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After Diu: The Forgotten Islamic Trade in Early Nineteenth Century Cantonese Confucian Historiography

After Diu: Perdagangan Islam yang Dilupakan pada Awal Abad kesembilan belas Historiografi Cantonese Confucian

HUNG Tak Wai 孔德維*

Abstract

Since the early 20th century, historians have studied interactions between China and Islamic communities. Most of them focused on the prosperity brought by the maritime trade between Muslims and Chinese in the earlier eras. How this trade ended, however, has not been extensively studied. This article studies the narratives regarding Arabs and Muslims participating in the Canton trade, as recorded in *Yuehai guan-zhi* 粵海關志 [Gazetteer of Canton Customs]. *Yuehai guan-zhi* was published by Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎 (1796–1861), a Cantonese Confucian elite, with the first-hand government records in 1838, by which time non-Chinese speaking Muslim merchants had already become rare in the region. This article investigates how Islamic trade was recorded during the early 19th century. In particular, it will illustrate how the trade ended and was forgotten due to the diminishing presence of Muslim merchants after the Battle of Diu in 1509.

Keywords: Chinese Islam, Canton trade, customs system, *Yuehai guan-zhi*, Leung Tingnan.

Abstrak

Sejak awal abad ke-20, sejarawan telah mengkaji interaksi yang berlaku antara komuniti Cina dan Islam. Kebanyakan mereka memberi tumpuan terhadap kemasyhuran perdagangan maritim antara Muslim dan Cina pada era tersebut. Walau bagaimanapun, kisah berakhirnya perdagangan ini tidak dikaji secara meluas oleh para sejarawan. Artikel ini mengkaji naratif mengenai orang Arab dan Muslim yang terlibat dalam perdagangan Canton, seperti yang dicatatkan dalam *Yuehai guan-zhi* 粵海關志 [Gazetteer of Canton Customs]. *Yuehai guan-zhi* telah diterbitkan oleh Liang See 梁廷柎 (1796-1861), seorang elit Confucian Kantonis, dengan menggunakan rekod pertama

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kerajaan pada tahun 1838, dimana ketika itu para peniaga Muslim yang tidak fasih berbahasa Cina telah menjadi asing di rantau ini. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana perdagangan Islam direkodkan pada awal abad ke-19. Secara khususnya, artikel ini menggambarkan bagaimana perdagangan maritim antara Muslim dan Cina berakhir dan dilupakan setelah berkurangnya jumlah pedagang-pedagang Muslim selepas Pertempuran Dui pada tahun 1509.

Kata Kunci: Cina muslim, canton trade, sistem budaya, *Yuehai guanzhi* Leung Tingnan.

Introduction

Many believe when everything ends, it is always sad. Though it might not always be true, it is perhaps one of the reasons scholars seldom discuss the demise of Islamic trade in the South China Sea.¹ The story of Islamic trade's heyday has repeatedly been prioritised for analysis. According to it, merchants from the Arab world, traveling through the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, arrived in South China and became major players of the international trade before the 16th century. Since the early 20th century, historians have focused on the early interactions between China and Islamic communities. In particular, they portrayed the prosperity brought by the maritime trade between Muslims and Chinese. Their accounts basically focus on how Muslims interacted with the subjects of the Tang (618-907) and Song Empires (960-1279).

For instance, Marshall Broomhall (1866-1937), one of the earliest English historians working on Chinese Islam, discussed the mosques and tombs of foreign Muslims who arrived in Canton mainly before the 14th century when he illustrated Islam in Canton.² Bai Shouyi 白壽彝 (1909-2000; also known as Djamel al-Din Bai Shouyi), one of the most prominent Chinese Muslim historians, also suggested that since the late 1930s, maritime trade between the Arab world and China was most prosperous before the Mongol reign. Bai devotes almost 70 pages to discuss the Arab trade and merchants in the Song Empire. He argues that discrimination and oppression that happened since the Mongol reign did not cease during Ming dynasty (1368-1644). According to his account, Muslim maritime trade in Canton started from the late 7th century and only lasted

¹ South China Sea can also be called Minami Shina Kai 南シナ海, West Philippine Sea, or North Natuna Sea in different contexts. The use of "South China Sea" in this article merely because of the study is concerning the Canton trade in history.

² Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007 [1910]), pp.109-120.

until the late 15th century.³ Fu Tongxian 傅統先 (1910-1985) also believes that the heyday of Arabic-Chinese maritime trade was before the end of the Pax-Mongolica. Worried about the potential threats of non-Chinese populations, the Ming court ended the booming international trade.⁴ These findings have been widely shared by many other historical accounts. Most scholars would agree that Muslims were dominant in the Indian Ocean and their highly visible influence in the South China Sea trade ended with the arrival of European empires. However, this is not sufficient to explain how exactly the demise happened and when Muslims ceased to appear.

This article attempts to explain how, in particular, those Muslims who visited the Canton port, one of the most important Chinese cities of the China Sea trade before the European era, ceased their trade there. Some suggest it was the new empires' policies to cease foreign trade. In his inspiring book, *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans*, Leonard Blussé, for instance, provides a clear illustration of the idea:

This situation became very clear when the Ming dynasty was established in 1367 after more than a century of Mongol domination. To gain full control over the border and do away with the Islamic traders at the coast who, during the Pax Mongolica, had basically run China's overseas trade from coastal port cities like Quanzhou in Fujian Province—the well-known Zayton of Marco Polo—the first Ming ruler, Zhu Yuanzhang (1368–1398), forbade all private Chinese trade with foreign countries.⁵

Blussé believed that Emperor Yongle 永樂帝 (1360-1424) attempted to replace the private commercial activities with tribute missions arranged with foreign governments. However, the government maritime trade ban never successfully ceased those private international commercial activities. Matsuura Akira 松浦 章 even suggested that the ban was the major reason for the maritime merchants to become pirates.⁶ In any

³ Bai Shouyi 白壽彝, *Zhongguo Yisilan shi cun gao* 中國伊斯蘭史存稿 [Manuscripts on History of Chinese Islam] (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1982), pp.1-44, 45-55, 104-169.

⁴ Fu Tongxian 傅統先, *Zhongguo Huijiao Shi* 中國回教史 [History of Chinese Islam] (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1969), pp.28-39, 89-90.

⁵ Leonard Blussé, *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University, 2008), p.15.

⁶ In fact, "pirate," or "kaizoku," is a label which governments gave to illegal traders. Matsuura Akira believed that licensed traders became illegal pirate merchants due to the

case, the large number of foreign vessels and wealthy Arab merchants no longer existed in Canton roughly by the early Ming. In his work about Confucian translation of monotheism and Islamic law, James Frankel points out that Muslim communities in China, at least those in the eastern and central regions, “were effectively cut off from frequent or extensive contact with their brethren in the Islamic heartlands and were left to fend for themselves without the support of any Islamic state.”⁷ And it was the Ming rulers, according to Frankel, who further isolated the Muslims from the Arab world. He further writes:

The Ming rulers, hoping to defuse the potential for ethnic strife, therefore enacted policies intended to accelerate the “civilization” of “barbarian” minorities, including laws to help accelerate the natural process of acculturation of various ethnic and cultural communities. The daily force and inevitability of acculturative processes had certainly shaped the history of the Muslim community in China even before the Ming period, but never before had a regime taken such concrete steps to oversee Muslim assimilation into mainstream Chinese culture and society. While the widespread adoption of Chinese language and material culture by Muslims living in eastern and central China would have occurred anyway, the Ming policies certainly catalyzed a more rapid naturalization that helped transform Islam in China into Chinese Islam.⁸

This was the background for the Chinese translation of Islamic doctrines, the Han Kitāb. Nevertheless, the cutting off process was “a complex history” which “we must not oversimplify.”⁹ How and when Muslim maritime merchants disappeared remains unanswered.

