

VIEWS
OF
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
VIETNAM



Christoforo Borri
ON *COCHINCHINA*

AND

Samuel Baron
ON *TONKIN*

京都大学 図書



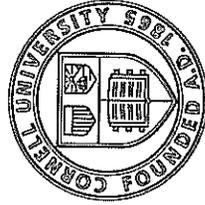
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INTRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY

Olga Dror AND K. W. Taylor

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Vietnam
Christoforo Borri on Cochinchina &
Samuel Baron on Tonkin



Cornell University

Olga Dror and K. W. Taylor, editors and annotators

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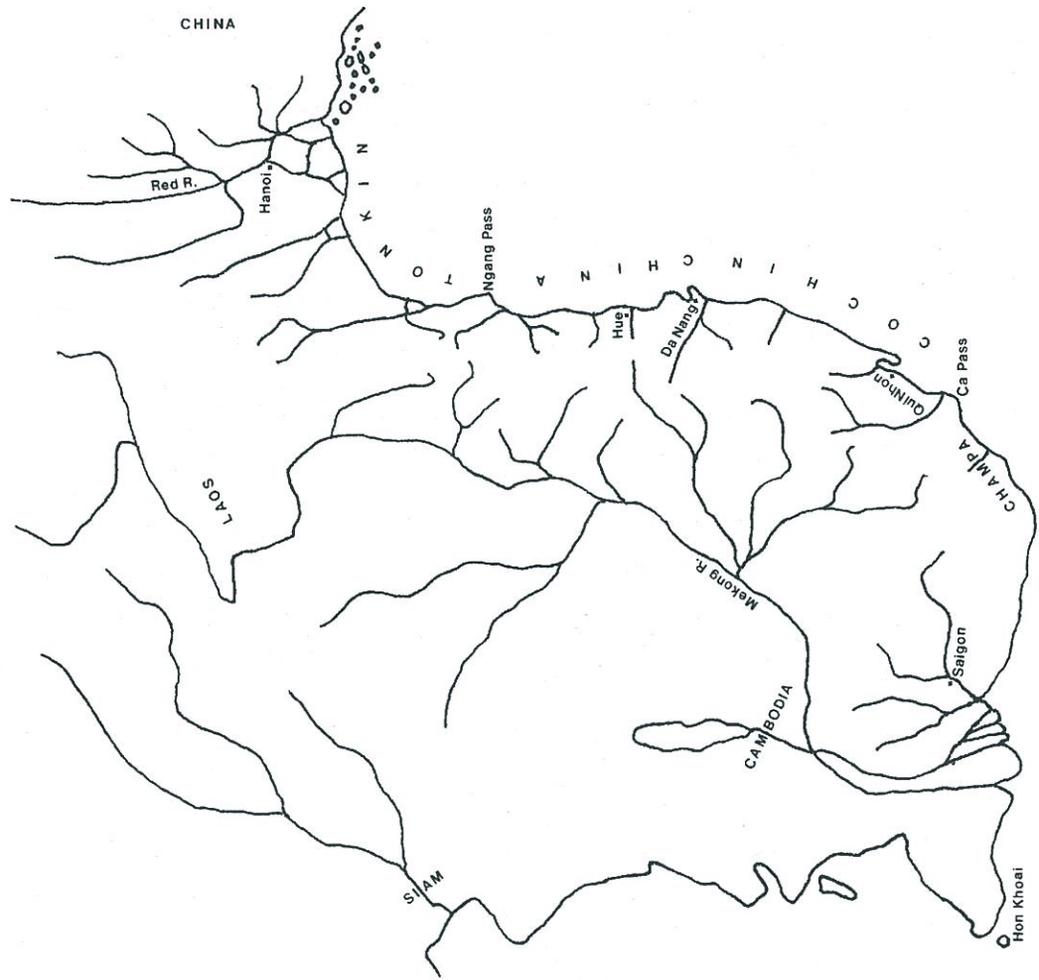
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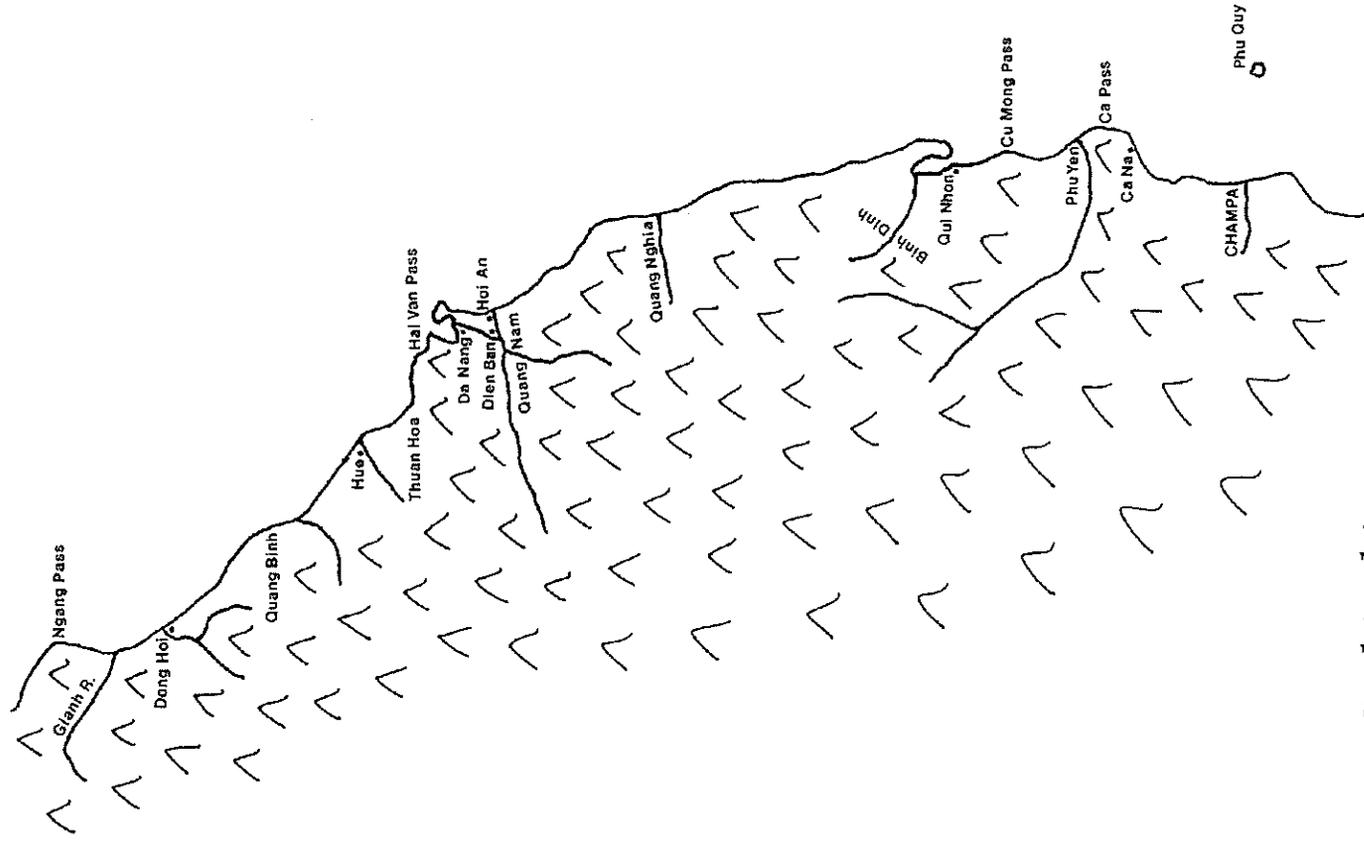
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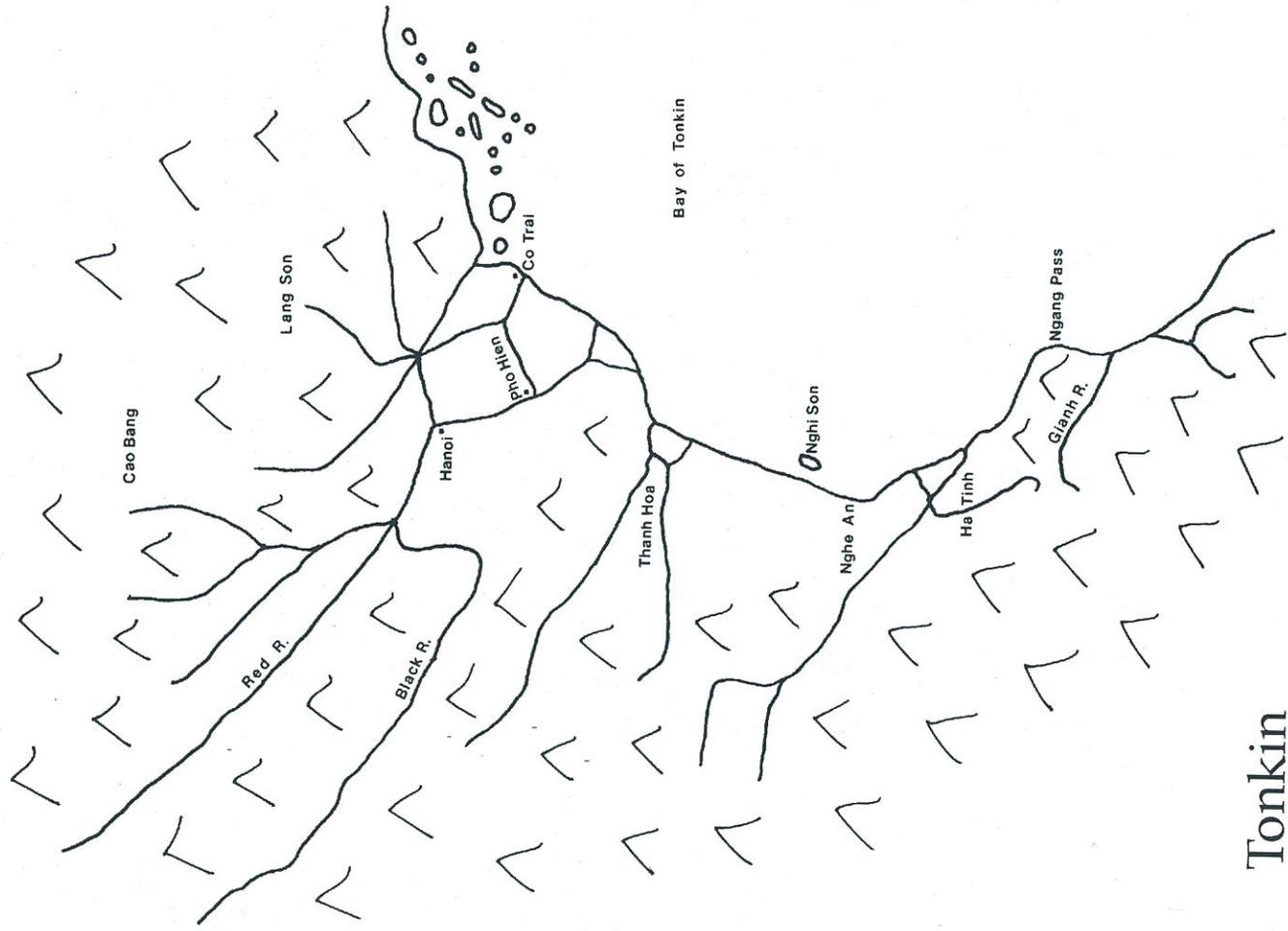
The World of Borri and Baron



Cochinchina and Tonkin



Cochinchina



Tonkin

PREFACE

The idea for this volume came from a realization that although Vietnamese sources for the seventeenth century are few there is nevertheless a relative abundance of European accounts from that time, when Europeans first began to publish observations of the Vietnamese. European accounts, written by merchants, missionaries, travelers, and scientists, offer a wealth of detail and a diversity of perspectives. The selection of Christoforo¹ Borri and Samuel Baron was initially guided by three considerations. First, their accounts appeared in English translations prior to the nineteenth century, so they have a history of being read in the English language and in shaping an English-language vantage on the Vietnamese. Second, in the seventeenth century Vietnam was divided into two rival states, and we wanted to include an account written from each. Third, we wanted to represent the voices of the two main groups who experienced and wrote about life among the Vietnamese: merchants and missionaries. But beyond this, having looked carefully at the two authors and their accounts, we have become aware of how their writings reflect specific agendas, which will be discussed in the Introduction.

Although we have benefited enormously from our discussions about all aspects of both authors and both accounts, we divided our work, with Olga Dror completing the introduction and annotations for Christoforo Borri and Keith Taylor doing so for Samuel Baron. We express our gratitude to Deborah Homsher for her patient and professional editorial assistance and to Michael Dror for his help with proofreading.

NOTE ABOUT THE TRANSLATION: () indicates material in parentheses in the original; [] indicates marginal notes in the original; [] indicates material added by the annotators. Old English spelling has been retained in many cases, but in some cases has been updated for ease of modern reading.

The map and illustrations from Samuel Baron reproduced in this volume were obtained by permission of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University.

¹ Although Borri's personal name is spelled variously in different sources, we follow the spelling used in the original 1631 edition of his book about Cochinchina.

INTRODUCTION

COCHINCHINA AND TONKIN

In the seventeenth century, Europeans encountered two Vietnamese-speaking kingdoms. They called the northern kingdom Tonkin (variously spelled Tonqueen, Tonking, Tunquin, Tunchim, etc.), derived from Vietnamese Đông Kinh, meaning "Eastern Capital," a name for Hanoi to distinguish it from the "Western Capital" that had been built at the beginning of the fifteenth century in a neighboring province.¹ This kingdom extended from the Chinese border south to include the modern province of Hà Tĩnh.

Europeans called the southern kingdom Cochinchina; its capital was eventually located at Hue. Several theories have been advanced to explain the name Cochun in Cochinchina. Some early European sources surmised that it derived from the vernacular appellation of the capital city of Tonkin, Kê Chợ ("marketplace"), corrupted into Cochi;² this theory cannot be sustained. About the same time, a Japanese scholar, Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), proposed a theory by which Cochun (pronounced Koshi in Japanese) derived from Guangxi (pronounced Kosai in Japanese), but this idea has no discernible merit.³ Early French colonial writers favored the idea that Cochun came from the expression Cồ Chiêm or its variant, Cồ Chàm, sometimes conflated with Kê Chàm ("Cham place"; transcribed Cachiam or some variant thereof in early European accounts), a Vietnamese expression for what is now the central coast of Vietnam, where the kingdoms of Champa once existed (the term means: "Old [i.e., pre-Vietnamese] Champa").⁴ This conjecture has not survived.

It is now generally agreed that Cochun derived from Giao Chỉ, the name (pronounced Jiaozhi in Chinese, Koshi in Japanese) given by the ancient Chinese to northern Vietnam as early as 111 BCE.⁵ As for the origin of Jiaozhi/Giao Chỉ, as is

¹ The "Western Capital" (Tây Kinh, variously Tây Đô) was a fortress built by the ruler Hồ Quý Ly (r. 1400-1407) in his home province of Thanh Hóa.

² For this idea, from the sixteenth century, see: Fernão Vaz Dourado, in A. Kammerer, "La découverte de la Chine par les portugais au XVIe siècle et la cartographie des portulans," *T'oung Pao*, supplément to vol. XXXIX (1944): 260; and Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Delle navigazioni et viaggi* (Venetia: Giunti, 1554), 1:391, and, from the seventeenth century, see Alexander de Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume du Tonkin*, annot. J.-P. Duteil (Paris: Édition Kimé, 1999), p. 21.

³ See N. Peri, "Essai sur les relations du Japon et de l'Indochine aux XVIe et XVIIe siècle," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 23 (1923): 5-6, n. 2.

⁴ E. Luro and E. Aymonier were cited for this theory at the turn of the twentieth century by Paul Pelliot; see P. Pelliot, "Le Fou Nan," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1903): 299, n. 1. A. Bonifacy also favored this idea when annotating his translation of Borri; see Cristoforo Borri, *Relation de la nouvelle mission* in "Les Européens qui ont vu le vieux Hué: Cristoforo Borri," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué* 18,3-4 (July-December 1931): 286, n. 9.

⁵ Pelliot, "Le Fou Nan," was apparently the first to propose this.

often the case with such terms, there is both a classical explanation based on ancient Chinese texts and an ethnographic explanation based on anecdote, but both have to do with feet. The term literally means "intertwined feet" and first appears in the *Liji* (Records of Rituals) to describe the habit among "southern barbarians" of sleeping in circular groups with heads out and feet together in the middle.⁶ Europeans have been fond of explaining the term as a reference to a peculiarity in the anatomy of the inhabitants of northern Vietnam, whose large toes extend outward perpendicular to the foot, supposedly to help maintain balance while working in the mud of rice paddies.⁷

The term *Giao Chi* was used as an administrative designation for the Hanoi area throughout the centuries when northern Vietnam was a province of Chinese empires, until the tenth century. *Giao Chi* then became part of the title by which the Chinese Song dynasty enfeoffed Vietnamese kings from the mid-tenth to the mid-twelfth centuries. In the early fifteenth century, the Ming dynasty used the name during its twenty-year effort to reestablish provincial government in northern Vietnam. The Portuguese, arriving in Asia at the beginning of the sixteenth century, encountered the term and used it to refer to Vietnam at a time when the country was not yet divided into two kingdoms.⁸

Christoforo Borri, as we see in this volume, believed that the Portuguese obtained "Cochin" from the Japanese "Koshi," apparently because of the phonetic similarities of the names in Portuguese and Japanese. Alexandre de Rhodes was of the same opinion.⁹ This was a plausible supposition for those who like Borri and de Rhodes witnessed the lively maritime relations between Japan and Cochinchina in the early seventeenth century. It was the beginning of the expansion of Japanese trade after the establishment of the Tokugawa peace in the early seventeenth century. In part because trade with China was constrained by coastal disorder, Cochinchina became Japan's major trading partner. The Japanese Shoguns regulated trade by issuing "vermilion seal certificates" to ships specifying where the ships were allowed to trade.¹⁰ Between 1604 and 1622, when Borri departed Cochinchina, sixty-nine Japanese ships received certificates to trade in Cochinchinese ports; during the same time, forty-nine certificates were issued for Luzon, forty for Siam, twenty-eight for Cambodia, twenty-one for Macao, twenty for Tonkin, and five for Champa.¹¹ From this, we can see the importance to Japan of trade with Cochinchina. The main port city of Cochinchina, Hôi An (called Faifo by Europeans), where Borri resided for a time, had a quarter especially reserved for the Japanese community.¹² De Rhodes notes the presence of Japanese merchants

⁶ See K. W. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), p. 26.

⁷ For example, Gio. Filippo de Marini, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao*, tr. L.P.L.C.C. (Paris: Gervais Clouzier, 1666), p. 2.

⁸ See L. Arousseau, "Sur le nom de Cochinchine," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 24 (1924): 564ff.

⁹ De Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume du Tonkin*, p. 21.

¹⁰ See Peri, "Essai sur les relations du Japon et de l'Indochine," pp. 2-3.

¹¹ See Robert L. Innes, "The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century" (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1980), p. 58.

¹² See *Ancient Town of Hoi An: International Symposium Held in Da Nang on 22-23 March, 1990* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1991).

in Tonkin,¹³ and several Japanese Christians assisted the early Jesuit missionaries in Cochinchina.

Nevertheless, there is overwhelming evidence that the Portuguese obtained the name from the Malays; the nasalization of the second syllable of Cochin has no possible origin in Japanese, while there is a strong tendency to nasalize this syllable in Malay.¹⁴ Sixteenth-century Portuguese transcriptions of Cochinchina include: Quachymchyna, Concamchina, Cauchimchyna, Cachenchina, Cauchenchina, Cauchinchina, and Coccincina.¹⁵ Tomé Pires and João Barros, two Portuguese who visited the area in the sixteenth century and wrote in 1515 and 1565, respectively, explicitly attribute the appellation to Malays. For example, we read in Tomé Pires's account, written before Cochinchina existed as a separate kingdom in the south, that: "In Malacca this country [i.e., Vietnam] is called Cauchy Chyna" and "The kingdom is between Champa and China"; furthermore, he explains that it is called Cauchy Chyna "on account of Cauchy Coulam."¹⁶ The reference to Cauchy Coulam is to Cochin, a city-state on the Malabar coast of southwestern India where the first Portuguese fleet arrived in 1500 and founded the first European fort in India. Portuguese fleet arrived in 1500 and founded the first European fort in India. Cochin is not far from Quilon (here transcribed Coulam; also transcribed elsewhere as Kollam). Quilon was the largest and richest kingdom in that region, according to Pires, "the greatest in Malabar in land and subjects."¹⁷ Quilon was a seaport that had diplomatic relations with China as early as the fourteenth century. Pires is making the point that the term Cochinchina was meant to distinguish this place from the Cochin in India.

In fact, in 1502 and 1503, after the Portuguese had reached India but before they had taken Malacca, Cochinchina had already appeared on maps made in Genoa in the inverted form of Chinacochim.¹⁸ There is no apparent explanation for this inversion, but it reminds us that the name had an existence even before Europeans had explored the South China Sea. In the thirteenth century, Marco Polo reported the existence of Caugigu, which modern scholars read as Chinese Jiaozhiguo (Vietnamese Giao Chỉ Quốc, "Kingdom of Giao Chỉ"), and an equivalent to this term appears in an early fourteenth-century Persian history of the Mongols.¹⁹ Furthermore, by the thirteenth century, Arab geographers were using the term Kawci min Cin ("Giao Chỉ of China"), following a pattern they used for other places in the region of China, and L. Arousseau conjectured that this is the source of the term in Malay, for the word "min" was typically abbreviated into a nasalized syllable when spoken to produce KawcimCin, which is a plausible explanation for the Portuguese transcriptions of Malay that nasalize the second syllable. While other names from the Arab geographers in the pattern of "

¹³ De Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume du Tonkin*, p. 21.

¹⁴ See Pelliot, "Le Fou Nan," and Pierre-Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais sur les côtes du Viêt-Nam et du Campa: Étude sur les routes maritimes et les relations commerciales, d'après les sources portugaises: XVI, XVII, XVIII siècles* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1972), p. 42, n. 2.

¹⁵ Arousseau, "Sur le nom de Cochinchine."

¹⁶ See Armando Cortesão, trans., *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944), pp. 114.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

¹⁸ Arousseau, "Sur le nom de Cochinchine."

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 574-5.

min Cin" fell out of usage, this one did not because of the need to distinguish between the Cochins in India and the Cochins near China.²⁰

Borri is the first to use the name Cochinchina to refer not to the Vietnamese polity as a whole but rather only to the southern realm. The nomenclature of Tonkin and Cochinchina to refer to northern and southern Vietnamese kingdoms appears to have originated with the Jesuits in the early seventeenth century,²¹ for they were the first Europeans to pay close attention to this part of the world and to write about it.

In the early seventeenth century, Cochinchina extended from the Gianh River in the province of Quảng Bình to the pass on the southern border of Phù Yên province (Đèo Cả; Cape Varella of French geographers); by mid-century, this kingdom was expanding the range of its armies into the Mekong plain, and by the end of the century it had established a major administrative center at Saigon, which had been a Vietnamese outpost since the 1620s.

At that time, aside from sailors, Europeans in Asia were either Catholic missionaries or merchants. Cristoforo Borri, an Italian Jesuit, was a missionary in Cochinchina from 1618 to 1622. Samuel Baron, born in Hanoi, probably in the late 1630s or early 1640s, of a European father and a Vietnamese mother, was active in Tonkin as a merchant in the 1670s and 1680s. Their accounts are among the earliest descriptions of what we now call Vietnam to appear in European languages.

In the eyes of seventeenth-century Europeans, Tonkin and Cochinchina were two countries with their own forms of government, economy, society, and culture. It was understood that the two countries were related by language, by historical memory among the educated, and by theoretical allegiance to a common but powerless monarch, but it was also understood that there was no meeting of minds between the northern and southern rulers, who were at war with each other for most of the century. Indeed, the border between the two countries was marked by fortified military encampments; the southerners had built a system of walls from the sea to the mountains at Đòng Hới to block northern armies.

What seventeenth-century Europeans saw as the Kingdom of Cochinchina had been relatively recently settled by Vietnamese-speakers. The most northerly parts of it, as far south as the vicinity of the modern city of Đà Nẵng, had been vulnerable to Vietnamese armies and immigrants at least since the early fifteenth century. In the 1470s, the Vietnamese permanently garrisoned the southern coast as far as what is now the southern border of Bình Định province (Đèo Cù Mông). When the Nguyễn clan gained ascendancy in these lands during the last half of the sixteenth century, Vietnamese speakers there were already viewing themselves as different from the "northerners."²² By the end of the seventeenth century, the Nguyễn had defeated repeated invasions by the northern Vietnamese and had established military garrisons in the Mekong plain.

The accounts of Borri and Baron give sharply different views of the Cochinchinese and the Tonkinese. According to Borri, the Cochinchinese were well governed, friendly and easy-going, curious about other countries, welcoming to foreigners, good at trade and commerce, wealthy and prosperous, and their

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 577-9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 567-69.

²² K. W. Taylor, "Nguyễn Hoang and the Beginning of Viet Nam's Southward Expansion," in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Anthony Reid (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 42-65.

language was easy to learn. According to Baron, the Tonkinese were poorly governed, unfriendly and choleric, not curious about other countries, suspicious of foreigners, clumsy at trade, poor and hungry, and with a language difficult to learn. These accounts can be read as evidence of two different countries at that time in the territory of modern Vietnam. At the same time, we must remember that Borri and Baron were quite different people with different backgrounds, experiences, and agendas. Borri was a foreigner who resided among Vietnamese no more than five years. Baron was at home in Hanoi, where he was born and raised. Borri was European. Baron was Eurasian. Borri was a Catholic missionary. Baron was a Protestant merchant. Any use of their writings to document two separate Vietnams must also take into account their backgrounds, perspectives, and aims.

THE VIETNAMESE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

For nearly three centuries, from the collapse of the Lê dynasty at the beginning of the sixteenth century until the founding of the Nguyễn dynasty at the beginning of the nineteenth century, rival governments, most of the time at war with each other, ruled the Vietnamese. It appears that this was related to the southward movement of the Vietnamese into territories inhabited by Chams and Khmers and the inability of any single regime to maintain control of all Vietnamese speakers during that time of change.

The Lê dynasty was the first major dynasty not to come from the Red River plain. After less than a century in power, the Lê were overwhelmed by rivalries among clans in its home province of Thanh Hóa and a reaction to Thanh Hóa dominance of the Red River plain led by the Mạc, who in the 1520s proclaimed their own dynasty at Hanoi. During the rest of the sixteenth century, there was war between the Mạc, who came from the coast near a mouth of the Red River, and the Trịnh and Nguyễn clans of Thanh Hóa, who claimed to be fighting to restore the Lê. Vietnamese terms later applied to what Europeans called Tonkin and Cochinchina—that is Đàng Ngoài (“outside”) for Tonkin and Đàng Trong (“inside”) for Cochinchina—appeared at this time as the terms used by Lê partisans, both the Trịnh and the Nguyễn, to refer to themselves as the “inner” group that remained loyal to the Lê and to the Mạc as the “outer” group in rebellion against the legitimate dynasty.²³ It appears that in the seventeenth century this terminology acquired geographic as well as, if not instead of, political connotations, with a usage that appeared during the years of southern expansion and continues today among all Vietnamese, by which one goes “in” to the south and “out” to the north.²⁴

In the 1470s, the Lê had extended Vietnamese rule into the south as far as Cù Mông Pass, on the southern border of what is now Bình Định province. The new territories thereby opened up for Vietnamese settlement became the base for a new political power in 1558, when the leader of the Nguyễn clan, seeking to avoid the rising power of his Trịnh ally, went south and established his headquarters in the region of Hue. In the 1590s, Nguyễn military forces assisted the Trịnh in driving the Mạc out of the Red River plain and into the upland province of Cao Bằng on the northern border, where they were protected by Ming China. However, within two decades, the Trịnh and Nguyễn were locked in a series of wars that lasted into the 1670s. Aside from a few years in the 1650s when Nguyễn forces occupied parts of what is now Hà Tĩnh province, these wars mainly consisted of Trịnh expeditions against the Nguyễn. By the 1630s, the Nguyễn began to construct a series of walls stretching from the mountains to the sea at Đồng Hới, which became the rock upon which all subsequent Trịnh attacks were broken. During this time, both the Trịnh and the Nguyễn claimed to be fighting on behalf of the Lê kings, who existed as virtual prisoners of the Trịnh in Hanoi. The Lê kings were called *vua*, the

²³ Roland Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers of Vietnamese Linguistics* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2002), p. 15.

²⁴ K. W. Taylor, “Surface Orientations in Vietnam,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57,4 (November 1998): 959.

Vietnamese word for "king," while the Trịnh and Nguyễn rulers were called *chúa*, the Vietnamese word for "lord" or "warlord."

The Trịnh-Nguyễn wars ended in relation to three factors. First, the rise of the Qing dynasty in China to replace the decrepit Ming had a calming effect on Vietnamese politics. The arrival of Qing forces on the border enabled the Trịnh to finally eliminate the Mạc, who had survived in Cao Bằng under the diplomatic protection of the Ming. But it also discouraged the Trịnh from continuing to channel its resources into warfare on its southern border. Second, the chronic lack of battlefield success eventually turned the focus of Trịnh government away from the frontier ambitions of Thanh Hóa warrior clans and toward administering the rice lands of the Red River plain. And third, Nguyễn success in continuing to expand the southern frontier and to accumulate wealth from foreign trade, even while concentrating resources to protect the northern border, made the aggressive Trịnh policy toward the south increasingly implausible.

In 1611, the Nguyễn pushed their border down to Cỏ Pass to include the modern province of Phú Yên. Champa thereafter became a subservient vassal kingdom. By the 1620s, the Khmer king had ceded the site of modern Saigon, which became a Nguyễn outpost. Thereafter, Nguyễn armies began to appear regularly in the Mekong plain to intervene in Khmer politics on behalf of various factions at the Khmer court. Later in the century, the Nguyễn settled large numbers of Ming loyalists fleeing the Qing conquest of China in the Mekong plain, and in the 1690s a permanent administrative headquarters was established at Saigon.

European merchants and missionaries first arrived among the Vietnamese during the era of the Trịnh-Nguyễn wars. The Portuguese had already been in the region for a century. They developed a strong relationship with the Nguyễn in trade and in military technology, particularly gunnery. Thus, in the second decade of the seventeenth century, the first missionaries to arrive among the Vietnamese came to Cochinchina on Portuguese boats. Among these first Europeans to live among the Vietnamese was Christophoro Borri. We read in his account about the warlike situation between the two Vietnamese states, even before the first battles took place. We also read about Nguyễn envoys on their way to Cambodia at the very beginning of Vietnamese involvement in the Mekong plain. Borri's account was written at the start of what would become a relatively successful Jesuit mission among Vietnamese in both Cochinchina and Tonkin. As we will see, he had interests other than gaining converts to the Christian religion, and these interests clearly shaped how he chose to remember his time in Cochinchina.

The Dutch East India Company established a relatively strong trading relationship with the Trịnh in the 1630s. The Trịnh were keen to involve the Dutch in their wars against the Nguyễn, and the rivalry between the Protestant Dutch and the Catholic Portuguese played into this situation. In the 1640s, the Dutch allowed some of their ships to be involved in Trịnh operations against the Nguyễn. Later efforts by the Dutch to establish relations with the Nguyễn were unsuccessful. Samuel Baron's father was deeply involved in Dutch affairs among the Vietnamese during this time, and Samuel Baron himself was born in Tonkin and apparently lived there through the 1650s. After his father sent him to Europe in 1659 and after his father's death in 1664, Baron went over to the English and reappeared in Asia in the 1670s and 1680s with the English East India Company.

The English attempted to establish trade with Tonkin beginning in 1672, but with virtually no success. By the time the English had arrived on the scene, the Trịnh-Nguyễn wars had ended and the Trịnh no longer saw any advantage in

humoring Europeans. The English maintained a trading presence in Tonkin into the 1690s, but it was nothing but frustration for them. Failure to develop profitable trading relations colored the English view of Tonkin, and Baron's account expresses this frustration, emphasizing all the reasons that had become current among the English to explain the impossibility of conducting trade there. In contrast, half a century earlier, Borri's cheerful account of Cochinchina, affirming that the Vietnamese were wonderfully welcoming to Europeans and that trading with them could yield great profit, was immediately translated into English in the 1630s to promote English interest in establishing trading relations there.

Perhaps because the Vietnamese found themselves caught in a military and political impasse during the seventeenth century, there is very little that remains from them during that time in terms of literature or other unofficial writings. The voices of Borri and Baron offer unique points of entry into the Vietnamese scene of that era and at the same time carry us into their agendas, which, although not Vietnamese, reveal examples of early contact, interaction, and the exchange of information between Vietnamese and Europeans.

PHANTASMATIC COCHINCHINA²⁵

In 1631, Father Christophoro Borri became the first European to publish an account of Cochinchina, indeed of any part of what is now Vietnam. Since then, his work, titled *Relatione della nuova missione delli PP. della Compagnia di Gesù, al Regno della Cocincina*²⁶ and referred to in this essay as the *Account*, has been translated into several languages and has become fascinating reading for the curious and an indispensable source for students and scholars studying seventeenth-century Vietnam. As the eighteenth-century English introduction to the *Account* published in this volume demonstrates, Borri was well qualified to write this work. An Italian Jesuit, one of the first missionaries among the Vietnamese, he spent five years in Cochinchina. The introduction affirms that he was fluent in the Vietnamese language, well traveled around the country, familiar with various classes of people, and that he wrote not as a visitor but as a resident of the country.²⁷

This essay is a first step to look at Cristoforo Borri beyond the *Account* and to consider how this might influence our understanding of his work.²⁸ Aside from the *Account*, information about Borri is scarce and controversial. We have notes about Borri and his works written by his contemporaries and by later generations of his fellow Jesuits, as well as by members of other religious orders, scientists, and scholars. But all of these notes are from people who evidently did not know Borri well, if at all. In addition, we have several letters from Borri to his friend Pietro della Valle, as cited in the latter's correspondence with various officials upon Borri's death, which were discovered in 1947 in the Archivio Vaticano and published by Angelo Mercati.²⁹ And there remains a letter from Borri to his superior, the General of the Society of Jesus, published by Mauricio Gomes dos Santos.³⁰ There are very few points on which the sources are in agreement with each other.

²⁵ I paraphrase the title of Panivong Norindr's book, *Phantasmatic Indochina*, on the French colonial effort to "exoticize" their colony; *Phantasmatic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film, and Literature* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996).

