the mother church of Gesù and Maria in Rome on 10 February 1697, and proceeded via Venice, Alexandretta, Aleppo, and Isfahan, to China. He finally arrived in Amoy on 16 October 1698, but only after his ship was wrecked at a latitude comparable to that of Taiwan. On this English merchant vessel from Surat, Cima lost everything, in circumstances related in his co-traveller Giovanni Mancini's letter from Amoy, dated 18 October 1698, and of the religious passengers, Philippus

²¹ Fortunato MARGIOTTI et al (dir.), *Relationes et epistolae fratrum minorum hispanorum in Siniis qui annis 1697-98 missionem ingressi sunt*, Madrid, Sinica Franciscana, vol. IX, 1995, p. 785 and note 19, p. 943; Ignazio BARBAGALLO, 'Le missioni degli Agostiniani scalzi nel Tonchino e nella Cina', *Presenza Agostiniana*, 2-4, 1992, pp. 133-141.

²² BARBAGALLO, 'Agostiniani scalzi', p. 410; cf. 'Discalced Augustinians', in R.G. TIEDEMANN, *Reference Guide to Christian Missionary Societies in China*, Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 2009, p. 7.

²³ H.A.G. [Historical Archives of Goa], vol. 2779 [Anon. account of Augustinian affairs, writ. 1747], f. 2r.

²⁴ John M. FLANNERY, *The Missions of the Portuguese Augustinians to Persia and Beyond (1602-1747)*, Leiden: Brill, 2013. For the roster of Augustinian missions, see Manuel de AVE MARIA O.S.A., *Manual Eremético da Congregação da Índia Oriental dos Eremitas de N.P.S. Agostinho*, Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra, Codex 1650.

Avril S.J. perished.²⁵ It was not clear that the Chinese government would then allow these missionaries, two Italian Augustinians and two 'riformati', into China.²⁶ Charles Maigrot, Bishop of Fukien, who came into contact with Cima, then lobbied hard, despite the 1659 *Instructions* that missionaries should avoid centres of worldly power and non-priestly activities such as medicine, which was traditionally left to lay brothers, that Cima be sent to the court in Beijing as a medic to the Kang'xi Emperor. This was a rapidly developing sphere of competence and opportunity for western missionaries, although Cima had no formal medical training here.²⁷ He was given a place in the Dongtang, and spent time travelling about in the imperial retinue in the empire's eastern provinces (Nanking and Chekiang).²⁸ He 'took possession' (*cum mandato procurationis pro accipiendo possessione ecclesie cathedralis*) of the cathedral in the name of the Bishop of Peking, Bernardino della Chiesa, on 3 December 1699, but thereafter the relationship started to develop problems.²⁹ Letters reveal 'serious perplexity' on the part of his superiors, while another noted that 'he is not apt as a

²⁵ A.S.R., Agostiniani Scalzi, 156. Cima himself claimed that English mariners stole his goods, and lobbied the Chinese mandarins to impose justice, 'Epistola ad Car. Aug. Fabroni', Aug. 1699, in WYNGAERT e MENSAERT (dir.), op. cit., vol. V, p. 399. These shipwrecks were all too common, cf. the Spanish Jesuit Adriano de las Cortes' account of the shipwreck of the *Nossa Senhora da Guia* on 16 February 1625 in similar circumstances also around 350 kms north-east of Macao, in Pascale GIRARD, *Le Voyage en Chine d'Adriano de las Cortes, S.J.*, Paris, Chandeigne, 2001, or that of the large cargo-carrying Chinese junks being escorted from Formosa to Batavia, 3 October 1646, account of Jürgen Andersen in OLEARIUS, *Orientalische Reise-Beschreibungen*, Schleswig, J. Holwein, 1669, conveniently reprinted together with that of Volquard Iversen in a more accessible modern reprint of the same *Orientalische Reise-Beschreibungen*, Dieter Lohmeier (dir.), Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1980.

²⁶ 'Letter of Bernardino della Chiesa to the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation, dated 22 October 1701', repr. in WYNGAERT e MENSAERT (dir.), *Sinica Franciscana*, vol. 5.

²⁷ Beatriz PUENTE-BALLASTEROS, *De París a Pekín, de Pekín a París: La Misión jesuita francesa como interlocutor médico en la China de la era Kangxi (r. 1662- 1722)*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Tesis Doctoral con grado Europeo, Ciencias Sociosanitarias y Humanidades Médicas, 2009; PUENTE-BALLASTEROS, 'Jesuit Medicine in the Kangxi Court (1662-1722)', in *East Asian Science Technology and Medicine*, 34, 2011, pp. 86-162.

²⁸ 'Epistola ad Car. Aug. Fabroni, Ag. 1699', in WYNGAERT e MENSAERT (dir.), op.cit., vol. V, p. 385, nr. 6, 397 (More generally, see Claudia von COLLANI 'Mission and Medicine in China between canon law, charity and science', in Staf Vloeberghs (dir.), *History of Catechesis in China*, Leuven, Leuven Chinese Studies XVIII, 2008, pp. 37-68.

²⁹ Cima seems to have become a pawn here in the sparring between the Jesuits, who claimed the church for themselves, and the Franciscans, who were sent out to redistribute power in the mission somewhat more equably, and to whom the Jesuits only permitted the use of the church, see 'Epistola ad Cardinales S.C.', Peking, 6 octobris 1700, in WYNGAERT e MENSAERT (dir.) op. cit. vol. V, p. 416, and for more context, Luigi BRESSAN & Michael SMITHIES, *Siam and the Vatican in the Seventeenth Century*, Bangkok, River Books, 2001, p. 77.

result of certain natural conditions to remain alone'.³⁰ Cima himself seems to have understood what the success of his mission depended upon, but protested against the political dominance of the French Jesuits at court, and the pre-emptive interference of the mandarins.³¹ Cima later told Leibniz that he had often taken the Emperor's pulse 'en qualité de Medecin', a dangerous strategy given that this was an area Chinese medicine manifested vast superiority when compared to western medical knowledge. The Kangxi Emperor, whom Cima admired as 'thoroughly (*fort*) enlightened', was himself not convinced of Cima's medical skills, and stopped summoning him, a similar *démarche* to that which had cut short Isidoro Lucci's medical career in 1693.³² In mid-1700, Cima returned to Fukien/Fujian province, and thence left China.

4. Cima's return to Europe

His movements thereafter are a little hazy, and indeed a matter of dispute. Surdich sees Cima returning home via Sumatra (where he preached a *quadragesima* mass in the church of the Franciscani Riformati) and Pondicherry (where he spent 20 months).³³ Surdich's account of proceedings is not, however, matched by the information Cima himself provides in his account. While Cima admits to having said mass in Acheh, Sumatra, he then dwells on a rewarding trip to Siam, where he suggests he was invited to discussions with the Barcalon. Then, 'the year after that invitation [1703] the Danish Company of the Indies, the Governor and Director of Tranquebar, was stimulated to send a vessel to Mergui under the command of Lord Captain Meijar, and I went there as ambassador and

³⁰ See the letter of Bernardino della Chiesa, in WYNGAERT e MENSAERT, op. cit., vol. V, p. 399; the second letter from Della Chiesa to Cardinal Maigrot, 27 September 1700, op. cit., V, p. 415; see also the letter from Cima from the Fondo degli Agostiniani Scalzi di Gesù e Maria al Corso, fasc. 117, 96r, dated Peking 1700, repr. by SURDICH, op. cit. as an Appendix, pp. 199-201.

³¹ 'Letter from Peking, 1700', reproduced in SURDICH, op. cit., pp. 199-201. Allusions to the in-fighting between the different western missionaries is also alluded to after conversations with Cima in Leibniz's letter of 13 December 1707.

³² 'Leibniz to Joachim Bouvet, Hannover, 13 December 1707', Letter no. 69, repr. in Rita WIDMAIER (dir.). *Leibniz korrespondiert mit China: der Briefwechsel mit den Jesuitenmissionaren (1689-1714)*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1990, p. 266; Beatriz PUENTE-BALLASTEROS, 'Isidoro Lucci (1661-1719) and J.B. Lima (1659-1733) at the Qing Court: The Physician, the Barber-Surgeon, and the Padroado's Interests in China', in *Archivum historicum societatis Iesu*, vol. 82, fasc. 163 (1), 2013, pp. 165-216.

³³ A 'quadragesima' mass is defined as 'an organic series of preachings, customarily held at Church every day of Lent'.

envoy and then he returned with me to Copenhagen'. So he would have proceeded via Tenasserim to Mergui, and thence to Tranquebar (a little to the south of Pondicherry) and back to Europe. We have been able to trace the Lord Captain of this home journey with some certainty. Initially, it did not seem possible: I had thought to check the Sound toll register, the *Tabeller over skibsfahrt of veretransport*, especially the later 1953 edition produced under the direction of Knut Korst, which is one of the great serial sources for early modern economic history, but is better for enumerating *lasts* of corn than individuals. Danish historians have suggested that 'Meijar' does not concur phonetically with any Danish surnames, and it is more likely to have been a foreigner, perhaps a Dutchman, Meyer. Jaap Bruijn, in his well-known study of eighteenth-century Dutch naval commanders, provides an array of possibilities: Jan Maljaard, Ary van der Meer, George Jakob Meyer, Jan Balthus Meyer, but it turned out that none of these individuals fitted the information we know about 'Meijar'.³⁴ I looked in English records, hot on the trail of one Roger Myers, captain of the *Streatham* (a 350 ton, 70 crew frigate) on two occasions, between 1700-1 and 1702-6. The second long journey, particularly, provides us with an opportunity for paths to have crossed: although neither Tranquebar nor Mergui, nor even Copenhagen, appear in the log-book, which otherwise see the Indies run completed in Erith, in south-east London on 7 March 1707.³⁵ Finally it was the index cards of Kay Larsen (1879-1947) at the Danish National Archive, digitized at the Danish Demographic Database, which resolved these questions. The captain was one Steffen Meyer, whose year of birth is unknown, but worked his way up the shippers' hierarchy in Tranquebar, beginning with his first commission on 26 June 1700. He may have been a brother-in-law or son-in-law of the governor Jørgen Bjørn. In 1703, he was ordered to travel on the ship *Dansborg* to Mergui to effect the release of the Danish East India Company ship, *Elephanten*. With the company's clerk, Arnoldus de Fine, he made a trip to the Siamese court and had *Elephanten*

³⁴ Jaap R. BRUIJN, *Commanders of Dutch East India Ships in the Eighteenth Century*, Woodbridge, Boydell, 2011. 'Meyer' does not return any suggestive individuals from the database of outgoing VOC employees: <http://vocopvarenden.nationaalarchief.nl/search.aspx>. There is, however, mention of a Captain Myers who kept a watchful eye on Captain Lee during his second ever voyage to Batavia on the *Streatham*, §8 'The Company's Captains in 1710', in C.R. WILSON (dir.) *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal, being the Bengal public consultations for the first half of the 18th century*, London, W. Thacker, 1895-1911, vol. 1, p. 374.