We should also consider it from another angle. After foreign Muslim merchants disappeared, how was their presence remembered? What images do historical narratives have of these wealthy foreigners from the alien world with exotic religious practices? One might also consider whether the experience of interacting with Muslim merchants was learnt and applied to the growing international trade between Europeans and Chinese since the 17th century.

strict trade ban during the 14th century. “Pirate” in this sense is not necessarily related to violent crimes along the trade routes. It mainly refers to smuggling. Matsuura Akira 松浦章, *Chugoku No Kaizoku 中國の海賊* (Tokyo: Toho Shoten, 1995), pp.43-79.

⁷ James D. Frankel, *Rectifying God’s Name: Liu Zhi’s Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), p.xviii.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.23.

⁹ *Ibid.*.

Published in 1838 by Liang Tingnan 梁廷枏 (1796–1861), *Yue-hai guanzhi* is a text that sheds light on the demise of the Islamic trade in the South China Sea. Liang was born into a wealthy and prestigious family in Shunde town.¹⁰ He was a cosmopolitan Confucian who made a great contribution to the Canton government. His works were largely related to the international trade of the region.¹¹

Liang was so well-known for his knowledge that Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), the Viceroy of Liangguang 兩廣總督, appointed Liang to be his secretariat-advisor in 1817.¹² Liang served in different posts of the secretariat. His research eventually focused on artwork, local history and foreign affairs in Canton. But the Viceroy secretariat had more concern for foreign affairs owing to the small military conflict be-

¹⁰ It is important to note that Liang did not finish the national level of civil service examinations. After he passed the regional examination, his family donated the first level of the degree (*Fu-Gongsheng* 副貢生) to him. *Fu-Gongsheng* was a kind of “official student” (*Sheng yuan* (*Sheng-yuan*) 生員 and *Jian sheng* (*Chien-sheng*) 監生, was not part of the ruling class, “the group that identifies the interests of state power with its own interests and always, in promoting the penetration of political authority, automatically pursues its own interests”. Unlike the gentry (*Shenshi* 紳士), who obtained a degree from the civil service examinations and thus had the potential to join the bureaucracy, *Fu-Gongsheng* was a middle stratum between the ruling class and the commoners. Liang, in this sense, remained an intellectual of the orthodox Confucian intellectuals’ circle but was distant from state power. Min Tu-ki 민두기, “Political Aspects of the Sheng-chien,” in *National Polity and Local Power: The Transformation of Late Imperial China*, ed. Philip A. Kuhn and Timothy Brook (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp.21-49.

¹¹ The life of Liang Tingnan has not been well studied. Only one brief biography is available today. Unfortunately, it does not include any citations. See Wang Jinfeng 王金鋒, *Liang Tingnan* 梁廷枏 (Guangzhou: Guangdong People’s Publishing House, 2005). More authoritative sources could refer to texts compiled in Qing era. See *Qing dai Yue ren zhuan* [Biographies of Cantonese of the Qing era] (Beijing: China National Microfilming Center for Library Recourses, 2011 [reprint]), Vol.13, pp.1529-1533.

¹² The secretariats of viceroys in late Imperial China were privately funded institutions for the purpose of policy research. Intellectuals participating in secretariats were not officially “inside” the bureaucratic system. This gave intellectuals serving in secretariats comparatively more freedom than other officials. They were similar to present day think-tanks but also carried the responsibility of training young and talented scholars of the region. See Guan Xiaohong 關曉虹, *Cong mu fu dao zhi guan: Qing ji wai guan zhi de zhuan xing yu kun rao* 從幕府到職官——清季外官制的轉型與困擾 [From Secretariat to Professional Official System: Changing and Confusion of Qing Sub-bureaucracy] (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2014).

tween the British and Canton navies from 1833 to 1834.¹³ Thus, Liang was the first, among other Confucian scholar-bureaucrats, to write about the civilisations that lay outside the Qing Empire.

Lu Kun 盧坤 (1772–1835), the Viceroy in the office after Ruan Yuan, recognised the potential threat from the Europeans and found it necessary to understand the foreigners, even though trade was revived within a year after the clash. Thus it was Liang who took up the duty of studying the matter and compiling the *Guangdong haifang huilan* 廣東海防匯覽 [The Conspectus of Maritime Defence in Canton].¹⁴ After three years, his research extended to a comprehensive historical study of the Canton trade and Customs operations. *Yuehai guanzhi* was the fruit of this study. It covered the history of international trade and Canton Customs, and some ethnographies of the trading partners, including the Europeans and Americans, and several Southeast Asian ethnic groups.¹⁵

¹³ The Parliament of the United Kingdom passed the Saint Helena Act (also known as the Government of India Act, or the Charter Act of 1833) in response to the rising demand for laissez-faire policies in Britain. The Act legalised the British India Government, which replaced most of the functions of the British East India Company in India, and ended its monopoly rights in the Far East, including the Qing Empire. The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston (1784–1865), thus sent William John Napier (1786–1834) to Canton. Due to his immature diplomatic skills and ignorance of Chinese affairs, Napier's conflict with the Viceroy soon led to a skirmish of cannon fire. See Priscilla Napier, *Barbarian Eye: Lord Napier in China, 1834, the prelude to Hong Kong* (London: Brassey's, 1995); W. Travis Hanes; Frank Sanello, *Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* (Naperville, Ill.: Sourcebooks, 2002) and Susanna Hoe, Derek Roebuck, *The Taking of Hong Kong: Charles and Clara Elliot in China Waters* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), pp.36-42.

¹⁴ Chen Enwei 陳恩維, "Liang Tingnan yu difang haifang tongshi *Guangdong haifang hui lan*" 梁廷柎與地方海防通史《廣東海防匯覽》 [Liang Tingnan and Regional Maritime Defence History: *Conspectus of Maritime Defence in Canton*], in *Zhongguo difangzhi* 中國地方志 [China Local Record], Vol. 10, 2010, pp.50-56; see also Lu Kun 盧坤, Deng Tingzhen 鄧廷楨 eds., *Guangdong haifang hui lan* 廣東海防彙覽 [Conspectus of Maritime Defence in Canton] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Renmin Publishing House, 2009).

¹⁵ Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志 [Gazetteer of Canton Customs] (Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2014[2002]), Book 1, Vol.1, p.1a; see also Chen Enwei 陳恩維, "Liang Tingnan 'Yue haiguan zhi' ji qi haiguan shi yanjiu" 梁廷柎《粵海關志》及其海關史研究 [Liang Tingnan's *Canton Customs Record* and his customs study], in *Shixue shi yanjiu* 史學史研究 [Journal of Historiography], Vol.3, 2009, pp.72-80; Guan Hanhua 關漢華, "Liang Tingnan 'Yue hai guan zhi' wenxian jiazhi chutan" 梁廷柎《粵海關志》文獻價值初探 [On the

Liang discovered that the official record before 1749 was not well preserved in the Canton Customs office and was thus less precise and reliable. The commercial activities of Muslim merchants, which were mainly happening before the 16th century, were therefore not comprehensive. However, this is exactly why the memories and images of the early 19th century Confucian elites on the history of Muslim trade could be located. The record after 1749 up till 1837 (the year which *Yuehai guanzhi* was published) are especially illustrative of the stories concerning Arab and Muslim merchants before 1749.