²⁶ Rome: F. Catanio, 1631. All translations in this essay are mine, unless noted otherwise. I express my sincere gratitude to Daniel Bornstein and Andrew Kirkendall of Texas A&M University, who more than once lent me a hand in the intricacies of Italian and Portuguese texts, but who are not responsible for any mistakes, which always remain my own.

²⁷ Christophor Borri, "An Account of Cochinchina in Two Parts; The First Treats of the Temporal State of that Kingdom; The Second of the Spiritual," in Awnsham & John Churchill, eds., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London: John Walthoe et al., 1732), vol. 2, p. 721.

²⁸ This essay is based only on published materials.

²⁹ Angelo Mercati, "Notizie sul gesuita Cristoforo Borri e su sue 'inventioni' da carte finora sconosciute di Pietro della Valle, il pellegrino" (Note on the Jesuit Cristoforo Borri and on His "inventions" from Previously Unknown Letters of Pietro della Valle, a Traveler), *Acta*, 15 (3), 1953, pp. 25-46. These letters, according to Mercati, were kept at the Archivio della Valle-del Bufalo, an archive of one of the most noble Roman families, consisting of documents from the fourteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.

³⁰ Cristoforo Borri, "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale. Cristoforo Borri sopra il libro che ho composto per stampare delli tre cieli" (To the Most Reverend General. Christophoro Borri on the Book Composed for Publication on the Three Heavens), Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Armários dos Jesuitas, fol. 314 r, 314 v, 315 r, 315 v, 316 r, 316 v, 317 r, 317 v.

Borri appears as a tragic persona who, spending his life in different countries on different continents, created controversy wherever he went. He was despised by some and respected by others. The works on astronomy, cosmology and navigation to which he devoted his life have become lost amid the scientific, political, and religious developments of his time, never to be fully recovered and studied by following generations. If he is remembered today, it is mainly because of his *Account of Cochín-China*, describing this country and his missionary life there, which hardly constituted the main interest in his life.

False Start

Christoforo Borri was born in Milan in 1583. We do not know the exact date of his birth, only that he was from a noble family.³¹ On September 16, 1601, he entered the Society of Jesus.³² It is recorded that he "studied philosophy, four years of theology, three years of humanities, and two years of mathematics."³³ Mathematics and astronomy, which at that time were inseparable, became the focus of the young Jesuit's interest. In 1606, at the age of twenty-three, he began to teach mathematics at the Jesuit Collegio di Mondovi, in a small town in Piedmont, northern Italy. In 1609 he transferred to another Jesuit college, Collegio di Brera, in Milan.³⁴ The Collegio di Brera was a celebrated center of education not only in Lombardy but throughout all of northern Italy. Unlike the seemingly straightforward development of Borri's life during his first twenty-six years, the years that followed his appointment at Collegio di Brera, as depicted in surviving sources, present many mysteries that may never be unraveled.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a creative and turbulent era for astronomy. Geocentricity, the Ptolemaic idea of the structure of the universe, had dominated scientific and religious discourse for many centuries. According to this idea, the earth is at the center of the universe, which consists of heavens or celestial orbs (caelum or coelum), widely believed to be of solid matter. After 1543, when Copernicus published *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres), advocating a heliocentric universe, the geocentric system was seriously questioned. Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), a Danish astronomer, while maintaining the Ptolemaic geocentric structure of the universe, developed a theory that combined the views of Ptolemy and Copernicus; he proposed that all the planets except for the Earth revolve around the Sun, which revolves around the Earth. He furthermore denied the solidity of the celestial orbs or heavens, accepted by prevailing opinion at that time, and suggested instead that they were fluid or

Published in the Appendix (pp. 143-150) of D. Mauricio Gomes dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra do P. Cristóvão Borri," *Anáís* (Academia Portuguesa da História) 3 (1951): 119-150.

³¹ Otto Hartig, "Borrius (Borri, Burrus), Christopher," in Charles G. Herbermann, et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. 2 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), p. 689.

³² Angelo Mercati, "Notizie," p. 26, dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 119,

³³ Joseph Franz Schütte, S. J., *Monumenta historica japoniae I, Textus catalogorum japoniae, 1549-1654*" (Rome: Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu, 1975), pp. 848, 849, 854, 884.

³⁴ L. Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Alberto M. Ghisalberti, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1971), 13:3-4. Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, pp. 424, 780-781, 1141.

liquid.³⁵ Brahe created a foundation for formulating laws of planetary motions, later developed by his assistant, the famous German astronomer, Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), who in 1604 discovered the phenomenon of the appearance of new stars. In 1609, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) built what he called an *occhiale*, later known as a telescope, which, along with his other discoveries and theories, provided an empirical foundation for Copernican theory and caused Galileo to be considered the father of modern astronomy. In this vibrant intellectual milieu of adventurous astronomers and mathematicians, Borri's curious mind was stirred. Following in the footsteps of Brahe, Borri developed a theory of three heavens: aerial of the planets, sidereal of the fixed stars, and the empyrean beyond it. These heavens, according to him, were liquid or tenuous.

Neither Copernicus nor Galileo (not to mention Brahe) endured the difficulties that befell Borri. The Church did not attack Copernicus's work until 1616, and even then allowed his work to be published with some passages deleted, yet without compromising his basic ideas. Until his heresy trial in 1633, Galileo continued to enjoy success and fame under the attentive but not forbidding eye of the Church, on the condition that he claimed his view only as a hypothesis and not as a proven fact. However, with ideas even less revolutionary than Copernicus or Galileo, Borri saw his promising career come to an abrupt end, and years of bitter disappointment followed for the young professor. He failed to survive in the Jesuit academic community of that time apparently because he lacked adequate skill in navigating the currents of factions and rivalries in the politics of his order.

Soon after his transfer to the Collegio di Brera, Borri found himself at odds with his superiors. We can only speculate about the reasons for this because available sources are scarce and unenlightening. One such source is Father Dominique Le Jeunehomme, from the Society of Jesus, who wrote in 1627 that Borri

invented an opinion, concerning heavens as being liquid, of which there are only three, one which we call air, another for planets or stars, and the other empyreal. This is what displeased Rome so much, during the time of Father Acquaviva [then General of the Society of Jesus], so that he drew a penitence and a small rebuke [*il en tira une penitence, et un petit mot au bout*].³⁶

For his part, Borri, in his letter to General Acquaviva's successor, General Mutius Vitelleschi, written around 1630 or 1631, described the episode differently, alleging that General Acquaviva,

at the insistence of the old Fathers of our Province [Society of Jesus], ordered me therefore to leave my lectureship not to be charged by the world with new ways of thinking, with which certain new opinions that the Society produced in the theological field at that time the Pope particularly charged us.³⁷

³⁵ Victor E. Thoren, "The Comet of 1577 and Tycho Brahe's System of the World," *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* 29 (1979): 53-67.

³⁶ Dominique Le Jeunehomme, S. J., *Relation d'un voyage de la Flèche à Lisbonne en 1627*, (Poitiers: Oudin, 1864), p. 39, cited in Carlos Sommervogel, S. J., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Alphonse Picard & Bruxelles: Oscar Schepens, 1890), vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

³⁷ Borri, "Al molto Rev. Pte. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 143.

Here, Borri explains his dismissal as an effort by the Jesuit order to demonstrate its submission to the Papacy by disciplining a member who appeared to show excessive zeal for "new ways of thinking."

Each letter cited above has to do with a rebuke: in Le Jeunehomme's letter, Borri is rebuked; in Borri's letter, he implicitly rebukes his superiors, notwithstanding the fact that later in the letter he talks about the patience and humility with which he endured the decision. But whom does he blame: the Pope, General Acquaviva, or those "old Fathers"? While General Acquaviva made the decision, Borri believed that he was prompted to do so by others. The Pope could hardly have known or cared about the young Lombardian teaching at a Jesuit college in Milan. Thus, those who prompted General Acquaviva were "the old Fathers." If we carefully read Borri's letter and familiarize ourselves with the development of his celestial theories, we see that it was his polemic with one of "the old Fathers" that colored his entire life and career. In this letter, written around two decades after his expulsion from the Collegio di Brera, he still argues against one of the "old Fathers" without naming him, while repeatedly referring to this man's book and his theory of eleven heavens. This father was almost certainly a German Jesuit, Christopher Clavius (1537-1612), who was one of the most celebrated scientists of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He was the premier mathematician of the Jesuit Order and the most senior professor of astronomy and mathematics at the Collegio Romano in Rome, the main Jesuit college founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1551. The book against which Borri vehemently argued is Clavius's *In sphaeram Iohannis de Sacro Bosco commentarius*.³⁸ Father Clavius was an adherent of the Ptolemaic system, and one of the aspects of his work concerned the structure of heavens or orbs, the number of which he suggested was eleven.³⁹ Later he increased this number to twelve: "Beyond the eleven moving heavens," Clavius wrote, "theologians such as Strabo and Bede and all the rest affirm that there is another heaven, which they call the empyrean. It is not a heaven with stars, but rather is the happy seat and home of the angels and the blessed."⁴⁰

Despite being a follower and a developer of the Ptolemaic system, and thus an opponent of the Copernican theory, Father Clavius had a relatively open mind, and he clearly proved this. In 1610, Galileo discovered three of Jupiter's largest satellites and observed different phases of Venus; both of these phenomena were incompatible with the Ptolemaic system. Galileo published his observations in Venice in the work titled *Siderius Nuncius* (Sidereal Messenger). The Jesuit order and other church officials requested the scholars of the Collegio Romano to confirm the performance of Galileo's invention, the telescope, and the accuracy of observations made with it. The mathematicians of the Collegio under the direction of Clavius confirmed Galileo's discoveries. In 1611, Father Clavius organized a

³⁸ Christopher Clavius, *In sphaeram Iohannis de Sacro Bosco commentarius* (Rome: Victorium Hallianum, 1570). Thanks to Mariya Berezovska for help with Latin.

³⁹ Edward Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 318.

⁴⁰ Clavius, *In sphaeram*, p. 24.

solemn convocation at the Collegio to honor Galileo with the attendance of numerous dignitaries, including scholars and high-ranking church officials.⁴¹

Considering the mutual respect and even friendship between Clavius and Galileo despite the seriousness of their difference of opinion, it is hard to imagine that Father Clavius would persecute Borri, who was by far more moderate than Galileo in his views. Moreover, the issue of the number of heavens and their composition were not as crucial as the issue of a geocentric versus a heliocentric system. On the number of heavens, there was no unity among medieval natural philosophers and astronomers, who, according to Edward Grant, "divided the celestial region into as few as eight and as many as eleven major units."⁴² None was persecuted or even punished for his preferred number of heavens. As for the liquidity or tenuous substance of the heavens, this issue became relatively important, though not critical, later in the century after Galileo's trial in 1633, but it was not a particularly contentious topic before and during the second decade of the century. For example, in the 1570s, Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine (1542-1621), also a Jesuit and one of only thirty-three Doctors of the Church, had discussed the fluidity of heavens in his lectures at Louvain University (modern Belgium).⁴³

On the other hand, General Aquaviva, in order to strengthen the position of his Order vis-à-vis the Pope, required the members of his Order not to deviate from the official doctrines, the main one in astronomy being the Ptolemaic system. As a junior member of the Society of Jesus, Borri had to comply. Perhaps he had an uncompromising nature, which did not allow him to assume the "hypothetical" stance suggested to Galileo. Perhaps because, unlike Galileo and many other astronomers, he was inside the Order, Borri found himself under special scrutiny and on the wrong side of ecclesiastical politics. It is likely that, rather than the "small rebuke" mentioned by Le Jeunehomme, Borri was in fact expelled from the Collegio di Brera, if only because Borri mentions this in the letter to his superior, General Vitelleschi, and would hardly be inclined to invent such an event.

We do not know a precise date for his departure from the school. Mauricio Gomes dos Santos, a modern Portuguese scholar, who based his research on Borri's aforementioned letter to General Vitelleschi as well as materials in Spanish and Portuguese archives, avoids dating this event but talks about scientific developments at the end of 1610 and in 1611 that Borri could not closely follow because he was out of the academic circle.⁴⁴ This implies that he dates Borri's expulsion prior to the end of 1610, that is, shortly after Borri's 1609 arrival in Milan. On the other hand, an Italian scholar, Ugo Baldini, dates Borri's departure as late as 1614, but although he cites Borri's 1631 letter to Vitelleschi in support, the letter does not give us the date. Baldini mentions that in 1612 Borri gave a public lecture in Milan, a copy of which is kept in Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome,⁴⁵ and this would

⁴¹ Pasquale M. D'Elia, S. J., *Galileo in China*, trans. Rufus Suter and Matthew Sciascia (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 13.

⁴² Edward Grant, "Celestial Orbs in the Latin Middle Ages," *Isis* 78,2 (1987): 160.

⁴³ Robert Bellarmine, "Whether by Its Nature the Sky Is Corruptible," in *The Louvain Lectures (Lectiones Lovanienses) of Bellarmine and the Autograph Copy of his 1616 Declaration of Galileo*, translated with introduction and annotations by Ugo Baldini and George V. Coyne, S. J. (Vatican: Specola Vaticana, 1984), pp. 8-9.

⁴⁴ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 121.

⁴⁵ In Rome there is a manuscript of his lecture titled "De astrologia universa tractatus" (Biblioteca Nazionale, ms. Fondo Gesuitico 587), noted in Ugo Baldini, *Saggi sulla cultura*

seem to extend Borri's period at the Collegio at least to 1612. In any case, Borri's departure from the Collegio certainly took place before January 1615, when General Acquaviva, who ordered Borri's expulsion, died.

Looking for New Venues

Being deprived of his post must have been very painful for Borri. Although he continued to hope that new scientific observations would sweep out old theories,⁴⁶ he was nevertheless outside academic circles and could no longer follow closely the activities of other scholars. Desperate to rejoin the scientific world, he looked for new opportunities to pursue his astronomic interests and his interest in magnetic observations and cartography. According to another seventeenth-century Jesuit, Valentin Estâncel (1621-1705), Borri was convinced that he had discovered a new way to determine longitude by the use of a magnetic needle (*agulha magnetica*), and he wanted to go to India to observe the behavior of the magnetic needle there. He hoped this would enable him to create a map for navigation on the basis of isogones, the lines connecting points of the Earth where the magnetic declination is the same.⁴⁷

The issue of determining longitude was a very important issue for navigation. For many centuries, most navigation was conducted along coasts, and methods of determining longitude by surface orientation were developed. However, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the development of navigation led to exploring new territories, and ships started to venture farther from coasts, which created a serious problem with their orientation at sea, as coastal markers could no longer serve as points of orientation. This was so important that in 1598 the King of Spain and Portugal, Philip III, offered, according to some sources, a prize of 50,000 cruzados to the first person to discover the solution to this problem.⁴⁸ According to another source, the prize was six thousand ducats of permanent revenue, supplemented by two million ducats of life-long revenue and a thousand ducats the winner would receive immediately. Fifty years later, the Dutch government announced a prize of 100,000 pounds for the same achievement.⁴⁹ The way to solve this seemed to lie either through the observation of the sun, moon, and stars, or by using magnetism. Among those who worked on this problem was Galileo. He relied on the former approach and in 1613 offered the Spanish crown his tables of eclipses for defining longitude. However, his method did not prove reliable.

Borri wanted to try a different approach based on magnetism. The technique seemed to involve the construction of a chart that mapped points of equal magnetic declination, the use of an azimuthal compass, and a technique for

della Compagnia di Gesù, secoli XVI-XVIII (Essays on the Culture of the Society of Jesus, XVI-XVII centuries) (Padova, Italy: CLEUP Edifce, 2000), p. 156, fn. 80 & p. 163, fn. 102.

⁴⁶ Borri, "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 143.

⁴⁷ Valentin Estancel, *Tiphys Lusitano* (Fuondo generale 2264, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa), cited in Joaquim de Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," *Biblos XIX* (1943): 447.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 448. The same information is also in Athanasius Kircher, *Magnes, sive de arte magnetica* (Rome: L. Girgnani, 1641), p. 502.

⁴⁹ Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," p. 406.

measuring the declination at any time of day.⁵⁰ By that time it was already known that the geographic north pole and the magnetic north pole are not the same. Borri apparently wanted to measure the angular declination from the magnetic to geographic north pole to determine longitude at sea. For this, he needed to conduct extensive observations. India, being on the opposite side of the Earth from the north magnetic pole, is located at a larger angle of magnetic declination than Europe. Consequently, magnetic measurements made in India could provide Borri with data unavailable in Europe.⁵¹ In Goa, for example, the declination turned out to be between 16 degrees 40 minutes and 17 degrees, while in Naples it did not pass 30 minutes.⁵²

At that time, Christian missionaries were rapidly developing their presence in Asia, where conducting astronomical research seemed to be especially promising. Missionaries such as Jesuits Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Niccolo Longobardi (1565?-1655), who arrived in China at the end of the sixteenth century and established their missions there at the beginning of the seventeenth century, reported the enormous interest of the Chinese in astronomy and mathematics and how their skills in these fields facilitated the Jesuit approach to the local society. Father Ricci wrote on May 12, 1605, from Beijing to Rome: "if the mathematician of whom I spoke came here, we could readily translate our tables into Chinese characters and rectify their year. This would give us great face, would open wider the gates of China, and would enable us to live more securely and freely."⁵³ Father Ricci's successors, Sabatino de Ursis and Niccolo Longobardi, also petitioned the Jesuit officials in Rome and the General in Charge of the Portuguese Province and Missions at Rome, Father Anthony Mascarenhas, to urgently send missionaries skilled in astronomy and mathematics.⁵⁴ Consequently, when Borri petitioned to be sent on a mission to Asia, his request was immediately granted.⁵⁵ His destination was China, but he had first to go to the Portuguese base at Goa, on the western coast of India, and from thence to Macao, the Portuguese base on the coast of China and the headquarters for the Jesuit missions in Asia.

En Route

The way was long and difficult. Lisbon was the sole port of embarkation for Portuguese Asia.⁵⁶ In the words of one scholar of that time:

⁵⁰ Michael John Gorman, "The Angel and the Compass: Athanasius Kircher's Geographical Project," in *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), p. 244.

⁵¹ I am indebted to Professor Peter Dear of Cornell University, whom I consulted on this issue as well as on the issue of the eleven heavens.

⁵² Estancel, *Tiphys Lusitano*, in Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," pp. 442-443.

⁵³ Letter from August 22, 1608, from Beijing, in Tacchi Venturi, *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci* (Macerata, 1913) II:367.

⁵⁴ D'Elia, *Galileo*, pp. 21-23.

⁵⁵ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 122.

⁵⁶ In February 1633, Pope Urban VIII issued a Bull allowing all religious to travel to the East Indies by any route to facilitate access to the missionaries' destinations. See Ludwig Freither von Pastor, *The History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf, O. S. B., 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), vol. XXIX, p. 132.

... ships, when they left Lisbon at all, left only once a year, in March; and, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, they arrived at Goa, if they arrived at all, only after six months of terrible crossing, if all went well, in September of the same year. Then in India the traveler had to halt at least until April of the following year when the monsoons would permit another ship to sail for the port of Macao, if all went well.⁵⁷

Borri departed in April 1615.⁵⁸ If he took the usual route, he could arrive in Macao not earlier than 1617. October 1617 is also the first time when his name is listed among missionaries residing in Macao.⁵⁹ Apparently, upon his arrival in Macao, Borri, whose name was also spelled Borro in Italian, or even Burro, started to use, at least on certain occasions, the last name Brono, Bruno, or Bravo, "not to offend the Portuguese ears with the word *borro* which in their language does not sound good."⁶⁰ *Borro* in Portuguese means sheepskin or stupid, *burro* "ass," or *borra* "dregs, lees, sediment, rabble, or scum."⁶¹ In the Latin texts, his name was usually transcribed as Borrus.

In Macao, according to Borri, Father Francisco Vieira, Apostolic Visitor to Japan and China,⁶² approached him with a request to write a tractate to persuade the missionaries in China to abandon the opinion of eleven heavens and their hard or "incorruptible" nature, based on Aristotle, which was in conformity with Papal doctrine at that time, and instead to adopt ideas prevalent in China, which were proving to be "more viable than ours." While ideas about the celestial structure were changing in Europe, among the missionaries in China they remained fixed in the established doctrine. Matteo Ricci wrote about the Chinese celestial structure: "There is only one sky and it is empty, not solid."⁶³ The Jesuits in China, according to Joseph Needham, opposed the Chinese doctrine that posited the "floating of the heavenly bodies in infinite space, and the irony was that they did so just at a time when the best minds in Europe were breaking away from the closed Aristotelian system."⁶⁴

Borri seemed to be nonplussed by Vieira's request because earlier he had advocated the idea of the fluidity of heavens and considered this to be a reason for his expulsion from the Collegio di Brera by General Acquaviva. The explanation given to Borri by Father Francisco Vieira provides us with a curious glimpse into

⁵⁷ D'Elia, *Galileo* p. 19.

⁵⁸ Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1141; Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 691.

⁶⁰ Pietro della Valle, *The Travels of Sig. Pietro della Valle, a Noble Roman, into East India and Arabia Deserta* (London: J. Macock, 1665), part 3, p. 81. Later cited in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque* vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe," and from Sommervogel in other works, for example Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 780.

⁶¹ Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario*, p. 3.

⁶² Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1323. Father Vieira (1556?-1619) arrived in Macao from India. He apparently arrived there simultaneously with Borri. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, lists him but does not provide any information except for one work (vol. 8, col. 685, under "Vieira, François").

⁶³ Matteo Ricci's letters on October 28 and November 4, 1595, cited in Joseph Needham, *Chinese Astronomy and the Jesuit Mission: An Encounter of Cultures* (London: The China Society, 1958), p. 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

Jesuit policies towards new developments in general and the policies of Acquaviva in particular. In his letter to General Vitellescho, Borri conveyed Vieira's explanation and wrote:

The reason why Father Claudio [Acquaviva] had prohibited to me such a doctrine [in Europe] is the same reason, as I was told, why [this doctrine] is to be held and taught in China; because this doctrine [of eleven heavens and their "incorruptibility"] is old to us in Europe, but there in China it is totally new and therefore the aforesaid new way of thought would chase us [out of China].⁶⁵

What was "the same" reason that Borri refers to as explaining both Acquaviva's forbidding a doctrine of fluid heavens to Borri in Europe and his proposed advocacy of such a doctrine in China? Apparently, it was pragmatism. To safeguard the Order and to avert possible repercussions from above, General Acquaviva sacrificed Borri, a young and vulnerable scientist among the Jesuits. Similarly, it seems that Acquaviva regarded the missionary presence in China as more vital than any particular doctrine about the structure of the heavenly bodies, and he was willing to sacrifice the latter for the sake of the former. The irony of this, however, lay in the fact that it was Borri's lot to be requested to explain this to the Chinese mission. It is hard to imagine that Borri was enthusiastic about the task requested of him, and we have no evidence that he ever accomplished it.⁶⁶

Mission: Impossible

If initially Borri was designated to join missionaries in China, this plan was changed. In 1616, a persecution arose at Nanking when several missionaries were arrested and expelled to Macao, "some of them in cages, while others managed to remain hidden among Chinese Catholics and secretly continued their Apostolic work."⁶⁷ Instead of China, Borri went to Cochinchina.

While some Portuguese and Spanish Dominicans and other missionaries penetrated to Cochinchina before the seventeenth century, it was the Jesuits who established the first mission there in 1615. It happened allegedly because of a Portuguese merchant, Ferdinando da Costa. Upon his return to Macao from a trip to Cochinchina, he related "what he had seen and the excellent likelihood there was of converting that kingdom. Immediately after this speech, Fr. Buzomi went and threw himself at the feet of his superior to ask a permission to go to this beautiful land to which God was calling him. His request was soon granted to him."⁶⁸ As the head of the mission, Father Francesco Buzomi⁶⁹ was joined by

⁶⁵ Borri "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale." in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 144.

⁶⁶ Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Pascal M. D'Elia, S. J., *The Catholic Missions in China* (Shanghai, China: The Commercial Press, 1954), p. 51.

⁶⁸ Alexandre de Rhodes, *Rhodes of Vietnam*, trans. Solange Hertz (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1966), pp. 46-47. Also see on this Nguyễn Văn Tố and L. Cadrière, *Lịch Sử Đạo Thiên Chúa ở Việt Nam* (History of Christianity in Vietnam) (Hue: Đại Việt Thiên Bản, 1944), p. 110.

⁶⁹ (1576-1639). Italian Jesuit born in Genoa and educated in Naples, joined the Society of Jesus in 1592 (Skütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1143). According to Alexandre de Rhodes, "He succeeded so well that although he found very few Christians on first arriving in

another Jesuit Father, Jacques Carvalho,⁷⁰ and three Brothers Coadjutors: Antonio Diaz, a Portuguese, and two Japanese, Joseph and Paul. A year later, Father Carvalho departed for Japan, where he would become a martyr in 1624.⁷¹ The mission proved to be viable, and within a short time there were three hundred neophytes. The officials from Macao decided to send Father Francisco de Pina to reinforce Father Buzomi.⁷²

But soon troubles befell the Cochinchinese mission. Local religious leaders blamed the fathers for a drought afflicting the country. A church was burned down, and Father Buzomi fell seriously ill. In response to these events, the officials in Macao dispatched two new missionaries to Cochinchina: a Portuguese, Father Peter Marques,⁷³ and Cristoforo Borri. Borri wrote that he "freely and affectionately embraced the opportunity to dedicate myself to God in the mission of Cochinchina." The two departed on a Portuguese boat. As a precaution, in order not to arouse suspicion among the Cochinchinese in a time of persecution, Father Marques was appointed the chaplain of the ship and Father Borri was disguised as a slave. They arrived in Cochinchina either at the end of 1617 or the beginning of 1618.⁷⁴

When the ship entered the harbor, as Borri informs us, a fight between two sailors erupted. The locals were afraid to intervene, but Borri fearlessly separated the fighters. While this won him enormous respect from the Vietnamese, it also revealed to them his identity as a religious man, as they could not believe that a mere servant would be able to do this. Realizing this, Borri changed into his clerical

Cochinchina, he left at least 12,000 when he went to heaven to receive as many crowns as he had made new Christians." De Rhodes, *Rhodes of Vietnam*, p. 78.

⁷⁰ In Borri's original Italian, the name is spelled Diego Caravaglio (Borri, *Relazione*, p. 100). He was born in Portugal, in 1578, joined the Society of Jesus in 1594, and in 1600 departed on his mission to Asia. He propagated Christianity in Macao, Japan, and Cochinchina, where he arrived in 1615, and from whence he departed back to Japan in 1616. According to Charlevoix, *Le Christianisme au Japon 1542-1660* (Lille: L. Lefort, 1853), he died the way Borri describes, in Sendai, Japan, on February 22, 1624.

⁷¹ L. - E. Louvet, *La Cochinchine religieuse*, vol. 1 (Paris: Challamel Aimé, 1855), p. 235.

⁷² Henri Chappoullie, *Aux origines d'une église. Rome et les missions d'Indochine au XVII^e siècle*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1943), p. 23. In the English translation used in this volume, Francesco de Pina's name is spelled as Francis de Pina. (1585?-1625) A Portuguese, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1605, and studied and preached in Macao, where he met Cristoforo Borri. Father de Pina arrived in Cochinchina sometime in 1617 (Shütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1271). He was the first to master the language of the country and thus was very successful in conversion and establishing good rapport with local people. F. de Montézon and Ed. Estève, eds., *Mission de la Cochinchine et du Tonkin* (Paris: Charles Dounoil, 1858), p. 386. Alexandre de Rhodes initially studied Vietnamese under Father de Pina's guidance.

⁷³ Pedro Marques (1577-1657), a Portuguese Jesuit, who was appointed as the Superior of the Cochinchinese mission and is listed as such in the Catalogue of Cochinchinese missionaries: "Catalogo com suplimento do primeiro e segundo rol dos Padres e Irmaos que estao no Collegio de Macao e Missao de Cochinchina sojeita a este mesmo Collegio, feito em Junho de 1618," in Shütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 782. He returned to Macao in 1620 (*Ibid.*, p. 1228). He later became Alexander de Rhodes's companion during his mission in Tonkin, where they arrived together in 1627. Borri fails to mention that Father Marques stayed in Cochinchina only for two or three years.

⁷⁴ Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario*, p. 3; and Otto Hartig, "Borrius (Borri, Burrus), Christopher," in Charles G. Herbermann, et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), vol. 2, p. 689, respectively.

robes, disembarked, proclaimed his Christian faith, and said the mass, expecting the fate of a martyr. Fortunately for him, however, at this point a downpour intervened, ending the drought for which Father Buzomi had been blamed and persecuted. Thus, the local people viewed Borri's arrival as having caused the much-desired rain, and the missionaries accordingly benefited in popular esteem.⁷⁵

Upon their arrival, Fathers Borri and Marques joined forces with Fathers Buzomi and de Pina. After a short stay in Đà Nẵng and a visit to Hội An, he, along with Fathers Buzomi and de Pina, at the invitation of the governor of Pulfucambi (modern Bình Định province), departed for the provincial capital located at the modern city of Qui Nhơn. Father Marques stayed at Hội An to preach there since he was fluent in Japanese and there was a large Japanese community there. The missionaries seemed to be successful in Qui Nhơn until the governor, their protector, died. After that, their situation deteriorated as narrated in Borri's *Account*. Borri apparently stayed in Qui Nhơn for nearly all of his time in Cochinchina.

In 1622, Pope Gregory XV established in Rome the Congregation de Propaganda Fide (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith). The Pope "declared that it was his desire to continue with greater energy and vigilance the work of training laborers for the rich harvest which his predecessors had inaugurated with so much zeal."⁷⁶ But Borri was not to be among these laborers. In that same year, Borri's missionary career came to an abrupt end and he left Cochinchina, again finding himself at odds with his Order. He became such an instant non-person among the Jesuit missionaries in Asia that Alexander de Rhodes (1591-1660), a French Jesuit and the most celebrated missionary of that time in Vietnam, who arrived in Cochinchina in 1624, only two years after Borri's departure, and who wrote several works on Vietnam and the missionaries there, never mentioned Borri either in discussing the work of his predecessors or in any other context.

Nowhere does Borri mention a reason for his departure from Cochinchina. He simply states matter-of-factly, after describing the churches in Cochinchina: "This was the state of affairs there, when I came away out of that country for Europe, which was in the year 1622."⁷⁷ Dos Santos speculates that the reason was a new persecution against the missionaries,⁷⁸ but there is no evidence to support this theory, not to mention that Borri would be unlikely to omit mention of any case of persecution. The official reason, as documented in the *Index Personarum* of the Society of Jesus at that time, was his poor health.⁷⁹ However, Borri seemed to be in good health while in Vietnam as we see from the list of the missionaries compiled every year for the Jesuit Order. Under the year 1620, we read, for example: "Father Christóvão Brono, native of Milan, thirty-seven years of age and in the Order for nineteen years, in good health."⁸⁰ While we cannot exclude the possibility that

⁷⁵ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter II, Section titled "The author in Cochinchina."

⁷⁶ Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor, *The History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf, O. S. B., 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), vol. XVII, p. 132.

⁷⁷ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter X, Section titled "At Cacchiam."

⁷⁸ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 127.

⁷⁹ "[p]ropter infirmam salutem Macaum rediit" (on the account of infirm health [he] returned to Macao), "Index Personarum," Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1141.

⁸⁰ "Textus Catalogorum Japoniae," Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 854.

Borri fell seriously ill between 1620 and 1622, this is unlikely considering that he makes no mention of this in his account, nor does this idea appear in any source other than the official explanation.

Evaluations of Borri's missionary activities are various. Caroli de Visch in his 1656 collection of the works of the Cistercian Order commended Borri for his "praiseworthy" activity in Cochinchina.⁸¹ Filippo Argelati, a century after Borri's death, in his collection of works and short biographies of Milanese, employed the highest praise to describe Borri's missionary activity in Cochinchina, "where he exercised his apostolic duties with utmost fervor."⁸²

Not so with one of Borri's fellow Jesuits. According to an Italian Jesuit, Father Daniello Bartoli (1608-85), who published a six-volume work on the history of his order, "there was not a small increase in the number of Christians" in Cochinchina. But all the glory for this, Bartoli believed, should go solely to Father Buzomi, who singlehandedly carried out their education and conversion. Bartoli insisted on attributing "no part [of this] to Father Christoforo Borri, who has been his [Father Buzomi's] companion, and who was recalled by his superiors to Macao; not because, as he wrote, to be put into the hand of physicians there, who would heal his body, because [his body] was not ailing; but to cure his soul, that is, to return it from anxiety to fervor of the spirit. When it turned out to be in vain, it was necessary to discharge him from India and to return him to Europe."⁸³

A century later, another Jesuit, Julio Cesare Cordara (1704-1785), ascribes a very high value to Borri, characterizing him as "once the most praised among the evangelical laborers." According to Cordara, the reason that put an end to Borri's mission in Cochinchina was that "truly more anxious for the well-being of others rather than of his own, [he] has sinned, on account of which he seemed to have been removed from that mission and recalled to Europe."⁸⁴

We will perhaps never discover what stands behind Bartoli's diagnosis of Borri's ailing soul nor Cordara's description of Borri's anxiety for others' well-being and who was right and wrong in their judgment of Borri's missionary merits. We can only try to reconstruct the situation there based on available materials, the most important of which are Borri's *Account* and a letter or a draft of a letter written by Borri's fellow missionary, Francisco de Pina, to his superior in Macao, Father Visitor Jerónimo Rodrigues Senior, in 1623, following Borri's departure from Cochinchina.⁸⁵ In this letter, de Pina does not mention Borri, but some details of his letter are instructive to understand Borri, his life in Cochinchina, and his *Account*.

⁸¹ R. D. Caroli de Visch, *Bibliotheca scriptorum sacri ordinis cisterciensis* (Coloniae Agrippinae: Apud 1656), p. 71, under "Christophorus Borrus."

⁸² Filippo Argelati, *Bibliotheca scriptorum mediolanensium* (Mediolani: In Aedibus Palatinis, 1745), vol. I, p. 239.

⁸³ Daniello Bartoli, *Dell'istoria della Compagnie di Gesu, La Cina* (Rome: Nella Stamperia del Varese, 1663), III:707.

⁸⁴ Julio Cordara, *Historiae societatis Jesu* (Rome: Ex Typographia Antonii de Rubéis, 1750), p. 331. Thanks to Brian Ostrowski for this reference.