³⁵ Information in Anthony FARRINGTON, *Catalogue of East India Company ships' journals and logs, 1600-1834*, London, British Library, 1999. Margaret Makepeace of the British Library helped me here to cross-check with the new digital database *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk).

released. On 21 January 1704, Meyer departed on another expedition from Tranquebar, this time for Tanoor [Tanna, Th na].³⁶ The same year, he became captain of the company ship *Printz Carl*, which was freighted on an expedition to Persia. The ship was wrecked on the north-west coast of India, but all crew were saved and from the Danish lodge at Oddeway Torre [Eddowa, founded 1695/6 on the Malabar coast between Quilon and Anjengo] they were sent to Tranquebar. As there was no work for Meyer at Tranquebar, he left the colony on 24 October 1706 on the ship *Norske Løve*, the 'Norwegian Lion', destined for Copenhagen. His wife travelled with him, and so too, of course, did our friend Nicola Cima.³⁷

Cima's return was a somewhat foreshortened one by the standards of India hands, who tended to spend the rest of their lives in the missions, and Cima had many years ahead of him. His first task was to proceed to Rome on foot, a journey which took him as long as two years, during which time he met many leading ecclesiastics in the Augustinian Order in southern Germany, men like Gelasio Hieber, an Augustinian preacher (*concionator*) in Munich, and Angelus Oickmar (Hoggmair), a prior in Augustinian monasteries at various times in Munich and Regensburg.³⁸ It is thought Cima lobbied here for the reformation of his order, and met the German philosopher Leibniz in Hildesheim in Lower Saxony, who was busy developing his Sinophilic critique of European absolutism.³⁹ Leibniz wrote about his encounter with Cima in a letter of 8 October 1707 to Maturinus Veyssièrè La Croze, the learned Benedictine historian and orientalist, at that time the royal Prussian librarian in Berlin. The letter betrays Leibniz's suspicions that Cima 'had not been in China long enough to acquire knowledge of

³⁶ Sir Richard TEMPLE, *The Diaries of Streynsham Master, 1675-1680*, London, John Murray, 1911, vol. II, p. 66 explains that this place was 40 miles downriver from Hughli, or twenty miles by land. For some understanding of the complex fluvial geography of the various branches of the Ganges at the river's mouth see 'Some notes about the Hooghly', posted by the grandson of Arthur David Linklater, a British imperial pilot and master mariner, see www.quivis.co.uk/dum/Hooghly.html (URL accessed 18 June 2016).

³⁷ This ship is not mentioned in the *Diary and Consultation Book of the Records of Fort St. George*, vols. 37-8, which, while often taking note of 'a Danes Ship', fails to provide their names.

³⁸ Cima, *Oedipus Sphingi* brief attached to *Relatione Distinta delli Regni di Siam, China, Tunchino e Cocincina*; Joannes Felix OSSINGER, *Bibliotheca augustianiana historica, critica et chronologica in qua mille quadringenti Augustiniani ordinis scriptores, eorumque opera tam scripta quam typis editis inveniantur, simulque reperitur*, Ingolstadt: Craetz, 1768, pp. 437-8; Thyrso LÓPEZ BARDÓN e Nicolas CRUSENIUS, *Monastici Augustiniani R. P. Fr. N. Crusenii continuatio atque ad illud additamenta, sive Bibliotheca manualis Augustiniana, in qua breviter recensentur Augustinienses ... virtute ... ac meritis insignes ab anno 1620 usque ad 1700*, Vallisoleti, 1890-1913, vol. III (Pars tertia), pp. 307-9.

³⁹ Sergio ZOLI, 'Il Mito Settecentesco della Cina in Europa e la Moderna Storiografia', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 60 (3-4), 1976, pp. 335-366.

their characters' (he apparently asserted that there were 400 'fundamental characters' which we know to be far too few, 'functional literacy' of Chinese requiring mastery of around 3-4000 characters).⁴⁰ Cima, for his part, besides seeking audiences with the king, Frederick I of Prussia (r. 1701-1713), expressed his desire to return to China, and seems to have been more interested in raising money from this encounter, perhaps for the founding of an Augustinian mission on Taiwan (Formosa), which he evidently dreamt about alongside his suggestions for Siam indicated in the *Relatione*.⁴¹ Despite Leibniz's entreaties to La Croze and the courtly *Leibmedikus* Gundelsheim to 'show him [Cima] favour', in a letter written two months later to Joachim Bouvet, Leibniz suggested that Cima 'was now returning to Italy'.⁴² For his part, Cima wrote a letter to Leibniz on 2 December 1707 explaining that he had been robbed by his servant and unspecified 'Moors' – he appears to thank Leibniz for the money he had given Cima.⁴³ Cima went on, of course, to present his memorandum to the Venetian Senate, and lived on until at least 1719, probably until 1722.⁴⁴

5. Venice in Siam?

The ecclesiastical historian Luigi Bressan has suggested a possible historical precursor to Cima's project of reviving Venetian trading fortunes with the East Indies: a secret mission to Venice which the erstwhile First Minister of Ayutthaya, Constance Phaulkon, entrusted to Fr. Giovan Battista Morelli in 1686. The mission was undertaken ostensibly to intercede with the Senate for his family (we know from Forbin that he still had a brother living in 1695), but Bressan thinks that the real motivation was to promote

⁴⁰ 'Leibniz to Maturinus Veyssièrre La Croze, 8 October 1707', in Ludovic DUTENS (dir.), *Opera Omnia nunc primum collecta, in classes distribute, praefationibus et indicibus exornata, studio Ludovici Dutens*, Geneva, Fratres de Tournes, 1768, vol. 5, pp. 484-5 (letter in French).

⁴¹ Widmaier, op. cit., p. 268. There had been a Spanish colony on the northern tip of Taiwan which was founded in 1625, and was accompanied by a strong, especially Dominican missionary presence, which used the island as a transit point for missionaries en route to and from China and Japan, but it was closed down twenty years later when Manila's economy faltered, parag. 295.

⁴² 'Leibniz to Joachim Bouvet, Hannover, 13 December 1707', repr. in Widmaier, op. cit., Letter no. 69.

⁴³ NIEDERSÄCHSISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK, HANNOVER, Leibniz Briefwechsel 157 Bl. 18-19.

⁴⁴ T. LÓPEZ BARDÓN e N. CRUSENIUS, op. cit. vol. II, p. 591; WYNGAERT e MENSAERT (dir.), op. cit., vol. IV, p. 196, note 23; STANDAERT, op. cit., vol. I, p. 340. Dror believes that Cima died in 1711, the year he switched from the Augustinians to the Discalced Augustians, Adriano di St. Theola, *Opusculum de Sectis Sinenses et Tunkinenses*, ed. Olga Dror, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002, p. 24, n. 16.

trade with the Republic, and possibly to encourage merchants to come to Siam.⁴⁵ At any rate, Morelli got only as far as Paris.⁴⁶

Back home in Venice, more general ideas were put forward as to how to revive the trading economy. The trader Simone Giogalli had been asked by the magistrates to provide a brief but considered report on the way to make industry and commerce in Venice flourish again. He reflected on the crushing weight of taxes (*gabelle*), and the excessively high wages crippling the textile industry.⁴⁷ Then on 23 November 1703, in the name of the Diputati al Commercio, the Republic introduced five new members to the body of the Cinque Savi, with the task of 'improving the trade of the Levant, reintroducing that of the West, removing from subjection and from weights the manufactures of this city and the facilitating of success in commerce'.⁴⁸ The current Doge, Alvise II Mocenigo, who had acceded in July 1700, was himself a Constantinople trader, albeit via Marino d'Andria in a company with Nicolò Contarini di Aurelio, and was considered to be lenient and indulgent, rather than rigorous, in his commissions.⁴⁹ It was peacetime, a window of opportunity after the peace of Karlowitz (January 1699), but before renewed conflict with the Ottomans broke out again in 1714. In European politics, Venice had opted for neutrality in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), despite the disgrace that this implied for Venice and the tenacious efforts of Charles Montagu, first Duke of Manchester to win Venice round to joining the Allied cause. Neutrality nevertheless led to devastation on the *terraferma* and corsair incursions on the Adriatic; one of the Doge's *Oselle* (medals) was coined in celebration of the measures taken to avoid the invasion of the state. Many overseas territories,

⁴⁵ BRESSAN e SMITHIES, op. cit., p. 78. Edward W. HUTCHINSON manages to track Phaulkon's precise words: 'Being anxious to send someone to Europe to rebuild the church in which I was baptized and to obtain a favour for my family from the Republic of Venice, I entrusted the commission to a Franciscan from Rome', *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, London, Royal Asiatic Society, 1940, p. 74. Phaulkon's links to Venice were very tenuous: he started to work as a cabin-boy on English boats from an early age, and as CHOISY reports, spoke rather in Portuguese to the French Abbot, who responded to him in Italian, *Mémoires de l'Abbé de Choisy Habillé en Femme. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Louis XIV*, Paris, Mercure de France, 1993, p. 193, entry for 19 November 1685.

⁴⁶ Stefan HALIKOWSKI SMITH, 'Floating' European Clergy in Siam during the Yeats Immediately Prior to the National Revolution of 1688: the Letters of Giovan Battista Morelli, O.F.M.', in *Reinterpreting Indian Ocean Worlds: essays in honour of Kirti N. Chaudhuri*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, pp. 370-3.

⁴⁷ *Scrittura inedita di Simone Giogalli, negoziante veneto del secolo XVII, intorno la decadenza del commercio di Venezia*, E.A. CICOGNA (dir.), Venezia, G. Antonelli, 1856, especially pp. 16-7.

⁴⁸ MUSEO CIVICO DI VENEZIA. Raccolta Cicogna, ms. 1342 (3242).