Arabs and Muslims in Canton Trade before the 18th century

There are three major entries related to Arabs and Muslims in *Yuehai guanzhi*. One of them was made in the Song period and concerns how merchants from different countries were welcomed to the Song Empire. The second one is about the Muslim traders during the Mongol reign. The last one is a diplomatic incident regarding an embassy with an Islamic title in the Ming era, which raised the concerns of the Emperor. In these three entries, Liang Tingnan did not provide any of his comments on either Arabs or Islam. Most of the records were plain facts.

The first record about the Arab merchants was around 999 to 1002. The Song Empire set up officials in the coastal area to serve incoming foreign merchants,

In the middle of the Xianping reign (998-1003), [the Court] ordered the ministers of Hang and Ming states to arrange customs offices and serve the needs of the foreign merchants. If a vessel arrives in Dinghai county of Ming state, ministers should seal the vessel and send it to the customs office of the Ming state. [Merchants from] Dashi, Guluo, Dupo, Zhancheng, Boni, Mayi, Sanfuqi, Bintonglong, Shaliting, Danliumei [were welcomed]. [The Song Empire would] sell gold, silver, copper coin, lead, tin, coloured silk cloths, and porcelain for spices, rhinoceros horn, ivory, coral, amber, pearl, wrought iron (or Damascus steel), softshell of Trionychidae, shell of Hawksbill sea turtle, agate, giant clams (Tridacninae), crystal, foreign cloths, ebony, and sappanwood (*Biancaea sappan*).”

咸平中，又命杭、明州各置司，聽蕃客從便。若舶至明州定海縣，監官封船荅堵送州。凡大食、古邏、閣婆、占城、勃泥、麻逸、三佛齊、賓同隴、沙裡亭、丹流眉，

通貨易，以金、銀、緡錢、鉛、錫、雜色帛、精粗瓷器市易香藥、犀象、珊瑚、琥珀、珠、寶鐵、鼈皮、瑁、瑪瑙、車渠、水晶、蕃布、烏櫛、蘇木之物。¹⁶

Dashi 大食, as any scholar of Islam in China knows, is the term used in Imperial China to describe Arabs, the Arabian Peninsula, and any political entity from the region or of the people.¹⁷ In this record, the foreign merchants, including Arab merchants, were invited to present-day Ningbo 寧波 and Hangzhou 杭州 instead of Canton. However, foreign traders might have reached Canton according to different evidence. In 971, the Song government had established a customs office in Canton, so foreign merchants arriving in this port should include those from Arabia.¹⁸ During this period, foreign merchants were to sell their goods directly to the Song government while they gained valued metal, silk cloths, and porcelains.

Compared with other historical records, *Yuehai guanzhi* did not narrate the wealth and other conditions of the Arab merchants.¹⁹ For instance, *Lingwai Daida* 嶺外代答 [Representative Answers from the Region beyond the Mountains], a geographical treatise which was published in the 12th century, made the Arabian Peninsula the centre of its discourse when introducing the foreign world to Chinese readers. *Lingwai Daida* also indicated that most maritime merchants were somehow related to Dashi. It recorded that,

Most coastal states and counties have their customs office. In order to comfort the foreigners, our empire had set up supreme customs offices in the states of Quan (Quanzhou 泉州) and Guan (Canton 廣州). Those foreign merchants in emergency and accidents shall seek assistance from the supreme customs offices. Every tenth month of the year, supreme customs officers would offer a banquet for foreign merchants and send them back [to their home countries]. After summer solstice,

¹⁶ Liang Tingnan 梁廷枏, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志 [Gazetteer of Canton Customs], Vol.2, p.19.

¹⁷ Graham Thurgood, *From Ancient Cham to Modern Dialects: Two Thousand Years of Language Contact and Change* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), p. 228; Edward Allworth, *Central Asia, 130 Years of Russian Dominance: A Historical Overview* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p.624.

¹⁸ Liang Tingnan 梁廷枏, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.2, pp.19-25.

¹⁹ Some of the earlier historical records include the trading condition, lifestyle, religion, and even names of wealthy Arabs. See Bai Shouyi 白壽彝, *Zhongguo Yisilan shi cun gao* 中國伊斯蘭史存稿 [Manuscripts on History of Chinese Islam], pp.104-169.

they would return. Supreme customs offices would tax their goods and protect them. Among all foreign nations, the wealthiest and most resourceful one is Dashi-guo (Arabia)...

沿海州郡，類有市舶。國家綏懷外夷，於泉、廣二州置提舉市舶司，故凡蕃商急難之欲赴懇者，必提舉司也。歲十月，提舉司大設蕃商而遣之。其來也，當夏至之後，提舉司征其商而覆護焉。諾蕃國之富盛多寶貨者，莫如大食國……²⁰

In Liang Tingnan's narrative, Arab (or Dashi) was only one of the common trading countries during the Song reign. The omission of Arab merchants from his writing could be explained in two ways. First, *Yuehai guanzhi* aimed at illustrating the trading condition and customs policies of the Qing government for the 19th century. It is understandable that the details of the Song Empire's trading partners, from almost eight centuries earlier, were no longer important. Second, the brief description also reflected that Arabs held little significance at the time of Liang. The history of these people meant very little for Confucian scholar-bureaucrats when they discussed contemporary maritime trade.

The second record is from between 1291 and 1293, almost three centuries after the first record. Kublai Khan (r.1260-1294) sent an edict to his government with twenty-two orders concerning maritime trade. The fourth order was about the commercial activities of the religious population of the Mongol Empire. Theocratically, four groups of religious people, Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, Yelikewen 也里可溫 [Christian priests of the Church of the East],²¹ and Danishmand 答失蠻, had the privilege to pass borders without paying tariff within the Mongol Empire.²² However, they always brought “commoners” (suren 俗人)

²⁰ Zhou Qufei 周去非, *Lingwai Daida* 嶺外代答 [Representative Answers from the Region beyond the Mountains], collected in *Qinding Siku Quanshu* 欽定四庫全書 [Complete Library in Four Sections], “Shibu III” 史部十一 [Category of History, XI], Vol.3, pp.11b-12b.

²¹ *Yelikewen* 也里可溫 was the name for Christians of the Church of the East stationing in the Mongol Empire, who had long been mixed up (what does this mean? Confused with? Living side by side?) with the Nestorian traditions. These Christians were called Jingjiao 景教 in earlier Chinese texts. See Chen Yuan 陳垣, *Yuan Yelikewen kao* 元也里可溫考 [On Yalikewen in Yuan Dynasty] (Beiping 北平: Peigen xuexiao 培根學校, 1917) and Wilhelm Baum, Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London; New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2003).