⁸⁵ The document was discovered by the French scholar, Roland Jacques, in the Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, the *Jesuitas na Ásia* collection, vol. 49/V7, fol. 413r-416r, translated in Roland Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers of Vietnamese Linguistics Prior to 1650* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2002), pp. 40-45. Jacques discusses the authorship, addressee, and the dating of the letter on pp. 23-24.

As we already know, with Borri's arrival, the Cochinchinese mission consisted of four fathers: Buzomi, de Pina, Marques, and Borri himself. In addition, there was Brother Antonio Diaz.⁸⁶ Father Marques left the mission either in 1619 or 1620, but new figures soon arrived: Father António Fernández, who was occupied with the conversion of Japanese in Hôï An,⁸⁷ and Father Manouel Fernández.⁸⁸ During this time, the mission, for the most part financially dependent upon Macao, was under severe financial restraints. This was the consequence of difficulties the Jesuit headquarters at Macao had in distributing money to the missions because of "the ever tighter closure of Japan to Portuguese business; the insecurities of navigation as Dutch ships were attacking everything that displayed the Portuguese flag; and the war waged by the Manchu against the Chinese dynasty, resulting in a volatile situation that had repercussions in Macao."⁸⁹ Consequently, the Cochinchinese mission was left almost without supplies. Borri mentions these difficulties only in *passim*, when he says that Father Buzomi departed for Hôï An in an attempt to get some alms from the Portuguese. But the difficulties also surface in de Pina's complaint about the inability to provide churches with "images," or even with paper prints, and the effect of poverty on the missionaries' everyday life.

Talking about the missionary activities in Cochinchina in his *Account*, Borri most often employs the pronoun "we." This creates a sense of "brotherhood" in the portrayal of those few laboring in Cochinchina. However, this brotherhood crumbles in de Pina's letter. He hardly has a kind word for any of his fellow missionaries. De Pina envies Father Buzomi, who, alone in Pulucambi after Borri's departure, enjoys much more financial freedom than de Pina, being able to hire local assistants for his work. Father Buzomi, whom Alexander de Rhodes hailed as "the real apostle of Cochinchina, who spent himself there entirely, working for twenty years with a fortitude that couldn't be too highly praised,"⁹⁰ is accused by de Pina of a *laissez-faire*, if not outright sybaritic, attitude:

At Pulo Cambi [Pulucambi], father Buzomi has two or three monks *ông sãi* who do all the work for him. Thus, if something happens, if there is something to be settled or important messages, he sends his interpreter, or then again one of the *ông sãi*; when the catechizing is finished, he retires, and they stay to either repeat or converse with the catechumens.⁹¹

⁸⁶ A Portuguese Jesuit (1585-?), listed among the Cochinchinese missionaries until 1623. Unlike Jesuit "fathers," his duty was to take care of the house. "Catálogo das Informaçõens Commuas dos Padres e Irmãos que estam na Missam de Cochinchina, feito no anno de 1620," in Shütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 885.

⁸⁷ Also listed as António Rodríguez (1552-1630), a Portuguese Jesuit, the oldest in the mission. He arrived in Cochinchina in 1619 or 1620 and worked with Japanese Christians as he *sabe bem a lingua de Japam e prega nella* (knows well the language of Japan and preaches in it). *Ibid.*, p. 884.

⁸⁸ Also spelled (Emmanuel Fernandes). A Portuguese Jesuit (1584?-1634), entered the Society in 1601, studied in Macao, ordained in 1611, and remained in Macao occupying various positions at the Jesuit College until his departure to Cochinchina. *Ibid.*, p. 1170, and Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 28.

⁸⁹ Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 87.

⁹⁰ de Rhodes, *Rhodes of Vietnam*, p. 46.

⁹¹ De Pina's letter, cited in Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 45.

De Pina's life markedly differs from that of Father Buzomi's: "It is I who must catechize, go out to [meet] those who arrive or leave . . . Whenever something happens, if I don't go, no one else goes."⁹² De Pina himself is stationed under the supervision of Father Manoel Fernández, who arrived there in January 1622 just before Borri's departure.

One of the main contentious points for Father de Pina, on which he criticizes his fellow-missionaries as undermining their effectiveness in propagating Christianity, is their inability to master the language. He apparently would not agree with Borri's statement about the easiness of the language, which allows a man to preach in a year.⁹³ The main target of de Pina's disdain is his Superior, Father Manoel Fernández. According to de Pina, after a year of study, "whether he [Father Fernández] says a word or not, that comes about to the same," and the locals "were stupefied that after a whole year he did not know more."⁹⁴ Nor is he more lenient toward his other colleague in the mission, António Fernández, who, according to him, also neglects his duties towards the Japanese Christians and does nothing but pray.⁹⁵

But controversial issues, as revealed in de Pina's letter, go beyond finance and language. We can only surmise what arguments were dividing these people who found themselves bound to each other in a land they wanted to change but that none of them really knew. Yet, in de Pina's letter we see a shadow of the emerging Rites Controversy, at the core of which lay the attitude of missionaries towards local religious beliefs, practices, and terminology. Conflicts in the microcosm of the Jesuit mission in CochinChina in the 1620s are an inkling of the larger conflict that eventually exploded at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the Rites Controversy and culminated in 1767 with the expulsion of Jesuits from all the missions and, shortly after, in the suppression of the Society itself. At issue was the Jesuits' flexibility and willingness to accept some local religious practices that offended the orthodox views of other orders. Father de Pina mentions numerous contentious debates that apparently hindered the missionaries' activities.⁹⁶ He does not elaborate on these debates, but elsewhere in the letter he addresses the issue of local young men, whom missionaries, not only in CochinChina but elsewhere as well, would educate toward the goal of enabling them to preach. Along with their studies, these young men also performed domestic chores in the missions without remuneration.⁹⁷ As we can infer from de Pina's letter, the officials in Macao insisted on a policy of disengaging converts from their own culture, which led, among other things, to instructing local youths in only European, or Portuguese, script. Father de Pina, if reluctantly, complied with this requirement. However, as a result, he complained that young people "do not want to stay here with me, because I allow them to study only our own script; for this reason they want to go live in Pulo Cambi [Pulucambi] with father Buzomi, who allows them to study [their own script] and gives them a tutor; or they wish to study at their own

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁹³ Borri in this volume, Part II, "Conclusion."

⁹⁴ De Pina's letter, cited in Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 42.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹⁷ Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, pp. 69-71.

homes."⁹⁸ Thus, Father Buzomi, working in the relative isolation of Qui Nhơn, at least in de Pina's description, did not honor the policy of Macao.

Even though de Pina wrote this letter in 1623, when Borri was already in Macao, we see that the controversies in the mission started earlier, and Borri could hardly have avoided them. If reading Borri's *Account* we cannot understand his position on the education of the locals, we definitely get some clues about his perception of the local religious life and his own position vis-à-vis it. First of all, Borri extracts Confucius and Confucianism from his description of religions, placing it in the Chapter "Of the Civil and Political Government of the Cochinese." Moreover, he seems to have sincere respect, if not admiration, for Confucian wisdom. He says that Confucian books are "full of erudition, of stories, of grave sentences, or proverbs, and such like things."⁹⁹ Thus, Borri, following the lead of Matteo Ricci and other Jesuits in China, was ready to secularize Confucius. This eventually became a central topic in the Rites Controversy when the other orders claimed that local people worshiped Confucius in the same manner as other "idols" and that Confucianism could not coexist with the monotheistic Judeo-Christian tradition.

Another crucial point of the Rites Controversy that augmented discord among the missionaries was the attitude towards ancestral rituals in general and of food sacrifice to the dead in particular. Borri's comments on these issues reveal, perhaps better than anything else, the dualism of his personality and his ambiguous view of mission work in Cochinchina. While his missionary half considers the idea of providing food for dead relatives foolish and vain and attempts to explain to the Vietnamese that the dead cannot consume this food, his scientific half appreciates the explanation of Vietnamese that this food was comprised of material and immaterial parts, of which the soul consumes only the latter. "Any wise man," says Borri, "may by this false answer discover the acuteness of the Cochinese philosophers, though they absolutely err as to the reality of the argument."¹⁰⁰ His mind can appreciate their logic even as his religious commitment rejects their argument.

As for Cochinese beliefs, he illuminates them in the chapter titled "A Short Account of the Sects in Cochinese-China." In his description, which mainly dwells on Buddhism and Daoism, Borri demonstrates utter confusion in failing to distinguish clearly between the two. On the one hand, he perceives the reality of a fusion of Buddhist and Daoist practices that existed in Vietnam. However, on the other hand, he reveals a lack of comprehension of the basic doctrines of Buddhism and Daoism, the extent of which is surprising considering his relatively long residence there of five years. In this respect, we can surmise that Father Pina's attitude towards Borri in 1620 or 1621 would hardly differ from de Pina's derision of his Superior Father Manoel Fernández in 1623, when he compared him to a local youth, named Andrew, who served as interpreter for Father Fernández and could "understand at least the easiest [points]; however, in regard to questions concerning the sects and controversies he can't go very far because he is not [ready] any more than the Superior."¹⁰¹ Father Fernández is criticized for not being

⁹⁸ De Pina's letter, cited in Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁹ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter VI, Section titled "Learning."

¹⁰⁰ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter VIII, Section titled "Errors of Cochinese."

¹⁰¹ De Pina's letter, cited in Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 43.

ready to discuss the sects after a year in the country; Father Borri was not ready after five years.

This raises a question: how arduous was Borri in performing his missionary activities and in studying Cochinchina and its natives? First, the issue of the utmost importance for Father de Pina: language acquisition. Borri never addresses the issue of why, taking into account his claim that the language was easy to master, after at least three years in Cochinchina, he had only "some knowledge of the Cochinese language," not sufficient to instruct "in the lofty mysteries" of the Christian religion,¹⁰² and how it happened that after five years in the country, he mistranslated its Vietnamese name Annam, meaning "Pacified South," as "western country."¹⁰³ While Borri explains Father Buzomi's lack of language skill with reference to his old age,¹⁰⁴ he does not provide a similar excuse for himself. In any case, such an excuse would be hardly plausible since Father de Pina, who apparently did learn Vietnamese, was only three years younger than Borri.

The inevitable question comes up about Borri's contribution to the development of the Latinized script, *quốc ngữ*, on which Father de Pina scrupulously and ardently worked. Despite Borri's inadequate language ability in Vietnamese, his transcriptions of Vietnamese words opened a new venue in linguistics. His description of the language inspired a comparative analysis by Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639).¹⁰⁵ He referred to Borri when discussing non-Indo-European languages, such as Cochinese.¹⁰⁶ Borri was the first to publish alphabetic transcriptions of the Vietnamese language. However, according to Roland Jacques, Borri made no contribution to the development of the Vietnamese alphabet, for his interests were far from linguistics.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Jacques argues that Borri's case is irrelevant for even a representation of the patterns of writing in *quốc ngữ* despite the fact that the first published alphabetic transcriptions of the Vietnamese language appear in Borri's *Account*. He was writing in Italian for Italians, and the Vietnamese words and phrases that he incorporated into his *Account*, "show that the author had not mastered the transcription system elaborated by his own group, or at least did not follow its rules."¹⁰⁸

Borri seemed to be not without ability for foreign languages, as, in addition to his native Italian, he was fluent in Latin and Portuguese, as his written works testify. Without any indication from him about the difficulties to be encountered in learning the language, it is logical to assume that he apparently did not devote

¹⁰² Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter V, Section titled "Conversion of a great lady."

¹⁰³ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter I, Section titled "Of the Name, Situation, and Extent of this Kingdom."

¹⁰⁴ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter I, Section titled "Churches erected": The officials in Macao decided to send to Father Buzomi "another father, that was younger, ... that learning the language, he might afterwards preach without standing in need of an interpreter." On his arrival in Cochinchina, Buzomi was forty-one years old.

¹⁰⁵ An Italian philosopher and author of the famous *The City of the Sun*; in comparison with his tragic life, Borri's turbulent career looks pale and uneventful.

¹⁰⁶ Tommaso Campanella, *Philosophiae rationalis partes quinque: videlicet, grammatical, dialectica, rhetorica, poetica, historiographia, iuxta propria principia* (Paris: Apud Ioannem Du Bray, 1637-8), p. 52.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 52. Jacques mistakenly allotted to Borri only three years in Cochinchina.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3.

enough time or effort to this. It is especially important to note that Borri, as he informs us, was sent to Cochinchina to learn the language in order to later go to Tonkin to establish a mission there.¹⁰⁹ Failing in mastering the language, he defied his superiors' plans for him and undoubtedly provided Father de Pina with a reason to disrespect him.

Moreover, when Borri describes conversions that took place during his tenure in Cochinchina, he is vague about his precise role in them. The titles of all four chapters on conversion relegate the merit for it solely to God through four different groups of people (Noblest Persons, Learned People, Heathen Priests, and Meaner Sort).¹¹⁰ Most of the conversions occurred by "miraculous means." In addition to the "miraculous means," Father Buzomi was "labouring in all places to instruct, convert, and dispose the people to receive baptism."¹¹¹ Borri did not describe himself as "laboring" in places other than the city of Nuocman in the province of Pulucambi (Qui Nhơn), where he resided, along with Father Buzomi and Father de Pina, after the death of their protector and benefactor, the governor of Pulucambi, having spent three years without converting anyone. After these three "barren" years, the other two Fathers left, de Pina for Hôi An, Buzomi for Đà Nẵng, to attempt to get "alms of the Portuguese there."¹¹² Borri, however, was left in Nuocman, "solitary and desolate," not being able to convert even when someone requesting conversion appeared on his doorstep. This person eventually played a very important role in many later conversions.¹¹³ Borri had to wait until Father Buzomi returned with the interpreter. In his chapters on conversion, we trace his passive attitude. It seems that conversions took place at the initiative of local people as if by divine intervention rather than by any active role on the part of the missionaries.

For most of the time, Borri uses the pronoun "we," shielding or concealing his own role, which might be attributed to his modesty if not for one notable exception. In Chapter VI, "How God Open'd Another Way to Christianity, Through the Means of the Learned People Among the Heathens," he explains the benefits of his astronomical knowledge for conversion. Then and there the pronoun "I" appears, and we see Borri active and aware of his actions. Indeed, this concerns the area of his field of study: astronomy. Moreover, the mission benefited from his ability to predict the lunar eclipse of December 9, 1620, and the solar eclipse of May 22, 1621, which Borri describes with evident satisfaction in his *Account* as bringing him high esteem from the local astrologists. And after that everything sinks back to "we."

It is possible that the switch of the pronouns reveals to us Borri's real interest and *raison d'être* to be in Cochinchina or to be on any mission. Borri certainly had an experimental and scientific nature. For instance, having received some pieces of

¹⁰⁹ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter XI, Introductory passage.

¹¹⁰ They are: "How God Made Way for the Conversion of the Province of Pulucambi, by Means of the Noblest Persons in It" (Chapter V), "How God Open'd Another Way to Christianity, Through the Means of the Learned People Among the Heathens" (Chapter VI), "How God Open'd Another Way to Christianity, by Means of the Omsais, or Heathen Priests" (Chapter VII), "How God Opened Another Way to the Conversion of the Meaner Sort by Miraculous Means" (Chapter IX).

¹¹¹ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter I, Section titled "Churches erected."

¹¹² Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter V, Section titled "The fathers disperse."

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Section titled "Conversion of a great lady."

a fragrant tree and curious about the strength of their fragrance, he buried them "for a trial" to see how far through the earth the fragrance could penetrate.¹¹⁴ On another occasion, admiring the potency of herbal medicine applied by a local physician to cure Borri's accidental wound, he "caused the leg of a hen to be broke in several places" and then cured it with the same herb.¹¹⁵ He mentions these small examples in his *Account*. What he does not mention there and what perhaps occupied a lot of his time are other experiments.

Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), the foremost intellectual not only of the Jesuit Society but perhaps of his time, regarded as a brilliant mathematician and astronomer, worked on magnetic fields as Borri did. Kircher had a very high regard for Borri's thoroughness in his magnetic observations in Asia.¹¹⁶ On top of this, Borri continued to develop his theory about the tenuousness of the heavens, for which he had paid with the loss of his tenure at the Collegio di Brera. Corroboration of this comes from Borri's aforementioned letter to General Mutius Vitelleschi, in which he argues about the precision of his observations of two comets in 1618 that "completely confirmed the tenuousness and corruptibility of the Heaven, which I already in Europe demonstrated for the sake of modern observations. This phenomenon was observed not only by myself but also by Father Giovanni Vremano in China, and Father Manuel Dias in India," as well as by mathematicians in Europe. According to Borri, this gave "the unique proof of the truthfulness of observations, when it is found in different territories and countries, far from each other."¹¹⁷ Despite all his troubles, the fluidity of three heavens had remained the baby of his mind, which he could not abandon.

His case of being both a scientist and a missionary was not unique, as Jesuits before and after him successfully combined these capacities. But while other Jesuits, like Matteo Ricci, were primarily missionaries for whom science was a means to achieve their ends, Borri seemed to be the reverse. Walking a tightrope between his duties and his interests in the very limited and interconnected microcosm of the Cochinchinese mission, Borri failed or did not want to negotiate his existence there as a missionary. Someone reported to Macao on Borri's activities, and he was recalled. The four other Jesuit Fathers at the time of Borri's departure were Buzomi, de Pina, António Fernández, and Manoel Fernández. The last one arrived only in January of 1622, just before Borri's departure, and hardly could be behind Borri's recall. In his *Account*, Borri never mentions Father António Fernández, who stayed with Father de Pina in Hôï An, never seemed to meet Borri, and, according to de Pina, spent all his time in prayer. Thus, Borri was in contact only with Fathers Buzomi and de Pina. In general, the Head of the mission, at that time Father Buzomi, was the one to write an annual report on the mission. Borri resided with him. Borri's "hands off" attitude seems to have been similar to Father Buzomi's, and it is possible that Buzomi wanted someone more involved in the everyday work. However, although in his *Account* Borri identified Father de Pina as his great friend from the College in Macao,¹¹⁸ it is very possible that de Pina was

¹¹⁴ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter III, Section titled "Aquila, and Calamba, odoriferous wood."

¹¹⁵ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter V, Section titled "Great cures."

¹¹⁶ Kircher, *Magnus*, p. 502.

¹¹⁷ Borri "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 144.

¹¹⁸ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter II, Section titled "Charity of Japanese Christians."

dissatisfied with Borri, who fits the profile of a bad missionary as developed in Pina's letter critiquing other missionaries. While there is not sufficient evidence to put a finger on either Buzomi or de Pina, one of them surely had a hand in Borri's recall to Europe, which perhaps was only timely.

New Enemies, Friends, and Destinations

From Cochinchina, Borri went to Macao, where he stayed for a year occupying a post of "Minister" in a Jesuit college. At that time, Macao, the Portuguese commercial base in eastern Asia, was a point of contention with the Dutch. The expansion of Dutch interests in Asia, especially after the establishment of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC) in 1602, launched a bitter struggle between the Dutch and the Iberian countries, Spain and Portugal, relations with whom were already antagonistic as a result of the Netherlands' struggle for independence from Spain and its acceptance of Protestantism. By the 1620s, the Dutch became more and more active and successful in their attempt to establish dominance in the Asian trade and endeavored to seize Macao. At the end of May 1622, several Dutch boats shelled Macao and seized two junks loaded with Chinese merchandise, but after that they immediately retreated to Japan. However, the Dutch did not give up and sent a fleet under Admiral Cornelis Ruyssen with 1,300 marines and soldiers, which attacked Macao on June 24, 1622. The Portuguese, under the command of Lopo Sarmiento de Carvalho, reacted swiftly and decisively and repulsed the attackers, but the city was heavily affected.¹¹⁹ Borri, as well as other Jesuits, played an active role in the defense of the place.¹²⁰ He "headed an improvised troop which vigorously repelled the attack."¹²¹ Borri and other Jesuits "who had distinguished themselves in this brilliant yet unexpected victory, were granted by the Senate of Macao an honorary award for gallantry, dated October 14, 1623."¹²²

At the end of the same year, Borri departed for Goa.¹²³ There, on April 10, 1623, he met Pietro della Valle (1586-1652), a rich Italian nobleman, widely educated, a globetrotter, fluent in several languages. Writing to an Italian friend, della Valle mentioned his encounter with Borri. He commented that Borri had changed his name due to its unpleasantry to Portuguese ears and praised Borri as "a great mathematician."¹²⁴ The two men became friendly. Father Borri shared Tycho Brahe's teaching with della Valle,¹²⁵ as well as his own scientific observations on the three heavens, which he had apparently put into written form by that time,

¹¹⁹ Albert Kammerer, *La découverte de la Chine par les portugais au XVIème siècle et la cartographie des portulans* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1944), p. 127.

¹²⁰ Vu Khanh Tuong, "Les missions jésuites avant les missions étrangères au Vietnam (1515-1665)," PhD dissertation, Institute Catholique de Paris, 1956, vol. 1, p. 254.

¹²¹ Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 80.

¹²² The Lisbon Biblioteca da Ajuda, vol. 49/V5, fol. 511v-514v, cited in Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 80.

¹²³ Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1141.

¹²⁴ Mercati, "Notizie," p. 26, cites della Valle's letter. The English translation is Della Valle, *The Travels*, p. 81.

¹²⁵ Della Valle, *The Travels*, p. 84.

either in Cochinchina or in Macao or after arriving in Goa.¹²⁶ Borri evidently completely won his new acquaintance over to his side, and in 1624 Pietro della Valle translated Borri's work into Persian as *Risalah-i Padri Khristoforus Burris Isavi dar tufiq-i jadid dunya* (Compendium of a tractate of Father Christoforo Borri, S.J. on the new model of the universe according to Tycho Brahe and the other modern astronomers).¹²⁷ Borri proudly announced della Valle's translation in his letter to General Vitalleschi:

On my way to Europe, through India, I met Signor Pietro della Valle, to whom, as he was curious, I communicated this doctrine, and he later communicated it to the sages of Persia, Armenia, and Arabia, all of whom, as he also confirmed, remained so satisfied with it, that they put it in front of any other opinion.¹²⁸

Another issue that Borri shared with della Valle was his work on defining longitude, which the latter also found extremely interesting.¹²⁹ Even after the two men parted ways, they remained in contact, exchanging letters from which comes much of our information about Borri, whom della Valle called *mio grande amico* (my great friend).¹³⁰ After Borri's death, della Valle seemed to be the only person interested in his legacy.

According to *Monumenta historica*, Borri departed from Goa in 1623.¹³¹ Della Valle, however, dates Borri's departure at the beginning of February 1624. He mentions that Borri departed on the same ship with Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa (1614-1624).¹³² Figueroa indeed sailed from Goa to Portugal on January 28, 1624,

¹²⁶ Two copies of this work, according to Sommervogel, are kept in the Vatican Library under the title *Compendium tractatus patris Christophori Bori iesuitae de nova mundi constitutione, iuxta systema Tichonis Brahae, aliorumque recentiorum mathematicorum, e lingua Latina in persicam translatum a Petro de Valle in urbe Goa, regia Lusitanorum in India, anno Christi 1624 et ab eodem nuncupatum Zaineddino Lari astronomo; apposite e regione interpretatione, quam idem Petrus de Valle Romae conficit anno 1631*. Sommervogel, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

¹²⁷ In 1631, della Valle translated this work into Italian as *Compendio di un trattato del Padre Christoforo Borro giesuita della nuova costituzione del mondo secondo Tichone Brahe e gli altri astologi moderni* (Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe").

¹²⁸ Borri "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 143.

¹²⁹ Della Valle, "Al Sig. Ingoli, 21 Maggio 1632," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 29.

¹³⁰ Della Valle, "Lettera mia alla S. M. del Re di Portogallo," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 41.

¹³¹ Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1141.

¹³² Della Valle, "Ricordi miei al Padre Fra Luys Coutinho. 24 Aprile 1642," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 36. On page 218 of his *Travels*, Della Valle records an observation made on August 9, 1624, a day that falls after the date he indicated elsewhere for Borri's departure. He describes the observation as follows and seems to imply that Borri was present: "Two hours and forty minutes before Noon (if the Calculation and Observation of *Christoforo Borano* or *Boro* be true) the Sun was in the Zenith of *Goa*, and began to decline towards the South." Della Valle, *The Travels*, p. 218. However, this statement does not necessarily imply that Borri was physically present there on that day and had not made his calculation before his departure. The difference in dating (February or January 28) is insignificant. The document where della Valle mentioned Borri's departure was written eighteen years after the fact. In his *Travels*, della Valle dates the departure of the ship on January 31, 1624. It was the same ship that della Valle identifies as the only ship that departed Goa for Portugal that year. Della Valle, *The Travels*, p. 205.

and died of scurvy on July 22, 1624, off the Azores,¹³³ which are located off the coast of Portugal. Assuming that a trip from Goa to Lisbon would take roughly the same amount of time as it usually took to travel from Lisbon to Goa—that is six months—these dates are correct.

As with so many other points in Borri's life, his departure from Asia is obscured by a veil of mystery, produced by the existence of his manuscript known as *Informazione del P. Christoforo Borro giesuita a S. S. [Sua Santità] d'una nuova India per portar in quella con sua autorità apostolica mandar a piantare, e propagare la santa fede à petitione della Santa Congregatione de Cardinali de propaganda fide* (Information of Father Christoforo Borro, Jesuit, to His Holiness on a New India in Order to Bring, Plant, and Propagate There with His Apostolic Power the Holy Faith, through a Petition to the Sacred Congregation of Cardinals for the Propagation of the Faith)¹³⁴ and of another manuscript, or the same one under a different title: *Relazione a Sua Santità delle cose dell'India orientale, del Giappone, della Cina, dell'Etiopia, dell'Isola di San Lorenzo, del Regno di Monomotapa, e della terra incognita australe* (Account to His Holiness about East India, Japan, China, Ethiopia, Madagascar, the Kingdom of Zambeze, and the Southern Unknown Land).¹³⁵ Dos Santos suggests that after his departure from Goa, Borri actually traveled to all these countries to collect ethnographic information and the data for his navigational research.¹³⁶ The Jesuit Dominique Le Jeunehomme, whom we have previously mentioned, appears to indirectly corroborate this information when he writes, in 1627, that Borri wandered extensively in different lands and in different seas, all over the Orient and Africa.¹³⁷ If Borri indeed traveled to all these places, the period between Goa and Portugal would be his only chance to do so, as the rest of his life seems to be better illuminated and uninterrupted by such long, unaccountable gaps in information. But neither in Borri's published works, nor in della Valle's letters, nor in any other place, can any evidence of such a detour be found.

We do not know the exact date, nor even the exact year, of Borri's arrival in Portugal. Dos Santos found the first mention of Borri's arrival in a letter dated June 8, 1627, describing Borri as still "weak from the fatigue of the voyage but already teaching a course on astronomy." From this, dos Santos surmises that Borri arrived in Portugal the previous year, that is, 1626.¹³⁸ The first letter that we have from Borri in Portugal is the one reported by Pietro della Valle. It is dated September 21, 1626.¹³⁹ However, the fact that della Valle himself did not return to Rome from his

¹³³ Luis Gil, "The Embassy of Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa to Shah Abbas (1614-1624)," Abstract of the paper presented at the Conference of the Iranian Heritage Foundation, London, "Iran and the World in the Safavid Age" (September 2002), <http://www.iranheritage.com/safavidconference/soas/abstract24.htm>

¹³⁴ Archivio di Propaganda Fide, Scritture antiche, 190, f. 19-26, as indicated by Dr. Schmidlin "Die ersten Madagascarmissionen im Lichte der Propagandamaterialien" (The First Madagascar Missions in the Light of Propaganda Material), *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, vol. XII (1922), p. 198.

¹³⁵ This work is mentioned in de Visch, *Bibliotheca scriptorum sacri oridinis cisterciensis*, p. 71, under "Christophorus Borrus"; in Argelati, *Bibliotheca scriptorum mediolanensium*, p. 239; in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

¹³⁶ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 128,

¹³⁷ Le Jeunehomme, *Relation d'un voyage*, cited in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

¹³⁸ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 129.

¹³⁹ Della Valle, "Ricordi miei," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 36.

travels until March 1626 might explain the interval in their correspondence. Another source dated Borri's arrival in Portugal by 1625, but there is no supporting evidence for this.¹⁴⁰ But perhaps the best source for dating his return to Europe is Borri himself. Praising Cochinchinese medicine in his *Account*, he admitted bringing with him "a small cask of *rhubarb*, which was extraordinary good there, and when I came into *Europe*, having spent two years by the way, I found it so changed, that I scarce knew it myself."¹⁴¹ Thus, by his own account, having departed Cochinchina in 1622, Borri arrived in Portugal by 1624 at the latest, apparently without visiting all these places but passing, or briefly stopping at, Madagascar, Ethiopia, and Zambeze on his way to Europe.

Why did he not stay longer in Goa? And why did he not go directly to Italy? Did he hasten to Iberia in hopes of claiming the aforementioned reward offered by the Spanish monarch? As has been pointed out, during his years in Asia, Borri apparently had made significant progress on his magnetic observations and in drawing maps based on them. If he indeed achieved some results, he would want to make them known and find practical applications for them. Spain and Portugal, which at that time were unified under the single crown of Philip IV,¹⁴² would be appropriate locations for such an effort. Even though in decline compared with the two previous centuries, these two countries still were major naval powers, especially if we talk about the Catholic world, to which Borri belonged. In the Iberian countries Borri hoped to find more interest in his inventions than in his homeland of Italy.

Conquering Iberia: Success

Upon his arrival in Portugal, Borri lost no time rejoining the European academic world. He lectured on astronomy at the Universidade de Coimbra, a famous Jesuit institution in Portugal. At that time, one of the lecturers there passed away and the University, experiencing a lack of faculty members, offered the position to Borri, which he accepted.¹⁴³ He continued to work in two main directions: the celestial theory, as he discusses in his letter to General Vitelleschi, and the application of magnetic observations to navigation, as della Valle reports, referring to Borri's letters to him.

After all his fiascos in promulgating his theory in Italy and elsewhere, Borri endeavored to resuscitate his theory of the three heavens. He approached his colleagues in various fields, such as Arts, Philosophy, Theology, and Scriptures, at the Universidade de Coimbra, and all of them, according to Borri, supported him and repudiated the theory of the hardness and the incorruptibility of the heavens. Not only did they unanimously support him, but they also officially reported their support of his views to the head of the college.¹⁴⁴ Borri's colleagues were no less enthusiastic about his work on longitude at sea and advised him to go to Lisbon to make it known to the Viceroy, and through him, to the king himself.

¹⁴⁰ Schütte, *Monumenta historica*, p. 1141.

¹⁴¹ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter V, Section titled "Great cures."

¹⁴² Lived 1605-1665, King of Spain as Philip IV from 1621 to 1665 and King of Portugal as Philip III from 1621 to 1640.

¹⁴³ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 129.

¹⁴⁴ Borri, "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 129.

And so, Borri moved to Lisbon. In 1628, he was teaching at the Colégio de Santo Antão. Many of his colleagues there were interested in new theories.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, in Lisbon there was a broader circle of scientists among whom were not only Portuguese but also many foreigners who came to Lisbon either to settle down or to await their departure for Asia.¹⁴⁶ Borri was the only one there to teach on celestial spheres, and in his lectures he introduced the heliocentric system,¹⁴⁷ with which he essentially disagreed. The Colégio de Santo Antão, while having rather open-minded faculty members, was a Jesuit college and discussions could not trespass the limits imposed by the Order. Borri's introduction of the heliocentric system in his lectures was somewhat daring, for after 1616 the Copernican system had become a more restricted subject for discussion. At the same time, he continued to develop the three-heaven theory. The evidence of Borri's relentless work can be found in his notes titled *Nova astronomia, na qual se refuta a antiga da multidão de 12 ceos* (New Astronomy in which the Ancient Multitude of the 12 Heavens Is Refuted).¹⁴⁸ At the Colégio, his attitude, ideas, and writings passed as exciting and innovative, while in fact they hardly deserved such a status, as Borri introduced few novel ideas into the theories of his predecessors, in particular, Tycho Brahe.¹⁴⁹

At the Colégio, Borri also taught a course on the Art of Navigation, the fruit of his long deliberations and observations, and he wrote a manuscript entitled *Arte de navegar*, which he signed as: "Father Master Cristóvão Bruno, from the Colégio de Santo Antão from this city of Lisbon, on March 19, 1628."¹⁵⁰ This manuscript has had a history almost as complex as its author's. Borri wrote it in Portuguese. This limited the circle of potential readers outside Portugal. Father Le Jeunehomme, the one who reported that the consequence of Borri's early work on three heavens in Milan was "a small rebuke," was apparently commissioned to translate this manuscript into Latin. According to him, Borri "found a means to identify the distances of longitude from east to west"¹⁵¹ and a new way for better navigation, which is in grand vogue here [in Portugal]."¹⁵² In fact, in *Arte de navegar*, Borri wrote that he was not talking about an "invention but *aperfeiçoamento* [improvement] of the old idea of using a clock to determine longitude." He suggested a construction consisting of an hour-glass (*uma ampulheta*) with the duration of at least six hours, and perhaps of twelve or twenty-four, and with a division of the intervals between the hour-marks into fifteen parts, corresponding

¹⁴⁵ This can be supported by the analysis of works published and courses taught by the faculty members at Coimbra and S. Antão. See for example M. G. da Costa, "Inéditos de filosofia em Portugal," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, 5,1 (1949): 37-77.

¹⁴⁶ For a list of foreign and Portuguese professors who taught at the College see Baldini, *Saggi sulla cultura*, p. 146, fn. 53.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 159 & 160, fn. 94.

¹⁴⁸ Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra, ms. 44, fols. 65 and after, cited in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 135. By the time that Borri wrote this work, the idea of twelve heavens had replaced the idea of eleven heavens.

¹⁴⁹ Baldini, *Saggi sulla cultura*, p. 163.

¹⁵⁰ Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra, ms. 44, fol. 1 r, cited in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 131.

¹⁵¹ Father Le Jeunehomme makes a mistake as Borri's theory is explicitly built on determining longitude from West to East, not in the opposite direction.