⁴⁹ Andrea DA MOSTO, *I Dogi di Venezia*, Firenze, Giunto e Martello, 1977.

Cyprus, then Crete, as far as the Ionian islands were surrendered, but big projects for the better fortification of the Isthmus of Corinth and Castello di Morea were also dreamt up, alongside repopulation and a stimulus to agriculture there. None of this met, however, with any long-lasting success, and Austria openly challenged the Venetian monopoly over the Adriatic as from 1717.⁵⁰

If we turn to shipping records, the Venetian fleet could boast more shipping in 1700 than at any other time in the period between 1670-1797, some 29 sailing vessels, or around 40.000 tons of bottomry. In addition to this, Venice could deploy fifty galleys, more than any other European sea power. Altogether, then, the fleet as a whole rose from around 100 vessels in the middle of the seventeenth century, to more than two hundred in 1720, if you add the merchant fleet with its various categories of shipping from the *navi da punta* down to small *marciliane* with less than 50 *botti* capacity. Only around 1720, when Venice reverted to peace and budgetary constraints started to reduce the state fleet, can we really speak of what Cabanès calls the ‘very long and sometimes very beautiful autumn’.⁵¹ Admittedly, the convoy system had been abandoned by 1684, despite the ever-present risk of depredation by pirates, principally on the basis of cost considerations, and because of the effect that the mass arrival of cargoes had on local market prices. Foreign commentators had also criticised the system whereby mariners were paid by the day ‘how long soever the voyage lasteth’, which diminished the efficiency of the crew.⁵² Overall, however, shipping was not the problem facing the Venetian Republic; what was missing was any idea of commercial striving for the Indies, and finding the crews, who after 1647 were no longer supplied from Venice herself, but from forced labour, captured in the Wars of Morea, amongst Dalmatians, Greeks and Levantine subjects.⁵³

Direct trade with the Indies was a difficult prospect if only because it immediately overturned centuries of trading experience with the countries of the Levant, the traditional intermediaries. Lands like Turkey

⁵⁰ Heinrich KRETSCHMAYR, *Geschichte von Venedig*, Gotha, Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1905-34, vol. III, p. 368.

⁵¹ Pierre CABANÈS, *Histoire de l'Adriatique*, Paris, Seuil, 2001, p. 366.

⁵² Charles HUGHES (dir.), *Shakespeare's Europe: Unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary being a survey of the condition of Europe at the end of the 16th century*, [originally 1617], London, Sherratt & Hughes, 1903, p. 135.

⁵³ P. CABANÈS, op. cit., deals with the merchant fleet on pp. 376, 382; Fernand BRAUDEL, *Out of Italy, 1450-1650*, Paris, Flammarion, 1991. Gligor STANOJEVIĆ, ‘Jugosloveni u vojnoj službi Venecije na kopnu Italije u XVII vijeku’, in *Istorijski Casopis*, 24, January 1977, pp. 145-60.

continued to trade with the East on the old routes, now increasingly via Armenian intermediaries, and could supply the spices on which top Venetian pharmaceutical products like mithridatum and theriac continued to be made. Turkey produced gold coins and small denomination coinage, but was dependent on the silver flowing in from Spain, which the Venetians could transport to them. Around six ships continued to conduct this trade every year.⁵⁴ East Indian textiles, on the other hand, now came into Venice from the West, often via the neutral ports of Ancona and Ragusa, now frequented by the English and Dutch, after duties on imported cloth were raised by the Senate in 1690 in light of the decline in domestic production.⁵⁵ From 1577, even taxes on spices transported via the Atlantic like pepper were lifted in order to keep the Venetian market supplied.⁵⁶ As Domenico Sella writes, the development of the Atlantic trading routes 'progressively and irreversibly eliminated the Italians'.⁵⁷

The researchers Antonella Viola and Nunziatella Alessandrini have nonetheless been working on the history of joint Luso-Italian business plans relating to the Indies trade at the end of the seventeenth century. The Compagnia Genovese delle Indie Orientali had launched two ships that were promptly seized and confiscated by the Dutch off Batavia in April 1649. A bit less than twenty years later, trading relations were opened between Genoa and the Ottoman Empire, with the idea of providing convoys to sail between Constantinople and Smyrna, but again only one Genoese convoy ever sailed this route between 1666-1667.⁵⁸ In Lisbon, different plans to launch a collaborative Portuguese-Tuscan shipping company between 1671-6 were afoot, as negotiated by the businessman Lorenzo Ginori and his extended family. It, too, had as its key negotiators

⁵⁴ Ludwig BEUTIN, 'Der wirtschaftliche Niedergang Venedigs im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert', in *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, 76, 1958, p. 70.

⁵⁵ BEUTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁵⁶ Cited in Fernand BRAUDEL, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, Colin, 1949, p. 434.

⁵⁷ Carlo M. CIPOLLA, *The Economic Decline of Empires*, London, Methuen, 1970, p. 210.

⁵⁸ Thomas KIRK, 'A Little Country in a World of Empires: Genoese Attempts to Penetrate the maritime trading Empires of the Seventeenth Century', in *The Journal of European Economic History*, 25, 2, 1996, p. 417.

men of the cloth, here Padre Almeida.⁵⁹ This project, although grounded on tangible and recorded discussions involving the Portuguese King Pedro, and launched from a realistic hub, which was Lisbon itself, also foundered, for many reasons. Given this track record, and Sella's monitory observation above, Cima's proposal, with its unlikely partnership with the Danish East Indies Company, and grounded in far more challenging logistical realities, can only appear absurd.

Worse was to come in the shape of the next Venetian Doge, Giovanni II Corner, a *religioso* (r. May 1709-August 1722). It is true that at a still later date, the ambassador Andrea Tron had incited the nobles in 1784 to return to sea trade (*di far fiorire il commercio*) using their predecessors' example (an incitation from Paris, published 29 May 1784), and in 1793 an insurance company was founded by the renowned innovator Girolamo Zulian, assuring with 500 stocks of 1000 ducats journeys to the Levant, West, Baltic and America.⁶⁰ But the East Indies were not even selected here as a propitious destination.

6. A Venetian partnership with the Danish East Indies Company?

Then there is the whole issue of the trading alliance which Cima proposes with regard to the Danish East Indies Company. From the memorandum, it is not clear how the partnership would work: were the Danes to teach the Venetians the daily business of running a commercial Indies fleet, and what then would the Venetians offer in return? Or would the Danes merely lease space on their Indies fleets for Venetian freight? At certain points in the text, Cima starts to doubt whether Venice should indeed contemplate a sea journey at all, rather than establish consuls as intermediaries in Suez, Cairo and Alexandria (a very impracticable proposition given

⁵⁹ Antonella VIOLA, 'Lorenzo Ginori: Console della Nazione Fiorentina e agente del Granduca di Toscana in Portogallo (1674-89)', in *Di Buon Effetto e Commercio. Relações Luso-Italianas na Idade Moderna*, Nunziatella Alessandrini (dir.) et al., Lisbon, CHAM, 2012, pp. 163-75. Better on the proposed shipping company is, however, Nunziatella ALESSANDRINI e Antonella VIOLA, 'Genovesi e fiorentini in Portogallo: reti commerciali e strategie politico-diplomatiche (1650-1700)', in *Mediterranea. Ricerche storiche*, no. 28, August 2013, online version at <http://www.storiamediterranea.it/portfolio/agosto-2013-2/>. It has not been established whether this Almeida was D. Juan de Almeida, Master of the Wardrobe, a courtier Christopher of Almeida (sic.) or Pedro de Almeida, presumably the Secretary Dr. Pedro de Amaral. See Fremont d'Albancourt, *Memoirs of the Sieur d'Ablancourt: containing a general history of the court and kingdom of Portugal, from the Pyrenean treaty, to the year 1668*, London, R. Smith, 1703, pp. 47, 157, 186.

⁶⁰ Giovanni TABACCO, *Andrea Tron (1712-1785) e la crisi dell'aristocrazia senatoria a Venezia*, Trieste, Università degli studi di Trieste, 1957, p. 161.

the recent and long-standing conflicts between Ottomans and Venetians). Cima had not thought of European redistribution, which he presumed to run on precedent – German traders coming to load stock at the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* – although the Habsburgs had already experimented with their own *Wiener Orientalische Handelskompagnie* between 1667-83, and from 1719 would open up Trieste and Fiume as free ports (*Freihäfen*) from which new routes like the ‘Triester Straße’ would now run.⁶¹ Then, we might be reminded that Cima seemed to favour Siam as a focus for Venetian trade over China, with which the Danes anyway did not conduct direct trade until the 1730s.

How did Cima get the idea of teaming up with the Danish, of all people? Was he a visionary, who saw the end of the ‘Dutch century’ and a new era of cooperation with Scandinavia opening up? Was he looking forward to the first direct Swedish shipping into the Mediterranean, which emerged from the Swedish Navigation Act (*Produktplakat*) of 1724?⁶² Cima champions the Danes as a ‘loyal, straight and free’ shipping partner (f. 12v). But this only contrasts with contemporary comment from the English. Molesworth’s famous diatribe *An Account of Denmark as it was in the Year 1692* (London 1694), for example, portrayed the Danes as dull slaves to absolutism, whose national character consisted in the cultivation of mediocrity, while John Ovington, in his popular East Indies travelogue, relates Danish unprincipled opportunism in the affairs of the East: how a Danish mercenary force promptly betrayed the King of Anjouan, who had paid them to wage war against the neighbouring island of Mohéli.⁶³ Cima’s ideas could equally never conceivably have been entertained by fellow missionaries such as Giovan Battista Morelli who, just a few years earlier, had cursed the English on whose vessel he returned to Europe.

⁶¹ Herbert HASSINGER, ‘Die erste Wiener Orientalische Handelskompagnie, 1667-83’, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 35, 1942, pp. 1-53; Wilhelm KALTENSTADLER, ‘Der österreichische Seehandel über Triest im 18. Jahrhundert’, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 55, 4, 1969, pp. 481-500.

⁶² Eli HECKSCHER, ‘Produktplakatet: Den gamla svenska sjöfartspolitikens grundlag’, in *Ekonomi och Historia*, Stockholm, A. Bonniers, 1922, pp. 164-222 and, more generally, his *An economic history of Sweden*, Cambridge Mass., Harvard U.P., 1954, p. 195.