²² Jack Weatherford has recently provided a comprehensive and colourful illustration of the religious tolerance and commercial activities in the Mongol Empire. See Jack

with them in order to let merchants be exempted from tariff. This concerned Kublai Khan and hence his court ordered the priests to pay the tariff as the rest of the population did when they brought goods for commercial purposes:

“From court discussion, we found that Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, Yelikewen, and Danishmand always brought commoners with them to trade in foreign regions and mislead the customs office to avoid tariff. From now, religious populations like Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, Yelikewen, and Danishmand trading to foreign regions, shall be taxed by the customs office according to the law, unless they have the edict to exempt their tariff duties. If they violate the rule, they shall be seen as tariff evaders and their goods shall be confiscated.” For this, ministers made a memorial on the thirteenth day of the fourth month in 1293, “Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, Yelikewen, and Danishmand can trade as they wish, and be taxed as commoners...” The Emperor replied, “Accepted.”²³

「議得和尚、先生、也里可溫、答失蠻人口，多是夾帶俗人過番買賣，影射避免抽分。今後和尚、先生、也里可溫、答失蠻人口等，（多）過番興販，如無執把聖旨許免抽分文，仰市舶司依例抽分。如違，以漏舶論罪，斷沒。」為此，於至元三十年四月十三日奏過事內一件：「和尚、先生、也里可溫、答失蠻每（們），但做買賣去呵，依着百姓每（們）的體例裏與抽分者……」聖旨：「了也。」²⁴

The discussion between Kublai Khan and his ministers revealed several phenomena. First, the mobility of commercial and religious populations was common. Second, religions were relatively equally governed within the Mongol Empire. Besides, if the number of religious populations using the tax exemption privileges was large enough to reach the court, the migrating population would be even larger. In fact, according to Peter Jackson, Muslim traders were one of the most important groups of merchants during Pax Mongolica. Including both the so-called “Silk Road” from Inner Asia to Europe and the maritime trade route going through the Indian Ocean, Muslim merchants had been participating in

Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Quest for God: How the World's Greatest Conqueror Gave Us Religious Freedom* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018).

²³ Author's Translation.

²⁴ Liang Tingnan 梁廷柅, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.7, p.45.

different kinds of trading and contributed much to the economy.²⁵ More importantly, the recognition of the religious title “Danishmand,” which was a general term to address Islamic clerics in Chinese texts during the Mongol era, implied how Islam was officially recognized by the Mongol regime and how it was associated with maritime trade.²⁶ As in the previous case, Liang Tingnan did not portray the importance of Muslims in the maritime trade in his book.

The last incident related to Islamic trade recorded in *Yuehai guanzhi* happened in the Ming reign. It was also a recognition of an Islamic religious title. In 1403, Emperor Yongle (r.1402-1424) exempted the punishment and tariff of a Muslim Hajji who was arrested for privately trading with commoners. It was recorded that,

In the first year of Yongle (1403)...the country of Suoli²⁷ in Xiyang sent their envoy to pay tribute. The envoy brought with them pepper to trade with the commoners. The customs office requested to tax the trade, but the Emperor refused. Also, Muslim Hajji (Huihui hazhi 回回哈只) Mohammad Jilani (Mahamo Qilanni 馬哈沒奇刺泥) from Country of Lani²⁸ and his fellow came to pay tribute to us. For they brought pepper to trade with the commoners, customs office requested to tax the trade. The Emperor also refused.”

²⁵ Peter Jackson, “Pax Mongolica and a Transcontinental Traffic,” in *The Mongols and the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp.210-241.

²⁶ Li Xinghua 李興華, “Studies on Islam in Beijing,” in Jin Yijiu 金宜久 ed.; Chan Ching-shing Alex tran., *Islam* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), p.358.

²⁷ Suoliguó 瑣里國 was the name for Chola territory in Coromandel coast of the South India. It was called Sora in Greco-Roman texts, Čola or Chola in Sanskrit texts, and Cūliyān, Soli, and Máabar in Arabic. In the Chola dynasty, the territory was called Cholamandalam. In Chinese texts, it is also called Cheli 車離, Chalao 察牢, Zhuliye 珠利耶, Zhunian 注輦. See Chen Jiarong 陳佳榮, *Gudai nanhai diming hui shi* 古代南海地名匯釋 [Collection of Ancient Geographic Terminology of South Sea with Illustration] (Beijing: Zhunghua Book Company, 1986), p.929. However, the Chola Empire was completely overtaken by the Pandyan empire by the end of the 13th century. The envoy from Suoliguó in 1403 was very likely not from the Chola but from Pandyan Empire. See Rama Sankar Tripathi, *History of Ancient India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), p.472.

²⁸ We have no clue for the exact location and history of Lani-guo. However, it should be a small state along the Malabar coast. See Sen Tansen 沈丹森, “The impact of Zheng He's expeditions on Indian Ocean interactions,” in *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol.79, Issue 3 (2016), pp.609–636.

永樂元年……西洋鎖里國遣使貢，附載胡椒與民互市，有司請征其稅，命勿征。又，刺尼國回回哈只馬哈沒奇刺泥等貢，因附載胡椒與民互市，有司請征其稅，亦不聽。²⁹

To understand the meaning of this incident, it is necessary to illustrate the commercial and diplomatic interactions between the Ming Empire and those under the so called “sea sealing” (*haijin* 海禁) policy. During the Ming reign, foreign envoys were allowed to have commercial activities with the government. Ueda Makoto 上田信 best illustrated this situation,

“Kaikin” is different from “Sakoku.” “Kaikin” means the state monopolisation of interactions with foreign countries.³⁰

海禁は、いわゆる鎖国とは異なる。外国との交流を國家が独占しようとする政策が、海禁である。³¹

Ueda suggested that ‘*sakoku*’ (鎖国; さこく) is different from ‘*kaikin*’ (海禁; かいきん; *haijin* in Chinese). The former refers to the total retreat from international trade while the later one refers to state controlled, or monopolised, trade. Since the mid-16th century in Ming China, according to Ueda, interaction between Chinese and foreign merchants from other parts of the world re-emerged, albeit under state control and regulation.³² In this sense, the Indian Muslim envoys were accused not of bringing peppers to trade during their diplomatic visit, but of violating the commercial regulations of the Ming court by selling peppers directly to commoners instead of to the customs office.

The traditional discourses, as shown in the first part of our discussion, that suggest the Ming Empire’s discriminatory policies brought an end to the Muslim trade in Canton (and also China) are invalid. First, although trade was monopolized by the state, Muslim countries were still allowed to visit the Empire with goods. Besides, even if Muslim envoys violated the trade laws of the Ming government, they were not punished

²⁹ Author’s Translation.

³⁰ Author’s Translation.

³¹ Ueda Makoto 上田 信, *Kai do Teitoku* 海と帝国 [Ocean and Empire] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005), p.101.

³² Ueda Makoto 上田 信, *Kai do Teitoku* 海と帝国 [Ocean and Empire], pp.101-103; Chinese translation see Ueda Makoto 上田 信, Ye Weili 葉韋利 Chinese trans., *Hai yu diguo: Ming Qing shidai* 海與帝國：明清時代 [Ocean and Empire: Era of Ming and Qing] [海と帝国] (Taipei: The Commercial Press, Ltd., 2017), pp.109-110.

or taxed. It is clear that the court welcomed the coming of foreign merchants, regardless of their religious background.