¹⁵² Cited in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

to the fifteen degrees that the sun goes in an hour. It was to be used with an astrolabe, which would help to measure degrees between the shore and the big mast. According to the modern Portuguese scientist Joaquim de Carvalho, theoretically, this improvement was admissible as the determination of longitude would be essentially relegated to the issue of time; in practice, however, maintenance of correct time turned out to be precarious and costly, at least for long voyages.¹⁵³

Le Jeunehomme reports that Borri tried to publish the book in Rome, but because it was in Portuguese "our fathers encouraged me to turn this book into Latin, because everybody thinks that this book would have a wider distribution than in Portugal; perhaps I will be occupied with that this year."¹⁵⁴ We do not know whether Le Jeunehomme completed the translation as the only extant copy of this book is still in Portuguese and was published in 1940, since its significance, according to Carvalho, was not recognized until the twentieth century.¹⁵⁵

Simultaneously with his hourglass-based solution, Borri continued working on the magnetic method defining longitude, the study he started in Milan and was so eager to try in India. In a manuscript, Borri presented another "invention to navigate from West to East, based on vacillations of the magnetic needle [*fluxumbrio*] and tracing the respective lengths through points of equal declination," *tractus chalybolytici*, as he designated them, upside down.¹⁵⁶ This manuscript is titled *Regimento que o P. Christovam Bruno da Comp. de Jesus, por ordem de S. M., dá aos pilotos das náos da India para fazerem as experiências sobre a invenção de navegar de lest a oest* (Regulation of Father Christoforo Borri of the Society of Jesus by Order of His Majesty to the Pilots of the Boats for India to Make a Test of the Invention for Navigation from West to East).¹⁵⁷ We will discuss the fate of this manuscript below.

Borri seized the opportunity of being in Lisbon to present his work to the Royal Council, and della Valle cites Borri's letter to him dated March 17, 1629, as follows:

My business of the invention from the West to the East has already been examined, and approved in this Royal Council of Portugal, where all the sages and intellectuals [skilled] in this issue from the entire kingdom assemble together with the Pilots. And later it was approved by the Council in Madrid. Finally, the King commanded that this March an armada of three ships and six galleons under the Viceroy would be dispatched to India navigated by this my invention. Necessary instruments for all the ships have already been made at royal expense, and the Pilots have been instructed and obligated to comply with the invention, etc.¹⁵⁸

In December of the same year, according to della Valle, Borri wrote to him from Madrid, where he was summoned by the king to his court and where he three

¹⁵³ Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," p. 405. On how to use it see *Ibid.*, pp. 429-432.

¹⁵⁴ Cited in Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

¹⁵⁵ Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," p. 406.

¹⁵⁶ João Andrade Corvo, "Linhas isogónicas no século XVI" (Isogone Lines in the Sixteenth Century), in his *Roteiro de Lisboa a Goa* (Pilgrim from Lisboa to Goa) (Lisbon, 1882), p. 393, cited in Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," p. 434.

¹⁵⁷ See *Ibid.*, p. 405.

¹⁵⁸ Della Valle, "'Ricordi miei,'" in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 37.

times demonstrated his invention in three councils of various people. Borri continues:

the King ordered that there would be the last council to determine the prize; and in this he ordered to give me maintenance and the cost of the publication of the book on this issue, also the King ordered to tell me he wanted to see the invention. Two crowns of Portugal and Castille, were fighting over me: this one wanted me to return to Lisbon to supervise their navigation; that one wanted me [to go] to Seville in order to apply the same invention to their Navy of the West Indies, including the Philippines, etc.¹⁵⁹

His next letter was from Barcelona, dated July 20, 1630:

After my invention of the graduation of longitude from East to West (*sic*)¹⁶⁰ was approved with universal applause at the Court; the King and the Count di Olivares¹⁶¹ wanted to nominate me to be Bishop of Macao; but our Portuguese Fathers blocked it as I was a foreigner, and also those in the Royal Council decreed that the King order me to Seville to instruct these Pilots of the West Indies and to provide them with the instruments necessary to put in practice the new art for these seas.

But Borri did not want to share with Spain what he already implemented in Portugal the previous year. So, as he writes to della Valle,

to be true, as well as to be more desired, I went to the King and the Count di Olivares and told them that it was already too late for me to go to Seville for this year because the fleet was to depart in several days and to introduce all the new instruments etc. I would at all times need three months; and so I asked the King for a permission to go to Rome, which he gave me, but with a condition that I would return in time to dispatch the fleet next year; and with this I departed and arrived at the port of Barcelona, from which I will shortly depart for Rome.¹⁶²

In Madrid, Borri not only found admirers of his navigational inventions in the Royal Council, but also fervent supporters of his celestial theory at the Colégio Imperial de Madrid, a Jesuit institution, which at that time was under the patronage of the Empress Maria, and thus titled "Imperial College." As Borri reported to General Vitelleschi, French, German, Flemish, and Scottish mathematicians there approved his theory.¹⁶³ And he desperately needed their

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ I believe that Pietro della Valle, like Father Le Jeunehomme, erred in citing Borri's letter as about the "graduation of longitude from East to West" when it should be from "West to East."

¹⁶¹ Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel, Count-Duke of Olivares (1587-1645), was the *valido*, that is, the favorite, closest associate, and powerful minister of Philip IV. See also, J. H. Elliot, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

¹⁶² Della Valle, "Ricordi miei," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 38.

¹⁶³ Borri, "Al Molto Rev. Pre. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 147.

approval as he was determined to publish his theory on the celestial structure, on which he continued to work despite difficulties with publishers. Eventually, he turned his *Novae astronomia* into a final product titled *De tribus coelis aereo, sydereo, empyreo*. The body of the work was printed in Lisbon, in 1629, as is seen from the imprint inside the book: "Em Lisboa. Por Matias Rodrigues. Anno de 1629." But the book did not come out until later, as it had not received official approval, which was finally given in February 1630 by the censor, Dr. Jorge Cabral. He required that the title page read *Collecta Astronomica ex doctrina P. Christophori Borri Mætiolanensis, ex Societate Jesu*, thus obscuring the disputed question of *tribus coelis* (three heavens).¹⁶⁴ In his struggle for the book, Borri tried to drum up all the support he could and that is why the support from the Colégio Imperial de Madrid was vital. The book eventually saw the light in 1631, as we read on the front page "Vlysipone. Apud Mathiam Rodrigues. Anno M.DC.XXXI." It contains six parts and argues against both the Copernican and the Ptolemaic systems. It discusses the movement of the planets and the composition of heavens. It attributes the creation of the celestial bodies to angels.¹⁶⁵ The last part of the book is on the creation of heavens. It follows the Book of Genesis and, according to Lynn Thorndike, a science professor from Columbia University, this part was compiled to appease the religious authorities.¹⁶⁶

Conquering Iberia: Failure

Borri portrays himself as a victor successfully playing on the aspirations of Spain and Portugal, which, according to him, fought over him. He further implies that the reason for his departure from the hospitable Spanish monarchy is his own loyalty to Portugal, which first gave him a comfortable and supporting refuge. But other voices bring this thesis into doubt. It is questionable whether his successes as reported to Pietro della Valle were so complete and cloudless. According to Athanasius Kircher, Borri is the one to whom the invention of the magnetic declination was attributed. As evidence for this, Kircher adduces a letter from one of his correspondents in Madrid who writes about Borri. This correspondent communicated with Borri, who at that time was in Portugal, on the subject of longitude and magnetic declinations. Borri, according to this letter, considered himself as the inventor of the device to find longitude at sea, which was very important for navigation at that time.¹⁶⁷ According to Martino Martini (1614-1661), a Jesuit missionary, the technique seemed to involve the construction of a chart mapping points of equal magnetic declination, an azimuthal compass, and a technique for measuring the declination at any time of day.¹⁶⁸ According to Kircher's correspondent, Borri "had the nerve" to claim this prize in spite of the

¹⁶⁴ De Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," pp. 465-466.

¹⁶⁵ For a detailed overview of the work see: A. A. de Andrade, "Antes de Vernei nascer ... o P. Cristovão Borri lança, nas escolas a primeira grande reforma científica (Before Vernei was born ... Father Cristoforo Borri Launches the First Major Scientific Reform in the Schools)," *Brotéria* XL, 4 (1945): 369-379. Also Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1958) VII:55-58; and de Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," pp. 464-465.

¹⁶⁶ Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, p. 465.

¹⁶⁷ Kircher, *Magnets*, p. 502.

¹⁶⁸ Gorman, "The Angel and the Compass," p. 244.

correspondent's effort to dissuade him, pointing out dubious aspects of Borri's theory due to the unreliability of the magnetic device. Moreover, Borri accused this correspondent of not being willing to help him gain access to the king. When he did get the king's attention, however, his invention, according to the correspondent, was rejected.¹⁶⁹ Valentin Estancel, a Jesuit astronomer who taught in Portugal, also referred to Borri's presentation at the court as a fiasco, saying that instead of gaining the 50,000 cruzados promised by the Spanish crown, Borri earned the reputation of being "presumptuous and bizarre."¹⁷⁰ Similar epithets, according to Ribeiro dos Santos, writing in 1812, were applied to Borri's method, which was said to have "little reliability and solidity."¹⁷¹ The best result that Borri achieved there was that the king ordered his invention to be used by his fleet departing for India, and this outcome is what unites these various accounts of events with Borri's.

But even if Borri had not gotten the desired recognition of the Spanish crown, his work undoubtedly provoked discussion and even won approval among the scientists. One of the famous mathematicians of that time, Francesco Stelluti (1577-1652), on December 2, 1628, at the end of the year when Borri completed his *Arte de navegar*, wrote to Galileo, whose close friend he was, about his meeting with Pietro della Valle. The latter told him about a Portuguese Jesuit who found an instrument to define longitude. Despite the erroneous identification of the Jesuit as Portuguese, there is little doubt that della Valle was referring to Borri and the instrument is identified as *horivolo con polvere* (watch with sand, that is, hourglass) to observe longitude. Stelluti, too, expresses uncertainty about the invention but he is also very interested in and enthusiastic about it as, according to him, it being "easier and more precise than all the other inventions before, that it will be embraced by everybody and of great use to navigation and cartography."¹⁷²

It is possible that he was not successful in some other matters that he also tried to pursue in Portugal and Spain. Borri did not report on these to Pietro della Valle or if he did those letters have not survived. In one of the sessions of the Royal Council, he discussed inadvertent discoveries by a Dutch boat. Originally, to get from Europe to Asia, the Dutch followed the course of their predecessors, the Portuguese, that is, after doubling the Cape of Good Hope, they would proceed along the east coast of Africa to Madagascar, and from there cross the Indian Ocean to the East Indies (modern Indonesia). Later they found that turning eastward from the Cape of Good Hope and then to the north could bring them faster and more safely to their destination. In 1616, Dirk Hartog, captain of the ship *Eendracht*, deviated from this course and found himself off the West coast of Australia. Borri advocated sending an expedition there. The Council did not reach any decision about this, except to refer it to the king, who did nothing about it. Borri did not give up on this idea and, two years later, in 1629 or 1630, he found in Madrid a certain captain of the navy and persuaded him to apply for a license from the Royal Council to make this exploration. The Council, however, was

¹⁶⁹ Kircher, *Magnus*, p. 502.

¹⁷⁰ De Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," p. 448.

¹⁷¹ Ribeiro dos Santos, "Memórias históricas sobre alguns matemáticos portugueses e estrangeiros domiciliados em Portugal ou nas Conquistas," *Memórias de literatura portuguesa publicadas pela Academia Real das Ciências de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1812), vol. VIII, part I, p. 188, cited in de Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," pp. 436-437.

¹⁷² Galileo Galilei, *Opere*, vol. XIII (Florence: Tip. di G. Barbèra, 1906), pp. 459-60.

uninterested and responded that the monarch "already had more land than he could maintain; it is not worthwhile to search for more."¹⁷³ And Borri went back to Rome.

The Return of the Prodigal Son

Whether he went to Rome from his own volition, as he wrote to della Valle, or was called by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, as della Valle affirms,¹⁷⁴ we do not know. While in Rome, according to Pietro della Valle, Borri received news from Spain on the success of the voyage of that armada, which navigated from Lisbon to India with his invention. The pilot of the armada used the old methods. But there was also on board "a Jesuit Father ultramontane, person skilled in Mathematics and well-instructed in Father Borri's invention, [whose observations] corresponded with Father Borri's map and with his invention." One day, the Pilot announced that, according to his calculations, they were at the distance of half a day from Goa. The Jesuit Father, however, decided that they were at the distance of half a day from the Maldives Islands, a place that was considered dangerous for navigation. At dawn of the following day, land appeared, considered by the Pilot and all other Portuguese to certainly be India. Thus, they prepared to disembark. But when they approached, it turned out to be the easternmost island in the Maldives chain. This recognition helped them to find one of the larger channels among the islands, which, according to the official report, "permitted them with God's help to be saved from the dangers in which they would otherwise find themselves, in more narrow channels. From this it is possible to comprehend how beneficial is this invention." The account of this was given to Father Borri in Rome from Spain, authenticated by the hand of the Notary with witnesses and with all legal solemnity.¹⁷⁵ But if all this indeed happened, it was one of the last bright moments of Borri's life.

Borri's return to Italy after fifteen years of absence brought him neither happiness nor peace. Having failed to persuade the Portuguese and the Spaniards to venture into new territories, Borri decided to try his hand in Rome. In 1630, he entered into correspondence with the Pope and the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, trying to persuade them to organize a mission to the *terra incognita australe* inadvertently discovered by the Dutch, "adding that he had failed to persuade Portuguese authorities to send an expedition to the new land."¹⁷⁶ Simultaneously, Borri tried to persuade the Pope and the Congregation to establish ecclesiastical missions in Madagascar and from there to initiate missions in the "southern island world." Borri wrote the already mentioned *Informazione del P. Cristoforo Borro giesuita a S. S. [Sua Santità] d'una nuova India per portar in quella con sua autorità apostolica mandar a piantare, e propagare la santa fede à petitione della Santa Congregazione de Cardinali de propaganda fide* (Information of Father Cristoforo Borro, Jesuit, to His Holiness on a new India in order to bring, plant, and propagate there with his apostolic power the Holy Faith, with a petition of the

¹⁷³ Ms. 677, Biblioteca da Universidade de Coimbra, fol. 253r, cited in dos Santos, pp. 132-133.

¹⁷⁴ Della Valle, "Lettera mia alla S. M. de Re di Portogallo," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 42.

¹⁷⁵ Della Valle, "Ricordi miei," in Mercati, "Notizie," pp. 38-39.

¹⁷⁶ Joe Morley, "Feature: First Priest to the Great South Lands," *The Catholic Weekly*, Sydney, Australia (April 14, 2002).

Sacred Congregation of Cardinals for the Propagation of the Faith). In this petition, Borri asks the Pope to be concerned about the souls perishing in Madagascar, especially with Prince André, a son of a Madagascar ruler who received Christian training in Goa, waiting "like Daniel in the lion's den" until the Pope would send missionaries to help him.¹⁷⁷ In 1613, Jesuits had persuaded a local king in one of the territories of Madagascar to let them proselytize in his kingdom and to take his son to Goa, where he was baptized and assumed the name André. The young prince returned to Madagascar in 1616 with Jesuits. Not long after that, his father decided to bring the evangelization of his kingdom to a halt and expelled the missionaries.¹⁷⁸ This was what brought to Borri's mind a comparison with Daniel and the lion's den. If Borri did not visit Madagascar, he could have met the prince in Goa in 1616 or, at least, heard his story there.

According to della Valle, Pope Urban VIII also saw the *Informazione* and considered it good.¹⁷⁹ While we undoubtedly should credit Borri for this success, Pietro della Valle was probably instrumental in Borri's writing of this work and in establishing Borri's contact with the Pope and the Congregation. In one of his letters, della Valle mentions that he "communicated" the work numerous times with Borri and also that he could testify to its correctness as one who saw it.¹⁸⁰

Writing about places one had never visited was not unheard of. For example, Borri's famous contemporary, Athanasius Kircher, wrote on China and Egypt while never leaving Europe and relying on the letters and works of missionaries and travelers.¹⁸¹ Another famous seventeenth-century traveler, the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689), whose account will be discussed in this volume in connection with Samuel Baron's work, described the kingdom of Tonkin without ever going there, basing his description on what he reportedly heard from his brother.¹⁸² Della Valle's observations of these places would undoubtedly add a welcoming touch to Borri's epistle. In addition to his knowledge of the places, by that time della Valle had had a good experience with similar requests. He returned to Rome in March 1626, not long before Borri, and, as a Roman patrician and intellectual, he had the Pope's ear. Already on April 11, 1626, he presented to the Pope the *Information of Georgia*, describing the homeland of his second wife, which was already a Christian (if not Catholic) country. Della Valle wrote his *Informazione* "to the end to persuade him [the Pope] to send a Mission of Priests thither in order to reduce those people to the union of the Roman Church." Already on May 4, 1626, the Pope spoke of this with the Congregation and they agreed.¹⁸³ It seemed that the Pope treated Borri graciously, and Borri even demonstrated to him his invention for defining longitude, the "Instrument, neither yet used nor named by

¹⁷⁷ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 139.

¹⁷⁸ Albert Kammerer, *La découverte de Madagascar par les portugais et la cartographie de l'île* (Lisbon: 1950), pp. 82-90.

¹⁷⁹ Mercati, "Notizie," p. 31.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Athanasius Kircher, *China monumentis* (Amsterdam: Apud Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & E"Relation nouvelle et singulier du royaume de Tunquin," in J. B. Tavernier, *Recueil de plusieurs relations et traités singuliers & curieux* (Paris: 1679), lizeum Weyerstraet, 1667).

¹⁸² "Relation nouvelle et singulier du royaume de Tunquin," in J. B. Tavernier, *Recueil de plusieurs relations et traités singuliers & curieux* (Paris: 1679).

¹⁸³ Pietro della Valle, *The Travels*, pp. 317-318.

others, he [Urban VIII] thus named it, and called it, very appropriately, by a Greek word Naugnomon,¹⁸⁴ that is, "nautical gnomon," or "nautical sundial." Urban VIII (1568-1644), né Maffeo Barberini, was an offspring of one of the most famous Florentine families. Pope from 1623, Urban VIII patronized arts, architecture, and science, including bringing to Rome such renowned figures as Athanasius Kircher. Thus, della Valle's statement on the Pope's interest in Borri's invention is not ungrounded.

In a Crossfire

But instead of an all-round success, the result of these contacts for Borri was apparently an all-out war. According to della Valle:

In Rome, Father Borri had a lot of troubles with his superiors; who did not like his direct contacts with the Pope; and with that Congregation, in relation to the propagation of the faith; but Father Borri innocently, as a newcomer to Rome and misinformed, undertook these tasks, believing that his Order with the Congregation, being of the same will, aimed towards the same goal to serve God.¹⁸⁵

Borri's troubles in Rome were not limited to dealings with the authorities of his order as he also had "great troubles from the Spaniards" who were dissatisfied with Borri's return to Rome and his contacts with the Pope concerning missionary activities in India.¹⁸⁶ Della Valle describes Borri as being in conflict with the world, or at least with his own order and with Spain, which he had only recently left and which had seemed to be hospitable to him. This is not smoke without fire, and there was apparently a reason for Spanish dissatisfaction with Borri.

In his petition to the Pope, Borri writes about how providential it is that the need for missionaries he described coincides with a period when the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith is ready to take the opportunity to open up a new mission field. Borri writes that he would offer to do it himself if he were not "hindered by the East Asian missions and by difficulties in his own order." Borri points out three ways to propagate the faith in the "new south Indies": 1) with the help of Spain and Portugal, 2) by means of the Pope, 3) by some other ruler.¹⁸⁷

As a scientist, Borri is methodical. He had tried the first way and failed. So he moved to the second one. While della Valle mentions only the troubles caused to Borri by Spaniards, we should not exclude that it is possible that the Spaniards were joined by the Portuguese, whom della Valle perhaps leaves out of his accusation for the reason that his addressee was the King of Portugal. Borri had lost his faith in the Iberians. We also hear his request for changes in organizing mission activity in his *Account of Cochinchina*, in which he refers to the support given to missions by King Philip of Spain "and his council of the Indies," yet notes that "it is impossible" that Spain, "which supports other mighty weights" and bears "almost all the world" on its "shoulders," can sufficiently support all the

¹⁸⁴ Della Valle, "Ricordi miei," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 41.

¹⁸⁵ Della Valle, "Lettera mia alla S. M. de Re di Portogallo," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 42.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ As cited in Schmidlin, "Die ersten Madagascarmissionen," pp. 197-198. I thank Arthur Gross of Cornell University for helping with this passage.

needs of overseas missions.¹⁸⁸ He desires that the Pope would commission the Congregation to supply what Spain cannot, but in doing so he was interjecting himself into the strained relationship between the Pope and Spain. Spain was suspicious of the Pope, who, according to a historian of the papacy, "was anxious for a balance of power since by reason of the exclusive preponderance of Spain in Italy, he had cause to fear not only for the autonomy of the Papal States but for that also of the Holy See itself."¹⁸⁹ Borri seems not to have been heedful of these subtleties.

It is evident that upon Borri's return to Rome, the relationship between the Jesuit Society and himself was irreparably damaged. General Vitelleschi does not allow Borri to publish his doctrine on the three heavens. Borri's letter to him, cited above, was intended to obtain Vitelleschi's permission for publication. However, the tone of the letter and the presentation of arguments suggest either the absence of any negotiating skills on Borri's side or his intention to sever his relation with the Society. He does sign the letter "the most humble son and servant," but essentially the letter consists of the description of injustices Borri endured from his superiors in the Society: General Acquaviva, who ordered him to leave his post at the Collegio di Brera, and General Vitelleschi himself who, according to Borri, initially promised him permission to publish his book but later revoked it, despite all the acclamations he had received in Portugal and Spain from the local scientists as well as from the French, Germans, Flemish, and Scots, and even in Rome, where the "reviewers who by the order of Your Paternity saw my work and in general agreed with my doctrine."¹⁹⁰

In addition to this, the traces of Borri's conflict with the Order flash in his correspondence with the Pope and the Congregation. As Dr. Schmidlin informs us in his article on the three hundredth anniversary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Borri wrote that he was willing to be the one to establish the mission in Madagascar if he were not "hindered by the East Asian missions and by difficulties in his own order."¹⁹¹ In addition to Borri's incompatibility with his Order, the relationship between the Congregation and the Jesuits did not thrive either. There were reasons for the Jesuits to be suspicious, if not apprehensive, of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The Congregation was receiving discouraging and critical reports from the missions in the West and East Indies. The Secretary of the Congregation, Francesco Ingoli, was an adversary of the Jesuits and put much of the blame for trouble in the missions on them for being too autonomous.¹⁹² Already in 1625, three years after the creation of the Congregation, he presented to its cardinals a memo in which he listed obstacles to the propagation of Christianity in the Indies: discord between Jesuits and other orders, and the guilt of many missionaries "who only looked for amassing riches and to import them to Europe."¹⁹³ According to Dr. Schmidlin, the Jesuits were "so disinclined toward the Congregation that if the [Jesuit] fathers thought that Borri

¹⁸⁸ Borri in this volume, Part II, "Conclusion."

¹⁸⁹ Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor, *The History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf, O. S. B., 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955), XVIII:274.

¹⁹⁰ Borri, "Al molto Rev. Pre. Generale," in dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 146-148.

¹⁹¹ Schmidlin, "Die ersten Madagascarmissionen," p. 198.

¹⁹² Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, XXIX:263.

¹⁹³ Chappoullie, *Aux origines*, p. 76.

was dispensing such information and ideas to it [about plans for sending missions to new lands] they would find a way to expel him from Rome."¹⁹⁴

On December 23, 1630, Borri's suggestion was indeed discussed at a meeting of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, but no result was achieved.¹⁹⁵ This new failure did not deter Borri. The following year, 1631, he published *Relazione della nuova missione delli PP. della Compagnia di Giesù, al Regno della Cocincina*, the *Account of Cochim-China* presented in this volume. The *Account* was apparently written after Borri's arrival in Rome to support his attempts to persuade the Pope and the Congregation to expand mission activities into new territories. The book is dedicated to Urban VIII, not only because his work discusses conversion to Christianity but mostly, as Borri writes, "because Your Holiness showed to me an inclination to see it, that's why humbly prostrating to his feet I present it to him, and implore Your Holiness' Benediction."¹⁹⁶ Borri's statement confirmed his contacts with the Pope and even implied the Pope's encouragement of his work.

The context of adversarial relations between the Congregation and the Society of Jesus undoubtedly made it difficult for Borri to find his own voice in this account. He needed the approval of the Society for the publication and thus he had to gloss over all the contradictions and difficulties among the missionaries in Cochinchina. This explains the difference between his *Account* and Father de Pina's letter, the gloominess of which beclouds the rainbows of Borri's *Account*. While we do not know whether that letter was de Pina's momentary *cri de l'âme* or a habitual mode of internal correspondence, unlike Borri's *Account*, it was not intended for public eyes. Jesuit closeness about their internal affairs perhaps accounts for the high praise employed by the non-Jesuits Argelati and de Visch for Borri's

¹⁹⁴ Schmidlin, "Die ersten Madagascarmissionen," p. 198.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* We do not know whether Borri had or he would have approached another ruler after his failures to persuade Rome, Spain, and Portugal to expand the missions, as was suggested by Schmidlin above. Joaquim de Caravalho included in his article a document demonstrating, in his opinion, Borri's contact with a Dutch scientist in order to inform the Dutch government of his method based on the map of magnetic declination. If true, this would give a whole new twist to Borri's personality, with his scientific ambitions dominating over both his religious affiliation and his political loyalties, as the Protestant Dutch were at that time bitter enemies of Portugal and Spain. However, the document that Caravalho presents (pp. 437-438) does not allow us to come to this conclusion. He reprints a letter written from Amsterdam by Gerhard Johann Vossius to Borri in response to Borri's request to promote an issue that they discussed while never identifying the matter. The letter is published in his *Vossius' Opera* (Amsterdam: P. & J. Blaev, 1699), p. 344. Vossius or Voss (1577-1649) was a German classical scholar and Calvinist theologian, without any evident connection to science. Moreover, the letter is dated in 1643 (eleven years after Borri's death); it implies that Borri and Vossius are relatives (as Vossius addresses Borri as his *Cognate optime*, "Dear relative"; the letter further indicates that Borri is married and has a father-in-law, Georgio Rataliero Dubletio, apparently a high-ranking church official. It also implies that Borri lived in France, at least at the time of the letter, as Vossius asks Borri to convey his wishes for the health of Borri's wife and father-in-law, "unless they live in a different part of France" (*nisi alterum illorum Galliae adhuc tenent*). It is appealing to imagine Borri playing a trick on everybody and, instead of dying, leaving Italy, marrying, and then, through his father-in-law, attempting to get in touch with the Dutch. But if we resist this temptation and wait until a better corroboration surfaces, Borri's connection to the Dutch, if it existed, remains unproved.

¹⁹⁶ Borri, *Relazione della nuova missione* (Rome: F. Catanio, 1631), p. A2.

missionary activity as, not privy to the Society's affairs, they most probably received their information about this from Borri's own *Account*.

The flesh of Borri's *Account* was arranged upon the skeleton of a Cochinchina "which wants nothing to make it a part of heaven."¹⁹⁷ His Cochinchinese are predominantly friendly, kind, and childish. They, for example, "being soon taken with the curiosities of other countries, it comes to pass, that they put a great value upon, and buy at great rates, many things, which to others are of very small worth."¹⁹⁸ Moreover, "as ready as the Cochinchinese are to give, so are they as apt, if not more, to ask any thing they see, so that as soon as ever they cast their eye on any thing that is new to them, and curious, they say, *Schin Mocaii* [please give it to me]."¹⁹⁹ Presenting the Cochinchinese as children, Borri undoubtedly insists on the need of parenting, but the conditions of the parenting in his depiction are almost ideal.

Whether all the details of the *Account* corresponded to reality was beside the point. They did not. Sometimes we can see Borri's insufficient knowledge of the country, which perhaps unintentionally distorts the presentation of Vietnamese history or religion. Sometimes a discrepancy is more deliberate, as we see in Borri's compromising description of the easiness of learning the language. Even his reflection on living conditions can be contested. De Pina describes troubles caused by drinking water when he, with another missionary, went out to a mission. The water, he writes, "made us gravely ill. I was in bed for fifty days, then convalesced and relapsed for [a total of] three full months."²⁰⁰ What a dissonance with Borri's mesmerizing, almost sumptuous, account of the exquisite fruits and foods of the country, its healthy climate, and skillful physicians!

But Borri's goal was to persuade the Congregation about the viability of the missions and the usefulness of science for missionary purposes. He enriched the usual reasons cited for European penetration into Asia, summarized as the "three Gs": God, Gold, and Glory; to these he added Science.

His *Account* became the last signifier of Borri's affiliation with the Society of Jesus. In January 1631, General Vitelleschi wrote a foreword to the *Account*, identifying its author as a member of his Order and one of the first missionaries to Cochinchina and, as it was the custom, conditioning the publication "if the Reverend Monsignor Vicegerent [of Rome] and the Reverend Father Master of the Sacred Palace approve."²⁰¹ These two officials, in charge of all the materials published by the members of religious orders, indeed approved. The same year, Borri's *De tribus coelis* was also published in Lisbon and then translated by della Valle in Rome.

¹⁹⁷ Borri in this volume, Part II, Section titled "Conclusion."

¹⁹⁸ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter VIII, Section titled "Trade of Cochinchina."

¹⁹⁹ Borri, Book I, Chapter V, "Liberality."

²⁰⁰ De Pina's letter, cited in Jacques, *Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 42.

²⁰¹ Page A2 of the original *Relatione*. The Viceregent of Rome was Antonio Ricciulli (?-1643), Bishop Emeritus of Belcastro; see Patritius Gauchat, O. M., *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi* (Catholic Hierarchy through Times) (Monasterii: sumptibus et typis librariae Regensbergianae, 1935), vol. 4, p. 112. Master of the Sacred Palace was Nicolaus Riccardus. No further information is available.

A Layman of Two Religious Orders?

Either because of Borri's contacts with the Congregation or the publication of the *De tribus coelis*, the tension between Borri and the Jesuit order not only continued but became aggravated to the extent that "it became necessary [for] the Pope to issue a dispensation, which in a special edict allowed [Borri] to leave the Jesuit Order and to pass to the Cistercian Order."²⁰² Persecutions against Father Borri from all sides were so numerous that, according to della Valle, the "poor thing" (*poverello*) one day found himself in the house of Monsignor Vicegerent, either to talk about his problems or for some other reason, "when he suddenly was overcome with some grave pain, and after less than sixteen hours of the malady he passed away."²⁰³ We do not know whether this is the same Vicegerent as the Vicegerent of Rome (at that time Antonio Ricciulli), who had recently approved his *Account*, or some other person.

Borri's fellow Jesuit, Julius Cordara, presented the case differently. According to him, Borri did not leave the Order through the Pope's dispensation but, on the contrary, was expelled from the Society by order of General Vitelleschi after he did not mend his ways upon his return to Rome from Spain.²⁰⁴ As noted by Pietro della Valle, Borri subsequently joined the Cistercian Order. Carlos Sommervogel, the nineteenth-century Jesuit historian, is more particular on this period of Borri's life. Citing a letter from Father Venot to Father Ayrault, written on July 15, 1632, from Rome, Sommervogel states that Borri

... left the Jesuit Order to enter the Order of Bernadins of the St. Cross of Jerusalem²⁰⁵ in Rome with the dispensation from the Pope to have his profession after three months of novitiate. But when the three months had elapsed, the abbey refused to admit him. He then went to another house of the Order of Cîteaux,²⁰⁶ from which he was also dismissed after several weeks. He brought this order to court and won the process. On his way to announce his victory in court to the prelate, an accident happened, which put him into bed, where he died the following day, being May 24, 1632, at this prelate's house.²⁰⁷

Bartoli, who has also been cited in this essay, identified "the accident" as apoplexy.²⁰⁸

Even the date of Borri's death is not unambiguous and signifies a watershed in Borri's regard between the Jesuits and non-Jesuits. The aforementioned Father Ayrault's date is supported by the *Bibliotheca scriptorum societatis Iesu* published in

²⁰² Della Valle, "Lettera mia alla S. M. del Re di Portogallo," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 42.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁰⁴ Julio Cordara, *Historiae societatis Iesu*, p. 331.

²⁰⁵ One of the houses of the Cistercian Order. The Order is otherwise known as the Order of Cîteaux or the Order of White Monks because of the color of the habit over which is worn a black scapular or apron.

²⁰⁶ Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario*, p. 4, suggests that it was perhaps the House of S. Bernardo alle Terme.

²⁰⁷ Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1821, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

²⁰⁸ Bartoli, *Dell'istoria della Compagnie di Giesu*, III:707.

1676, which indicates that Borri died on May 24, 1632.²⁰⁹ However, Pietro della Valle provides us with the date of May 14, 1632. Angelo Mercati, who discovered and published della Valle's letters, is puzzled because this date, according to him, differed from the commonly accepted day found in all other sources for Borri's death: May 24, 1632.²¹⁰ I found the matter even more puzzling since della Valle's correspondence with the religious authorities immediately upon Borri's passing is dated earlier than May 24.²¹¹ It may be tempting to blame the ten-day difference in the dates to the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. The latter was introduced in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII and was implemented rather swiftly in the Catholic countries in Europe. While some Protestants, especially in England and its colonies, were still using the Julian calendar at the time of Borri's death, it is hard to explain why della Valle, an Italian writing to Italian religious authorities, would chose to use the Julian calendar. It turns out that della Valle was not alone in his dating of Borri's death. De Visch, the seventeenth-century historian of the Cistercian order, who like della Valle was chronologically close to Borri's time, publishing his work in 1649, also dates Borri's death on May 14, 1632.²¹²

Moreover, according to Father Venot, as cited by Sommervogel, Borri died "not being a Jesuit, nor Bernardine, nor even of a religious order."²¹³ In contrast to this portrayal is that of the eighteenth-century historian, Argelati, not affiliated with any religious order, who wrote on eminent Milanese. He, perhaps too generously, identified Borri as "of Two Religious Orders" (*Geminus Religiosos Ordines*).²¹⁴ The seventeenth-century Cistercian historian de Visch, more rigorous in his approach, wrote that Borri was recalled to Rome and expelled from the Society

because he seemed to deviate from the Society. He joined his mind to our Order and because of the outstanding gifts of his mind, the subtlety of his intellect, his eminence in all sorts of teaching, he was accepted by our fathers, among whom, under the name Onufriy, after some time he became distinguished.²¹⁵

De Visch's description indicates that Borri did find a new home among the Cistercians some time before his death.

Coda

After his death, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was interested to collect Borri's works "for public service," as is evident from a note written by Francesco Ingoli, the aforementioned Secretary of the Congregation and the Jesuits' adversary, conveying to della Valle a request from Cardinal

²⁰⁹ Pietro Ribadeneira, Filippo Alegambe, and Nathanaele Sotvello, *Bibliotheca scriptorium societatis Iesu* (London: Gregg International Publishers, 1969; 1st edition Rome, 1676), p. 138.