⁶³ Jørgen SEVALDSEN, ‘Diplomatic eyes on the North: writings by British ambassadors on Danish society’, in *Britain and the Baltic: studies in commercial, political and cultural relations 1500-2000*, Patrick Salmon e Tony Barrow (dir.), Sunderland, University of Sunderland Press, 2003, pp. 321-36; Robert MOLESWORTH, *An Account of Denmark, as it was in the year 1692*, London, s.n., 1694, A2v-A3r, A4v-A5r, C2v-C3r; John OVINGTON, *A Voyage to Suratt in the year 1689 giving a large account of that city and its inhabitants and the English factory there...*, London, Jacob Tonson, 1696, p. 119.

For Morelli, religious grounds were enough: they were damnable heretics ‘worse than the gentiles; I would rather spend a year among the heathen than two days amongst people of this nation’, whom he compared to *Inimici crucis Christi*.⁶⁴

Words here were, however, often louder than actions on the ground: the Venetian Senate did not possess any such scruples and had, since the Cretan War (1645-69), turned to England and the Low Countries to buy sailing vessels, which it then rechristened (for example, the *Sol d'oro*), and whose construction was then copied in its own yards. Particularly popular were the flat-bottomed cogs manufactured in Holland, and which were perfectly adapted to navigation in the Venetian lagoon.⁶⁵ Similarly, we find the English in Madras occasionally recurring to the Danes to freight private goods back to Europe, and instructions for the Governor were also sometimes dispatched by the commissioners back in London on Danish ships. This held as much for Thomas Pitt as it did for Edward Harrison's tenure in Madras.⁶⁶

The Danish king Frederik IV of course came on a three-month state visit to the city during the winter of 1708-9 for motives which seem primarily to have been a repeat visit of an exciting trip he had undertaken as Crown Prince sixteen years earlier, between 1692-3. It was a classic Grand Tour at its very heyday (1700-1760) in which Frederik visited castles, manor houses, gardens, military installations and cathedrals, complete with sexual dalliances.⁶⁷ His visit is graphically conveyed by the paintings of Luca Carlevarijs, such as ‘La Regata in Canal Grande in onore del re Federico di Danimarca’, and the engravings issuant from these paintings by Giuseppe Baroni.⁶⁸ For Aldo Rizzi, this visit and the artwork they triggered ‘exalts the Baroque spirit of Venice’.⁶⁹ That one of Carlevarijs's regatta paintings was brought back to Frederik's castle at Frederiksborg may just have been an act of personal nostalgia. But what of the Danish perspective on a prospective business partnership with the Venetians?

⁶⁴ Quoted in HALIKOWSKI SMITH, ‘Floating’ European Clergy in Siam’, pp. 372-3.

⁶⁵ CABANÈS, *op. cit.*, p. 368. The Compagnia Genovese delle Indie Orientali, albeit a historical ‘gadfly’ circumscribed to the second half of the 1640s, similarly commissioned ships in the Texel, along with sailors and pilots, to undertake voyages to ‘the East Indies, in particular Japan and neighbouring areas’, T. KIRK, *art. cit.*; Sanjay SUBRAHMANYAM, ‘On the Significance of Gadflies: the Genoese East India Company of the 1640s’, in *Journal of European Economic History*, 17, 3, 1988, pp. 559-581.

⁶⁶ Søren MENTZ, *The English gentleman merchant at work: Madras and the City of London, 1660-1740*, Copenhagen, Tusculanum Press, 2005, p. 154.

⁶⁷ Bruce REDFORD, *Venice and the Grand Tour*, Newhaven, Yale University Press, 1996, p. 15.

⁶⁸ Frederik WEILBACH, *Frederik IV's Italiensrejser*, Copenhagen, Levin & Munksgaard, 1933.

⁶⁹ Aldo RIZZI, *Luca Carlevarijs, Venezia*, Alfieri, 1975, pp. 9, 11, 31.

Weilbach's book is sadly silent on this subject, and other primary accounts dwell also on the hedonistic aspects of this trip. In terms of precedents for collaboration between Venice and Denmark, we know that one returning commandant, Mourids Hartmann (1657-1695), who faced an inquest on his return for executing the captain of the returning vessel and then allowed the wreck of the vessel in the Channel, absconded to Venetian service in the Cycladic Archipelago, where he promptly died of fever. The *Dictionary of Danish Biography* suggests it was the third time he took up employment with them, and that during the war against Turkey in 1685 he had been awarded the Order of Saint Mark.⁷⁰ Thus, there were precedents, if only privately. Otherwise, documentation suggests the Danes were keen on attracting population to their colonies, here Armenians to Tranquebar, especially in the 1750s under Governor Krog, although François Martin had reported 80 years earlier in February 1674 that the inhabitants were subjected to high taxes and were badly handled by the Governor, so that as a consequence they were not very 'interested' (*interessés*).⁷¹ While the British in Madras had a great need for a loyal population to man civil defence and stand up to local nawabs, the Armenians were needed primarily to prize open long distance trade, as we can see from their successes in the diamond business between the 1630s and the 1680s.⁷² But eighteenth-century Venice was not operating on a demographic surplus,

⁷⁰ *DANSK BIOGRAFISK LEKSIKON*, Povl Engelstoft (dir.), Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1979-84. http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_Biografisk_Leksikon [URL accessed 9 November 2014]. There is also a biographical note in Jacques MACAU, *L'Inde Danoise 1670-1732: la deuxième compagnie*, Aix-en-Provence, I.H.P.O.M., Université de Provence, 1975, pp. 21-4.

⁷¹ A. MARTINEAU (dir.), *Mémoires de François Martin*, Paris, Société de l'Histoire des Colonies françaises, vol. I, p. 566.

⁷² For the Portuguese sub-altern population, see Stefan HALIKOWSKI SMITH, 'Languages of subalternity and collaboration: Portuguese in English settlements across the Bay of Bengal, 1620-1800', in *International Journal of Maritime History*, May 2016, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 237-267. Armenians were particularly valuable to Europeans in port cities like Surat for their knowledge of producers and productive processes in the interior. For the Armenians in Coromandel, see Bhaswati BHATTACHARYA, 'Making money at the blessed place of Manila: Armenians in the Madras-Manila trade in the eighteenth century', *Journal of Global History*, 3, 1, March 2008, p. 10; Holden FURBER, *Rival empires of trade in the Orient, 1600-1800*, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1976, pp. 289, 373; in Bengal, see Bhaswati BHATTACHARYA, 'Ports, hinterlands and merchant networks: Armenians in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century', in G.B. Souza, *Hinterlands and Commodities: Place, Space, Time and the Political Development of Asia over the long Eighteenth Century*, Leiden, Brill, 2015, pp. 102-126; for Armenian relations with the EIC, see Margaret MAKEPEACE e Vahe BALADOUNI, *Armenian Merchants of the Early Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1998. At one time, the British in Madras had lobbied to elect Portuguese and Armenian aldermen. BRITISH LIBRARY, Asia, Pacific and Africa collections, London. Fort St. George Consultations, 28 September 1708, P/239/84.

indeed its population had decreased by 0.7% between 1596-1696, and as in practical terms the desperate shortage of military personnel in the closer-to-home wars in the Adriatic could attest.⁷³

The Danes had otherwise never been taken seriously by the other East Indian trading companies hitherto. To the Nuremberg traveller Johann Wurffbain, writing in the 1680s, 'the Danish have by now been reduced in importance due to different misfortunes and corrupt administration of their servants, so that the Danish can no longer conduct their trade, and for these reasons they are held in low esteem by the Indians. As a result, you cannot expect the favour of coming to India by their ships'.⁷⁴ Historians have only perpetuated this idea of the Danes as a 'minor player in Asia' (*een kleine speler in Azië*).⁷⁵

Tranquebar, the port from which Cima sailed back to Europe, had however been settled continuously with fort and factory since 1620, and after a 'modest success' during the War of the League of Augsburg (1688-97), the charter was renewed in 1698.⁷⁶ Other Italian friars provide similarly encouraging descriptions of Danish Tranquebar from around this time. Padre Giambattista Maoletti O.F.M. (1669-1725) affirmed, for example, that the Governor of Tranquebar 'was extremely courteous and I found him a worthy lord, despite being Lutheran, who allowed Catholics and missionaries the right to go about their tasks without interfering (*dar molestia*) with them'.⁷⁷ Other Danish Lutheran ministers, such as Johann Georg Bövingh, settled in Tranquebar in 1706 albeit in small numbers,

⁷³ Carlo Marco BELFANTI, 'Aspetti dell'evoluzione demografica italiana nel secolo XVII', in *Cheiron*, 2, 1984, Table 13; Daniele BELTRAMI, *Storia della popolazione di Venezia dalla fine del secolo XVI alla caduta della Repubblica*, Padova, CEDAM, 1954.

⁷⁴ 'Johann Sigmund Wurfbains Instruction, oder Kurtzer Bericht / Wie eine Reise / sowol zu Wasser / als zu Land / nach Indien anzustellen sey' in Christoph ARNOLD, *Wahrhaftige Beschreibungen dreyer maechtigen Koenigreiche Japan, Siam und Corea*, Nürnberg, in Verlegung M. & J.F. Endters, 1672, pp. 1132-1148.

⁷⁵ Leo AKVELD e Els JACOBS (dir.), *De kleurrijke wereld van de VOC*, Bussum, THOTH, 2002, p. 282.

⁷⁶ Holden FURBER, op. cit., pp. 212-3; H. VAN DER LINDEN, *Histoire de l'expansion coloniale du Danemark, XVII et XVIII siècles*, Bruxelles, Lamertin, 1911. Jacques MACAU would locate the upswing in Danish fortunes further back to the foundation of the 'deuxième compagnie' in 1670, op. cit. Kristof GLAMANN, on the other hand, asserts that 'up to 1732 the Danish East Indian trade was an unstable enterprise', 'Danish historical writing on colonial activities in Asia, 1616-1845', in C.H. Philips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 209.

⁷⁷ Anna ALBINO (dir.), *Da Roma alla Cina. Viaggio e apostolato del P. Giambattista Maoletti Francescano, 1702-25*, Firenze, Tipografia Barbèra, 1935, p. 47.

while German missionary scholars from Halle, like Benjamin Schultze, came to Tranquebar shortly afterwards in 1719.⁷⁸

Conclusion

The last two sections have been concerned with how improbable Cima's exhortations for Venetian trade with Siam and in partnership with the Danish East Indies Company at the beginning of the eighteenth century might have appeared to their readers, and to what extent we then have to write him off as a delusional crank.