Yuehai guanzhi did not show detail records of the Muslim trade and its ending. Comparing with the fact that Muslims were among the most important contributors to the Indian Ocean trade and Canton trade as shown in other texts, the limited number of records about these people in *Yuehai guanzhi* is surprising. When other historical records show the huge number of Muslim merchants in Canton before the Mongol era, why does a history of the Canton customs office neglect them? One of the possible explanations would be the fading or disappeared importance of Muslim traders during the time of Liang. In the next section, we examine this assumption by looking further into the record of Muslim trade in Canton from the mid-18th to the early 19th century. This will show how the Qing Canton Confucian elites understood Islam in the Canton maritime trade.

Muslim Merchants and their Religion between 1749-1837

The record of Muslim merchants between 1749 and 1837, the year in which *Yuehai guanzhi* was published, was also limited. There are two kinds of records related to Islam we can find in the book. The first group is the trading record of Muslim countries while the second one is a descriptive section for countries trading with the Qing Empire. In fact, *Yuehai guanzhi* was the *modus operandi* for the Qing customs officers and other bureaucrats related to international trade in Canton. The book includes first-hand sources from the Canton customs office and gives the most reliable illustrations of foreign merchants, including Muslim traders, in Qing Canton. It is thus possible to investigate what groups of Muslim merchants had arrived in Canton in the aforementioned period. We would also be able to show how Confucian scholar-bureaucrats described these people in their writings.

a. Merchants from Muslim Countries

Yuehai guanzhi categorised foreign merchants into two categories by the vessels they took, following the Qing policy of international trade. They included tributary vessels (gongbo 貢舶) and trading vessels (shibo 市舶). Tributary vessel referred to foreign vessels representing, theoretically, foreign political entities to pay tribute to the Qing Empire. Their commercial activities were basically tariff free. Although the diplomatic nature of their visits was emphasized in the Chinese records, the tariff

free trade during these visits had a larger significance for the foreigners, and even the Canton customs officers. As for the trading vessels, they were private merchants who arrived in Canton just for commercial activities; their profits were taxed by the Qing government.

Before 1838, vessels were from six tributary countries and twenty-four trading countries. The tributary countries included *Xianluo guo* 暹羅國 (or Siam, roughly present-day Thailand), *Helan guo* 荷蘭國 (mainly referring to the Dutch people, roughly present-day the Netherlands), *Yidaliya guo* 意達里亞國 (referring to the Italian Peninsula, nevertheless Liang assumed it was a political entity since the 16th century), *Boerdugaerya guo* 博爾都噶爾雅國 (Portuguese Empire), *Yingjili guo* 英吉利國 (England or Britain), and *Liuqiu guo* 琉球國 (Ryukyu).³³ The trading countries were twenty-four from Southeast Asia, India, Europe and America. No countries from the Arabian Peninsula were found in the record, while two Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Denmark, much farther away from Canton, were recorded. It was noteworthy that these were not all countries that related to the Qing Empire diplomatically or commercially. Some of them were reaching the Empire by land, and some of them, who travelled through the ocean, ported on the eastern coast. For example, Japanese registered vessels travelling from Nagasaki 長崎, according to Matsuura Akira, were arriving to Ningbo 寧波, Nankin 南京, and Amoy 廈門, while Qing merchants sailed to Nagasaki at least until 1861.³⁴ In short, what we are reading from *Yuehai guanzhi* reflected the condition of maritime trade only in Canton. Back to our theme on Islam in Canton, it would be surprising to recognize that, among the thirty-one foreign countries, only two of them were classified as Islamic ones. Compared with the prosperous maritime trade between Muslims and Chinese people, this fading of Muslim traders in number deserves careful investigation. The two Muslim countries being recorded in *Yuehai guanzhi* were called Matala-guo 馬塔拉國 and Sula-guo 蘇喇國. We would first illustrate the record of Matala-guo,

Matala-guo had not contacted China before our dynasty. Their land is in Xiao xiyang (mainly refer to the Indian Ocean) next to two

³³ However, it is quite difficult to identify whether Liang means Dutch people or Dutch Empire, for the understanding of the West is quite incomprehensive during his time. For instance, he assumed Italy to be one country since the time of Matteo Ricci.

³⁴ Matsuura Akira 松浦章, Li Xiaolin 李小林trans., *Qing dai haiwai maoyi shi yanjiu* 清代海外貿易史研究 [A Study of Qing Maritime Trade] (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Publishing House, 2016), pp.9-11.

countries Wansuoluo and Malunni. All these countries are a thousand miles long along the coast. They are of Muslim origin. They produce cotton, Indonesian lemon pepper, and shark fins. Matala first came to Canton to trade in 1742.

馬塔拉國前世未通中國，其地與小西洋望娑羅、麻倫你二國，皆沿海長數千里，回回種也。土產棉花、花椒、魚翅。乾隆七年進口貿易。³⁵

The exact location of Matala-guo is not available now. It was suggested that this country was along the coast to the north of Goa. It might refer to Maharashtra, which is in the western coastal region of contemporary India. By describing Matala-guo as Muslim in origin (huihui zhong 回回種), *Yuehai guanzhi* reveals that the traders from this country was similar to Hui-Muslims within the Qing Empire.³⁶ The exact phrase was used also for Sula-guo when referring to the Sumatra Island,

Sula-guo is Muslim in origin. Some stated it was the Sumendalaguo in the Ming reign. During the expedition of Zheng He (1371–1433) to Xiyang, the Ming envoy had reached the island three times, and granted the native minister Zainuli Abiding (referring to Sultan Zainal Abidin II of Samudera Pasai Sultanate; r.1428-1438) the title of Sumatra King. During the reign of Emperor Wanli (r.1572-1620), the ruling house of the country changed twice and was renamed as Aqi (referring to the Sultanate of Aceh) at last. The place produced native made European style cloth, clove, nutmeg, benzoin oil, storax balsam. Their tributary gifts (to the Ming court) included: gems; agate; crystal; azurite; good horses; rhinoceros; ambergris; agarwood; ligumaloe; costus; clove; wisteria incense; knives; bows; tin (metal); down clothing; pepper; sappanwood; sulfur. The farmland is barren, rice is farmed but not wheat, while there are two harvests each year. Sailing three days and traveling on land for four to five days from the North of Bombay would reach this country. The culture of Sula-guo is similar to that of Bombay, and the products of the two places are similar too, except Bombay does not have the dragons' blood (Sanguis Draconis) Sula-guo produces. First arrived in Canton to trade in 1744.”

³⁵ Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.24, p.482.

³⁶ Huihui 回回 was the Chinese term used for Muslims. However, it sometimes referred to an ethnic category and even to Jewish people. Plenty of discussion had been contributed to define the term in the twentieth century scholarships. See Michael Dillon, *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp.1-11.