²¹⁰ Mercati, "Notizie," p. 39, fn. 32.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-30.

²¹² De Visch, *Bibliotheca scriptorium sacri ordinis cisterciens*, p. 71, under "Christophorus Borrus."

²¹³ Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, col. 1821, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

²¹⁴ Argelati, *Bibliotheca scriptorium mediolanensium*, p. 238, under "Burrus, Christophorus."

²¹⁵ De Visch, *Bibliotheca scriptorium sacri ordinis cisterciens*, p. 71, under "Christophorus Borrus."

Barberini.²¹⁶ The note was written on May 19, 1632, a year after Borri left the Jesuit order and only five days after Borri's death, if it is true that he died on May 14. On May 21, 1632, della Valle responded that one of Borri's books, titled *Hidrografia, ovvero Exame de Pilotos* (Hydrography, or Examination of Pilots), written in Portuguese, was "ordinary in Portugal, but here [in Italy], where Spanish books are rare, is not located, and even though I looked for it with great effort, I could not find it."²¹⁷ He sees its value in the description of Borri's invention, of which della Valle knew in Persia before he met Borri, when a Portuguese gave it to him to read. "Later in India, Father Borri communicated to me this invention, of which I had already heard, if only in theory at that time and not yet tested, as was done later in the voyage to Portugal."²¹⁸

Two of Borri's works were found: the *De tribus coelis* and the *Informatione* on the Indies. There were two copies of the latter: one, written by Borri's hand, "lacked precision," as he was editing it; the other one, made by the hand of a copyist, was easier to read and more precise, "but the Father," recalls Pietro della Valle, "told me that the copyist made errors in this, because of not having a good intention in his character." However, Pietro della Valle, having the original, could correct it easily as he had read and discussed the original with Borri many times.²¹⁹

But three things that Pietro della Valle considered very important were missing: a book manuscript on navigation, a navigational map, and a mathematical instrument to determine longitude, that is the aforementioned *naugnomon*. Mercanti identified the missing manuscript as *Tratade de navegar* but, since the letter does not provide any details except for the general reference to its usefulness, it is uncertain whether della Valle indeed referred to *Tratade* (which discusses the hourglass theory) or to some other writing that discusses the *naugnomon*. I am actually inclined to assume the latter, as della Valle later paired the manuscript with the instrument, made of brass or some other metal, whose description is closer to the *naugnomon* than to the hourglass. But whatever the case, the manuscript was not found in 1632 after Borri's death. Della Valle believed that

²¹⁶ Francesco Ingoli, "Per gli libri del Padre Borro in nome del Sig. Card. Barberino," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 28. There Barberini is alternatively spelled as Barberino or Barbarino. At that time, there were three Cardinals Barberini in Rome, namely, Antonio Barberini, Senior (1569-1646), a brother of Urban VIII; Cardinal Antonio Barberini, Junior (1607-1671), Urban VIII's nephew; and Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597-1679), another nephew of Urban VIII. I assume that the Barberini on whose behalf Ingoli wrote to della Valle was Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who between 1626 and 1633 was Librarian of the Holy Roman Church, a *mecenate*, or patron, of arts and sciences, who founded the famous Barberini Library, which became a part of the Vatican Library in 1902.

²¹⁷ Della Valle, "Al Sig. Ingoli, 21 Maggio 1632," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 28. It is unclear to what book he refers as this title appears on no lists of Borri's works. However, judging from his description, this can be either the aforementioned *Arte de navegar* (hourglass) or *Regimento (naugnomon)*. Della Valle thinks that the book was published (he says *fra i libri stampati*, "among published books") and that it was very popular in Portugal. We do not have evidence that either of these two works had been published by 1632. As for the popularity of the book in Portugal, this information could have reached della Valle from Borri himself, as Borri's accounts to della Valle appear to contain some exaggeration. After a first mention, della Valle does not refer to *Hidrografia* any more. Later, della Valle is occupied with the search for the manuscript (instead of *libro stampato* he uses the expression *un libro manoscritto*; p. 32) dealing with magnetic declinations, apparently the *Regimento*. We do not know if he found the *Hidrografia* or the *Arte de navegar*.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

Father Christopher Scheiner (1573-1650), a German Jesuit and Borri's friend, had a copy of it.²²⁰ But "as for the original," Pietro della Valle complains, "Father Scheiner said that he did not have it," and that it remained in the hands of a copyist, a certain Laertio Alberti da Orte, who had departed from Rome by that time. Father Borri, while still alive, was very unhappy about da Orte's behavior, and, according to della Valle, not being able to recover his original, took this fellow, da Orte, to court. However, due to da Orte's absence from Rome and Borri's premature death, the process did not yield any results. Thus, Pietro della Valle suggested that the situation was not critical since even without the original, producing a copy of Schreiner's copy would be a solution.²²¹

While Father Schreiner was keen on having a copy of the navigational map, Borri kept taking it back from him, perhaps, as della Valle suspects, because he had not finished working on it yet. However, Father Mascarenhas, Assistant of Portugal in the Society of Jesus, had another copy of this map, done by one of the most famous cartographers, Matteo Greuter (1556-1638), with the assistance of Borri. Pietro della Valle saw it many times attached to the wall in Mascarenhas's cell, but Mascarenhas refused to surrender it.²²² Not possessing the map, Father Scheiner, according to della Valle, nevertheless had the *naugnonon* with which the map was produced and of which Borri was so proud. Pietro della Valle warned Father Ingoli that Father Scheiner was soon to return to his native Germany, so prompt measures should be undertaken.²²³ Such was the situation on May 21, 1632, a week after Borri's death.

Soon afterwards, the Inquisition launched severe sanctions against new theories. In Florence, in 1632, Galileo published his *Dialogo dei due massimi sistemi del mondo* (Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World System), which unequivocally supported the Copernican system. In 1633, he was summoned to Rome and put on trial on suspicion of heresy. He recanted. His and Copernicus's works were put into the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, where they remained until 1758.

Perhaps after the *Dialogo's* publication, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the Vatican itself had lost interest in Borri's work, being overwhelmed by the burden of fast unfolding events. There appears to be no further information about the fate of Borri's works until della Valle updates the status of these items in his letter to the King of Portugal dated October 23, 1650. Father Macarenhas had by then departed Rome, and the map simply remained in the hands of Jesuits in the cell of Mascarenhas's successor, Father Nuno da Cunha, where, after many tireless efforts and difficult negotiations, della Valle found and recovered it, together with the "Instructions or the Regiment for the Pilots."²²⁴

²²⁰ At the same time, Scheiner was Galileo's bitter rival because of the existing controversy about the discovery of sunspots, which both of them claimed. See William R. Shea, "Galileo, Sunspots, and Inconstant Heavens," *Galileo's Intellectual Revolution: Middle Period, 1610-1632* (New York, NY: Science History Publications, 1972), pp. 49-74. Perhaps the friendship between Borri and Scheiner emerged, among other factors, from their shared opposition to Galileo.

²²¹ Della Valle, "Al Sig. Ingoli, 21 Maggio 1632," in Mercati, "Notizie," pp. 33-34.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

²²⁴ Della Valle, "Lettera mia alla S. M. del Re di Portogallo," in Mercati, "Notizie," p. 44.

The *naughtmon* was a different matter. Despite della Valle's warnings, nothing was apparently done to prevent Father Schreiner from taking Borri's work to Germany, to where he indeed departed in 1633 and where he presented them to the Emperor; and "there, without being more seen, nor used, they became kept, solely for vanity, amidst mathematical curiosities."²²⁵ In his letter to the Portuguese king, Pietro della Valle does not forget to take credit for all the difficult investigations he had undertaken:

It is of the utmost importance for the navigation of India and of Brazil, and it is a pleasure for me to give this small service of diligence that I committed to find them; it is certain that if not for me they would never be found and would stay simply buried here in Rome in the cell of the Fathers Assistants for Portugal, without being used, neither perhaps known, as they should be.²²⁶

The Swedish scientist, Johan Fredrik Nyström, apparently saw Borri's map, either in Germany or in Portugal, and wrote that Borri had obtained compass readings of isogones in the Atlantic and Indian oceans and produced what he called "no doubt the first real isogone map." Nyström considered Borri a predecessor of Edmund Halley (1656-1742), a famous English astronomer and mathematician who in 1701 published a *General Chart of the Variation of the Compass*.²²⁷

In Memoriam: Chacun À Son Goût

Pietro della Valle is whole-hearted in his support of Borri, presenting him as a genius highly esteemed abroad though little understood in his homeland. But other people remembered Borri differently. Borri's story, according to the seventeenth-century Jesuit Bartoli was, "an example and a warning, especially for those who for the divine ministry must have virtues similar to the Apostle."²²⁸ Not all the Jesuits had only critical words for Borri. Cordara, the eighteenth-century Jesuit historian, wrote that Borri "soon after he had put aside the tunic of the Society, while he was enjoying the first fruit of his recovered liberty, has perished overcome by the sudden force of the disease."²²⁹ Cordara seemed to understand that Borri's problem arose from conflict between an individual and the organization to which he belonged. Saying that Borri died "while he was enjoying the first fruit of his recovered liberty," Cordara implies that the Jesuit Society was Borri's cage. He perceived him as a suffering soul who actually had to pay for a choice he had made in his youth, that is, to join the Society of Jesus. He considered Borri as "a man of very lamentable memory, who fell disgracefully because of his own pristine zeal, [who while] eager to heal the misfortunes of others had created

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

²²⁷ Johan Fredrik Nyström, *Geografien och de geografiska upptäckternas historia* (The History of the Geography and Its Discoverers) (Stockholm: C. E. Fritzes Kongl. Hofbokhandel, 1899), p. 399. Thanks to Professor Fredrik Logevall of Cornell University, who translated this passage for me.

²²⁸ Daniello Bartoli, *Dell'istoria della Compagnie di Gesu*, III:707.

²²⁹ Julio Cordara, *Historiae societatis Jesu*, p. 331.

the most grave misfortune for himself."²³⁰ Cordara's reference to the misfortunes of others might well imply Borri's zeal to arrange missions into the new lands, in one of which, Madagascar, Prince Andre was alone "in the Lion's den."

These accounts create three different versions: Borri as a scientific success and treasure (della Valle), Borri as a villain (Bartoli), and Borri as a tragic figure (Cordara).

In the nineteenth century, Carlos Sommervogel (1834-1902), a French Jesuit scholar, who has often been cited in this essay, took another approach, as is evident in his entry on Borri in the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*. His edition of the *Bibliothèque* was not the first one, and he definitely was not a newcomer to it. He was one of the assistants of Augustin de Backer (1809-1873), the editor of the two previous editions of the *Bibliothèque*. Noting "occasional errors and omissions" in the first edition, Sommervogel "made a systematic examination of the whole work,"²³¹ and consequently, in the revised edition of the *Bibliothèque* (1869-1876), Augustin de Backer credited Sommervogel as his co-author. In the second edition, Borri's life is described briefly and nonchalantly: place of origin, entrance to the Society of Jesus, missionary activity in Cochinchina, teaching in Coimbre and Lisbon, and invitation to the Spanish court. De Backer ended his entry on Borri as follows: "He left the Society [of Jesus] to enter the Order of Cîteaux, where he took the name of Don Onofrio; he died in 1632."²³² When in 1890 Sommervogel, as de Backer's successor, published the new edition of the *Bibliothèque*, he kept the first lines of the entry on Borri but changed and expanded the rest based on several letters. The first is a letter from Father Charles Venot (1574-?) to a certain Father Ayrault. Venot's description of Father Borri's misfortunes and ramblings in Rome create a picture of a hapless chap spending the last months of his life in a miserable communité among religious houses and dying as a member of none of them, while, as we have seen, there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. This information is quite unique, contradicting not only materials previously published by others (as for example, the Cistercians) but also the previous edition of the *Bibliothèque*. One wonders about Sommervogel's reasons for including it. What was Father Venot, a French-based Jesuit, as is clear from Sommervogel's own entry on him, doing in Rome? What was his relation to Borri? Why did his information supersede that of the other sources? Sommervogel provides no answers to these questions. Nor can we find any indirect corroboration in Venot's other works, as the only other written sources by Father Venot, discovered by Sommervogel, are three more letters, two of which are to the same Father Ayrault.²³³

Sommervogel skillfully elaborated on Father Venot's image of Borri by including other examples of potentially controversial, if not derogatory, comments made by two other people. Curiously enough, one of these two was Pietro della Valle, whose observation on the necessity for Borri to change his name is repeated by Sommervogel, "as it was unpleasant to the Portuguese ears." Taken by itself,

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ J. H. Pollen, "Society of Jesus," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. XIV (New York, NY: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), p. 110.

²³² Augustin de Backer, in collaboration with Alois de Backer and Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Liège: A. de Backer; Paris: C. Sommervogel, 1869), vol. I, p. 777, under "Borri, Borrus, Christophe.

²³³ Carlos Sommervogel, S. J., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Alphonsae Picard; Bruxelles: Oscar Schepens, 1898), vol. 8, col. 564-565, under "Venot, Charles."

this comment might not create an image of a hexed or jinxed person, but it enhances Venot's description. There is no doubt that Sommervogel did this consciously as he chose to use only part of della Valle's statement about Borri. He ignores that della Valle immediately goes on to describe Borri as a "great mathematician."²³⁴

In addition to the citations from Father Venot and Pietro della Valle's letter, Sommervogel employs comments made by Father Dominique Le Jeunehomme (1590-?), about whom Sommervogel had very scant information, limited to the fact that he was a French Jesuit who in 1627 went to Lisbon and wrote *Relation d'un voyage de la Flèche à Lisbonne en 1627*.²³⁵ Based on the citations from this work used by Sommervogel, Le Jeunehomme was allegedly commissioned to translate Borri's *Treatise de nauegar* from Portuguese into Latin, and this seems to be their only connection. The reason that Father Le Jeunehomme gives for Borri's writing in Portuguese is remarkable: Borri wrote in Portuguese "since the gentleman while traversing the seas and the lands, everywhere in the Orient and Africa, forgot his native Italian, and did not remember his Latin."²³⁶ Surely Borri did not forget his native Italian, nor did he forget his Latin. Portuguese was the language which he used in his teaching, along with Latin, as is evident from his lecture notes preserved in the institution where he taught in Portugal.²³⁷ In Jesuit schools, use of Latin was mandatory in public lectures of rhetoric, philosophy, and theology, though not in lectures on practical subjects such as navigation, astrology, and mathematics.²³⁸ Consequently, it is peculiar to note that the only manuscript in Latin at the Colégio de Santo António is by Borri, which, after a general introduction, contains his lecture on cosmic spheres.²³⁹

Father Le Jeunehomme's statement is very significant, as to a certain extent it reflects the complex relationship between Borri and his superiors in Rome and many of his contemporaries among the Jesuits and, as it turned out, those in the next generation. They could not afford not to notice Borri and his theories because others were noting his views, but neither could they forgive him any deviation from their standards, so they punished him by mockery if no other means were at hand.

Sommervogel does not explain why, considering all the various sources for Borri undoubtedly available to him, he chose to give particular emphasis to Fathers Venot and Le Jeunehomme, both French and neither closely associated with Borri or with any significant legacy in the religious or intellectual history of their Order, as is evident from Sommervogel's own entries on them in his *Bibliothèque*. Disregarding all the sources giving a positive spin on Borri, he created a new, almost farcical, image of him, evincing an unabated disdain for this black sheep of the Society of Jesus.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to Sommervogel's authority, his entry on Borri has become a standard reference in the twentieth century for scholars dealing with

²³⁴ Della Valle, *The Travels*, part 3, p. 81.

²³⁵ Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 4, col. 799, under "Jeunehomme, Dominique."

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, col. 1822, under "Borri, Burrus, Christophe."

²³⁷ Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," p. 133.

²³⁸ Ugo Baldini, *Saggi sulla cultura*, p. 151.

²³⁹ Ms. 2378, as indicated in Ugo Baldini, *Saggi sulla cultura*, pp. 151-152, fn. 73.

Borri, including Petech's entry on Borri in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*,²⁴⁰ Caravvalho's "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa,"²⁴¹ dos Santos's "Vicissitudes da obra do P. Christóvão Borri,"²⁴² and Vu Khanh Tuong's dissertation, "Les missions jésuites avant les missions étrangères au Vietnam."²⁴³ Even the celebrated scholar and professor of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Charles Maybon (1872-1926), used Sommervogel's entry as the main source for his biographical essay on Borri introducing the French translation of his *Account*.²⁴⁴ From Maybon, Borri's biography found its way into the Vietnamese edition of Borri's account.²⁴⁵

Borri was different from Sommervogel's caricature. He had a proud and inflexible character, which got him into trouble with his superiors in Rome and in Cochinchina. At a time when few suffered for their scientific views, he nevertheless did. He, like many of us, did not like to admit his failures, and he glossed them over, as for example in his letters to della Valle about his dealings at the Spanish court. Sometimes he chose to exaggerate his successes, as with his reported nomination as Bishop of Macao and the fight between the Spanish and Portuguese crowns over him in the same letters.

But he possessed an extraordinary stubbornness in achieving his goals, be this in conducting his research, introducing his inventions to the Portuguese and Spanish courts, publishing his works, or attempting to expand missions into new territories. Any means would work: litigation,²⁴⁶ insubordination, trespassing, and outright disregard for the rules of his Order. But all this was connected to his great passion for science, which he pursued tirelessly and self-righteously. The lack of his insistence in matters pertaining to missionary activity suggests the secondary role it played in his life. He volunteered to go to Asia in order to check his theories; while in Cochinchina, he apparently failed to prove that the mission's work took precedence over his scientific research; when recalled to Macao, and then in Goa, he did not seek another missionary position but instead proceeded to Portugal to develop his theories and demonstrate his inventions. Near the end of his life, he ardently advocated the expansion of missions into Madagascar, Australia, and other places in the South Seas, but, after his apparent failure at the Spanish court, it would be hard to claim that he did this to bring Christianity into those territories

²⁴⁰ Petech, "Borri, Cristoforo," in Ghisalberti, *Dizionario*, p. 4.

²⁴¹ De Carvalho, "Galileu e a cultura portuguesa," pp. 423, 427.

²⁴² Dos Santos, "Vicissitudes da obra," pp. 140-141.

²⁴³ Vu Khanh Tuong, "Les missions jésuites," pp. 254, 256.

²⁴⁴ Charles Maybon, "Notice sur Cristoforo Borri et sur les éditions de sa relation," *Revue Indochinoise*, 1909, pp. 343-348. Republished in *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué* 3-4 (1931), pp. 269-276 together with an excellent translation of Borri's work as *Relation de la nouvelle mission des pères de la Compagnie de Jésus au royaume de la Cochinchine*, by Lt.-Col. Bonifacy, who taught Vietnamese history at the University of Hanoi, and with Leopold Cadrière's Preface in the volume "Les européens qui ont vu le vieux Hué" (pp. 261-405).

²⁴⁵ Hồng Nhuệ, Nguyễn Khắc Xuyên, Nguyễn Nghi, "Lời Giới Thiệu" (Introduction) in Cristophoro Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong Năm 1621* (Cochinchina in 1621), translated and annotated by Hồng Nhuệ, Nguyễn Khắc Xuyên, Nguyễn Nghi (Hochiminh City: Nhà Xuất Bản Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh, 1997), pp. 5-10.

²⁴⁶ I have mentioned in this essay two instances of Borri resorting to litigation. While either or even both of them can be questioned, the fact that two independent sources describe two different occasions of Borri initiating a judicial process suggests his propensity in this direction.

more than to expand scientific exploration to areas that were important for his research on determining longitude.

Onward, Britannia!

Taking into account the means of communication in the seventeenth century, Borri's *Account* proved to be quite a hit, with its popularity in Europe comparable to that of *Harry Potter* or *The Da Vinci Code*. Within two years, the *Account* was translated into five languages. In 1631, the same year of its original publication in Italian, Father Ant. de la Croix, S. J., translated it into French.²⁴⁷ The following year, 1632, a Latin translation by another Jesuit, Father J. Buccellini, appeared in Vienna.²⁴⁸ The same year F. Jacobus Susius, S. J., translated and published Borri's *Account* in Dutch.²⁴⁹

Apparently, by that time the breakup between Borri and the Society of Jesus had become widely known and no other Jesuit ever again translated Borri's work. But the *Account* proved to be viable even without the patronage of the Society. In 1633, again in Vienna, a German translation appeared.²⁵⁰ And the same year, the *Account* crossed the Channel to flourish in English editions, of which we now have six. But these six editions are reprints of only two translations. Robert Ashley published the first translation in 1633.²⁵¹ The second, by an anonymous translator, appeared in Churchill's *Collection of Voyages and Travels* in 1704.²⁵²

Robert Ashley (1565-1641) entitled his edition *Cochinchina: Containing many admirable Rarities and Singularities of that Country. Extracted out of an Italian Relation, lately presented to the Pope, by Christophoro Borri, that lived certaine yeeres there*.²⁵³ The difference in Borri's and Ashley's goals announces itself already in the title page of their editions. The place allotted to the dedication to Pope Urban VIII in Borri's book is occupied by a famous maxim from Seneca: *Cum hac persuasione vivendum est: Non sum uni angulo natus; Patria mea totus hic mundus est* (Live in this belief: "I was not born for any one corner of the universe; this whole world is my

²⁴⁷ *Relation de la nouvelle mission au royaume de la Cochinchine* (Lille: Pierre de Rache, 1631). According to C. Maybon, A. De Bellecombe published a new translation of the *Relatione* in 1852 titled *Mission en Cochinchine* (Maybon, "Notice," p. 275). In this case, Lieutenant-Colonel Bonifacy's excellent, and apparently the first annotated, translation of Borri's work, *Relation de la nouvelle mission des pères de la Compagnie de Jésus au royaume de la Cochinchine*, is the third French translation.

²⁴⁸ *Relatio de Cocincina R. P. Christophori Borri e Societate Jesu* (Vienna: Domo Professa Societatis Jesu, 1632).

²⁴⁹ *Historie van eenen nieuwe seyndinghe door de paters der Societeyt Ieso in't ryck van Cocincina* (Louvain: By de weduwe van H. Haestens, 1632).

²⁵⁰ *Relation vof dem neuen Königreich Cochin China* (Gedruckt zu Wien in Oesterreich bey Michael Riekhes). Another German edition was published in M. C. Sprengel and G. Forster, *Neue Beiträge zur Volkerund Länderkunde* (Leipzig: P. G. Kummer, 1793), vol. 2, pp. 27-110.

²⁵¹ Ashley's edition was reprinted in 1970 by Walter J. Johnson.

²⁵² Awnsham Churchill and John Churchill, eds., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, some now first printed from original manuscripts, others now first published in English* (London, 1704), vol. 2, pp. 787-838, reprinted in the 1732 edition of the same Collection (vol. 2, pp. 721-765), as well as in a new edition in 1744 (vol. 2, pp. 699-743). Borri's *Account* was also reprinted in John Pinkerton's *A General Collection of the best and most interesting Voyages and Travels* (London: 1811), vol. 9, p. 772-828. In 2002, the 1732 edition was reprinted (New Delhi, Madras: Asian Educational Services, 2002).

²⁵³ London: Printed by Robert Raworth, 1633.

country").²⁵⁴ This allusion to worldly affairs is fully supported in Ashley's choice of his dedication "To the Right worthy Knight Sir Maurice Abbot, Governor of the Honourable Company of Merchants, trading to the East Indies, and the rest of that renowned Society." In his "Epistle Dedicatory" to Sir Abbot, Ashley explained his desire to publish Borri's work by the great effect it had on him and expressed his hope that the book "might also happily be usefull to our Countrymen that trade and traffique in those Easterne parts," and he continued, "the remotest traffique is always most beneficial to the publick Stocke, and the Trade to the East Indies doth farre excell all others."²⁵⁵ In his Foreword, addressed to his fellow countrymen, Ashley pointed out that their potential lack of interest in Cochinchina should be overcome due to two reasons: the first is curiosity, since the book would expand their horizons, and the other is its usefulness, because as time passes England might find itself more involved in the trade of that area. And why would it be otherwise, since, citing Borri, Ashley affirms that Cochinchina was a welcoming country willing and eager to accept any foreigners for trade.²⁵⁶

Unlike Borri's scientific or ecclesiastical mission, Ashley's goal was either to promote his book or to promote trade between England and Cochinchina and adjacent areas, or both. Apparently assuming that the entire second part of Borri's *Account* on local religious life and Catholic missionary activity in Cochinchina would hardly be of interest to his readers among the merchants in Protestant Britain, Ashley excluded it from his work, indicating in the title that the work contains "extractions" from Borri's *Account*. He pretty loyally kept to the original in his translation of the first part of the book with one notable exception: the touchy issue of the relationship between the Portuguese and the Dutch in Cochinchina commanded his special attention.

Ironically, the passage in question from Borri opens with the same statement Ashley used in his Preface: "the King of Cochin-China gave free admittance to all nations whatsoever," a circumstance the Dutch decided to put to the test. The Portuguese, however, held a monopoly on European trade in Cochinchina at that time and managed to elicit from the ruler of Cochinchina a promise to deny the Dutch, their enemies, the right to trade in Cochinchina. Nevertheless, while the Portuguese envoy who obtained this promise, Ferdinando da Costa, was still at the Cochinchinese court, a Dutch ship arrived there in an attempt to gain a foothold. The ship brought rich gifts to the ruler, who, having accepted the gifts, granted the Dutch request to trade. Infuriated, the Portuguese demanded that the ruler expel the Dutch, which was then done. The ruler moreover ordered the destruction of the Dutch vessel and the seizure of its goods. In addition, he gave the Portuguese further concessions, including land on which to build a city, an invaluable offer in Borri's eyes, as a fleet prepared to counter the Dutch could be kept there.²⁵⁷

The first unpleasant encounter between the Dutch and the Cochinchinese occurred in 1601 when the Dutch sent two ships to China, the *Harlem* and the *Leyde*. The ships stopped somewhere on the coast of either Champa or Cochinchina, and, according to the records of the Dutch East India Company: "It is

²⁵⁴ On the front cover of Ashley's translation of Borri's work. Seneca, *Epistularium moralium ad Lucilium*, translated by Richard Gummere, Book III, Epistula XXVIII: 4 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann LTD, 1917), 1:200-201.

²⁵⁵ Ashley, "The Epistle Dedicatory," in Borri, *Cochinchina*, Ashley trans., p. A2.

²⁵⁶ Ashley, "The Preface Apologetical," in Borri, *Cochinchina*, Ashley trans., p. A4.

²⁵⁷ Borri, Part I, Chapter VIII, Section "Dutch banish'd."

difficult to imagine a worse reception than the one that here awaited the navigators: twenty-three people were massacred, and van Groesbergen [Gapsar Gorenbergen, commander of the small fleet] himself was a prisoner for some time." After being freed, they continued their way along the shores of Cochinchina. Groensbergen dispatched two merchants, Jeronime Wonderaar and Albert Cornelisz, who

passed also Tournon [Đà Nẵng] and Faifo [Hội An], who attracted a big number of merchants, Portuguese and Japanese. Further southward there was a sea city Sinoa, where the son of the king resided. In Tachem [Cachiam], the reception given by the king was more welcoming, but this visit did not produce anticipated results.²⁵⁸

The Dutch never succeeded in establishing good relations with Cochinchina. They mainly traded with Tonkin, while Cochinchina kept an alliance with the Portuguese.

The description of the strength of the Portuguese at the court, and of a fickle Cochinchinese ruler's conduct towards the Dutch, who at that time still were British allies,²⁵⁹ could easily turn the English from a Cochinchinese enterprise even before it started, especially taking into account that the English, like the Dutch, had already had an unpleasant encounter in this country. In fact, it may be that Borri's sad tale about the Dutch attempt to trade in Cochinchina confuses Dutch with English traders, for a very similar event did take place involving an English merchant ship. According to English records, in 1613, an English ship arrived at Faifo and the king cordially received one of the merchants aboard, Walter Carwarden, from whom he received gifts. But when Carwarden unloaded his cargo, he and his companions were massacred.²⁶⁰ The Dutch explained the incident in the following way: "The English merchant learnt at his own expense what it cost to speak of the king of Annam [Chúa Nguyễn, ruler of Cochinchina] in insulting terms. He was put to death and his cargo ended up at the king's [possession]."²⁶¹

Even if Borri's Dutch story is a garbling of this episode, it is unclear whether Ashley knew about the English merchant's experience in Cochinchina. As it is, Ashley condensed and rewrote three pages of Borri's *Account*, eliminating the Portuguese victory and the Dutch defeat, which together with the omission of Borri's second part of the book, turned the *Account* into an alluring, if deluding, vignette for English traders and travelers into the land of Cochinchina.²⁶²

Only seventy years later, a full translation of Borri's *Account* was introduced to English-speaking readers. It appeared in Awnsham and John Churchill's *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* and is quite accurate, which explains our choice to use it for this book.

²⁵⁸ W. J. M. Buch, "La Compagnie des Indes Néerlandaises et l'Indochine," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 36 (1936): 115.

²⁵⁹ Twenty years later, the First Anglo-Dutch war over sea trade broke the alliance.

²⁶⁰ Borri, *Relation de la nouvelle mission*, Bonifacy, trans., p. 335 n. 82 and Charles B. Maybon, *Histoire moderne du pays d'Annam* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1920), p. 65.

²⁶¹ Buch, "La Compagnie," p. 117.

²⁶² A footnote with Ashley's interpretation of this subject can be found in the body of the *Account* (Part I, Chapter VIII, at the beginning of the Section "Dutch banished.")

Long Live Vietnam!

In 1997, Borri's *Account* was published in Vietnam for the first time in Vietnamese translation.²⁶³ The Vietnamese translators, Hồng Nhuệ, Nguyễn Khắc Xuyên, and Nguyễn Nghị, worked from Bonifacy's French translation. Despite some mistakes,²⁶⁴ most of the translation is faithful to the French. However, in addition to translating, the translators edited the *Account*, introducing new ideas and completely changing the goals and focus of Borri's work.²⁶⁵ Borri wrote to urge the expansion of missionary activities in Cochinchina, combining geographical, historical, cultural, religious, and ethnographic information with a narrative about the difficulties, successes, and importance of proselytizing there. The Vietnamese translators pursued different goals.

First, the translators eliminated almost all mention of the missionary activity conducted by Borri and his fellow Jesuits and their predecessors. Thus, six chapters of the second part of the *Account* discussing ways of conversion, construction of churches, and persecutions, are completely omitted.²⁶⁶ Some other chapters were selectively translated so as not to spoil an idyllic picture of the country.²⁶⁷ Sometimes, the translators keep a significant portion of a chapter but supplant its

²⁶³ Cristophoro Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong Năm 1621* (Cochinchina in 1621), trans. and annot. Hồng Nhuệ, Nguyễn Khắc Xuyên, & Nguyễn Nghị (Hochiminh City: Nhà Xuất Bản Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh, 1997).

²⁶⁴ For example, Borri's statement that "The Cochinchinese not being so fond of their own customs, as to despise those of strangers, as the Chinese do, ..." (translated even more transparently into French by Bonifacy) in the Vietnamese translation reads differently: *Dân Đàng Trong rất trọng những tục lệ của họ. Họ kính những tục lệ của người ngoại quốc như người Tái* (Cochinchinese very much respect their [Cochinchinese] customs. They despise the customs of strangers, as the Chinese [do]). See Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter V, Section titled "The scholars"; Borri, *Relation de la nouvelle mission*, Bonifacy, trans., p. 313; Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 58.

²⁶⁵ I cannot say to what extent the translators initiated changes introduced into the Vietnamese version and to what extent changes may have been initiated by state authorities. Thus, my usage of the word "translators" here encompasses the people who literally worked on Borri's account and also those who may have directed them.

²⁶⁶ These are the following chapters in Part II: Chapter I "Of the First entering of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus into that Kingdom: And of the two Churches built at Turon and Caccian"; Chapter II "Of the Persecution the New Church of Cochinchina endur'd, at its first institution: and how I was Sent Thither to be Assisting to it, by my Superiors"; Chapter V, "How God Made Way for the Conversion of the Province of Pulucambi, by Means of the Noblest Persons in It"; Chapter VII, "How God Open'd Another Way to Christianity, by Means of the Omsais, or Heathen Priests"; Chapter IX, "How God Opened Another Way to the Conversion of the Meaner Sort by Miraculous Means"; Chapter X, "Of the Churches and Christians of Faifo, Turon, and Cacciam."

²⁶⁷ Compare, for example, Borri's Chapter IV (Part II), especially the section titled "Fathers in distress," in which he describes the fathers' distress upon the death of their main protector, with Chapter 10 in the translation. Borri wrote: "Three years pass'd after this manner, and yet we were not so much troubled at our own wants, which God knows were very great, as to see every day less hopes of promoting the service of God among those pagans, having during those three years converted but very few, and what with unspeakable labour and toil. Things being in this posture, in some measure desperate, we being inclinable to believe the time was not yet come, when it would please God to enlighten the darkness of those people, either because our sins obstructed it, or for some other hidden judgments of God." The translators condensed this to a description of the fathers' loneliness and avoided Borri's portrayal of further troubles. Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 106.

meaning with their own interpretation. For example, Chapter VI, "How God Open'd Another Way to Christianity, Through the Means of the Learned People among the Heathens," in the Vietnamese translation becomes a chapter titled "Astronomy" (*Thiên Văn*).²⁶⁸ The new title reflects the changes undertaken in this chapter to eliminate Borri's description of his use of astronomy to convert Cochinchinese. For example, the concluding part of Borri's section titled "The fathers foretell the eclipse truer than the Cochinchinese astrologers" is omitted. This section tells of a hapless Cochinchinese astrologer unable either to correctly predict an eclipse without Borri's help or to admit his inability to do this. Borri wrote that the *omigne*, or Cochinchinese astrologer,

repaired immediately to the Father to know the precise time of the eclipse; who having shewed him that it was to be exactly at eleven the following night, he still continued doubtful of the truth of the matter, and therefore would not wake the prince till he saw the beginning of the eclipse. Then he ran to rouse him, and he coming out with some of his courtiers, performed the usual ceremonies and adorations to the moon. Yet he would not make the matter publicly known, for fear of utterly discrediting their books and mathematicians, though all men conceived a great opinion of our doctrine, and particularly the *omigne*, who from that time forwards for a whole month came to hear the catechizing, diligently learning all that belongs to our holy faith. However, he was not baptized, wanting resolution to overcome the difficulty of the multiplicity of women, as the ambassador Ignatius had done before. He forbore not nevertheless publicly with much fervour to declare our doctrine and law were true, and all others false, and said he would certainly die a Christian, which mov'd many others to desire to be baptized."²⁶⁹

The translators dispensed with the part in bold,²⁷⁰ seemingly in order to avoid the topic of astronomy as a means of conversion. But then why not to throw the chapter out completely, as was done with some other chapters? Probably because Vietnamese historians consider science to be something their ancestors could learn from foreigners. Retaining this chapter might also serve to explain the reason Borri was in Cochinchina, since removing most discussion of proselytizing would leave the reader curious about what those fathers were doing in Cochinchina. Borri the astronomer is more palatable to Vietnamese historians than Borri the Christian missionary. The Vietnamese translators also omit Borri's own explanation of his sojourn in Cochinchina in Chapter XI, where he wrote: "When the superiors of Macao sent me into Cochn-China, they told me, they did not absolutely design I should continue in that mission, but only to learn the language, that I might afterward discover the kingdom of Tunchin."²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, pp. 107-117.