As I have tried to show here, however, Cima does fit into a particular genre of missionary traveller and writer of his period whose unhinged suggestions were grounded in the shortcomings of the missionary education of the period and the sheer speed with which the vast territories of the Indian Ocean world were traversed and re-traversed without accumulation of corresponding depth of knowledge of any one locale, or sufficient mastery of native languages. Furthermore, the use of his text for the purposes of lobbying relevant political authorities bears the psychological hallmarks of delusions of grandeur.

We nevertheless have here a text full of details and observations that merit a wider airing and appreciation, particularly given the silence into which Ayuthaya falls after the intensity of contact and exchange under Phra Narai. If Cima's text is coloured by whiffs of nostalgia and possible borrowing from other European authorities, his descriptions below of Ayuthaya's political economy and trading opportunities are fine-tuned.

⁷⁸ The Halle missionaries erected schools for 'Portuguese' and 'Malabar' children, bibles, hymn books and tracts were translated and printed in Portuguese, Tamil and other languages, and reports of the work of the 'Royal Danish Missionaries' were sent out across Europe twice a year. These reports were collected into nine volumes and published as *Der KÖNIGLICHE dänischen Missionarien zu Ost-Indien eingesandter ausführlichen Berichte*, Halle: in Verlegung des Waisen-Hauses, 1710-72, 9 vols. The Studienzentrum August Hermann Francke in Halle has digitized some of these volumes, see for example: <http://192.124.243.55/digbib/missionsberichte/teil02/cont013/start013.htm> [URL accessed 21 October 2014]. J.F. FENGER's monograph of 1843 *Den Trankebarske missions historie* was translated into English as *History of the Tranquebar Mission*, Tranquebar: Evangelical Mission Press, 1863. See also H.W. GENSICHEN, 'The Social Impact of Early Protestant Missions in South India', *Kyrkohistorisk Arsskrift*, 78, January 1978, pp. 430-35.

Appendix

“Siam is the best ‘place’ in the Indies”

Nicola Agustin Cima, *Relazione Distinta delli Regni di Siam, China, Tunchino e Cocincina*, c. 1707
Marciana Library, Venice, Ital Cl. VI. 76 (6036)

Having then considered [29r.] all the places of India⁷⁹ it is certain that, whether for trade or for the comfort of missionaries and for the increase of our Holy Faith, I have not seen nor found a free place, with more abundant foodstuffs, and guaranteed a more exquisite and temperate supply of air than Siam, even though it is below the torrid zone at around 14 degrees from the pole, and where are around twenty settlements and colonies of various different foreign nations, who went there many centuries ago and who live from commerce.⁸⁰ They are all situated along the bank of that that great navigable river [the Chao Phraya], which every year floods the greater part of that country, from which stems that [29v.] great abundance, also caused by the flooding of other rivers, which are also there.⁸¹ These colonies go by the name of ‘campo’, or district; there is the Dutch *campo*, that of the French, Portuguese, Japanese, Tonchinese, Cochinchinese and Maja⁸², that of Pegu, Makassar, Laos, Tartars who border the Persians and Armenians, and others, all of whom have a governor or captain of their own nation, who hand down justice according to their own and particular laws, and in each of those colonies there is also a Siamese national nominated by the King to that community, who also serves as official [30r.] interpreter for the Barcalan, who is an important mandarin and principal minister of that king and who is Supreme Judge and Superintendent of all the said colonies

⁷⁹ We would say today, ‘the Indies’.

⁸⁰ ‘More than twenty languages are spoken there’, Luc FERMANEL DE FAVERY, *Relazione delle Missioni de’ vescovi vicarii apostolici, mandate dalla S. Sede apostolica alli regni di Siam, Cocincina, Camboia e Tonkino*, Rome, Sacra Congregatio De Propaganda Fide, 1677, p. 2.

⁸¹ Engelbert KÄMPFER, *Histoire naturelle, civile et ecclesiastique de l’Empire du Japon*, (The Hague: chez P. Gosse & J. Neaulme, 1729), Bk I, ch. II, pp. 38-40.

⁸² ‘Maja’ is unclear. Could it be an error on Cima’s behalf for Malay? Or could it be the Maghs, a Buddhist ethnic group living in the Chittagong hill tracts and Cox’s Bazaar areas of Bangladesh, said to be Arakanese descendants who ruled the region between the tenth and sixteenth centuries. Their chief occupation is slash and burn agriculture and their staple products are rice and liquor, see Amiran GONEN (dir.) *The Encyclopedia of Peoples of the World*, New York, Henry Holt, 1993, p. 373. Leonard ANDAYA agreed with this attribution in a private communication of 18 March 2014.

and all foreigners, who dwell and go about in that kingdom.⁸³ In the city then, other than the Chinese district, the Muslim one, that belonging to the Persians, there is the factory of the French and the English, although at the time I was there, there were no headmen, and all those kings of antiquity gave down these districts from hand to hand, both the site and the land for those nations to build houses, which are made of bamboo, very thick canes growing there, which are not just used to build houses but also as columns, on top of which [30v] then are built houses, which is how they build given the flooding of the rivers.⁸⁴ This is of very little expense, so that with one hundred pieces of eight you can have a very large house with a main room and eight or ten other rooms, and a courtyard. And although the houses are made of bamboo, all said one can live there very safely, free from all peril, due to the justice of the land, it being the policy there to grant and maintain the liberty of all nations to go there and to live there from the great commerce undertaken there, and which is carried out by the principal mandarins and even by the king, who owns warehouses of all the national [31r.] merchandise. Many of the principal goods one can only obtain from his royal warehouses, such as ivory, tin, copper, eaglewood, aloe wood, Calambac, which is called *Collamtù* there, of which [goods] whole ships travel around the Indies and to Persia.⁸⁵

Everyone then has the liberty of residence in that kingdom and the right to live according to his religion and to profess it publicly as do the Tartars of Laos, the Japanese, the Muslims, Englishmen, Dutch, Portuguese and all the Catholics and others, among whom our men of the cloth may wear their habits publicly and thus go about the whole kingdom and undertake processions and exercise all their rites solemnly, whether in conducting the last rites (*portare il santissimo Viatico*), or in burying the dead, the church being public places, as too the bells and organs, where celebrations, prayers and everything is conducted as if we were in Italy

⁸³ Cf. Nicholas GERVAISE, *Histoire politique et naturelle du royaume de Siam*, Paris, Pierre Le Mercier, 1688, pt I, ch. XIV-XV, pp. 67-76; Simon de LA LOUBÈRE, *Du Royaume de Siam*, Amsterdam, Abraham Wolfgang, 1691, pt III, ch. XVI, pp. 427-32. I have tried to characterize these different communities in my book *Creolization and Diaspora in the Portuguese Indies*, ch. 4 & 5.

⁸⁴ See the sketch in Simon de LA LOUBÈRE, *A new historical relation of the kingdom of Siam*, London, Francis Leach, 1693, following p. 24.

⁸⁵ Historians of Siam confirm the royal monopoly in these metal and mineral products, Sarasin VIRAPOL, *Tribute and Profit. Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652-1853*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977, pp. 20-1. Aqa Muhammad, a Persian Muslim, was granted the export monopoly in eaglewood by Phra Narai (r. 1656-1688), most of which was shipped to Indian destinations.

itself, and this is how other religions are practised, everyone in his own colonies and churches professing his or her own rites. Indeed, our men of the cloth are held in great veneration by them, in such a way that the same king, when he admits one of us men of the cloth into audience with him, makes [a gesture of] reverence, holding up the right-hand to his forehead [32r.] and allowing them to stand up, which is not a custom allowed even the greatest mandarins. The mandarins, moreover, even the most high up, not only raise their hand, but stand up and give the churchmen a cushion on which to sit upon a carpet, as they do to their priests, called Talapoins, who are held in the greatest veneration and are esteemed as a divine thing, living as they do in grand asceticism, eating only rice, vegetables, herbs, fruits of the earth, not eating anything from living animals, that is to say no meat, nor fish, nor ever touching wine, but only water and tea. They spend the greater part of the day and night in their pagodas singing and chanting in front of their idols, to the [32v.] sound of a hundred solemn drums made from bamboo, and living only from charity, which they receive in the greatest abundance.⁸⁶

For the missionaries destined for those parts, I have not seen any other place so suitable, both for its great liberties and its security, which everyone can enjoy there; secondly, because there they have a great opportunity to learn the languages which they wish, whether through study or from exercise, according to the kingdom or place they wish to go to, something which is very considerable and should stimulate those zealous Catholic princes to make a special seminary there [33r.] and send suitable people, it being possible in that city to learn, apart from Siamese, Japanese, Chinese, both the ordinary strain of Canton and Fukien, as well as that of the lettered.⁸⁷ The Peguan language, the Tartar language of Laos, the language of Tunkin, Cochinchina and Turkish and Persian and all other languages spoken by people there can be learned, so that one can become really

⁸⁶ Cf. S. de LA LOUBÈRE, 'Concerning the Origin of the Talapoins and of their Opinions', in *A New Historical Relation*, pt. III, ch. XXIII; François CARON e Joost SCHOUTEN, *A True Description of the mighty kingdoms of Japan and Siam*, London: Samuel Broun & John de l'Ecluse, 1663, pp. 140-143. Giovan Battista Morelli writes how the Greek Chief Minister Constance Phaulkon, executed in 1688, greatly feared the Talapoins both for their numbers and their esteem among the populace, HALIKOWSKI SMITH, 'Floating' Clergy in Siam', p. 360. There is an engraving of a Talapoin in Guy TACHARD, *Voyage de Siam des Pères Jésuites*, Paris, Seneuze & Horthemels, 1686, pp. 416-7.

⁸⁷ The friars typically trained their missionaries in the Chinese language on Formosa (Taiwan), or amongst the large Chinese community in Manila, James S. CUMMINS, 'Two Missionary Methods in China. Mendicants and Jesuits', in CUMMINS, *Jesuit and Friar in the Spanish Expansion to the East* (London: Variorum, 1985), p. 82.

perfect not just in European languages but in so many Indian [he means 'oriental'] languages both from study and from practise. And as this Serene Republic has in Constantinople a college with twelve students, where it is no longer possible to learn Oriental languages⁸⁸, here [in Siam] [33v.] this could be undertaken with the greatest profit and utility, and although extremely few and far between are the Siamese who convert to our religion, with all of this many Cochinchinese, Tonkinchinese and Peguans will convert and be baptised.