蘇喇國，回回種也。或曰本明之蘇門答刺國。鄭和下西洋，凡三至其國，封其酋宰奴里阿必丁為蘇門答刺國王。迨萬曆間，國兩易姓，更國名亞齊。土產西洋布、丁香、肉果、水安息、蘇合油，其貢物有：寶石、瑪瑙、水晶、石青、回回青、善馬、犀牛、龍涎香、沉香、速香、木香、丁香、降真香、刀、弓、錫、瑣服、胡椒、蘇木、琉磺之屬。地本瘠，無麥有禾，一歲二稔。自望眉國北，舟行三日，陸路四五日，可至其國。風俗同望眉，物產惟血蝎為望眉所無。乾隆九年進口。³⁷

From the above two records, Liang did not provide much information for us to understand how Islam functioned in these two states. Information about culture and religion, though also limited, were found in the last chapter of “miscellaneous knowledge,” which will be discussed in the next section. We must also point out that Liang did not mean that other countries did not have any Muslim population at all. As in the comparison of Bombay and Sumatra Island, Liang narrated that they, in general, shared the same culture. He identified the similarity of lifestyle in these two countries. With the description “Muslim in origin” (*huihui zhong* 回回種), Liang seems to imply the religion of the majority of the state or the religious preference of the rulers. Nevertheless, Muslim traders were still rare during the time of *Yuehai guanzhi*. Among thirty-one countries porting in Canton, only two were described as “Muslim in origin.”

In fact, as vessels from both of these states fell into the category of trading instead of tributary, the relationships between the Qing Empire and these countries were merely commercial. There were no tariff benefits enjoyed by these Muslim traders as people from tributary countries such as the Japanese, the Dutch people, the Portuguese, and the British had. This implied the insignificance of the Muslim merchants since, at least, the middle of the 18th century.

b. Islamic World in Yuehai guanzhi

Although merchants from Muslim countries were unusual, *Yuehai guanzhi* still included a general introduction of the Muslim populated regions. In an article called *Xiao xiyang ji* 小西洋記 [Record of Xiao xiyang] of the last chapter of *Yuehai guanzhi*, which is called “miscellaneous knowledge” (*zashi* 雜識), some facts of the Islamic world were in-

³⁷ Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.24, p.482.

troduced to readers.³⁸ This whole chapter contains geographic information of the trading routes and the political and cultural conditions of the trading partners.

“Xiao xiyang” referred generally to the Indian Ocean, the Ottoman Empire, the Black Sea, Arabian Peninsula, and Africa. Liang suggested that the people of some of the countries were similar to those from the “western region” (xiyu 西域, referring to East Turkestan and the eastern part of Inner Asia) in the traditional Chinese worldview. The record mainly included information from ten regions as listed below:

Table 1. Regions Introduced in *Xiao xiyang ji*

Pinyin and Chinese Characters	English Translation
Xiaobaitou 小白頭	India
Baoshe-dabaitou 包社大白頭	Persia
Sanmaerdan 三馬爾丹	Samarkand
Ximiliye-guo 細密里也國	Siberia
Eluosi-guo 俄羅斯國	Russia
Minya-guo 民呀國	Bangladesh
Duoerqi-guo 多爾其國	Turkey
Alimiye 阿黎米也	Arabia
Relureye-guo 惹鹿惹也國	Iranian Armenia
Wugui-guo 烏鬼國	Africa

Among the above regions, Persia (literally referred as “Persia Big White Head”), India (known as “Little White Head”) and Samarkand were not categorized as Islamic countries, but they were believed to be linked with the Dzungar Khanate (1634-1758), which was conquered by the Qing Empire in the 1750s. The Ottoman Empire was known as Duoerqi-guo, and is described to be separated into West and East parts.

³⁸ Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.30, p.588-589.

Liang explicitly informed his readers that the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire was not having any maritime trade.

However, Liang narrated that Arabia was subordinated to the Ottoman Empire and would present males and females to the Ottoman court as servants and slaves. There was no record found regarding international trade in Arabia. In fact, no Muslim merchants or international commercial activities were recorded in *Xiao xiyang ji*. Would it be possible that *Xiao xiyang ji* intended to present only political and cultural conditions instead of commercial activities? Obviously not. Within the same article, it provided information to the readers that trade in the region was monopolised by the Europeans. Besides, the author specifically pointed out that ports (*butou* 埔頭) in India were “bought” (*zhi* 置) by the Portuguese, the British and the Dutch for maritime trading. Clearly, trade between Arabia and the Qing Empire did not exist, or was at least so scarce and insignificant that Liang Tingnan omitted reference to it.

Diu and Canton: How Muslims Disappeared in the Canton Maritime Trade

When and why did Muslims leave the Canton trade? One feasible explanation is that the Ming Empire closed its borders after the Mongol reign. However, as we have explained in earlier sections, maritime trade continued, though under state monopolization, in late Imperial China. *Yuehai guanzhi* shows clues that illustrate international trade in the South China Sea remained prosperous at least until the early 19th century.

Although *Yuehai guanzhi* was a gazetteer, it was written with a strong political agenda. To express his support of international trade, Liang Tingnan provided quantitative evidence in his narrative. Just like French politicians before the Revolution, detailed financial data was included in political discussions during the time of Liang. By using the first-hand data of the Canton Customs Office, Liang Tingnan presented the growing income from, and thus importance of, maritime trade in Canton for the whole Empire. This made a strong defense against the economical interventionism during the early 19th century.³⁹ Facing the deep financial difficulties of the Qing court, even elites who were against maritime trade could not criticise the coastal government bureaucrats for get-

³⁹ For the detail of the arguments between the economic interventionists and accommodationists during the period, see Lin Man-houng 林滿紅. *China Upside Down: Currency, Society, and Ideologies, 1808–1856*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

ting too close with the foreigners. The use of quantitative evidence in this way could be compared with the French reformers from half a century earlier. In 1781, Jacques Necker (1732-1804) published *Compte Rendu au Roi* [Accounts Rendered to the King] to present “the truth of its (France’s) dire finances” in order to defend his financial reform.⁴⁰ The adoption of quantitative information in political discussion was a clear sign of sophisticated commercial culture.⁴¹ Considering Figure 1 and Figure 2, we could easily identify that maritime trading did not cease to exist in Canton:

Figure 1. Tariff Income in Taels (兩) of Silver (1749-1837)