²⁶⁹ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter 6, Section titled "The fathers foretell the eclipse truer than the Cochinchinese astrology."

²⁷⁰ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 114.

²⁷¹ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter XI, Introductory paragraph, and Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 122.

The omitted passage cited above also suggests the translators' desire to avoid any portrayal of backwardness in their country. This *omgñe* was prevented from conversion (in itself a topic to be avoided) by his unwillingness to part with the custom of polygamy. For the same reason, the authors omitted the end of this chapter altogether, which describes the respect gained by the missionaries through calculating the time of eclipse and the punishment inflicted by the ruler on the *omgñe*.²⁷² Elsewhere, Borri, and the Vietnamese translators, discuss punishments commonly imposed on *omgñe* who commit errors, such as being made to forfeit land previously awarded to them, which the translators apparently considered unobjectionable,²⁷³ but the punishment of "making them kneel a whole day in the court of the palace, bare headed, exposed to the heat of the sun, and to the scorn of all the courtiers"²⁷⁴ was seemingly viewed as rather barbaric by the translators, who replaced it with a vague comment that the "mathematicians" were punished by the ruler.²⁷⁵

The translators also mitigate Borri's description of Cochinchinese "superstition" when he wrote: "The reason why they make such account of foretelling the eclipse, is because of the many superstitions at that time used towards the sun and moon."²⁷⁶ The Vietnamese version reads: *Trong thời gian đó, họ giữ những tập tục quanh mặt trời và mặt trăng*²⁷⁷ (At that time, they held habits and customs with regard to the sun and the moon), thus replacing the condescending word "superstition" by the neutral and more respectful compound "habits and customs."

The translators also avoided the word "heathens," either completely omitting it (along with the sentence, paragraph, or even chapter where it was used) or replacing it by a different expression, for example by the compound *lương dân*,²⁷⁸ which comes from a Chinese compound 良民 meaning "loyal subjects or law-abiding people" and in modern Vietnamese means "ordinary people, or good people." Eliminating or replacing words such as "superstition" and "heathens" reflects an effort to shift the discussion of Vietnamese religions and rites. Two chapters give us the best perspective on this: Chapter IV and Chapter VIII of Part II. Chapter IV, titled by Borri, "Of the Governor of Pulucambi's Death," is reduced by the translators to roughly one-eighth its original length. They omit Borri's description of posthumous rites performed for the governor in sections titled "Heathen ceremonies at the governor's death," "Sorcery to discover the state of the soul departed," "Heathen canonization," "The governor's funeral," and "The fathers questioned concerning the governor's soul." They replace all these sections with one sentence: *Về các nghi lễ ma chay phúng điếu chúng tôi không thể tường*

²⁷² Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter 6, Section titled "Astrology in great esteem."

²⁷³ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 108

²⁷⁴ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter 6, Section titled "An eclipse of the sun mistaken."

²⁷⁵ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 117, which corresponds to Borri's "... his astrologers, who escap'd not unpunish'd." Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter 6, section titled "An eclipse of the sun mistaken."

²⁷⁶ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter 6, Section titled "Superstitions concerning eclipses."

²⁷⁷ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 108.

²⁷⁸ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter 6, Section titled "Matrimony"; Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 80.

thuật hết các chi tiết vì sẽ không bao giờ cùng (As for the funeral, offerings [to the deceased person], and condolences, we are not able to completely relate all the details because we would never finish).²⁷⁹ This is an interpretation of Borri's sentence, "It would be endless to relate them all."²⁸⁰ However, this sentence opens Borri's description of the rites, while in the Vietnamese version it mutes all descriptions.

The translation of Borri's Chapter VIII, "A Short Account of the Sects in Cochinchina," is converted into *Đời Sống, Tình Thần Ở Đàng Trong* (Spiritual Life in Cochinchina). The substitution of "Spiritual Life" for "Sects" avoids an image of fragmented groups designated by a word that for missionaries was derogatory and commonly applied to "heathens." Instead, "spiritual life" implies something valued by every civilized society. But the changes introduced by the translators into the chapter itself go far beyond replacing the title. They actually start the chapter with the last paragraph of Borri's previous chapter, Chapter VII, which they omit. The paragraph describes the vast and beautiful temples in Cochinchina, and the translators use it to draw a parallel between Catholicism and Buddhism that was never intended by Borri. According to Borri, the Cochinchinese

make so many processions that they outdo the Christians in praying to their false gods. There are also among them some persons resembling abbots, bishops, and arch-bishops, and they use gilt staves, not unlike our croziers, insomuch that if any man come newly into that county, he might easily be persuaded there had been Christians there in former times; so near had the devil endeavoured to imitate us.²⁸¹

The translators change "false gods" to Buddha and instead of a reference to "outdoing," we see an equalizing description: "They organize solemn processions and festive occasions and offerings to worship Buddha as we find among our most zealous Catholics."²⁸² Imitation and the devil completely disappear from the text. Borri's unquestionably muddled description of Cochinchinese religious doctrines also disappears, but his positive comparison of Buddha with Aristotle is retained.

Another matter pursued in the translation is political correctness and international relations. For example, in Chapter VII, Borri, describing Zen Buddhism, wrote "the second doctrine being made publick, the Chinese received it, and above others the *bonzis*, who are generally the meanest and most inconsiderable people in *Japan*, who being zealous for their spiritual advantage admitted this doctrine, and preserved it in twelve several sorts of sects all differing from one another . . ." The text in bold did not find its way into the Vietnamese translation. Vietnamese readers are spared the disparaging references to the bonzes, as well as to the errors in Cochinchinese religious practice and doctrine that are described in the rest of the chapter and which the translators omit. The omission also removes any offense to the Japanese, even at the expense of denying their origination of the twelve sects, which Borri attributes to them, and

²⁷⁹ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 106.

²⁸⁰ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter IV, Section titled "Heathen ceremonies at the governor's death."

²⁸¹ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter VII, Section titled "Temples."

²⁸² Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, pp. 118-119.

gives this honor instead to China.²⁸³ China is very important to Vietnam, and we find corroboration of this in the following passage in Chapter XI, "Of the Kingdom of Tunchim":

On the north of it [Tonkin] is China, without the defense of a wall, the trade and commerce between the Chinese and Tunchineses being so mutual and constant, that it will not allow of wall and gates shut, as they are against other foreigners. **This is the reason that induces the fathers of our society to attempt the entrance into China that way, knowing they shall not on this side meet with all those impediments that strangers meet with throughout all the rest of the kingdom, and more especially about Canton.**²⁸⁴

The omission of the part in bold removes from Vietnam any potential accusation of facilitating the penetration of Christianity into China and creates a picture of good neighborliness and equality regardless of the fact that Vietnam was a tributary state of China.

Similarly, the translators omit Borri's mention of Laos as a tributary state of Tonkin in the context of political relations among the Vietnamese states:

Yet he [the king] is always own'd as superior to the Chiuua of Tunchim, by the king of Cochín-China, and by that other Chiuua, we observ'd in the first book to be fled into the province bordering upon China, tho' these are continually at war against one another; **and the king of Lais bordering upon Tunchim, pays him a certain tribute.**

The Vietnamese version reads: *Các chúa Đàng Ngoài và cả Đàng Trong đều công nhân ông là kẻ bề trên và cả một chúa khác chúng tôi đã nói ở phần một, ông này đã trốn lánh trong tỉnh giáp giới Trung Quốc, mặc dầu ông vẫn luôn làm ngay* (The warlords of both Tonkin and Cochinchina recognized him [the Lê king] as superior and there is another warlord of whom we talked in the first part, who fled into the province bordering with China, although he is still a puppet).²⁸⁵ The omission of Laos in the translation concerns international politics and is one of two points worthy of our attention in this passage. The other point is the treatment of the situation in Tonkin and Cochinchina and relations between them. Borri calls the ruler of Cochinchina a "king," but the translators consistently translate his position as *chúa* or (war)lord. For Borri, Cochinchina and Tonkin are two kingdoms with "the language being the same, as formerly it was but one kingdom."²⁸⁶ However, the omission of the word "formerly" in the Vietnamese version *ngôn ngữ là ngôn ngữ chung vì cả hai xứ đều thuộc về một quốc gia* (the language is the same because both lands belong to the same state)²⁸⁷ leaves no

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 119.

²⁸⁴ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter XI, Section titled "A description of Tunchim"; Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 122.

²⁸⁵ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter XI, Section titled "The Government"; Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, pp. 125-126.

²⁸⁶ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter XI, Introductory paragraph.

²⁸⁷ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 123.

doubt for Vietnamese readers that Borri is talking about one kingdom, something Vietnamese authorities today insist to have always been the case. Perhaps this is one reason to omit the last part of this chapter where Borri describes conversions (which is the other reason for omission) and expresses hope that “these kingdoms of Tunchim and Cochinchina, will soon be united to the flock of the church, acknowledging and giving the due obedience to the universal pastor and vicar of Christ our Lord on Earth.” For the Vietnamese translators, there is no need to unite something that already constitutes one country and certainly not on the basis of Christianity.

The reference to “another warlord of whom we talked in Part I, who fled into the province bordering with China although he is still a puppet” is to Mạc Kinh Cung, a descendant of Mạc Đăng Dung, who in 1527 overthrew the Lê dynasty. Up until recently, the Mạc have been vilified in Vietnamese historiography, and this is apparently what prompted the translators to refer to the Mạc leader as a “puppet,” a term absent in Borri’s work.²⁸⁸ The Vietnamese translators also omit Borri’s mention of the warlords being “continually at war against one another” to avoid acknowledging that Vietnamese rulers engaged in war with each other. Indeed, Borri wrote about the Mạc and warfare in Chapter VII of Part I, which the translators chose to ignore. Thus, Borri’s title for this chapter, “Of the Power of the King of Cochinchina, and of the Wars he has in his Kingdom,” turned into *Lược Lược của Chúa Đàng Trong* (Of the Power of the Warlord of Cochinchina). In order to avoid a warmonger image, the translation eliminates from this chapter all descriptions of internal conflicts not only between the Mạc and the Lê and the Trịnh families in Tonkin,²⁸⁹ but also of all the conflicts the Cochinese *chúa* had to deal with, namely: “defense against the king of Tonkin”; second, civil war in Cochinchina itself; and third, a “continual war” against Champa, described in Borri’s section titled “Wars in Cochinchina.” Two sentences survive in the Vietnamese translation. One affirms that warfare is conducted in the same way in both Cochinchina and Europe, and the other mentions Cochinese assistance to the Cambodian ruler in his war against Siam,²⁹⁰ this being an indirect involvement to support a neighbor.

The Conclusion, reduced to about one-third the length of the original, epitomizes the revisionist project of the Vietnamese translators. In Borri’s work, the entire Conclusion is devoted to the need for expanding the work of proselytizing in the world generally and in Cochinchina particularly. To this end, he describes how perfect this place is for the propagation of Christianity, reiterating his praise of its people, its natural riches, and its climate. The translators entirely eliminate Borri’s goal, but keep his argument, albeit slightly modified. If Borri describes Cochinese as “admitting of all strangers in their kingdom, and being well pleas’d that every one should live in his own religion,” the Vietnamese version keeps this, but replaces “religion” by “laws and practices.” In addition to the people’s wonderful disposition, another factor that Borri considers important is the

²⁸⁸ In recent years, some works have appeared that consider the Mạc in a more positive light. For example: Nguyễn Đức Diệu et al., *Vương Triều Mạc* (Kings of the Mac Dynasty) (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1996); Nguyễn Đức Diệu et al., *Văn Bìa Thời Mạc* (Inscriptions of the Mac Period) (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1996).

²⁸⁹ Borri in this volume, Part I, Chapter VII, Section titled “King’s power.”

²⁹⁰ Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, p. 84.

relative ease of learning the language: "Nor is it necessary before preaching to spend many years in studying their letters and hieroglyphicks, as the fathers in China, for here it is enough to learn the language, which as has been said is so easie, that a man may preach in a year."²⁹¹ In the Vietnamese translation, this statement reads: *cũng không cần nghiên cứu tường tận về học thuật và chữ viết của họ trước khi giảng dạy họ, như các cha dòng ở Trung Quốc phải làm và tiêu phí những năm đầu tiên là những năm tốt nhất, bởi vì chỉ cần học tiếng nói của họ, thứ tiếng rất dễ, như chúng tôi đã viết, đến nỗi chỉ trong một năm là đã có thể nói được dễ dàng*.²⁹² (Nor is it necessary to exhaust yourselves studying their learning and letters before you teach them, as the fathers in China have to do and waste the first years, which are the best, because [they] have only to study their spoken language, a kind of easy language, as we have written, to the extent that already in a year one can speak with ease). The substitution of "teaching" or "speaking" for "preaching" is a transformation from a work of intervention by a proselytizer to a work of appreciation by a tourist. Borri's *Account* is an encouragement by a foreigner for other foreigners to come with their ideas to change a country that is not theirs.

The Vietnamese translation is an invitation for the Vietnamese to enjoy the history and culture of their country, which was so much admired (and admired only!) by this Westerner. It is also an invitation for foreigners to come and enjoy this wonderful land. This invitation is a *bonbonnière*, full of sweet and peaceful images of the country, where, as the translation of the *Account* suggests, it is so pleasant to live and easy to get by. One would ask: "But how many foreigners can read this translation?" Relatively few, but perhaps the message can reach them through other channels. The Vietnamese have already developed a tourist itinerary that includes "Borri Country."²⁹³ In short, this translation gives a new twist to Borri's work and legacy, enabling him to participate in recreating a "Phantasmatic Cochinchina," this time by Vietnamese and this time for both internal and external consumption.

²⁹¹ Borri in this volume, Part II, Chapter VI, Section titled "Conversion of a great lady," mentions that he had only "some knowledge of the Cochinese language" in the context of events occurring after he had already been three years in Cochinchina. The omission of this entire chapter in the Vietnamese translation eliminated a potential contradiction in Borri's statements.

²⁹² Borri in this volume, Part II, "Conclusion"; Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong*, pp. 128-129.

²⁹³ See the following sites: <http://www.discoveryvietnam.com/package3tour3.htm>, http://www.infohub.com/TRAVEL/SIT/sit_pages/12908.html. On day nine of these tours, "You will head out towards Lam Dong Province through 'Borri Country,' once the home of Jesuit missionaries."

THE REAL TONKIN

Very little is known about the life of Samuel Baron. Aside from a few mentions in the records of the Dutch and English East India Companies and in the diary of the London scientist Robert Hooke, not to mention a bit of graffiti on a rock reported by the French in the nineteenth century, nothing remains from him except his account of Tonkin. This account is remarkable for its informed detail about Tonkinese life, government, society, culture, and religion. Baron was apparently born and raised in Hanoi among the Dutch merchants and their Vietnamese women who from 1637 labored to turn a profit in local and regional markets. His father died in 1664, five years after sending him to Europe.

When Baron returned to Asia in the early 1670s he had gone over to the English, and the Dutch and the English were at war. His activities with the English East India Company during this time are obscure. Aside from some allusions to adventures in Taiwan, all that can be known for sure is that he established a good relationship with William Gyfford, who sailed to Tonkin in 1672 and remained there as chief of the English Company until 1674. These were difficult and unprofitable years for the English in Tonkin, and blame for this threatened to come upon Gyfford personally. There is no evidence that Baron was with Gyfford in Tonkin during this time, but his account, dedicated to Gyfford, bears the mark of being an explanation for the lack of English success in the Tonkin market, attributing failures to intractable local conditions. His basic argument is that European expectations of profitable trade in Tonkin were unrealistic, that merchant dreams were sure to break upon the rock of the real Tonkin.

In 1677, Baron appears briefly in the company of Robert Hooke in London. Hooke, a prominent scientist, was interested in learning about foreign lands and Baron was apparently able to satisfy some of his curiosity about Asia, particularly Tonkin. Shortly thereafter, Baron was off again to Asia, and in the late 1670s and early 1680s he spent quite a lot of time in Tonkin. In 1679, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier published an account of Tonkin in Paris. An English translation of this was published in London in 1680, and Hooke immediately sent a copy to Baron asking for his opinion. Tavernier had never been to Tonkin and had based his work on hearsay, supposition, and the account of a Jesuit missionary published some years before. Baron wrote his account to point out all the errors in the fantasy concocted by Tavernier and to provide a truthful description of the real Tonkin.

Baron wrote at least parts of his account while in Vietnam, but he finished it and sent it off to London at the English Fort St. George (Madras, India) in 1685. In his prefatory note to John Hoskins and Robert Hooke, he indicates that he is about to depart for China. There is no further information about him. His account of Tonkin is clearly based on extensive local knowledge and first-hand experience. But the account itself and the form of its development was elicited by a desire to disabuse readers of two discernible illusions about Tonkin, one about prospects for trade and the other about falsities and misinformation purveyed by Tavernier who never was there. Baron's voice is pitched at the confident angle of one who knows the real Tonkin.

A Dutch Father

Samuel Baron's father, Hendrik Baron, was an employee of the Dutch East India Company in Tonkin during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. In company records, he is identified as the person temporarily in charge of Dutch affairs at Hanoi in 1650, when the head of operations was absent, having departed on a voyage to Japan.²⁹⁴ In the following year, when a company inspector found irregularities at Hanoi and the head was dismissed, it was recorded that Hendrik Baron was not culpable.²⁹⁵ In that year, 1651, he was described as "a long-time resident of Tonkin and fluent in the language" as explanation for choosing him to be put in charge of a Dutch house at Faifo (Hội An), the chief port of Cochinchina.²⁹⁶ This was an ill-fated experiment, for the Dutch had but recently allied with the Tonkinese in their wars against the Cochinchinese, and there was much mutual suspicion between the Dutch and the southern rulers. It is not surprising that, in a matter of months, Baron and four other Hollanders in Faifo were confined to a prison and shortly thereafter expelled from Cochinchina.²⁹⁷ At the beginning of 1652, Baron was in Batavia, apparently on his way back to Tonkin.²⁹⁸

In 1659, Baron saw off his son on a ship sailing from Batavia to the Netherlands²⁹⁹ and then returned to Tonkin.³⁰⁰ During the next four years, Baron continued to be occupied with the Tonkin trade, traveling regularly between Batavia and Hanoi.³⁰¹ In May 1663 he was put in charge of operations in Tonkin, where he remained until his death on March 21, 1664.

Hendrik Baron's son's name appears in Dutch East India Company records of 1659 as Salomon.³⁰² This was either an error—entered mistakenly in place of "Samuel"—or else the young man changed his name when he arrived in Europe. We can only conjecture the age of Samuel Baron when his father sent him to Europe in 1659. Given the rigors of travel, it is most likely that he was at least in his teens. The Dutch had maintained a headquarters in Hanoi since the late 1630s, making it possible that Hendrik Baron had taken up residence there at that time.

Samuel Baron was described in a 1678 record of the Dutch East India Company as a "Tonkinese half-breed."³⁰³ The chief of the English Company at Bantam in 1674 wrote vaguely that he had been born "on the coast of China."³⁰⁴ When he first appears in the diary of the London scientist Robert Hooke, on May 29, 1677, he is

²⁹⁴ W. J. M. Buch, "La Compagnie des Indes Néerlandaises et l'Indochine," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 37 (1937): 132.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-4.

²⁹⁶ W. J. M. Buch, "La Compagnie des Indes Néerlandaises et l'Indochine," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 36 (1936): 194-5.

²⁹⁷ Buch, "La Compagnie des Indes Néerlandaises et l'Indochine," (BEFEO 37), p. 145.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²⁹⁹ Charles B. Maybon, "Une factorerie anglaise au Tonkin au XVII^e siècle (1672-1697)," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 10 (1910): 169, note.

³⁰⁰ Buch, "La Compagnie des Indes Néerlandaises et l'Indochine," (BEFEO 37), p. 142.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 144, 160.

³⁰² Maybon, "Une factorerie anglaise au Tonkin."

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

identified as "of Funquin [sic]."³⁰⁵ When his "description of Tonqueen" was published, he was denoted as "a native thereof." In his dedication, Baron claims to have been born in Tonkin. From all of these indications, it is reasonable to assume that his mother was Vietnamese.

A context for Baron's birth may be found in William Dampier's account of his visit to Tonkin in 1688. Dampier remarks upon the custom of Vietnamese women hiring themselves out as temporary wives to foreign sailors and merchants, and writes:

For 'tis said, that even while they are with Strangers, they are very faithful to them; especially to such as remain long in the Country, or make annual Returns hither, as the Dutch generally do. Many of these [i.e., the Dutch] have gotten good Estates by their Tonquin Ladies, and that chiefly by trusting them with Money and Goods. For in this poor Country 'tis a great Advantage to watch the Market; and these Female Merchants having Stocks will mightily improve them, taking their Opportunities of buying raw Silk in the dead Time of the Year.³⁰⁶

Perhaps this passage gives us a glimpse into one aspect of Hendrik Baron's long residence and apparent success as a merchant in Tonkin.

Baron Goes Over to the English

We have no information about Samuel Baron in the 1660s. At some point, he changed his allegiance from the Netherlands to England, perhaps after the death of his father in 1664. In 1672, Dutch company records noted that he had gone over to the English,³⁰⁷ this at a time when war had again broken out between the English and the Dutch. In 1674, the chief of the English company at Bantam wrote that Baron was a naturalized Englishman and had been in company service for three years.³⁰⁸

According to a letter from the London office of the English East India Company to its headquarters in Bantam, Java, dated September 21, 1671, Samuel Baron informed the officers of the company at the time they hired him that he was born in Tonkin, that his paternal grandfather had been "a Scotchman," his father was "a Dutch man," and his mother was "of the race of the Portugal."³⁰⁹ Baron, seeking employment with the English East India Company, was apparently trying to ingratiate himself with the English by emphasizing his connection with Scotland through a grandfather and by denying his Eurasian heritage by claiming a Portuguese mother. This can be surmised from further mention in the letter that

³⁰⁵ Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams, eds., *The Diary of Robert Hooke (1672-1680)* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1935), p. 293.

³⁰⁶ William Dampier, "Mr. Dampier's Voyages, Vol. II, Part I: His Voyage from Achin in Sumatra, to Tunquin, and Other Places in the East-Indies," in *A Collection of Voyages, in Four Volumes* (London: James and John Knapton, 1729), II:51.

³⁰⁷ Maybon, "Une factorerie anglaise au Tonkin."

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ Oriental and Indian Office Collection, The British Library, London: No. E-3-87 London General to Bantam 21 September 1671. I am indebted to Hoang Anh Tuan for this information.

Baron "gave us some reasons why he left the Dutch service and offered himself to ours" and the observation that "though he be not of our nation, yet by the grandfather he is very near it." The English found him, according to the letter, to be "an active, intelligent person with competent abilities for his years," implying that, despite his experience in "the Dutch service" and being "well acquainted with" Tonkin, Taiwan, Japan, and China, he was still rather young. The letter instructs the agent in Bantam to establish a trading base in Tonkin and notes that Baron would be useful in that endeavor. Nevertheless, the London office warned that in case of the death or absence of the Company's chief in Tonkin, Baron was not to replace him, "for though we have respect for this person for so little acquaintance we have with him, yet we do not think it would be so convenient to have a stranger to be chief in our factories."

Samuel Baron was involved in discussions at Bantam in 1672 about setting up an English headquarters in Tonkin. Because of some unspecified delay involving the availability of shipping and Baron's prior assignment to go to Taiwan and Japan, he did not sail to Tonkin with the first English ship in 1672.³¹⁰ In that year, William Gyfford, with whom Baron was closely associated, established the English company's presence in Tonkin, where he remained in charge for the next four years. Baron later dedicated his "Description" to Gyfford in language that indicates his personal acquaintance with Gyfford's activities in Tonkin, indicating either that Baron was also there or that he had heard about the vicissitudes of the English in Tonkin during that time from others.

While Gyfford was in Tonkin setting up a base for company operations, Baron was off to Taiwan. A letter from him arrived in Bantam in June 1672, perhaps sent from Taiwan.³¹¹ In April 1673, news reached Bantam that Baron had been imprisoned in Taiwan, and a documentary fragment that appears to pertain to this event records that "the ship and all others belonging to him were disposed of into other hands."³¹² This was a volatile period for the region. The Dutch had been driven out of their fortress on the island a decade earlier by Chinese coastal forces resisting the rise of the Qing dynasty. The Dutch had allied with the Qing against the local forces in hopes of recovering their position there, but nothing came of this alliance until 1683, when the Qing finally gained control of the island. It appears that in 1672-3 Baron ran afoul either of the anti-Qing forces on Taiwan or of the Dutch who were then at war with the English.

In 1676, after four years in Tonkin, Gyfford was dismissed from his post and summoned to London to answer charges that he had engaged in private business and mismanaged the Company's affairs there.³¹³ This did not greatly damage Gyfford's career with the Company, for in 1684-85 he was the Company's governor at Madras, which became the Company's base of operations in Asia when Bantam was abandoned to the Dutch in 1682. During Gyfford's residence in Tonkin, the English there languished from Company neglect, Dutch hostility, and what they perceived as the cupidity of corrupt officials, the anti-trade policies of the government, scarcities of items to purchase, lack of a market for their merchandise,

³¹⁰ Maybon, "Une factorerie anglaise au Tonkin," pp. 170, 193-4.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 171.

³¹³ According to Hoang Anh Tuan, "From Japan to Manila and Back to Europe: The Abortive English Trade with Tonkin in the 1670s," *Itinerario* 29, 3 (2005): 84. In his dedication, Baron hyperbolically says that Gyfford was in Tonkin "the space of well nigh six years."

and the Vietnamese themselves, who were "unreasonable and truthless."³¹⁴ Gyfford's efforts to trade under such conditions were unorthodox and easily perceived by distant Company officials as seeking private profit at Company expense.³¹⁵

When he wrote his account of Tonkin in the early 1680s, Baron echoed all the English complaints about the difficulties of doing business there in a way suggesting that he may indeed have given testimony on Gyfford's behalf when Gyfford was summoned to London. In his dedication to Gyfford, Baron refers to Gyfford "having suffer'd strange rudeness and harsh usages from the natives, their usual welcome to new-comers," and he itemizes the obstacles to English trade in Tonkin: "the Dutch war, want of shipping [and] supplies . . . incapacity to trade." He also dilates upon Gyfford's excellent qualities that enabled him to obtain some measure of success: "prudence and dexterity . . . generosity . . . liberal spirit . . . affable, courteous and complaisant." He notes that Gyfford was selfless in his pursuit of the Company's good, that he eventually "gained the good-will of [the local] courtiers and merchants," and that he upheld himself with "honour." The presence of Baron in London shortly after the time of Gyfford's summons suggests that these comments may paraphrase testimony on Gyfford's behalf.

Adventures

In 1677, Baron appears in London as an acquaintance of Robert Hooke and Thomas Hoskins, who were active in the Royal Society and in scientific activities of that time.³¹⁶ Hooke and Hoskins took an interest in people who had traveled in foreign lands. Baron appears in Hooke's diary from May to October as one of his regular companions.³¹⁷ In the October entries, Hooke tells of preparing a letter for Baron to deliver to an acquaintance of his who was apparently then traveling in Asia. Baron is not mentioned again in the diary until March 1679, when Charles Chamberlain, an agent of the English East India Company and apparently Hooke's intermediary for news of Baron, informs Hooke that Baron is "going to Tunkin."³¹⁸

In the meantime, the Dutch company in Batavia had noted Baron's arrival in Bantam aboard an English ship in June 1678.³¹⁹ He must have then proceeded to Tonkin, for a letter received in Bantam from Tonkin by the English East India Company dated in December 1678 mentions "errors committed by Baron."³²⁰ What this was about remains a mystery. It appears that Baron was in Tonkin in 1680 because as late as the nineteenth century, a rock could be seen from the Dáy River with the inscription "Baron 1680."³²¹ According to Chapter VI, he was doing business in Tonkin during the years 1678-1682 and to facilitate his activities had

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 85.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

³¹⁶ Lisa Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke: The Man Who Measured London* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2004), pp. 8-9, 272, 283.

³¹⁷ Robinson and Adams, eds., *The Diary of Robert Hooke*, May 29 (1677); June 23 (1677); August 2, 24 (1677); September 6, 22, 28 (1677); October 4, 8, 25, 26, 28 (1677).

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, March 18 and 21, 1679.

³¹⁹ Maybon, "Une factorerie anglaise au Tonkin."

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

³²¹ M. A. C. J. Geerts, "Voyage du yacht hollandais *Grol* du Japan au Tonquin," *Excursions et Reconnaissances* 13 (Saigon, 1882): 8, n. 1.

established a relationship of "adoption" or patronage with one of the local princes. We learn from Chapter XIII that in 1682 he arrived in Tonkin from Siam. Baron was apparently in Tonkin when Trịnh Tạc died in 1682, for he includes a detailed description of the funeral ceremonies in Chapter XVII. In Chapter XI, Baron writes that it is 1683, and he is in Tonkin.

During this time, Baron appears to have had many adventures. In Chapters VI and XII, he writes that his trading activities in Tonkin were protected by a Trịnh prince, the only surviving son and heir apparent of Trịnh Căn, who was the son and heir of Trịnh Tạc, the ruling lord (*chúa*). Baron writes that he had in his possession the seal of this prince and that this protected him from difficulties with local and court officials. In return, Baron writes that he "always gave [the prince] presents at my arrival from a voyage" (Chapter VI). Baron appears to have entered into competition with Chinese merchants, for twice he reports that he found himself in troubles because of Chinese hostility toward him. In Chapter V, he writes that on one occasion he took passage on a Chinese junk, but the Chinese stranded him and three others on an island in the western part of the "Bay of Tonqueen." He eventually found passage on a small boat that was "sewed together with rattans," on which he sailed all the way to Siam in twenty-three days. When he eventually returned to Tonkin, his story aroused widespread interest, and Vietnamese officials questioned him about what he had seen along the Cochinchinese coast and in Siam and even asked if he would lead two or three hundred soldiers to raid the Cochinchinese coast using such sort of small boats. He says that he refused this suggestion by saying that he was a merchant, not a soldier, but that his refusal was later held against him when he was "accused by the Chinese" (Chapter XII). This may have been related to his "troubles" in 1682 upon the death of Trịnh Tạc, when he refers to his patron as follows (Chapter VI):

This prince, tho' he be of a generous, noble mind, and had an extraordinary kindness for me, yet I was not the better for him in my troubles; for on the decease of his grandfather, it pleased God to visit him, in the height of his prosperity with madness, which was the overthrow of my business, by incapacitating him to protect me in my greatest trouble and necessity; but lately I understand he is recover'd again.

This prince, not mentioned in Vietnamese sources, never lived to become the ruler; his father Trịnh Căn was, upon his death in 1709, succeeded by a great-grandson.

Baron dated and apparently sent off his "Description" in 1685-6 from Fort St. George (Madras), the headquarters of the English East India Company, where his patron, William Gyfford, was then serving as governor. In his dedication to Hooke and Hoskins, he says that he is conveying his "Description" to these two men via Charles Chamberlain, and he asks that they send the money "the said description will yield" by Chamberlain to Gyfford "whose liberality has chiefly supported my expences." Judging from this, it appears that Baron hoped to repay a debt to Gyfford with whatever he could gain from his writing. Baron's reference, in his dedication to Gyfford, to "the troubles I was in" while writing his account probably relate to the situation described at the end of the previous paragraph and may have included financial difficulties that involved Gyfford and the English East India Company. In his dedication to Hooke and Hoskins, Baron names four men, one being Charles Chamberlain, apparently all associated with the English East India Company, whom he calls his "benefactors," and who may indeed have been

his creditors. Chamberlain and two of the other three men mentioned here appear on a list of men qualified for employment by the English East Company for the year 1675.³²²

Against Tavernier

Aside from discharging a debt, there was another motivation for Baron to write his account. In 1680, an English translation of Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's account of Tonkin, published the previous year in French, appeared in London.³²³ Although a rather famous world traveler whose writings received wide acclaim during his lifetime, Tavernier did not actually visit Tonkin. He claimed to have based his account upon the testimony of his brother, who supposedly did go to Tonkin, and upon information available to him during his residence in Batavia and Bantam on the island of Java (June-October 1648). According to his dedication to Gyfford and to his "Advertisement," Baron was requested by Hooke and Hoskins to note the errors in Tavernier. He organized his account following the topics in Tavernier, frequently pausing to dispute with Tavernier on various points. At some point Baron decided to expand his critique of Tavernier into a full account of his own, in his words, "finding it much more easy for me to compose a new description of Tonqueen (the country of my nativity, and where I have been conversant with persons of all qualities and degrees) than to correct the mistakes of others."

³²² English East India Company, "A List of Their Names Who by their Adventures and Capable of being Chosen Committees for the Year 1675." Aside from Chamberlain, James Houblon and John Paige are listed here; I conjecture that these last two are the men whose names Baron spells James Hobland and John Page. I have found no trace of the fourth man, William Moyor.

³²³ Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689) was a French traveler who gained fame for making six journeys to Asia between 1631 and 1668; he spent most of his time in Persia and India, but during his third voyage spent around four months in Java (June-October 1648), during which time his brother, whom he encountered there, died. In 1669, he was ennobled for his contributions to geography and commerce, whereupon he purchased the Barony of Aubonne in the canton of Vaud on the north shore of Lake Geneva, which joined the Swiss Federation in 1803. In 1685, he was forced to sell the barony due to financial difficulties, and he shortly after died in Moscow while en route once more to Asia. In 1676, he published *Six Voyages* in Paris, which did not mention Tonkin. This was quickly translated into English by J. Phillips and published in London in 1677 and again in 1678. In 1679, Tavernier published in Paris his second large work, *Recueil de plusieurs relations et traités singulier et curieux de J. B. Tavernier qui n'ont point esté mis dans ses six premiers voyages, divise en cinq parties* (Collection of several unique and interesting accounts and essays of J. B. Tavernier that were not among his six first voyages, divided into five parts), of which part four is "Relation nouvelle et singulier du Royaume de Tunquin" (New and unique account of the Kingdom of Tonkin). The following year, an English translation of this book appeared in London: Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *A Collection of Several Relations and Treatises Singular and Curious* (London: A. Godbid & J. Playford, for Moses Pitt at the Angel in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1680), which included "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin." In the early twentieth century, Tavernier's account of Tonkin was published in *Revue Indochinoise* X:504-517, 610-160, 744-750, 806-811, 894-900 (October-December 1908) and XI:43-51 (January 1909). For more on Tavernier, see the Introduction of William Crooke, ed., *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne, Translated from the original French Edition of 1676 with a biographical sketch of the Author, Notes, Appendices, etc.*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1925).