There is the seminary of the French missionary fathers, where the Bishop and the Vicar Apostolic resides, in which, beyond a few Portuguese *mestiços*, there are many from Tonkin and Cochinchina who number between 50 and 60, who are housed and fed and clothed with all that is necessary for free, who acquire the sciences and are well instructed in the customs [of the Church] and ecclesiastical rites and are ordained *in sacris* and serve as missionaries [34r.] in Cochinchina and Tonkin, from which the good springing from that seminary cannot be denied and from their students Christianity is preserved and augmented in those kingdoms. Better indeed than by Europeans themselves, firstly for the ease of using their mother tongue, which the European cannot attain so easily without the investment of great effort, speaking and singing; secondly, for the politics in those kingdoms, which views Europeans badly and retains their fears and suspicions that they [the Europeans] are coming to spy and for political ends, rather than out of religious interests, which nothing or very little can cure. In the church of the aforementioned seminary, Frenchmen compete with Tonkin and Cochinchinese, as well as Peguans, and a few Portuguese. Those reverend [34v.] priests have, however, made chapels in the Tonkinese and Cochinchinese districts where one goes, especially for the chief festivals, to celebrate and to preach. The exact timing and majesty with which that Church observes the Mass, and the hours, and the way those reverend priests and seminarians go about their functions is

⁸⁸ Fulgenzio reminds us of the 'scarcity of priests (*sacerdoti*) who pass that way', Alberto DALLOLIO, 'Un Viaggio in Oriente alla fine del secolo XVII', in *L'Archiginnasio. Bollettino della Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna*, II, 3-4 Maggio Agosto 1907, p. 102. This was a Senate sponsored 'program' to train young men in eastern languages with the aim of freeing the *baili* from dependence on foreign dragomans. Boys were to stay five years in the Ottoman capital. Set up in 1551, by 1625 there were more than ten young men regularly in attendance. Yet the 'program' was transferred to Venice some time before 1692. Francesca LUCCHETTA, 'La scuola dei 'giovani di lingua' nei secoli XVI e XVII', *Quaderni di studi arabi*, 7, 1989, pp. 19-40. See also Isabella PALUMBO FOSSATI CASA, 'L'École vénitienne des "giovani di lingua"', in Frederic Hitzel ed., *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, Istanbul and Paris: IFEA, INALCO, L'Harmattan, 1997, pp. 109-22.

indescribable, all in their surplices and with the Bishop officiating, and all those seminarians go into the priesthood and on to the missions raised and instructed with all due zeal and charity.

In the Portuguese district, which is very large and contains many people, there is the Church of the Dominicans, one of whom is the Vicar and the Superior, and is at the same time also Vicar [35r.] of the Holy Office to the Reverend Chief Inquisitor in Goa. This church was the first to be founded in this kingdom and the Dominicans were the first to come here, for which this church has always been the parish church of the Portuguese.⁸⁹ There are also Jesuit priests, who came here a short time ago and there are usually two Portuguese fathers, who are always fighting with the Dominicans, the former claiming they have a right to the Portuguese parish as their own, to which the Dominicans are opposed, saying they were invited by Padre Giuseppe Conca, a Dominican, to help them in the administration of the sacraments, being infirm.⁹⁰ And the Vicars Apostolic, who have the right [to represent the parish?], for being French, do not come to the [35v.] Portuguese obediently, [the Portuguese] claiming to be subject only to the Bishop of Melaka, although that city has been without a bishop for a long time, from which very great disorders and

⁸⁹ The Dominicans came to Siam after establishing themselves first in Melaka in 1549, thus either in 1555, or 1567. Benno BIERMANN, 'Die Missionen der Portugiesischen Dominikaner in Hinterindien', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaften und Religionswissenschaft*, 21, 1931, p. 319.

⁹⁰ I have not been able to identify Giuseppe Conca. Could it have been Paulo da Costa, the Administrator of the Diocese of Melaka, who led his flock from Makassar to Cambodia, where in his old age he indeed became 'languid' (to quote Chevreuil), but was keen to delegate his authority, principally so he could retire to Goa? This he did in favour not of the Dominicans but the M.E.P., see HALIKOWSKI SMITH, *Creolization and Diaspora*, p. 194. But this was long before Cima's time, in November 1667. Equally, I have long pondered who the 'two Portuguese fathers' whom Cima refers to might have been. The long partnership of J.B. Maldonado of Mons, who arrived in Siam in 1673, and Manuel Suarez (Soarez), Superior of the Residence from 1677, came to an end with Maldonado's hurried escape from Ayutthaya in August 1692 and Soares's death, probably the year after, Raphaël VONGSURAVATANA, *Un jésuite à la cour de Siam*, Paris, France-Empire, 1992, p. 322. Young António Dias, sent out as Visitor from Macao, replaced Maldonado, and was still there in June 1699, see his letters in the BIBLIOTECA DE AJUDA, 'Jesuítas na Ásia' collection, Cod. 49-V-23, fls. 313, 336, 346v, 348. The relationship between Dominicans and Jesuits in the parish of Ayutthaya was ambivalent: although they prevented Jesuits from going about burying Luiz Madre de Deus O.F.M. in 1689, they followed the Jesuits on the controversial Oath of Allegiance to the Apostolic Vicars in 1681, according to Père Claude de BÈZE, *Mémoire du Pere de Bèze sur la vie de Constance Phaulkon, premier ministre du Roi de Siam (...) et sa triste fin. Suivi de lettres et de documents*, Tokyo, Presses Salésiennes, 1947, pp. 41-2.

fighting issue.⁹¹ One father, an Augustinian lector (*Lettor*), called Stefano Sora, a Portuguese, has built a house and small church (*chiesola*) of stone and bricks with a bell tower and bell, and previously he had another one in the Japanese district, but it was destroyed one night.⁹² He blamed the Jesuits, who claimed alone to have jurisdiction over the Japanese, from which can be appreciated the great liberty that all enjoy in this kingdom, and only our domestics are our enemies.⁹³ Thus too the Muslims have their own church⁹⁴ [*sic*] and thus, cheek by jowl [36r.] with the others, conduct their public services.

Foodstuffs are so abundant and at such a low price that with twelve *scudi* alone one can live excellently: normally for one *paolo* one can acquire

⁹¹ After Dom Luís de Melo died in 1648, there was no Bishop until 1671, although Padre Paulo da Costa was Administrator of the Diocese of Melaka in the interim period and led the Portuguese 'tribe' to Siam and Cambodia. The problem with authority was not easily settled, because the Bishop was effectively without a diocese (Melaka had fallen to the Dutch in 1641). His authority was conveyed via his 'vicars of the rod' (*vigário da vara*), such as João de Abreu de Lima, first in Solor and then in Siam, but both communities resisted his jurisdiction and the Vicar Apostolic, Monseigneur de Cicé, felt obliged to excommunicate him after denying his claims to no avail. See HALIKOWSKI SMITH, *Creolization and Diaspora in the Portuguese Indies*, pp. 52-55. The first French Vicar Apostolic was Lambert de la Motte, who arrived in Siam in 1661.

⁹² Stefano Sora was Estevão de Sousa, the first Augustinian in Siam, who ran a chapel attached to the Dominican church, sharing the same living quarters, Engelbert KAEMPFER, *The history of Japan, giving an Account of the ancient and present State and Government of that Empire*, London, 1727, vol. 1, p. 31 (note that the author visited Siam in 1690). The Japanese quarter is clearly indicated in the 'Plan de la Ville de Siam' (from Simon de La Loubère, *Du Royaume de Siam*, 1691, engraving by F. Ertinger in MUSÉUM NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE, Paris. Réserve DS 526. 1 L 21 v1 A), on a large island to the east of the Chao Phraya River and before the stone town is reached. The church may have been destroyed as part of the retribution against the Japanese community following a rebellion and plot against King Phetracha soon after his accession in which two 'chiefs of the Japanese community were executed, 'Opperhoofd Tant to Governor General, 28 December 1700', NATIONAAL ARCHIEF, The Hague, VOC 1637, 29, 29v, 65; 'P. Gabriel Braud's letter of 12 June 1700', A.M.E.P., vol. 864, f. 312.

⁹³ Cima appears to be referring to the infamous death of Giulio Cesare Margico in 1630, who was poisoned by the Christian adjutor who served him, see António Francisco CARDIM, *Relazione della prouincia del Giappone*, Roma, Andrea Fei, 1645, pp. 155-56. Other outsiders, like Yamada Nagamasa, were also poisoned by their Siamese servants in this period, Sakae MIKI, *Yamada Nagamasa*, Tokyo: Kokonshoin, 1936.

⁹⁴ Not sure which Muslim group Cima is evoking here. Proselytisation amongst Malays and Islamised populations struggled when compared with 'pagans', local or immigrant Buddhist population, see for example a Franciscan report probably from the Junk-Ceylon area, 1660s, H.A.G., *Monções do Reino*, 124 A, 249. But by 'church' Cima almost certainly means mosque. Mendes Pinto had noted in Ayutthaya as many as seven mosques catering for the Moors and Malay communities, numbering as many as 30.000. 'Letter from Melaka, 1554, addressed to the Brothers and Fathers of the Society of Jesus', in Cristovão AIRES (dir.), *Fernão Mendes Pinto. Subsídios para a Sua Biografia e para estudo da sua obra*, Lisbon, Academia das Ciências, 1904, pp. 63-5.

eight or ten hens, for the same price you can get 16 or 18 chickens, for one *paolo* you can get 150 or 180 eggs.⁹⁵ Pork meat, which is the most widespread, is extremely cheap. One cannot acquire beef publicly, because these gentiles never slaughter oxen, indeed hold them in veneration, but anyone who wishes for it conducts their own slaughter privately. I bought in Pipli and in Siam two large cows for two *paoli* each, with the liberty of taking and slaughtering them by musket whenever I wanted. Arrack is also made, that is to say a fermentation from very good rice, and each [36v.] pound bottle is worth between eight and nine *soldi*. Wine is also made from water and the most excellent fruits, and is very similar to wine from grapes.⁹⁶ The fruits moreover are excellent, of every type and very sweet, like everywhere in India. Fish too are excellent and very cheap. Clothing also costs very little. The currency of the country are small cowries (*caragoi*), which come from Manila, and for one *paolo* one gets up to one thousand, from which you can appreciate how low the prices are, and whole ships come from Manila carrying them.⁹⁷ I took with me fifteen sacks, which lasted me three years and I had two servants.