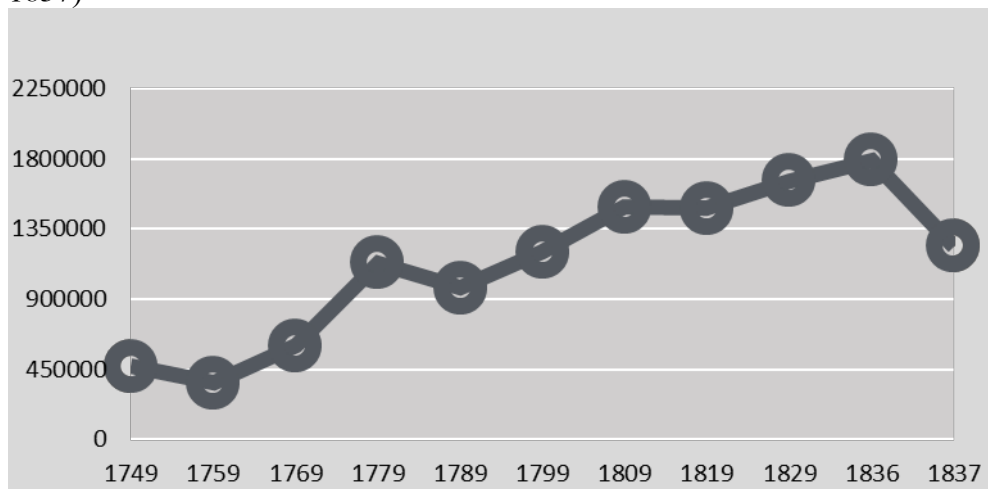
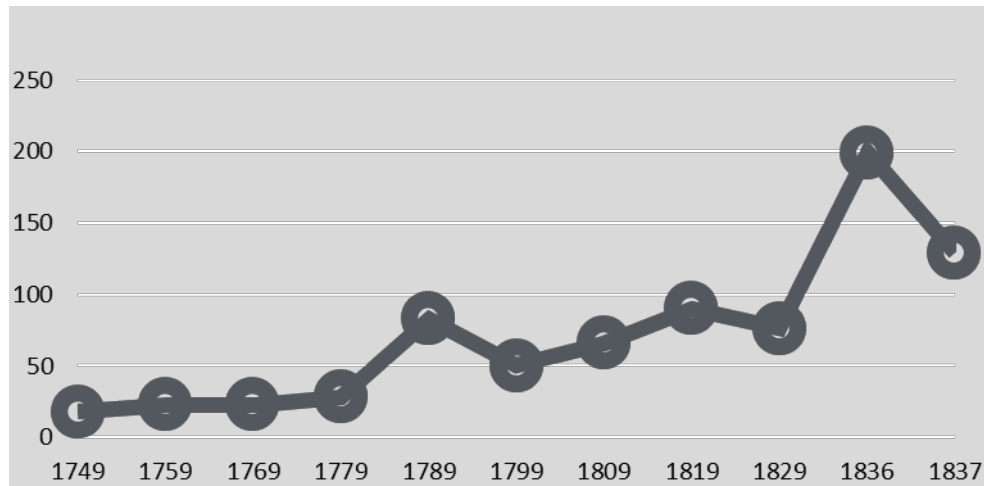


Figure 2. Foreign Vessels arriving Canton (1749-1837)

⁴⁰ Jacob Soll, *The Reckoning: Financial Accountability and the Rise and Fall of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), pp.250-273.

⁴¹ John U. Nef, *Cultural Foundation of Industrial Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp.50-54.



Moreover, Canton Customs in the early 19th century had multiple offices providing different functions. Some were specialised in export and some were specialised in import. There were thirty-one Customs offices (*zhengshui* 正稅), twenty-two investigation offices (*jicha* 稽查), and twenty-two Registration offices (*guahao* 掛號), all along the coast-line of Canton Province.⁴² The complicated Customs office system implied the importance of international trade in the eyes of the Qing rulers. What ended the Muslim trade in Canton was obviously not something due to the Chinese government.

In this section, we look into two other explanations for the disappearance of the Muslim merchants in Canton. First, the arrival of Europeans; second, the Chinese indigenous method of categorization and recording. Since the seas in Asia had long been the trading arena for people with different cultural and political backgrounds, the arrival of a new trading party in the Indian Ocean should not exclude the predecessors and lead to the end of Muslim trade in Canton, assuming the newcomers were peaceful commercial entities. The tragic end of the Islamic commercial activities in South China was due to the violence brought by Portuguese traders, who at the same time represented their empire and attempted to exclude non-Christian parties and to monopolise the trade. In fact, *Yuehai guanzhi* provided a small clue for us to understand the influence of the Europeans when they first arrived to Canton:

⁴² Liang Tingnan 梁廷柅, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.5-6, p.63-118.

In 1517, Fulanji foreigners from the West Sea claimed to pay tribute [to the Ming Court]. They raided Dongguan country, bombarded the land with fast and powerful cannons, frightening people even from great distance. They are barbaric and even burnt and ate children. The Surveillance Vice Commissioner in Charge of Maritime Surveillance Circuit⁴³ was ordered to eliminate them, and then the foreigners were expelled. Since the incident, foreign vessels were forbidden to entre Canton, those who routinely pay tribute [to the Ming Court] seldom returned. Some of the tributary vessels instead visit through Zhangzhou and Quanzhou. The Canton city was thus in deep depression and not as wealthy as before.

正德十二年，西海夷人佛朗機亦稱朝貢，突入東莞縣，大統迅烈，震駭遠爾，殘掠甚，以炙食小兒。海道奉命誅逐，乃出境。自是海舶悉行禁止，例應入貢諸番亦鮮有至者，貢舶乃出往漳、泉。廣城市貿蕭然，非舊制矣。⁴⁴

This was the first fight between Imperial China and a European empire within China proper. It was known as Battle of Tunmen (Tamão), which was fought around Tuen Mun in present-day Hong Kong. Although the Portuguese were defeated, small conflicts continued between the Ming Empire and Portugal for the coming decades.⁴⁵ In the local record of Dongguan, the Portuguese even attempted to occupy the Western part of present-day Hong Kong permanently.

In 1516, Fulanji foreigners started to enter Canton; foreigners attempted to occupy Nantau, Surveillance Vice Commissioner Wang Hong expelled them out of the territory.

⁴³ Haidao 海道 is a short form for Tixing ancha si xunshi haidao fushi 提刑按察司巡視海道副使, literally “Surveillance Vice Commissioner in Charge of Maritime Surveillance Circuit”. For its origin and later transformations, see Li Qingxin 李慶新, “Mingdai haidao fushi ji qi zhineng yanbian” 明代海道副使及其職能演變 [Ming Surveillance Vice Commissioner in Charge of Maritime Surveillance Circuit and its Changing Functions], in *Chinese Economic History*, 2010, last modified 1st of May, 2018, <http://economy.guoxue.com/?p=711>.

⁴⁴ Liang Tingnan 梁廷柎, *Yuehai guanzhi* 粵海關志, Vol.4, p.51.

⁴⁵ John E. Wills, *China and Maritime Europe, 1500–1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.28-45, 338-339; Wang Dongqing 王冬青, Pan Rudan 潘如丹, “Ming chao haijin zhengce yu jindai xifang guojia de di yi ci dui hua junshi chongtu” 明朝海禁政策與近代西方國家的第一次對華軍事衝突 [Ming Maritime Blocking Policy and Modern Western Nations’ First Military Disputes Against China], in *Military Historical Research*, 2004, Vol.2, pp.138-147.

（正德）十一年佛朗機夷人始入廣州；夷人謀據南頭，副使汪鋐逐之出境。⁴⁶

The continuous disputes between the Ming Empire and the Portuguese invaders forced the Ming government to cease trading in Canton. The Ming bureaucrats were aware of the Portuguese occupation of Malacca in 1512 and understood the Europeans as sources of chaos. In 1520, envoys from Malacca even reached the Ming court to plead for military support. The Ming Empire responded by ordering the Portuguese to return the Malacca land they occupied and requesting the neighbouring states to send armies there. Besides, the Empire punished her own bureaucrats in the coastal regions for not preventing chaos.⁴⁷ As the Europeans were not successfully expelled from Southeast Asia, nor did they returned the newly conquered land to the Malacca rulers, the Ming government had concrete reasons for their suspicion. The Ming authorities worried that the Portuguese agenda of military occupation was hidden behind the tributary and trading demands. Although the two Empires came to a *de facto* agreement to let Portuguese station in Macau in 1533, the maritime trade between the Ming and Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian states never returned to the relatively harmonious condition exhibited prior to that.⁴⁸

To a large extent, the Ming rulers were correct. The Portuguese did not simply join the maritime trade in the Indian Ocean. They participated in a series of raids, battles, and massacres. As Roger Crowley points out, the Portuguese expedition of Asia's seas combined commercial activities with a crusade against Islam. This is because they sought to monopolize the spice trade from Southeast Asia to Europe. The Portuguese Empire attempted to exclude Muslim merchants from the Indian

⁴⁶ Zhang Erguo 張二果, Ceng Qishen 曾起莘, *Dongguan zhi* (Chongzhen) 東莞志 (崇禎) [Gazetteer of Dongguan (Chongzhen era)] (Beijing: Chinese National Micro-filming Center for Library Resources, 2001), Vol.2, p.32.