Baron's account was compared favorably with Tavernier's account a century later in Abbe Richard's *Histoire Naturelle, Civil, et Politique du Tonquin*, which was based upon the account of a French missionary who lived for twelve years in Tonkin. Abbe Richard wrote:

The Jesuit missionary Father Alexandre de Rhodes and the traveler Tavernier were the first to give some idea of this country. The Jesuit, solely occupied by his religious interests, did not speak of the condition of the peoples of this kingdom and of the government except to the extent that it was related to his purpose. Tavernier recounted nothing about this topic that one should believe; and the best that one can think to his credit is that he had been deceived by his brother, whom he said had been in Tonkin and had observed all that which he ascribed to it: but his account is so little in conformity with the truth that it is doubtful that he ever set foot in the place. On the contrary, Baron, an Englishman, born in Tonkin where he was raised and where he passed a long succession of years, had no goal in composing his account of this country but to undeceive the public of the widely accepted errors in Tavernier's work.

So one can generally agree with the authenticity of Baron's account of Tonkin and can consider it as a reliable guide, at least for what happened up to 1685, when he departed the country ...³²⁴

Abbe Richard, in a note to the above passage, suggests that Tavernier, "being very ignorant and barely able to write," had dictated his accounts of various countries to copyists who added their own ideas, and that he easily confused items about one kingdom with those of another, and that he poorly remembered information he received from a French missionary whom he met during the course of his travels. But amidst the errors and confusions in Tavernier's account of Tonkin there are some verifiable items that may not be explained by Abbe Richard's supposition. Prior to the publication of Tavernier's account in 1679, less well-known accounts of Tonkin were published by two French Jesuits who had served as missionaries there: Alexandre de Rhodes,³²⁵ who is mentioned by Abbe Richard, and Joseph Tissanier.³²⁶ While Tavernier alludes to the account of de Rhodes, he makes no mention of Tissanier. Nevertheless, Louis Malleret, in an article published in 1932, has shown that Tavernier lifted whole passages out of Tissanier.³²⁷ Seven years earlier, William Crooke had commented: "In a certain

³²⁴ Richard (Abbe), *Histoire naturelle, civile, et politique du Tonquin* (Paris: Chez Moutard, 1778), pp. vi-viii.

³²⁵ Alexandre de Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume de Tunquin et des grands progresz que la predication de l'evangile y a faits en la conversion des infidelles, depuis l'année 1627 jusques à l'année 1646*, trans. from Latin by R. P. Henry Albi (Lyons: Chez Jean Baptiste Devenet, 1651).

³²⁶ Joseph Tissanier, *Relation du voyage du P. Joseph Tissanier de la Compagnie de Jésus, depuis la France jusqu'au royaume de Tonkin, avec ce qui s'est passé de plus memorable dans cette mission durant les années 1658, 1659, et 1660* (Paris: Edm. Martin, 1663). A third Jesuit, an Italian, had also produced an account of Tonkin at that time: Gio. Filippo de Marini, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao*, translated from Italian by L.P.L.C.C. (Paris: Gervais Clouzter, 1666).

³²⁷ Louis Malleret, "Une source de la relation du voyageur Tavernier sur le Tonkin," *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indo-Chinoises de Saïgon*, nouvelle serie 7.1 (Janvier-Mars 1932): 115-125.

sense, to a limited degree, Tavernier may have been a plagiarist, but he openly avowed his endeavours to obtain information wherever he could.³²⁸ Despite cribbing from the writings of authors more knowledgeable about Tonkin than himself, Tavernier failed to avoid Baron's indignant debunking, apparently because the English translation of his account attracted the interest of Hooke and Hoskins, who, having undoubtedly heard much about Tonkin directly from Baron, immediately requested from him an itemization of errors.

Epilogue

Baron's dedication to Hooke and Hoskins implies that he expected his account to be published without delay. However, it was not published until the 1732 edition of Awnsham and John Churchill's multi-volume *Collection of Voyages and Travels*.³²⁹ No explanation was provided for the gap of nearly half a century between Baron's dispatch of his manuscript to London and its eventual publication. We might surmise that, if the manuscript indeed arrived in the hands of Hooke and Hoskins sometime in 1686 or shortly thereafter, it was lost in the shuffle of accounts from foreign lands that Hooke had solicited from many travelers. Hooke indeed did bring to publication some of these accounts, but it is likely that Baron's manuscript languished, perhaps in the papers of the Royal Society if not in the personal papers of Hooke or Hoskins, as Hooke became increasingly distracted from this time with personal feuds and failing health.³³⁰

After Hooke's death in 1703, his papers were scattered, though many of the more purely "scientific" materials eventually appeared in the Repository of the Royal Society that was completed in 1712.³³¹ How Churchill's editors discovered Baron's manuscript is not known. At least one anonymous editor was conversant with Biblical studies and incorporated into Chapter XIV of Baron's work an entire entry from Dom Augustin Calmet's *Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, of which the first English translation, by D'Ogley and Colson, was published in the same year, 1732.³³²

Baron had an interesting life. In 1673 he had been imprisoned on Taiwan and lost his ship and crew. In 1678, records of the English Company noted unspecified "errors" that he committed in Tonkin. In the early 1680s, he was abandoned by a Chinese shipmaster on an island and later "accused by Chinese" in Tonkin; he refers to "the trouble I was in" at that time and mentions that the prince who was

³²⁸ William Crooke, ed., *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, ch. I, p. xxvi.

³²⁹ Awnsham and John Churchill, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 2nd ed. (London: John Walthoe et al., 1732), vol. 6. Baron's account also appears in volume 6 of the third edition published in 1744-46.

³³⁰ L. Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke*, pp. 272 ff.

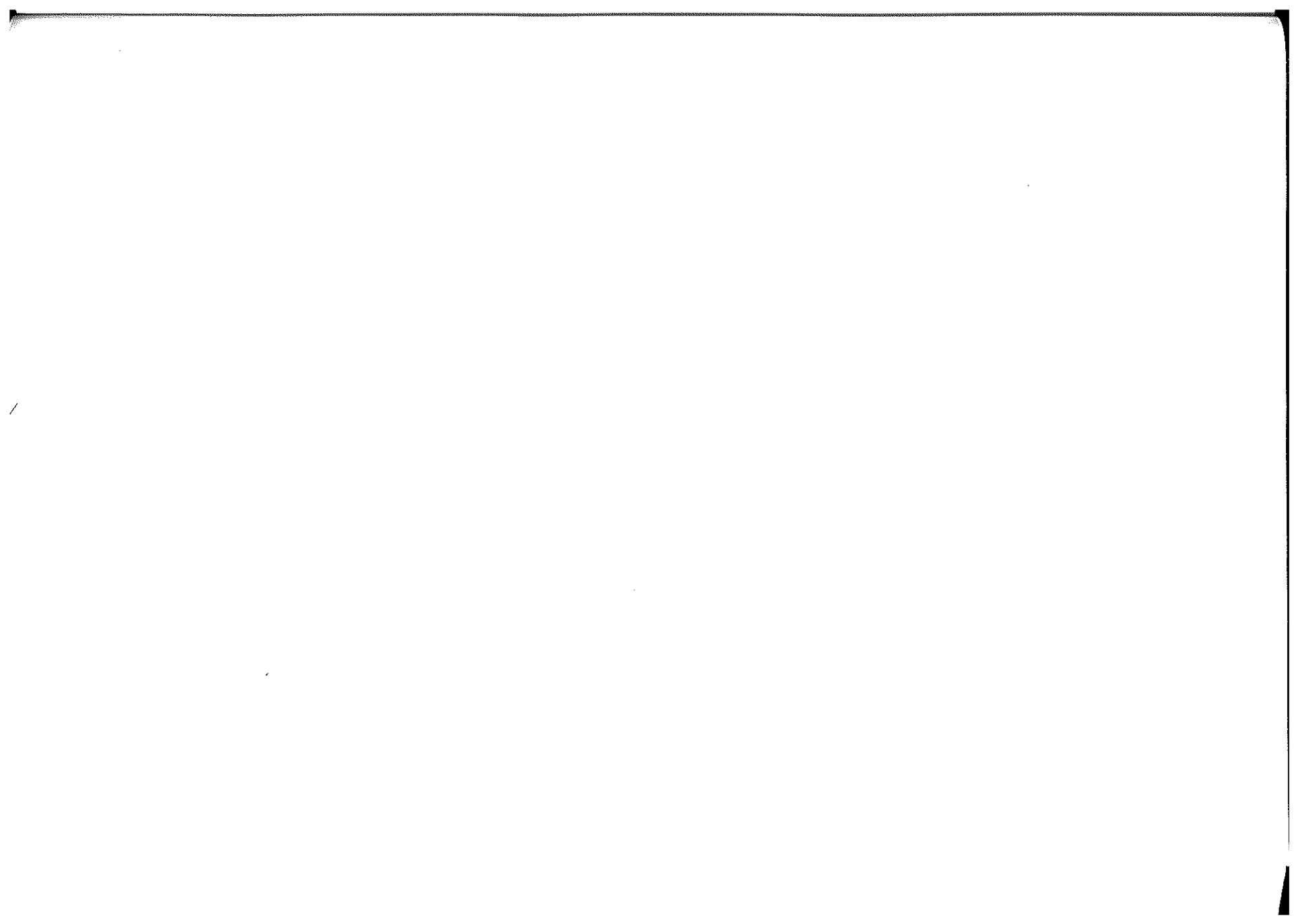
³³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 305 ff.

³³² Twenty years after Baron's account first appeared in Churchill, Abbe Antoine Francois Prevost included a partial French translation of Baron's account in his *Histoire Generale des Voyages* (Paris: Didot, 1751) IX:91-123, entitled: Baron, "Description du Tonquin." He ignores half of Baron's chapters, rearranges the rest, and summarizes rather than translates. In 1914-15, H. Deseille published a more faithful French translation with annotations: S. Baron, "Description du royaume de Tonquin," trans. H. Deseille, *Revue Indochinoise* XXII, no. 7 (July 1914): 59-75; no. 8 (August 1914): 197-208; no. 9-10 (September-October 1914): 331-343; no. 11-12 (November-December 1914): 429-454; *Revue Indochinoise* XXIII, no. 3-4 (March April 1915): 291-301; No. 5-6 (May-June 1915): 443-454.

his patron and protector pleaded temporary insanity to avoid assisting him in a time of need. He was apparently inclined to find himself in tight spots, but he did not lose confidence that with the written word he could strike blows for truth. Perhaps he kept himself busy amidst his troubles by writing, possibly while in prison.

Baron's discussions of several topics reveal his depth of knowledge. He gained his knowledge from his years of residence in Hanoi and from information gained from educated Vietnamese. He shows himself relatively well informed about the history of the country; about education, examinations, and academic degrees; about Trinh family politics; about the organization of provincial governments and of the central government; about the court and legal system; about public ceremonies conducted by the king (*vuua*) and the lord (*chúa*); about the mutiny of soldiers in the capital in 1674; about the funeral of Trịnh Tạc in 1682; about Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism; about clairvoyants, sorcerers, and geomancers; about fruits; and about daily life among the Vietnamese.

The interest that Baron's "Description of the Kingdom of Tonqueen" holds for us today is in what it tells us about the northern Vietnamese in the mid-seventeenth century and also about the Englishmen who sailed to distant lands at that time. Baron's strong, confident, expressive idiom is very close to that of John Bunyan, who wrote from prison around the same time. While Bunyan voiced the excitement of spiritual pilgrimage, Baron voiced that of the merchant adventurer. In both voices there is a sense of conviction and momentum, of engagement with error in defense of truth, of getting somewhere interesting. In his dedication to Hooke and Hoskins, Baron informs his London friends of his future plans: "I am now on a voyage to China, where if I can pick up any curiosity, or discover any thing worthy your sight or information, you are sure to hear from me." This is the last we hear of Samuel Baron. What curiosities, if any, Baron may have encountered in China after he sent off his manuscript to London are lost to us today. But his sense of anticipation remains.



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Vol. II

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For JOHN WALTHOE, over-against the *Royal-Exchange*, in *Cornhill*; T H O .
W O T T O N , at the *Queen's-Head* and *Three Daggers* over-against *St. Dunstan's Church*
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Fleetstreet; and H E N R Y L I N T O T , at the *Cross-Keys*, against *St. Dunstan's Church*, in
Fleetstreet. M D C C XXXII.

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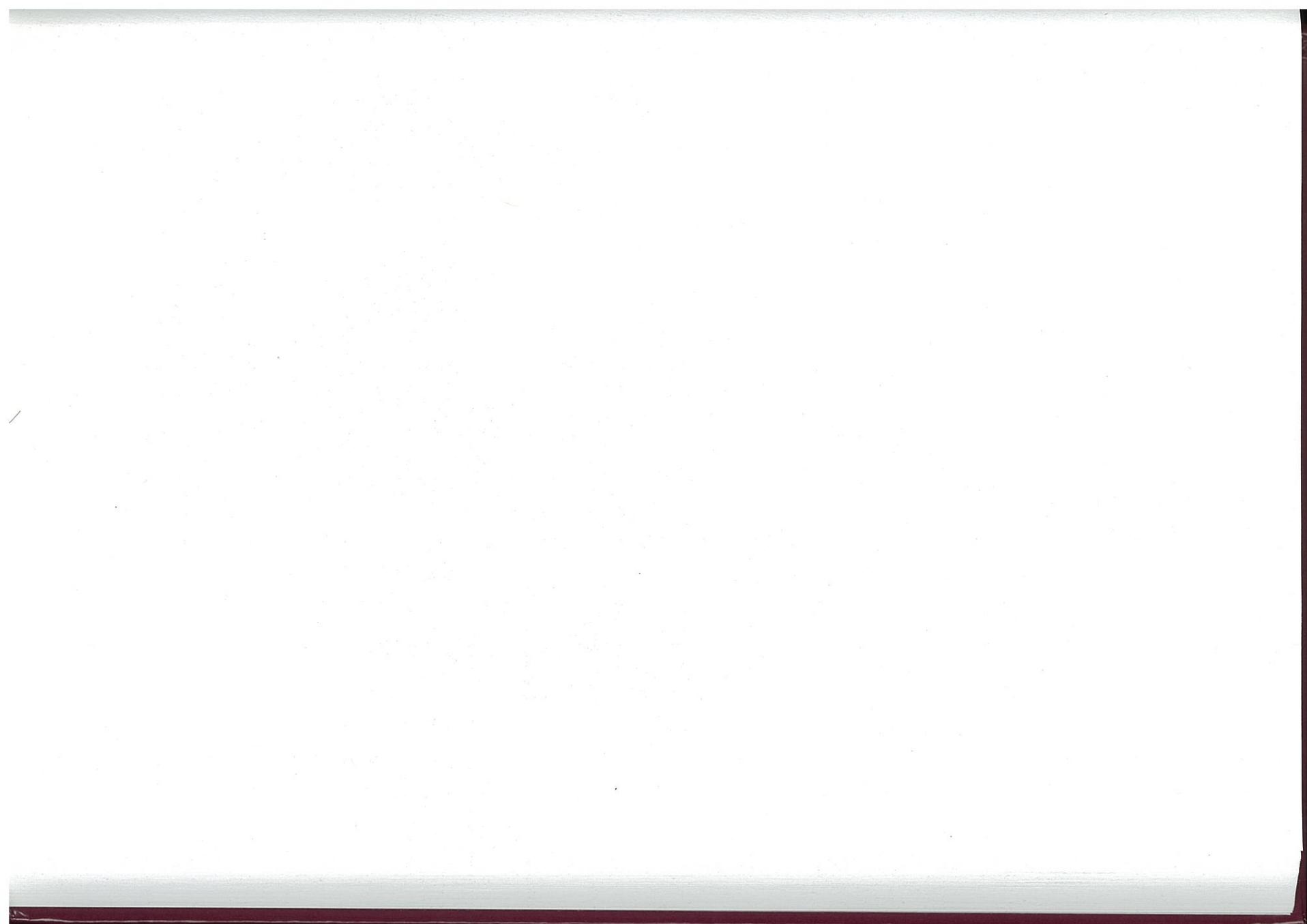
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An account of Cochín-China; in two parts: The first treats
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concerns the spiritual. By the R. F. Christopher Borri, of
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AN ACCOUNT OF COCHIN-CHINA. IN TWO PARTS.

THE FIRST TREATS OF THE TEMPORAL STATE OF THAT KINGDOM.

THE SECOND, OF WHAT CONCERNS THE SPIRITUAL.

WRITTEN IN ITALIAN

BY THE R. F. CHRISTOPHER BORRI, A MILANEZE, OF THE SOCIETY OF
JESUS, WHO WAS ONE OF THE FIRST MISSIONERS IN THAT KINGDOM.

This account is so short, it requires not much preface, or to say the truth, any at all; a little time sufficing the curious to inform himself of the value and contents of it. Who the author was appears by the title, and what the cause of his going into that kingdom, his profession and only business being to preach Christianity to the infidels: he lived five years among them, and learn'd their language to perfection; and therefore his relation is not like those of travellers, who just pass through a country; or merchants, that touch at ports upon the business of trade, and consequently deliver very fabulous accounts, either to make their travels the more surprizing, or for want of knowing better, taking things upon hear-say, and not understanding their language to get certain information. This father on the contrary frequently conversing with all sorts of people, and having a settled residence there for years, had the opportunity of knowing what he writ. He gives the description of the kingdom, a considerable part whereof he travell'd over: he speaks of its product, which he had the benefit of for sustenance and cloathing: he tells us the temper and seasons of the air, which he several times felt: he relates the inundations which he often saw: he gives an account of their sects, which he learn'd from their priests, or *omsays*,¹ whom he converted to Christianity: he sets down the power and

¹ The term "omsays" is an Anglicized plural used by the anonymous author of this introduction for Vietnamese *ông sãi*; see Chapter 2 of Part 2 in Borri where it is spelled "omsaii" by the translator; in Borri's Italian original, it is spelled "onsaij". The plural of the second syllable of this expression is given in Baron, Chapter 18, as "Sayes"; it might plausibly be argued that what is being transcribed is not *sãi* but rather *thầy*, a term of address meaning "master" and used for monks and teachers, but Baron, in Chapter 18, clearly distinguishes between *sãi* ("Sayes" in plural form) and *thầy* (which he spells "thay"). Alexandre de Rhodes, in his seventeenth-century dictionary, identifies *sãi* as "bonze" and describes such people as what we would consider to be "monks"; the same is true in the early nineteenth-century dictionary of Taberd. Alexandre de Rhodes, *Dictionarium Annamiticum, Lusitanum, et Latinum* (Rome: Sac. Congreg. 1651), col. 671. A. J. L. Tabert, *Dictionarium Anamitico-Latinum* (Serampore: J. Marshnam, 1838), p. 435.

government of the kingdom which he could be no stranger to, being familiar with several men in great authority: and to conclude, he particularizes how far the christian faith has been there propagated; which he well knows, as having been himself a labourer in the vineyard for the first five years; and after that, receiving it from those that succeeded him. In fine, the relation is curious, tho' short, and seems to carry all the air of truth imaginable, besides the general approbation it has always received in all parts, which is the greatest commendation that can be given it.

AN
ACCOUNT
of
COCHIN-CHINA.
The FIRST PART.

OF THE

Temporal State of the Kingdom of *Cochin-China*.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE NAME, SITUATION,
AND EXTENT OF THIS KINGDOM.

[Name of *Cochin-China*.]¹

Cochin-china, so call'd by the *Portugueses*,² is by the natives called *Annam*, signifying a western country, because it lies well west of *China*,³ for which same reason the *Japoneses*, in their language, give it the name *Cochi*,⁴ signifying the same as

¹ The original *Relatione* is not divided into sections. The section titles were added by the translator.

² See Introduction.

³ Annam (Annam in Chinese) means "Pacified South." This title was originally applied to the territory of modern northern Vietnam when it became a frontier province of the Tang empire (618-907). Borri's suggestion to explain the term "Annam" by its being west of China is not as absurd as it might seem, for on early European maps northern Vietnam is indeed west of what was known as China, the region of Canton; for example, see the map opposite page one in Alexandre de Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume de Tunquin et des grands progresz que la predication de l'evangile y a faits en la conversion des infidelles, depuis l'année 1627 jusques à l'année*, trans. from Latin by R. P. Henry Albi (Lyon: Jean Baptiste Devenet, 1651). Thus, Borri's apparent error simply reflects a common perception of his time. In the seventeenth century, the Jesuits commonly arrived in the Vietnamese territories after sailing west from Macau.

⁴ Usually transcribed as *Koshi* in modern Japanese, from Chinese Jiaozhi (Vietnamese Gao-chi).

Anam, in the *Cochi-Chinese* [*sic*] language. But the *Portugueses*, having, by means of the *Japaneses*, been admitted to trade in Anam, of the *Japanese* word *Cochi*, and this other word *China*, compounded the name *Cochin-China*, applying it to this kingdom, as if they call'd it *Cochin* of *China*, the better to distinguish it from *Cochin*, the city in *India*, inhabited by the *Portugueses*: and the reason why, in the maps of the world, we generally find *Cochin-China* set down under the denomination *Cauchim-China*, or *Cauchina*⁵ or the like, is no other but the corruption of the right name, or that the authors of those maps would signify, that this kingdom was the beginning of *China*.

[Its bounds.]

This kingdom, on the south, borders upon that of *Chiampá*,⁶ in 11 degrees of north latitude, on the north somewhat inclining eastward toward *Tunchim* [Tonkin],⁷ on the east is the *Chinese* Sea, and on the west-northwest the kingdom of *Lais*.⁸

[Extent.]

As to its extent, I shall here speak only of *Cochin-China*, which is part of the great kingdom of *Tunchim*, usurped by a king who was grandfather to him now reigning in *Cochin-China*, who rebelled against the great king of *Tunchim*:⁹ for as yet the

⁵ Variations in transliteration can be accounted for by a word passing through different languages and by the absence of an established system of transliteration. Speakers of the same language transcribed names they heard differently. We see in Borri's work that the same word now commonly transcribed as Tonkin is transliterated as Tunchim and Tonchin on adjacent pages. On Cauchin (or Cauchim), see: Pierre-Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais sur les côtes du Viêt-Nam et du Campa: Etude sur les routes maritimes et les relations commerciales, d'après les sources portugaises: XVI, XVII, XVIII siècles* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1972), p. 42, n. 2. For a full discussion of this term, see the Introduction.

⁶ Champa was a kingdom that went through many transformations along what is now the central coast of Vietnam, beginning from the second century CE, when it first appeared in Chinese records. The Chams, of Malayo-Polynesian ethnicity and language, received their prevailing cultural influence from the Indian subcontinent rather than from China, which set them apart from the northward-looking Vietnamese. In the fifteenth century, the Chams were defeated by the Vietnamese, and much of their territory was annexed and opened to Vietnamese immigrants. Remaining Cham lands were annexed by the Vietnamese in the seventeenth century.

⁷ Borri never went to Tonkin, but he knew it was between Macao and Cochinchina and that he had to go west from Macao to reach Cochinchina, which is apparently why he thinks Tonkin is east of Cochinchina.

⁸ The reference is to Laos. In the Italian original, Borri writes Lai, a plural form of the Italian appellation Lao, referring to the people inhabiting this country. The English translation adds an "s."

⁹ The ruler of Cochinchina during Borri's time was Nguyễn Phúc Nguyễn, also called Sãi Vương (ruled 1613-35). The "great king of Tunchim" is apparently a reference to the Mạc kings who ruled from Hanoi during most of the sixteenth century (1527-92). The "grandfather" is Nguyễn Kim (d. 1545) who initiated a movement against the Mạc to restore the Lê dynasty; however he did not, as Borri indicates, "usurp" Cochinchina, for it was after his death that his son Nguyễn Hoàng (1525-1613) shifted the family into the southern frontier and there established what the Europeans called Cochinchina in an area that had been garrisoned by Vietnamese soldiers since the late fifteenth century. When the Nguyễn family eventually established its power there in the late sixteenth century, it was allied with the forces that in the north were fighting the Mạc on behalf of the Lê. For more on this, see K. W. Taylor, "Nguyễn Hoàng and the Beginning of Vietnam's Southward Expansion," in *Southeast Asia in*

Portugueses have traded only in this province; and here only the fathers of the society have been conversant, in order to introduce Christianity: yet, at the end of this account, I shall discourse concerning some particulars of *Tunchim*, where our fathers got footing since my return into *Europe*.⁷⁰

Cochin-China extends above a hundred leagues along the sea, reckoning from the kingdom of *Chiampá*, in the aforesaid 11 degrees of north latitude, to the gulf of *Ainam*,¹¹ in the latitude of 17 degrees, or thereabouts, where the king of *Tunchim*'s dominions begin.¹² The breadth is not much, being about twenty miles, all the country plain, shut up on the one side by the sea, and on the other by a ridge of mountains inhabited by the *Kemois*,¹³ which signifies a savage people; for tho' they are *Cochin-Chineses*, yet they no way acknowledge or submit to the king, keeping the fastnesses of the uncouth mountains, bordering on the kingdom of *Lais*.

{Division.}

the *Early Modern Era*, ed. Anthony Reid (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 42-65. Borri's statement reflects the following perceptions: first, that Tonkin and Cochinchina were previously one country; second, that rulers of the South were "usurpers"; and third, that the only lawful dynasty in the country was in Tonkin.

¹⁰ The Catholic mission first developed among the Vietnamese in Cochinchina. It was not until March 1626 that Father Giuliano Baldinotti, an Italian Jesuit, with a Japanese lay-brother, Giulio del Piani, went to Tonkin, where they stayed for only about six months, during which they achieved no significant success and finally left for Macao. *Biên Niên Lịch Sử Cổ Trung Đại Việt Nam* (Annals of Ancient, Medieval, and Modern History of Vietnam) (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học, 1987), p. 307; A. Bonifacy, *Les débuts du Christianisme en Annam des origines au commencement du 18e siècle* (Hanoi: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, 192-?), pp. 18-9. The account of Baldinotti under the title *Relatione del viaggio di Tunquino nuovamente scoperto* was published in Rome in 1629. For its translation into French see *Bulletin d'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1903): 71-78. In 1627, Jesuit Fathers Alexandre de Rhodes and Pedro Marquez or Marques were dispatched to Tonkin to establish a basis for the propagation of Christianity there. They were expelled from Tonkin in 1630, but de Rhodes shortly returned and stayed there until 1633.

¹¹ The Gulf of *Ainam* is called after the large island (Hainan) that on early European maps is named *Ainam* or *Hainam*. The common English term today is the Gulf of Tonkin.

¹² The border between the Nguyễn and the Lê at Borri's time was along the Gianh river. Later, the Nguyễn built a wall some short distance south of this river to defend against northern invasions. See L. Cadière, "Le mur de Đông Hới," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 6 (1906): 87-254.

¹³ The reference is to the mountain chain presently called Trường Sơn that composed the western frontier of Cochinchina. *Kẻ Mỏi*, "uncivilized people," is a vernacular Vietnamese expression applied to the upland minorities in Central Vietnam. An apparent variant of this expression was applied to the mountains inhabited by these people on the map in Alexandre de Rhodes, *Histoire*, where this mountainous region is called *Ru Mòi*. The phrase *Ru Mòi* also appears at this place on some other early European maps. G. F. Marini, a Jesuit missionary in Tonkin in the mid-seventeenth century, also refers to the place as *Ru Mòi*, "where savage people live, of whom a part obey to two kings of Fire and Water." Gio. Filippo de Marini, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao*, tr. L.P.L.C.C. (Paris: Gervais Clouzier, 1666), p. 35. The meaning of the word *ru* is unclear, and it later disappeared from European maps and accounts, being replaced by *Kẻ Mỏi*, for example, on de Rhodes's map edited by the Jesuits and found in the later edition (1666) of his work.

Cochin-China is divided into five provinces; the first bordering on *Tunchim*, where this king resides, is call'd *Sinuová*;¹⁴ the second *Cachiam*;¹⁵ here the prince, the king's son, resides and governs;¹⁶ the third, *Quamguya*;¹⁷ the fourth *Quignin*, by the *Portugueses* call'd *Pullucambi*;¹⁸ and the fifth, confining on *Chiampa*, is *Ranran*.¹⁹

¹⁴ De Rhodes's map lists this province as *Thoanoa*, the modern Vietnamese spelling of which is Thuận Hóa, the province where Huế, the Nguyễn capital, was located; the Portuguese called this place Sinoa (*Sinuová* here is a misprint; Borri's original spells it *Sinuua* in Chapter 7 of Part I) after the Chinese pronunciation of Thuận Hóa, *shunhua* in Pinyin, transcribed in some early European texts as *Sun-Whua*.

¹⁵ Modern Quảng Nam province. Cachiam, spelled Cacciam in Borri's original, apparently takes its roots from Kê Châm, Kê Chiâm, or Kê Chiêm, which, in turn, derives from Vietnamese for Champa, Chiêm Thành. For many centuries, Quảng Nam had been the center of a major Cham kingdom.

¹⁶ Nguyễn Phước Lan (1601-48), known also as Công Thượng Vương (Duke Công Thượng), son of Sài Vương, who succeeded him on his death in 1635.

¹⁷ On the de Rhodes's map it is Quam ghia. In modern orthography it is Quảng Nghĩa or Quảng Ngãi.

¹⁸ De Rhodes's map in *Histoire* indicates it as Quinhin or Pulocambi. The modern spelling for Quinhin is Qui Nhơn. According to Daniello Bartoli, *Dell'Historia Della Compagnia di Gesu, La Cina, Terza Parte, Dell'Asia* (Rome: Nella Stamperia del Varese, 1663), III:707, Pulocambi is Malay for "Goat Island," in reference to an island shaped like a goat. Today this is Bình Định province, the capital city of which is Qui Nhơn.

¹⁹ Also called Ranran. The name probably derives from the main river Đà Ràn. Today this place is the province of Phú Yên.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE CLIMATE, AND NATURE OF THE COUNTRY OF COCHIN-CHINA.

{Great heat of *India*.}

Tho' this kingdom, as has been said, lies between 11 and 17 degrees of north latitude; hence it follows of course, that the country is rather hot than cold, and yet it is not so hot as *India*, tho' it be in the same latitude, and within the torrid zone. The cause of the difference is, because in *India* there is no distinction of the four seasons of the year, so that the summer lasts there nine months without intermission, without seeing so much as a cloud either day or night, and therefore the air is continually, as it were, inflamed with the great reflection of the sun-beams. The other three months are call'd winter, not because there is any want of heat, but because at that time it generally rains day and night; and tho' to appearance, such continual rains should naturally cool the air, yet they falling in the three months of *May, June, and July*, when the sun is in its greatest elevation, and in the zenith of *India*, and no winds blowing but what are hot, the air continues so inflam'd, that sometimes the heat is more intense than in summer, when for the most part there are pleasant winds blowing from the sea, which cool the ground, wherewith, if Almighty God did not relieve those countries, they would be uninhabitable.

{Four seasons in *Cochin-China*.}

But *Cochin-China* enjoying the distinction of the four seasons, tho' not in so perfect a manner as *Europe*, is much more temperate; for tho' its summer, which comprehends the three months of *May, June, and July*, be violent hot, because it lies within the torrid zone, and because the sun is then in its zenith, yet in *September, October, and November*, the autumn season, the heat ceases, and the air becomes very temperate by reason of the continual rains, which at this time usually fall upon the mountains of the *Kemois*, whence the waters running down in abundance do so flood the kingdom, that meeting with the sea, they seem to be all of a piece. These inundations during these three months, for the most part happen once a fortnight, and last three days at a time. They serve not only to cool the air, but to fertilize the earth, making it fruitful and abounding in all things, but particularly in rice, which is the most common and universal food of all the kingdom. During the other three winter months, which are *December, January, and February*, there are cold northerly winds, bringing cool rains, and so sufficiently distinguishing the winter from other seasons. To conclude, in *March, April, and May*, the effects of spring appear, all things being green and blossoming.

{Notable Inundations.}

Now since we have spoke of these inundations, I will not conclude this chapter without first observing some curiosities that occur on occasion of them.

The first is, That all men in general wish for them, not only that they may cool the air, but much more for the fertilizing of the earth; for which reason as soon as they appear, all the people are so pleas'd and joyful, that they express it by visiting, feasting, and presenting one another, all of them crying, and often repeating *Daden Lut, Daden Lut* [*Dā đén lưt, đā đén lưt*]; that is, the inundation is come, it is here; and this is done by persons of all degrees, even to the king himself.

And in regard the inundations often come so unexpectedly, that very often when they do not think of it at night, they find themselves the next morning surrounded with water; so that they cannot go out of their houses, throughout the whole kingdom, as has been said; hence it is that abundance of cattle are drowned, for want of time to retire to the mountains, or higher grounds.

{A pleasant law.}

For this reason there is a pleasant sort of law throughout the kingdom; which is, that if any oxen, goats, swine, or other beasts, are drowned, the owner loses them, and they belong to him that first takes them, which causes much sport and jollity; because when the *Lut* happens, they all go out in boats to seek the drowned cattle; upon which they afterwards feast and treat one another.

{Beneficial sport.}

Nor are the younger sort without their pastime; for there being in those fields of rice, an infinite number of rats, their nests filling with water, they are forced to swim out, and get upon the trees to save themselves; and it is pleasant to see the boughs loaded with rats, like fruit hanging on them. Then do the boys run out in their boats, striving to out-do one another, in shaking the trees, that the rats may fall and be drowned; which childish pastime is wonderful beneficial to the country, delivering it from those mischievous creatures, that otherwise, by degrees, would devour all the harvest.