In Siam, business is very great [37r.], both with regard to local goods and those from abroad, which come from all of India and China and all parts of the world. There are two considerable and secure ports in that

⁹⁵ A silver coinage minted during the papacy of Paul III (1534-9), which became a standard adopted in other Italian states – especially in the Tuscan Grand Duchy where, divided into eight *crasie*, it was the monetary unit until the end of the eighteenth century. The eighteenth-century *Carteggio di Pietro e di Alessandro Verri*, E. GREPPI e A. GIULINI (dir.), Milano, A Giuffrè, 1910-, parte 2, p. 200 states ‘Con dieci paoli al giorno posso comodamente vivere’, i.e. with ten *paoli* a day one can live satisfactorily.

⁹⁶ Cf. Morelli’s observations, see HALIKOWSKI SMITH, ‘Floating clergy’, pp. 364-5; Jean-Baptiste PALLEGOIX, *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam: comprenant la topographie, histoire naturelle, mœurs et coutumes, législation, commerce, industrie, langue, littérature, religion, annales des Thai et précis historique de la mission: avec cartes et gravures*, Paris, Au profit de la mission de Siam, 1854, vol. 2, p. 74.

⁹⁷ LA LOUBÈRE, also referring to Navarrete, confirms that the cowries were brought ‘from the coasts of India and Manila’ as well as the Maldives, *A New Historical Relation*, part II, p. 73, & ill. p. 72 ff. ‘Cori shell serveing for Mony seen severall ways in its natural size’. Reginald S. LE MAY confirms that they were used for ‘small change’, legally established at 800 to the *füang* (a brass coin), *Coinage of Siam*, Bangkok, Siam Society, 1932, pp. 97-8, §1. The local currency in Ayutthaya was Pod Duang coinage which was round-shaped, with long, sharp and pointed tips of legs and large holes between the legs. Excavations in Ayutthaya suggest that Japanese and Chinese coins were also in circulation in the seventeenth century, see Patipat PUMONGPHET, ‘Les fouilles archéologiques dans Mu Ban Portuget sur le site de São Pedro’, in Jacq-Hergoualc’h, *Phra Narai, roi de Siam et Louis XIV*, Paris, Association Française d’Action Artistique, 1986, p. 26, and Anek SIHAMAT, ‘Excavation of the Dutch United East India Company (V.O.C.) Historic site at Ayutthaya’, in Dhiravat na Pombejra ed. *Proceedings of the International Symposium Crossroads of Thai and Dutch history*, Bangkok, SEAMEO-SPAFA, 2007, pp. 401-17.

kingdom: one is in the [interior], but when the water is scarce they only proceed as far as Bangkok twenty miles distant from Siam, where the French have built a great fortress and are based. But they were chased out by the priest[s?] of this king for having been too close to that famous Constance, who had such belief in his fortune that as a private party he arrived at the highest post in that kingdom, namely to be Barcaron, which is to say judge and superintendant of all the foreign nations and Generalissimo of the Siamese army, which commanded [37v] also French and Portuguese soldiers. From whence it was wondered whether he wanted to usurp the kingdom with the help of the French, with whom he was strictly joined in friendship, and who were 800 in Bangkok and 600 in Mergui, from which this persecution started against the French. But then he was miserably killed, his wife and children are presently slaves of the King, and I have spoken several times with them.⁹⁸ The King of France gave instructions to the Compagnie des Indes that the said consort of Constance Phaulkon be given a thousand pieces of eight, the said Constance having both sent immense fortunes to France and given to the Jesuit fathers. Next to the seaboard there is a large port, called Amsterdam, where the Dutch have houses [38r.] and warehouses.⁹⁹ The sea there is very safe because the bottom is all sand and mud.

The other port is Mergui on the other sea towards Pegù and Bengal on a very great river which is apparently navigable, and where large ships ply up to Tonaceri [Tenasserim], a city which is the capital of the Kingdom of Tonaceri, where there is a Viceroy, placed by the King of Siam to govern

⁹⁸ Maria Guyomar de Pinha was enslaved until Phetracha's death in 1703: Guy TACHARD reproduced a letter written by Mme. Phaulkon to Fr. De la Breuille, dated 1 January 1696, *Relation de voyage*, 192v-194r. Ten years later, she was lobbying the French Compagnie des Indes to return the money the company owed to her late husband, see her 'Letter of 20 June 1706', from a Latin original once at the state archives on the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, but moved in 1995 to A.N.O.M. in Aix en Provence, repr. in SIAM SOCIETY, *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 8 'Relationship with France, England and Denmark', Bangkok, Siam Society, 1959, pp. 159-89. She was later vindicated via a decree from the Council of State in France, which provided her with a maintenance allowance, Michael SMITHIES, *Three Military Accounts of the 1688 'Revolution' in Siam by Lieutenant General Desfarges, De La Touche, and J.V. des Verquains*, Bangkok, Orchid Press, 2008, p. 180.

⁹⁹ The Dutch referred to it as a large warehouse, or *Pakhuys*. One of the fullest descriptions is left us in the Journal of Gijsbert Heeck, kept between 16 November 1654 and 18 October 1655, recently published as *A Traveller in Siam in the year 1655. Extracts from the journal of Gijsbert Heeck*, trans. Barend Jan TERWIEL, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2008. For more information about the Pakhuys Amsterdam, see Alfons VAN DER KRAAN, 'On Company Business. The Rijkloff van Goens mission to Siam, 1650', in *Itinerario*, 22, 2 (1998), p. 84, fn. 93.

that kingdom in particular, and which earlier belonged to the King of Pegu and was then acquired by the King of Siam.

In Siam, in other words the capital of the kingdom, where the King resides, every year between 20 and 25 *Ciampari* come from the cities of China, that is to say partly from Canton and partly from Lochius,¹⁰⁰ with all the Chinese merchandise of all types. One of those ships, although not so large as our ships, still manages to carry more than ours; when [38v.] I went to Manila there were more than 460 men on board. There also come every year ships from Tunkin, from Cochinchina with their own products consisting of silk cloth, sails of silk, and lacquer objects (*lavori di vernice*). The Muslims, Persians and Armenians come every year from different and great places like Surat, Bengal, Persia, with all the products of those lands consisting of white cloths, painted canvases and other materials. Furthermore, every year the Dutch come twice from Batavia with four ships, more to take merchandise from their warehouses and factories than to sell, carrying with them few goods. From Madraspatnam come the English, Armenians and Portuguese, who to all regard take with them the goods from that coast and from Tranquebar where the Danes are congregated, but for [39r.] the large part they go to the port of Mergui and not Siam. The Portuguese travel there every year with private vessels from all parts, from Macao, from Timor, from Melaka, from Batavia, from Madras, from Bengal, from São Thomé, from Manila and other places. Every year, moreover, two Siamese ships travel to Japan, from where they transport all the merchandise of that kingdom, consisting in silks, golden porcelains, decorated with both gold and silver filigree, very beautiful woollen goods

¹⁰⁰ Probably the Lochac of Marco Polo, see *The Travels of Marco Polo*, London, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., repr. 1950, chapter VIII, pp. 335-6. This was commonly associated with the capital of Cambodia which was known as Loech (Lovek) to priests like Gaspar de Cruz (O.P.), C.R. BOXER (dir.), *South China in the sixteenth century (1550-1575)*, London: Hakluyt Society, 1953, pp. 78-9. The second anonymous reviewer of this book, however, disagrees with this interpretation: s/he sees it rather as the Ryukyu islands, known to the Portuguese as Lequeos, Loo Choo Islands to the English, and 'Liu Chiu' in Chinese. The problem with this reading would be that trade between the Ryukyus and Ayutthaya stopped by the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, when the Japanese Lord of Satsuma took over these islands, Piyada CHONLAWORN, 'Relations between Ayutthaya and Ryukyu', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 92, 2004, pp. 43-63.

decorated with gold, copper, very fine lacquer work, that is to say chests, drawers and boxes and desks and other things from that realm.¹⁰¹

From all of this it is easy to recognise the great business that is done there, as everyone supplies themselves not only with the goods of the country, but of all the mentioned nations and ports, and moreover what is most important is that they can be had[39v.] at a very good price. So that before the way to China was opened, all Europeans and other nationalities went there to supply themselves with sugar, porcelain and silk cloth of all sorts, and now so too many Indians, Armenians and Persians go there so as to sell them on in their countries so that, beyond their own merchandise and that of China, Japan, Tonkin and Cochinchina, there is also wool from Pegù and Cambodia. The precious stones of Pegù consist of rubies, topazes and sapphires, Chinese gold, gold from Japan and Sumatra, which is normally sold at the following price: one ounce of gold for eight or nine of silver. The sandalwood of Timor, the gum benjamin of Laos and Sumatra, the mastic of Cambodia, the camphor of Borneo, the ambergris of the Nicobar islands [40r.], all kinds of drugs from Manila, the nutmeg, pepper, cloves and cinnamon of the Dutch, the ginger and rhubarb from various other parts. The merchandise of the country consists furthermore in ivory, tin, brass, [Indian] saffron, their own cinnamon alongside their own drugs, calamite storax,¹⁰² rhinoceros meat, and unicorn meat (this is extremely rare), eaglewood, which is more perfect than aloe wood, calambac wood¹⁰³,

¹⁰¹ Cima is referring to the annual Siamese copper fleet which primarily sought Japanese copper and represented both King and private merchants, VIRAPHOL, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-1. This was independent of the two VOC East Indiamen allowed annually to travel to Deshima, a run which was discontinued in 1715 in favour of Batavia, E.M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia: the trade of the Dutch East India Company during the eighteenth century*, Leiden, C.N.W.S. Publications, 2006, p. 213. The fame of Japanese craftsmanship was still retained in the early nineteenth century Thai poem, which refers to the Japanese as being *chang di*, or skilled craftsmen, *Prachum Charuk Wat Phrachetuphon (Collected Inscriptions of Wat Phrachetuphon)*, Bangkok, the Royal Academy of Siam, B.E. 2472 = 1929), vol. 2, pp. 483-4.