⁴⁷ *Ming Wuzong Shilu* 明武宗實錄 [Veritable Records of the Ming Wuzong] (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962), Vol.194, pp.3630-3631; *Ming Shizong Shilu* 明世宗實錄 [Veritable Records of the Ming Shizong] (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1962), Vol.4, pp.208.

⁴⁸ Fok Kai Cheong 霍啟昌, "Qian tan 'aomen moshi' yu ming qing gangao diqu haifang" 淺談「澳門模式」與明清港澳地區海防 [Brief Introduction of "Macau Model" and Ming Qing Hong Kong and Macau Region Coastal Defence], in Zheng Dehua 鄭德華, *Ming Qing Guangdong: Haiyun yu Haifang* 明清廣東：海運與海防 [Ming and Qing Canton: Maritime Transportation and Coastal Defense] (Macau: University of Macau Press, 2008), pp.1-22.

Ocean by controlling the major trading ports in South India. One might even suggest that the Portuguese Empire was built on the profit from the monopolized trade.⁴⁹ In short, free trade in the Indian Ocean was ceased by the incoming Portuguese who attempted to be the “master” of the sea and maritime trade. Muslim traders were no longer able to arrive in Canton as they had always done in the previous few centuries. The Islamic world, for sure, would respond to this threat.⁵⁰

In 1509, a fatal naval battle was fought in Diu, India between the Portuguese Empire and a joint fleet of almost every state that had suffered from the Portuguese new trade route. The battle once and for all changed the composition of maritime traders arriving to Canton. In the early 16th century, many Islamic states formed an alliance, at least nominally, in the Arabian Sea against the presence of the Portuguese Empire in Asia. In 1505, the joint fleet of the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan of Gujarat, the Mamlûk Burji Sultanate of Egypt and the Zamorin of Calicut left Suez. Even the Republic of Venice supported the Muslims’ campaign to turn the spice trade back to the East Mediterranean Sea from the Cape of Good Hope. In February of 1509, Ottoman-Gujarat-Mamluk-Calicut coalition lost their navy in Diu and the campaign to expel European Christians ended. No more attempts could be found to end the European monopolization of the Indian Ocean and intervention of the China Seas.⁵¹ The heartland of the Islamic world also changed after 1509, “the economy of the Muslim Middle East as a whole was transformed from the commercial and monetary economy that it had been in the Middle Ages and which could quite easily have continued to match that of Europe to one of military feudalism based on subsistence agriculture.”⁵² One histo-

⁴⁹ Roger Crowley, *Conquerors: How Portugal Seized the Indian Ocean and Forged the First Global Empire?* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), pp.85-199.

⁵⁰ Haneda Masashi 羽田 正, *Higashi Indo Gaisha to Ajia no Umi* 東インド会社とアジアの海 [East India Company and the Asia Seas] (Tokyo: KodanSha Gakujutsu bunko, 2018), pp.31-75. Chinese translation see Haneda Masashi 羽田 正, Lin Yongchun 林詠純 Chinese trans., *Dong yindu gongsi yu yazhou di haiyang* 東印度公司與亞州的海洋 [East India Company and the Asia Seas] [東インド会社とアジアの海] (Taipei: Amann Co., Ltd., 2018), pp.26-70.

⁵¹ Roger Crowley, *Conquerors: How Portugal Seized the Indian Ocean and Forged the First Global Empire?*, pp.189-199.

⁵² Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p.33.

rian wrote, “When the 15th century began, Islam seemed about ready to dominate the world. That prospect sank in the Indian Ocean off Diu.”⁵³

The relationship between Diu and Canton has seldom been recognized properly. Nevertheless, the naval battle in 1509 was a decisive incident which explains the end of Muslim maritime trade along the South China coast. After the last attempt by the Muslims to maintain free trade in the Indian Ocean, Islamic states to the West of Malacca were no longer able to trade in Canton. And what happened in Dongguan in between 1515 and 1516 also put Muslim traders in the Southeast Asia in a difficult situation to continue their trade in Canton.

Even after the colonization of Southeast Asia by the Portuguese, and later by the Spanish, the Dutch, and the British, Islam remained an important religion in the region. One question remains: Why were Muslim traders not found in the Chinese records?

It is hard to imagine that none of the Muslims living under the European Empires participated in the maritime trade to China. In particular, the British traders claimed to be supporters of free trade when they introduced themselves to the Southeast Asian states. In the standard letter of introduction to eastern princes, Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603) writes: “(In His) infinite and unsearchable wisdom... (God had so ordained matters that no nation was self-sufficient and that) out of the abundance of fruit which some region[s] enjoyeth, the necessitie or wante of others should be supplied.” [sic] The Queen suggested that the Portuguese and Spanish were prohibiting multilateral exchange and insisted on exclusive trading rights, which would be violating the will of God and harming the sovereignty of states.⁵⁴ The British East India Company, at least in its early years, supported free maritime trade. Under this circumstance, it very likely that Islamic merchants arrived in Canton from the early 16th century to the early 19th century. Why, we must ask, were they not appearing in *Yuehai guanzhi*?

Haneda Masashi 羽田 正 provided a possible explanation: the tributary system since the Ming reign aimed at consolidating the Confucian worldview and extending its power on neighbouring countries who would like to maintain some kind of relationship with the Empire. More than forty states within Asia were willing to participate in the Confucian

⁵³ William Weir, *50 Battles That Changed the World: The Conflicts That Most Influenced the Course of History* (North Bergen, NJ: Bookmark Press Inc., 2009), p.77.

⁵⁴ John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of The English East India Company* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), pp.11-13.

rituals. While the Ming court was concerned with the international order, its people and her so-called tributary states, more often than not, emphasized commercial activities right after the court rituals. Masashi calls the Indian Ocean a “sea of commerce” (*Keizai no umi* 經濟の海), while he prefers “sea of politic” (*Seiji no umi* 政治の海) for the East Asia seas.

Under the world order of the Ming Empire, commercial activities were conducted between political entities instead of individuals. Every merchant was under the supervision of his own “orthodox” government, which was to be diplomatically subordinate to the Ming Empire.⁵⁵ Although international trade had more liberty under the Manchu reign after the mid-18th century, it still inherited the categorization system of foreign merchants. In this sense, a vessel from British Malaya, even if sailed by Muslims, would still be recorded under the name “Yingjili” (英吉利 England). Composed using first-hand government records, *Yuehai guan-zhi* naturally adopted this framework to categorize foreigners. The remaining Muslim merchants who entered Canton from the 16th century onwards therefore easily disappeared from the record.

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⁵⁵ Haneda Masashi 羽田 正, *Higashi Indo Gaisha to Ajia no Umi* 東インド会社とアジアの海 [East India Company and the Asia Seas], pp.31-75.

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