¹⁰² A brilliant, resinous, solid substance, although dense, composed of white and reddish lumps; it possesses a rather acrid, strong smell, see Jacques SAVARY DES BRÛLONS, *Dizionario di commercio dei fratelli Savary, che comprende la cognizione delle Merci d'ogni Paese*, Venice, Giambatista Pasquali, 1770-71, vol. IV, pp. 199-200.

¹⁰³ A type of agarwood or dark resinous heartwood which forms in *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* trees. Gaspar da Cruz O.P. noted its export from Champa, BOXER, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 59; it was exported to places like the Chinese court, as noted by the Confucian poet Ch'en Wei-sung (1626-1682), see John E. WILLS, *Embassies and illusions. Dutch and Portuguese envoys to Kang-hsi, 1666-1687*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian monographs, 1984, p. 81. 'Unicorn meat', although one might be assume it a construct redolent of medieval *livres de merveille*, was a common term of reference for rhinoceri, see for example the list of presents sent from Madras to Emperor Farrakhsiyar in Delhi in 1715, C.R. WILSON (dir.), *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 46-7.

which is called 'la Calamba', camphor wood and other precious and odoriferous woods. Ebony and soapwood are here in great supplies and at a very low price; this serves to colour wood, like Brazil wood, and is worth 200 *lire* more than 4 *paoli* and for comestibles ships are sent to Sumatra, Manila, Massawa. Elephants are to be had for a very low price [40v.] of 25, 30 or 40 *scudi*, but 200 *scudi* are levied on each beast to be paid to the King to take them out of the kingdom. A ship in Mergui loaded in my time 24 beasts, and they are sold along the Coromandel coast, at best in Masulipatam for 1200 to 1400 *scudi*, and each year a great number of elephants are exported, the Mogul ruler and his nobles delighting in these beasts. For the transport another 200 *scudi* has to be paid annually. The King of Siam sends [for goods] every year from Mergui to Tennasserim by river and then by land and thus into Siam; these merchants transport from Mergui victuals, wine, rice, oil for Sumatra, with a two or three-fold profit. Very little European merchandise goes this way, being of very low value, that being said there is good profit to be had in false stones [41r.] and in crowns.

The King of Siam and Pegù do not have subjects but slaves, and they are treated as such. The King of Siam maintains that the King of Cambodia is his subject, who sends him every year a white elephant, which is served upon and treated as if it were a sacred and divine thing. It eats and drinks from silverware, and the nobility serve upon it, indeed greeting it and heaping reverences upon it.¹⁰⁴ The King of Jork [Johor] and Kedah [in] Malaya send both roses and golden roses every year as a token of their subjection, one of each, which is brought to the King in a great ceremony.¹⁰⁵

The Siamese are a slothful and lazy people, who do not work much, but delight in selling and buying, and all the vegetables and fruits for sale are those that do not require too much work. Nails [41v.] and ironware are brought in from elsewhere, nor even are shoes produced here, but are brought in from the coast of Malabar and Bengal.

In Siam, slaves are not to be had so cheaply as in Bengal or the cities of Malabar, but anyone who goes into debt however small remains a slave of his creditor until he pays off the debt, and if the debt is of some size, then the wife and children of the debtor are also enslaved. I liberated the

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Guy TACHARD, *Voyage de Siam des pères jésuites*, vol. I, pp. 230-33.

¹⁰⁵ These are *bunga mas dan perak*, or golden and silver flowers (actually trees) of tribute, *GENERALE MISSIVEN Van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII Der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, ed. Willem Philippus Coolhaas, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960-2004, vol. IV, letter of 29 April 1681, p. 439.

enslaved wife of a Christian Portuguese for 60 Ticals, which amounts to 33 pieces of gold.¹⁰⁶

In this realm, the French wanted to establish a fort and they already had two: one in Bangkok, and the other [42r.] in Mergui, and they wanted to build another in Porto di Ciaija.¹⁰⁷ But, wanting it too much and interfering in the government of the realm, the Collegio Grande was destroyed, which the French Jesuits in Lubò [Louvo] possessed¹⁰⁸, and the French

¹⁰⁶ Bonded labour to pay off debts, via a line of inheritance, judicial punishment, sale by parents / husband/ by one's own hand, or as a result of kidnap was fairly common in Siam. Franciscans and Augustinians actively sought to redeem slaves through payment, or direct intercession with the monarch, while the ever self-interested Jesuits provided loans. Achilles MEERSMAN, 'The Franciscans in Junk-Ceylon, Kedah and Mergui', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 1963, 56 (4), pp. 439-62; HALIKOWSKI SMITH, *Creolization and Diaspora in the Portuguese Indies*, 198; Maurice COLLIS, *The Land of the Great Image: being experiences of Friar Manrique in Arakan*, London, Faber & Faber, 1946, p. 140.

¹⁰⁷ It is not clear what Cima means. It is probably Junk Ceylon, or Phuket, to which General Desfarges did indeed sally forth in the latter part of 1689 from Pondicherry with 332 men and an idea of restoring French control, hoping to 'frighten the Siamese into reconciliation by a show of force', *Generale Missiven*, vol. V, letter of March 14, 1690, p. 362. A controversial meeting was called by Desfarges in Pondicherry on 6 February 1689 in which Martin advocated rather taking Mergui as more useful to the company. But Véret, Engineer De la Mare and General Desfarges prevailed, drawn by Phuket's wealth. HUTCHINSON, *Adventurers in Siam*, p. 180. What happened thereafter Hutchinson has described as an 'anti-adventure': Desfarges changed his mind, decided to release his Siamese hostages, and return to France via Balassor and Negrais, Michael SMITHIES, *A Resounding Failure. Martin and the French in Siam, 1672-1693*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 1998, p. 120; more generally DHIRAVAT NA POMBEJRA, 'Towards an "autonomous" history of seventeenth century Phuket', in Chris BAKER e Sunait CHUTINTARANOND (dir.), *Recalling Local Pasts. Autonomous History in Southeast Asia*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002, pp. 89-126. Phuket remained a failure in the 1690s, both in terms of a mission field, as the Spanish missionary Nicholas Tolentino's reports attest (Adrien LAUNAY, *Histoire de la Mission de Siam, 1662-1811. Documents historiques*, Paris, P. Tequi, 1920, vol. 2, p. 97; DHIRAVAT `Ayutthaya at the end of the seventeenth century: was there a shift to isolation?', p. 267; Dirk VAN DER CRUYSSSE, *Louis XIV et le Siam*, Paris, Fayard, 1991, p. 84) and because of the threats of Panglima Kulup, 'a renowned sea pirate' in 1691-2, *Generale Missiven*, vol. V, 'Letter of 31 January 1692', p. 471.

There is, however, the possibility Cima is speaking of Singhora / Songhkla near Patani. John Keay writes that the prospect of building a fort and a free port at Singhora was offered the French as 'an equivalent to Bombay with a French garrison and full sovereignty', John Keay, *The Honourable Company. A History of the English East India Company*, HarperCollins, London, 1993, pp. 199, 203. The Chaumont embassy had indeed obtained the rights to this commercial port, BAKER & CHUTINTARANOND, *Recalling Local Pasts*, p. 121. However, the French were put off by its distance from Ayutthaya, nor were Phuket or Ligor more attractive propositions, HUTCHINSON, *Adventurers in Siam*, 1940, pp. 119-20. Phonetically, the most similar place name is Chaiya on the west coast of the Gulf of Siam.

¹⁰⁸ This would have been the Jesuit college with an observatory on the roof, as described by Le Père Fontancy S.J. in the mid-1680s, Henri BERNARD, 'Le voyage du Père [Jean de] Fontancy', in *Bulletin de l'Université Aurore*, 3, 2, 1942, pp. 257-62, and not the Collegio delle Nationi, which was a French school at the heart of the camp St. Joseph in Ayutthaya, 'Letter of Lambert de la Motte to François Pallu, dated October 1667', A.M.E.P., vol. 857 (1), fol. 221.

were chased out of both of their strongholds and fortresses, as is written above, and in the Portuguese camp there was nothing to report, neither with the Dominican fathers, nor with the Portuguese Jesuits, nor any of the laymen, nor Dutch, nor Christian Peguans and to the other nations there was no harm done whatsoever, which leads me to say that the persecution was purely political and had to do with the said Constance Phaulkon, and had nothing to do with religion, as others have noted.¹⁰⁹

And thus Siam remains a considerable place of great importance for learning [42v.] and study and for continuous practising of the languages and rites of those nations, and to have all the merchandise and rare things from all parts of the world, and for the great liberty that anyone can enjoy there.

Therefore, as such a secure and useful place, I humbly beseech the prudence of this Most Serene Senate to try to establish a foothold [there] and [found] a place to settle; which I have already tried to do with respect to the Italians around that king¹¹⁰, [he] desiring an increase of trade and to have every nation there. I am more than certain that he will easily concede everything, especially if we send one or two ambassadors [43r.], who will be received with the greatest affection,¹¹¹ and I am more than certain that this Most Serene Senate and this entire Serene Republic will offer up to God a thousand thanks and blessings for having undertaken such a resolution’.

All ambassadors who go there are received with great keenness and affection and are always cared for out of the public cost of the realm, as much for their stay there as for their outgoing voyage, and this is also the practice with the King of Pegù, the Emperor of China, and almost all those Indian kings have the same custom.

¹⁰⁹ Dirk VAN DER CRUYSE considers that J.-B. Maldonado S.J. avoided the the ‘rage (*furor*) of the Siamese’, which ‘found vent in imprisonment, blows, defilement, and every form of insult, indignity (*ad omnem ignominiam coniectas*) which was levelled against the French’ because he was thought to be Portuguese, *Siam and the West, 1500-1700*, Chiang Mai: Silk-worm Books, 2002, p. 460, fn. 7. Other testimonies like the ‘Succinct Account of what occurred in the kingdom of Siam in 1688’, see *Witness to a Revolution: Siam 1688*, Michael Smithies (dir.), Bangkok, Siam Society, 2004, pp. 124-34, suggest that the bearing of arms by the Portuguese community was forbidden, and *mestiço* progeny summarily enslaved.

¹¹⁰ Unclear whom Cima is referring to. The Franciscan missionary Giovan Battista Morelli made a fleeting visit in 1706, HALIKOWSKI SMITH, ‘Floating’ European Clergy in Siam’, p. 374.

¹¹¹ This was definitely not the case on Guy Tachard’s visit in 1687 or 1699, although on the second occasion Tachard did make it as far as Ayutthaya and was even received by the King although purely out of formality and with obvious resentment.

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