{Markets and fairs on the water.}

In short, the *Lut* causes another considerable advantage; which is, that it affords every body the opportunity of furnishing his house with all necessaries, because the country being all navigable, during these three days, commodities are very easily convey'd from one city to another, and therefore then are held the greatest fairs and markets, and with greater concourse of people than at any other time in the year. Then also it is, that they lay in provision of wood to burn and build, bringing it from the mountains in boats; which to this purpose come into the streets, and into the very houses, built for this purpose upon high pillars, that water may have free passage, the people living during that time in the upper floors; to which it were a wonder if

the *Lut* should ever rise, they being built according to the situation of the place, to such a height as they know by long experience, is sufficiently above the waters.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE COUNTRY.

{Rice.}

It is an easy matter to conceive the fertility of *Cochin-China*, by the advantages accruing from the *Lut*; yet we will mention some other particulars relating to it. The *Lut* leaves the land so fruitful, that rice is gathered three times a year,¹ in such great plenty and abundance, that there is no body will work for gain, all persons having enough to live on plentifully.

{Oranges.}

There are great quantities of fruit of several sorts, all the year about; and they are the same with those in *India*, *Cochin-China* being within the same climate. But to come to particulars; the oranges there are bigger than ours in *Europe*, and very full; the rind of them is thin, tender, and so well tasted, that it is eaten with the juice, which has a pleasant relish like lemons in *Italy*.

{Banana's.}

There is a sort of fruit which the *Portugueses* call *Banana's*, and others *Indian figs*; though, in my judgment, the name of a fig is neither proper to those in *India*, nor in *Cochin-China*, because neither the tree² nor the fruit has any resemblance with our figs; the tree being like that we call *Indian wheat*,³ but higher, and the leaves so long and broad, that two of them would serve to wrap a man in quite round, and from head to feet. Hence some have taken occasion to say, that this was the tree in paradise, with the leaves whereof *Adam* covered himself. This tree at the top produces a cluster of twenty, thirty, or forty of these *Banana's* together; and each of them is in shape, length, and thickness, of an indifferent citron in *Italy*. Before the fruit is ripe, the rind is green; but afterwards yellow, as the citrons are. There is no need of a knife to pare this fruit, for the rind comes off as we shell beans. This fruit has a most fragrant smell; the pith or flesh of it is yellow, and firm, like that of a

¹ First, *lúa mùa* (seasonal rice); second, rice, that develops within three months, hence the name *lúa ba tháng* (rice of three moons) or *lúa chiêm* (fifth-month rice); and third, *lúa tháng* (belated rice). See Ch. Crevost and Ch. Lemaire, *Catalogue des produits de l'Indochine* (Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extreme-Orient, 1917), 1:24-5.

² Indeed, strictly speaking, bananas are herbaceous plants and not trees, as they do not have a wooden trunk but a stem.

³ The original calls it Turkish wheat; Cristoforo Borri, *Relazione della nuova missione delli PP. della Compagnia de Gesu, al Regno della Cocincina* (Rome: F. Catanio, 1631), p. 14.

bergamot pear,⁴ when full ripe, that melts in the mouth. By this it appears to be no way like our fig, except in the taste and sweetness.⁵ There is another sort of them, which is only eaten roasted, and with wine: the stem dies every year, when it has produced the fruit, and leaves a young sprout at the foot, which grows up against the next year.⁶ That which in *Italy* they call an *Indian* fig, is nothing like the plant, or fruit of this *Banana* we now speak of; nor is this which we have in *Italy* called an *Indian* fig, in those parts.⁷ This fruit is common throughout all *India*. There is another sort in *Cochin-China*, that is not found in *China*, nor *India*: It is as big as the largest citrons we have in *Italy*; so that one of them is enough to satisfy a man. These are nourishing, very white within, and full of black round seeds, which chew'd together with the white substance, are of a delicious taste, and a good medicine against the flux.⁸

{Can.}

There is another fruit in *Cochin-China*, which I have not seen in any other country of *India*; and this they call *Can*; the outward form and nature is like our pomegranate; but within it contains a substance almost liquid, which is taken out, and eaten with a spoon; the taste is aromatic, and the colour like that of a ripe medlar.⁹

⁴ It seems that Borri refers here to bergamot orange, or *Citrus bergamia*, which originated in South Italy, because bergamot pear, a winter pear, was cultivated mainly in England and could hardly be familiar to Borri. Bergamot orange, however, is also a pear-shaped fruit. It has been used also for extraction of oil, which, because of its fragrant smell, has been widely used in perfume production.

⁵ The description fits that of *chuiôi mật* (*Musa nana*) or *chuiôi tiêu* (*Musa paradisiaca*).

⁶ *Chuiôi sủ*.

⁷ As it is, this sentence seems obscure. In Italian, it reads: "Questo, che qui in Italia si chiama Fico d'India non ha che fare, nè con la pianta, nè con frutto con queste banane, delle quali noi ora parliamo, anzi che ne anche questo, che si trouva in Italia in quelle parti è chiamato fico d'India." Borri, *Relazione della nuova missione delli PP. della Compagnia de Gesu*, pp. 15-16. "This, which is called an Indian fig in Italy has nothing in common with either a plant or a fruit of this banana, of which we are speaking now; moreover, what is found in Italy is not called an Indian fig in this region [Cochinchina]."

⁸ Borri, apparently, refers to *chuiôi hột*, the biggest among the species of bananas in Cochinchina. It has red-greenish skin and retains its seeds. Crevost and Lemarié, *Catalogues*, I: 275.

⁹ The word *Can* used by Borri is not associated with any known fruit at the present time and is not used in other accounts. We can try to infer what he meant only by comparing his information with other possible fruits: their form and nature (pomegranate), substance (liquid), and color (medlar). Medlar, while unripe and even when picked from the tree, retains a yellow-greenish color, but as it becomes ripe through the months-long process of fermentation. Bonifacy suggested to see in this *can* a "passion fruit," which accords to him the Vietnamese call *đuá gan tây*, which Borri corrupted into *can*. Bonifacy identifies it as *Passiflora quadrangularis*, which in English means "giant granadilla." A. Bonifacy, *Les débuts du Christianisme en Annam des origines au commencement du 18e siècle* (Hanoi: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, 192-?), p. 20. This fruit might reach one foot in diameter, thus exceeding the "outward nature" of pomegranate, to which Borri compared it. It has a yellow color. Passion fruit, or *quả lạc tiên*, indeed has glutinous juicy fragrant pulp with numerous seeds. The Vietnamese translators of Borri, puzzled by this *can*, are more inclined to consider the option that this may be a reference to dragon fruit (*thanh long*); see Cristoforo Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong Nam 1621* (Cochinchina. Year 1621), trans. Hồng Nhuệ, Nguyễn Khắc Xuyên, Nguyễn Nghi

{Gnoo.}

They have another peculiar to the country, that grows, and is like our cherries, but tastes like raisins, and is call'd *gnoo*.¹⁰

{Melons.}

There are also melons, but not so good as ours in *Europe*; nor are they eaten without sugar or honey. The water-melons are large and delicate.

{Giacca.}

There is a large fruit they call *giacca*,¹¹ which is common in other parts of *India*, but much larger in *Cochin-China*: It grows on a tree as high as the walnut, or chestnut,

(Hochiminh: Nhà Xuất Bản Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh, 1998), p. 22, fn. 1. This is not very plausible, because dragon fruit, although comparable to pomegranate in its shape, is of red color, and its "substance" is not as liquid as that of the passion fruit. Furthermore, I was informed that *thanh long* appeared in South Vietnam only recently. Thus, I am inclined to agree with Bonifacy's opinion. It is possible, however, that Borri refers not to *Passiflora quadrangularis* but to some other kind of the 120 species comprising the Passifloraceae family, several of which existed in Cochinchina. The passion fruit got its name from its flower, which is not related, as commonly assumed, to "amorous" qualities of the fruit, but rather reflects Christ's passion and passion for Christ. The first European missionaries who discovered the plant in Latin America saw in the structure of the plant the iconography of Christ's crucifixion (nails, crown of thorns, etc.).

¹⁰ *Nho* in modern Vietnamese orthography. It has come to signify "vine" or "grapes." Borri definitely does not recognize Cochinese grapes as grapes with which he was acquainted in Europe, as is seen from his statement. Moreover, further in the text he directly says that there were no grapes in Vietnam. On the other hand, Crevost and Lemarié at the beginning of the twentieth century list grapes among the fruits of Cochinchina and apply the same word, *nho*, to them. Crevost and Lemarié, *Catalogues*, 1:219-20. Thus, there are two possibilities. First, the berries that Borri saw were indeed grapes but they looked different from what he knew as grapes. Or, they were not grapes, and real grapes appeared in Cochinchina only later, brought there by Europeans. If that were the case, what then might this *gnoo* refer to? We might plausibly assume that it refers to one of the species from the Sapindaceae family, among which we find mangosteen, genips, longans, and lychees. All of them have some of the features described by Borri. Probably, even though mangosteen, also known as "queen of fruits," has a purple color, grape-like taste, and is native to Southeast Asia, we should exclude it from the list of possibilities due to its tennis-ball size and segmented, tangerine-like structure, which does not exactly correspond to Borri's comparison to cherries. Genips, while having a grape-like taste and a consistency similar to cherries, is green and is not "peculiar" to Vietnam but rather to other parts of the world. Lychee, although grown in northern Vietnam, was not found in central or southern Vietnam, according to Crevost and Lemarié, *Catalogues*, 1: 221. Thus, only longan (*long nhân* in Vietnamese, meaning "dragon's eye" or also called simply *nhân*) is left to fit Borri's description. Longans do resemble the shape of cherries, they have a pit similar to cherries, and they grow on a tree, not on a vine like grapes do. It should be noted that by the time Alexandre de Rhodes published his dictionary in 1651, only two decades after Borri's work, *nho* had become identical to the meaning we employ now, as we find in his dictionary: "nho: vitis sylvestris" (wild vine, wild grape). See Alexandre de Rhodes, *Từ Điển Annam-Lusitan-Latinh* (Annamite-Portuguese-Latin Dictionary), ed. and trans. Thanh Lăng et al. (Hochiminh City: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1991), col. 553.

¹¹ The jackfruit is native to India, from where it traveled to other parts of Asia, including Cochinchina. The appellation takes its roots from the Malayalam word *chakka*, later apparently

and has much longer prickles than the *jubeb*.¹² It is as big as a very large pompon [pumpkin] in *Italy*, so that one of them is a man's load. The out-rind is like that of a pine-apple, but soft and tender within. This fruit is full of certain yellow round kernels, like a small piece of coin, that is round and flat; and in the middle of every one of them, is a stone that is thrown away. There are two sorts of this fruit; one in *Portuguese* is call'd a *giacca barca*: The stone of this is thrown away, and the pulp is stiff; they do not take out the stone of the other; nor is the pulp hard, but soft as glue;¹³ both these in taste somewhat resemble that delicious fruit called the *durion*, whereof we shall speak next.

{Durion.}

This *durion* is one of the most delicious fruits in the world, and found only in *Malaca*, *Borneo*, and the adjacent islands. The tree differs little from the *giacca* last mentioned, and the fruit itself is like it without, and that resembles the pine-apple, even in the hardness of the rind. The meat within is very white about the bone, to which it sticks like glue, and tastes very much like our *mangiare bianco* (a dainty among the *Italians*).¹⁴ This meat and liquor is divided into ten or twelve little apartments, in each of which the flesh and moisture is about its stone, which is as big as a large chestnut. And it is to be observ'd, that when they break open the shell of this fruit, there comes from it an ill scent, like that of a rotten onion, all the substance within remaining of a most sweet and inexpressible flavor; whereupon I will relate what happened in my presence: a prelate arrived at *Malaca*, and one there opened a *durion* before him to give him a taste; the prelate was so offended at that nauseous smell that came from it when broke, that he would not taste it by any means. Being afterwards set down to dinner, they gave the rest of the company *mangiare bianco*; but on this prelate's plate they laid the white substance of this fruit, which is so like the *mangiare bianco*, that he could not distinguish the difference by the sight. The prelate tasted it, and thought it so much more delicious than usual, that he ask'd, what cook dress'd it so rarely? Then he that had invited him to dinner, smiling, told him, It was no other cook but God himself, who had produc'd that fruit, which was the very *durion* he would not taste. The prelate was so astonished, that he thought he could never eat enough; and they so dear, that even at *Malaca*, where they grow, they sometimes cost a crown apiece.

corrupted by the Portuguese into *jaka*. Its weight can be as much as ninety pounds, its rind is covered with numerous spines. The fruit is considered a great delicacy.

¹² Borri refers here to jujube, a Chinese date, which spread all over the world and is a delicious sweet fruit. While the fruit has a very thin and edible skin, the tree, on which the fruits grow, is often very thorny.

¹³ *Quã mît mît* and *quã mît gîai* respectively.

¹⁴ Or "Bianco Mangiare" (literally "to eat white"), which is a delicious old Italian dessert prepared of all white ingredients: sugar, milk, ground almonds, and egg whites.

{Ananas.}¹⁵

Cochin-China abounds in another sort of fruit, by the *Portugueses* call'd *ananas*; which tho' it be common in all *India*, and *Brazile*, yet because I have not found it well describ'd by those that have writ of it, I would not pass it by. The fruit does not grow on a tree, nor from a seed, but on a stalk, like our artichokes, and the stem and leaves are much like those of the thistle or artichoke. The fruit is like a cylinder, a span long, and so thick that it requires both hands to grasp it. The pulp within is close, and like a radish, the rind somewhat hard, scaly like a fish. When ripe, it is yellow both within and without, is par'd with a knife, and eaten raw, the taste of it an eager sweet, and as soft as a full ripe *bergamot* pear.

{Areca.}

There is besides, in *Cochin-China*, a fruit peculiar to that country, which the *Portugueses* call *areca*. The trunk of it is as strait [straight] as a palm-tree, hollow within, and produces leaves like those of the palm, only at the top among these leaves, there grow some small boughs, which bear the fruit in shape and bigness like a walnut, green without, just as the nut is; within it is white and hard like a chestnut, and has no taste at all. This fruit is not eaten alone, but is wrapp'd up in leaves of *betle* [betel], well known in *India*, which are like our ivy-leaves in *Europe*, and the plant itself clings to trees like the ivy. These leaves are cut in pieces, and in them they wrap a bit of *areca*, each of them making four or five morsels; and with the *areca* they put some lime, which is not there made of stone, as in *Europe*, but of oyster-shells; and as among us there are cooks and caterers, & c. so in *Cochin-China* there is one in every family, whose business is to wrap up these morsels of *areca* in *betle*, and these persons being commonly women, are call'd *Betleres*. They fill their boxes with these morsels, and chew them all day, not only when they are at home, but when they are walking or talking, at all times, and in all places, never swallowing, but spitting them out when they are well chew'd, retaining nothing but the relish and virtue of it, which wonderfully comforts the stomach. These morsels are so much in use, that when one of them goes to make a visit, he carries a box full of them, and presently presents some to the party visited, who claps it into his mouth; and before the visitor departs, he that is visited sends to his *Betler* woman for a box of the same, and presents it to the visitor, to return his kindness; and these morsels must be still making. And there is so much of this *areca* us'd, that the greatest revenues of that country come from the fields of it, as among us of olive-gardens, and the like.

{Other growth.}

Tobacco is also us'd there, but not so much as *betle*. The country also abounds in all sorts of pumpions¹⁶ and sugar canes. The *European* fruits are not yet come thither;

¹⁵ Pineapple. The Europeans first discovered it on the coast of Brazil, where it was called "anana," which in the indigenous language meant an "excellent" or "fragrant" fruit. The name subsequently entered Portuguese, French, and Italian. The Spaniards, however, created a new appellation based on the shape of the fruit—"pina," from "pinecone"—and the English language elaborated on the Spanish name, adding the word "apple" to it.

¹⁶ Another variant spelling of the aforementioned word *pompion*, that is, pumpkin.

but I believe grapes and figs would take very well. Our herbs, as lettuce [lettuce], endive, colworts, and the like, come up well in *Cochin-China*, as they do throughout all *India*: But they all grow into leaf, without producing any seed, so that it must still be supplied out of *Europe*.

{Cattle and fowl.}

There is also plenty of flesh, by reason of the great multitude not only of tame cattle, as cows, goats, swine, buffaloes, and the like; but of wild, such as deer, much bigger than those of *Europe*, wild boars, & c. and of hens both tame and wild, of which sort the fields are full, turtles, pigeons, ducks, geese, and cranes, which are savory enough; and in short, other sorts, which we have not in *Europe*.

{Fish.}

Their fishery is very great, and fish so delicious, that tho' I have travell'd so many countries, I do not think I have met with any to compare to that of *Cochin-China*. And the country, as was said before, lying all along upon the sea, there are so many boats to go out a fishing, and they bring in so much fish to all parts of the kingdom, that it is really very remarkable to see the long rows of people continually carrying fish from the shore to the mountains; which is duly done every day, for four hours before sun-rising.¹⁷

{Balachiam.}

And tho' generally among the *Cochin-Chinenses*, fish is more valu'd than flesh, yet the main reason why they apply themselves so much to fishing, is to furnish themselves with a kind of sauce, which they call *balachiam*,¹⁸ which is made of salt

¹⁷ The part of the sentence—"which is duly done every day, for four hours before sun-rising"—is not an exact translation of the original, which reads: "il che infallibilmente si sa ogni giorno dalle vent' hore, fino alle vent-quattro" (Borri, *Relatione*, pp. 23-24) and should be literally translated as "which is done without fail each day from the twentieth hour to the twenty-fourth hour." While it is possible that the translation simplifies the phrase and just refers to the night time as "four hours before sun-rising," Bonifacy states that the time was counted in Italy starting from the evening at 6 pm and all Catholic offices used to follow it. In which case "from the twentieth to the twenty-fourth hour" will coincide with the time range of 2 pm to 6 pm. (Bonifacy, *Les débuis*, p. 295, n. 26). However, it is not clear who is right here. Bonifacy obviously refers to the "Divine Office" or "Catholic hours," prayers required to be recited by clergy during certain hours of the day. The day was divided into a night watch ("Vigil," between 6 pm and 6 am) and a day watch ("Matins," from 6 am to 6 pm), but the first hour, Prime or *prima hora*, is considered to be at 6 am, apparently because night prayers were gradually co-joined with the day prayers. If we count from 6 am, the time indicated by Borri will be between 2 am and 6 am. But we really do not know what count he used, and I could not locate any supporting evidence from other sources.

¹⁸ The reference is definitely to the famous Vietnamese condiment *nước mắm*. While Borri calls *nước mắm* "balachiam," William Dampier, who visited Tonkin in 1688, distinguishes between "balachaun" and *nước mắm*: "*Balachaun* is a Composition of a strong Savour; yet a very delightful Dish to the Natives of this Country. To make it, they throw the Mixture of Shrimps and small Fish into a Sort of weak Pickle made with Salt and Water, and put it into a tight earthen Vessel or Jar. The Pickle being thus weak, it keeps not the Fish firm and hard, neither is it probably so designed, for the Fish are never gutted. Therefore in a short Time they turn all to a Mash in the Vessel; and when they have lain thus a good while, so that the Fish is

fish macerated and steep'd in water. This is a sharp liquor, not unlike mustard, whereof every body lays in such store, that they fill barrels and tubs of it, as many in *Europe* lay in their stocks of wine. This of itself is no food, but serves to sharpen the appetite to the rice, which they cannot eat without it. For this reason, tho' rice be the general and most common sustenance in *Cochin-China*, there must be vast quantities of *balachiam*, without which it is not eaten, and consequently there is continual fishing. There is no less plenty of shellfish, oysters, and other product of the sea, especially of one sort, which they call *cameron*.¹⁹

Besides all this, providence has furnish'd them with a sort of food so rare and delicate, that in my opinion it may be compar'd to the *manna*, wherewith the chosen people of God were fed in the desert. This is so peculiar to *Cochin-China*, that it is nowhere else to be found: and I will give an account of what I know of it by experience, and not by hear-say, having seen and eaten of it several times.

[Wonderful nests.]

In this country there is found a small bird like a swallow, which fastens its nest to the rocks, the sea-waves break against. This little creature with its beak, takes up some foam of the sea, and mixing it with a certain moisture it draws from its own stomach, makes a sort of slime, or bituminous substance, which serves to build its nest, which when dry and hardened, remains transparent, and of a colour between green and yellow. The country people gather these nests, and being soften'd in water, they serve to season meat, whether fish, flesh, herbs, or any sort whatsoever; and give every thing so different a relish, and so proper to it, as if they had been season'd with pepper, cinnamon, cloves, and the richest spice; this nest alone being enough to season all sorts of provisions, without salt, oil, bacon, or any other addition; and therefore I said I thought it like manna, which had in it the taste of all the most delicious meats; saving that this is the work of a small bird, and that was made by God's angels. And such great store of them is found, that I myself saw ten small boats loaden with nests, taken among the rocks, in not above a mile's distance. But they being so precious a commodity, only the king deals in them, they being all kept for him; and his greatest vent²⁰ is to the king of *China*, who values them at a great rate.

They eat no sort of white meats,²¹ looking upon it as a sin to milk the cows, or other creatures: and the reason they give for this nicety is, that milk was by nature

reduced to a Pap, they then draw off the Liquor into fresh jars, and preserve it for use. The masht Fish that remains behind is called *Balachiam*, and the Liquor pour'd off is called *Nuke-mum*. The poor People eat the *Balachiam* with their Rice. 'Tis rank-scented, yet the Taste is not altogether unpleasant; but rather savory, after one is a little used to it. The *Nuke-mum* is of a pale brown Colour, inclining to grey; and pretty clear. It is also very savory and used as a good Sauce for Fowls, not only by the Natives, but also by many *Europeans*, who esteem it equal with *Soy*." William Dampier, "Mr. Dampier's Voyages, Vol. II, Part I: His voyage from Achin in Sumatra, to Tunquin, and other Places in the East-Indies," in *A Collection of Voyages, in Four Volumes* (London: James and John Knapton, 1729), II:28. Bonifacy, *Les debuts*, p. 296, n. 27, suggests to look for the roots of the appellation *balachiam* in the Cham name for it, *baraval* or *barahauk*.

¹⁹ I suppose this to be the *Portuguese* word *camerano*, signifying shrimps or prawns.

²⁰ In the original it says "spaccia" (p. 26) from the verb "spacciare" (to sell), thus, the meaning is "sale."

²¹ Butter or cheese.

appointed for sustenance of the young ones: as if the owner of the young ones could not dispose of their sustenance.

{Camelions eaten.}

They eat some things which we loath, and count venomous, as camelions, which are here somewhat bigger than those that are sometimes brought dry'd up into *Italy*, out of the other countries. I saw a friend buy some ty'd together in a cluster, and lay them upon the live coals, which having burn'd the string, they walk'd about gently, as they used to do fill they felt the heat of the fire; which being a violent cold nature, they resisted a-while, but were at last broil'd: my friend took them up, and scraping off the burn'd skin with a knife, the flesh remain'd extraordinary white; then he bruise'd and boil'd them in a certain sort of sauce like butter, and then eat them as a great dainty, inviting me to bear him company: but I had enough with the sight of it.

{All wear silk.}

Cochin-China abounds in all other things necessary for the support of human life; and in the first place for cloathing: there is such plenty of silk, that the peasants and mechanicks²² generally wear it; so that I was often pleas'd to see men and women at their labour, carrying stone, earth, lime, or the like, without the least fear of spoiling or tearing the rich cloathes they had on. Nor will they wonder at it, who shall know, that the mulberry-trees, whose leaves feed the silk-worms, grow in vast plains, as hemp does among us, and run up as fast; so that in a few months the said worms appear upon them, and feed in the open air, spinning their thread at the proper time, and winding their bottoms in such plenty, that the *Cochin-Chinenses* have not only enough for their own uses, but they furnish *Japan*, and send it to the kingdom of *Lais*, whence it afterwards spreads as far as *Tibet*; this silk being not so fine and soft, but stronger and more substantial than that of *China*.

{Buildings.}

The structures the *Cochin-Chinenses* use of wood, are nothing inferior to those of any other part of the world; for without falsifying this country has the best timber in the universe, in the opinion of all that have been there to this time.

{Incorruptible trees called *Tin*.}²³

Among the variety and multitude of their trees, there are two that most usually serve for building, and are so incorruptible, that they do not decay in the least, either under ground, or under water; and they are so solid and heavy, that they do not swim upon the water, and a log of them serves instead of an anchor to a ship. One of them is black, but not so as ebony; the other is red, and both of them, when the bark is taken off are so smooth and slick, that they scarce need any plaining. These trees are call'd *Tin*; and they would not deviate much from the truth, who should say, they were that incorruptible wood, which *Solomon* made use of for building the temple:

²² The original reads "zappatori e manoali." Borri, *Relatione*, p. 27.

²³ Ironwood.

for we know the scripture gives them a name much like this, calling them *ligna thymia*.²⁴ The mountains of *Cochin-China* are all full of these trees, all strat, of such a prodigious height, that they seem to touch the clouds, and so thick that two men cannot fathom them. Of this timber the *Cochin-Chinenses* build their houses, every man being free to cut down as many as he pleases.

[The houses.]

The whole fabric of their houses rests upon high, solid and well settled pillars, between which they place boards to remove at pleasure; either to exchange them for cane-lattices, which they weave neatly, to let in the air in hot weather; or to leave free a passage for the water and boats, at the time of the inundation, as we observ'd above. They also have a thousand curious inventions, and ingenious contrivances to set off their houses, with carving, and other works on wood, which are a very great ornament.

{Aquila, and Calamba, odoriferous wood.}

Since we have begun to talk of the trees, before we proceed upon any other matter, I will here mention something of a sort of wood, accounted the richest commodity that can be carried out of *Cochin-China* to other parts; which is the most famous wood called *Aquila*, or Eagle-wood,²⁵ and *Calamba*;²⁶ which are the same thing as to the tree, but differ in their value and vertue.²⁷ Of these trees, which are thick and high enough, the *Kemois* mountains are very full; if the wood be cut off a young tree, it proves *Aquila*, or Eagle-wood, and this there is most plenty of, every one cutting as much as he can: but when the wood is of an old tree, that proves *Calamba*; which were very hard to be found, had not nature itself provided for it, causing these same trees to grow on the tops of inaccessible mountains, where growing old without being exposed to destruction, some boughs of them now and then drop down, breaking off, either for want of moisture, or through age, and are therefore found rotten and worm-eaten, infinitely exceeding the common *Aquila* or Eagle-wood, in vertue and sweet scent; and this is the so highly valued and famous *Calamba*. The *Aquila* is sold by any body, but the *Calamba* belongs only to the king, because of the high value of its perfume and vertue. And to say the truth, it is so sweet where they gather it, that some pieces being presented me, for a trial, I buried them above a yard and a half under ground, and yet they discovered themselves by their fragrantcy. The *Calamba*, where taken, is worth five ducats a pound; but in the port of *Cochin-China*, where the trade is, it bears a much greater price, and is not sold under sixteen ducats a pound. In *Japan* it is worth two hundred ducats a pound; but if there be a piece big enough for a man to lay his head on like a pillow, the *Japaneses*

²⁴ *Ligna Tinea* in the original (Borri, *Relatione*, p. 29). Vulgate 2 Chronicles, 9:11 reads: "de quibus fecit rex de lignis scilicet thymis gradus in domo Domini et in domo regia..." "The king made of the algum trees terraces for the house of Yahweh, and for the king's house..." Algum, or sometimes almug, probably refers to the sandalwood tree. The Vietnamese translation for this term in the Chronicles is *đàn hương*. Borri possibly refers here to *Pterocarpus santalinus* or to *Adenanthera Paoniana*, which is taller than the former. Both can be used for construction.

²⁵ *Lignum aquile*, one of the less famous species of the *Thymelaeaceae* (aloe) family.

²⁶ *Aquilaria agalocha* or *Aquilaria malaccensis*, or aloes wood, a very rare and expensive tree.

²⁷ i.e. "virtue," meaning qualities.

will give after the rate of three or four hundred ducats a pound: the reason of it is, because they instead of a soft down-pillow, when they sleep, lay their head on some hard thing, and generally it is a piece of wood, which everyone, according to his ability, endeavours to have of as great value as he can; and a piece of *Calamba* is looked upon as a pillow fit for none but a king, or some great lord. Yet the *Aquila*, though of less price and esteem than the *Calamba*, is so considerable, that one ship's load of it enriches any merchant for ever: and the best advantage the king can allow the governor of *Malacca*, is to grant him one voyage of *Aquila*; because the *Brachmans* [Brahmans] and *Banians*²⁸ of *India* using to burn their dead with this sweet wood, the consumption of it is continually very great.

{Great wealth of *Cochin-China*.}

To conclude, *Cochin-China* abounds in rich mines of the most precious metals, especially of gold: and to reduce to a few words, what might be said more at large on the plenty of this country, I will conclude with that which the European merchants trading thither commonly say of it; which is, that in some measure the wealth of *Cochin-China* is greater than that of *China* itself; and we all know how rich that country is in all respects.

I ought in this place to say something of the beasts, whereof we before observed there was great variety and numbers in *Cochin-China*; but that I might not dilate too much, I will only treat of the elephants and abadas,²⁹ or rhinocero's, chiefly found here; of which many curious things may be said, which perhaps very many have not heard of.

²⁸ Also spelled *bania* or *banija*, the word refers to one the Indian castes, a majority of whose members are occupied with trade or moneylending. They usually follow Vishnaism or Jainism, observing a strict vegetarian diet and believing in the transmigration of souls. The *banians* were a wonder for the Europeans when they discovered them. One of the Europeans working in India in the eighteenth century, in a lengthy tractate on the *banians*, whom he mistakingly calls a "sect" instead of a "caste," mentioned also their burial rituals. "First, they beare the dead body to a river's side appropriate to such purpose, where, setting the corps downe on the ground, . . . After this, putting combustible matter to the body, accended and lighted by the help of sweete oyle, and aromatical odours shrewed thereon." See Henry Lord, "A Discussion of Two Foreign Company Sects in the East-Indies; viz. The Sect of the Banians, the Antient [*sic*] Natives of India and the Sect of the Persees, the Ancient Inhabitants of Persia," in *A Collection of voyages and Travels*, ed. Awnsham Churchill (London: John Walthoe et al., 1732), vol. 6, p. 319. Given the importance ascribed in this description to aroma during the funeral, we can see that aquila was a valuable commodity for them.

²⁹ Portuguese for "rhinoceros."

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE ELEPHANTS AND ABADAS, OR RHINOCERO'S.

{Elephants, their age.}

There are abundance of elephants in the woods of *Cochin-China*, which they make no use of, because they know not how to take, or tame them: therefore they bring them tame and well taught from *Cambogia*, a neighboring kingdom. These are twice as big as those of *India*, the round print of their feet they leave behind them, is not less than half a yard diameter; the two teeth striking out of the mouth, whereof ivory is made, are very often four yards and a half long; that is, those of the males, for those of the females are much shorter; by which it is easy to compute, how much those elephants of *Cochin-China* are bigger than those shewn about in *Europe*, whose teeth are not above three quarters of a yard long. The elephants live many years; and I asking, How old one might be? the driver of it told me, It was sixty years old before it came from *Cambogia*, and had lived forty [years] in *Cochin-China*: and having myself several times travelled upon elephants in that kingdom, I can relate many things that will seem strange, but yet are very true.

{They carry by land and water.}

An elephant generally carries thirteen or fourteen persons, who are thus disposed of: as we lay a saddle on a horse, so they clap a certain machine upon the elephant, which is like a coach, wherein there are four seats; it is fastened with chains under the elephant's belly, as a horse's saddle is girt. The coach has two doors on the sides, where six persons sit, three on a side; and another behind, where there are two more; and lastly, the *nayre*,¹ who supplies the place of a coachman, sits over the elephant's head, and guides him. Nor have I travelled in this manner by land only, but very often by sea too, crossing arms of it above a mile over: and it was wonderful to any body that knew it not before, to see such a vast great lump of flesh swimming under such a weight, so that it look'd like a boat rowing. True it is, the beast groan'd under the toil, occasioned by the unreasonable bulk of its own body, and the difficulty of breathing; and therefore to ease itself in that pain, it sucked in water with the trunk, and spouted it out so high, that it look'd like some great whale gliding across the ocean.

¹ *Nayre*, variously *Najar* or *Nair*, refers to a caste of rulers and warriors, in what is now the state of Kerala on the Malabar coast of southwest India, that was encountered by Europeans beginning in the sixteenth century. Here, Borri uses this term for "mahout."

{They help up passengers.}

For the same reason of its mighty corpulency, it finds much difficulty in stooping down; and this being absolutely necessary for the conveniency of passengers to get up to, or down from the coach, he does it not but when commanded by the *nayre*; and if when he is kneeling, any one stops but never so little, upon ceremony, or any other account, he rises up, not having patience to continue in that posture, it is so painful.

Nor is it less wonderful to behold, how at the *nayre's* command he makes, as it were, a ladder of his limbs, for the greater conveniency of those that are to get up into the coach: the first step is his foot, which is high enough; for the second, he turns out the first joint above the same foot, distant enough from the other; for the third he bends his knee; for the fourth, his hip-bone, sticking out to that purpose; and from whence, he that gets up, lays hold of a chain fastened to the coach itself, where he seats himself.

{How they sleep.}

By this it plainly appears, how much they are mistaken, who say and write, that the elephant can neither kneel nor bow down; and that the only way to take him, is to cut the tree he leans against to sleep: for that falling together with the false support, and not being able to rise, he becomes a certain prey to him that lies in wait: which is all a fable, though it be true that he lies not down to sleep, that being an uneasy posture to him, as has been said, but sleeps always standing, with a continual agitation of his head.

{Their vast strength.}

Upon occasion of war or battle, they take off the roof of the coach, whence, as it were from a tower, the soldiers fight with muskets, arrows, and sometimes a small piece of cannon, the elephant being strong enough to carry it, his strength being answerable to all the rest: and I have been on one myself, that would carry vast weights upon his trunk; and another that lifted up a great piece of cannon with it; and another, who by himself launch'd ten galliots one after another, taking hold of them very dexterously with his teeth, and shoving them into the sea. I have seen others pull up large trees with as much ease as we do a cabbage or a lettuce: with the same ease they throw down houses, leveling whole streets when they are commanded, either to do harm to an enemy in war, or to stop the fury of the flames upon occasion of any fire.

{The trunk.}

The trunk's length is proportionable to the height of the rest of his body, so that he can take up any thing off the ground with it without stooping. It is made of abundance of small sinews knit together, which makes it so pliable, that he can take up the least thing, and yet so strong and firm as we have shewn.

All the body is covered with a rough ash-colour skin. An elephant's usual day's journey is twelve leagues, and his motion has the same effect upon those that are not used to it, as that of a ship has at sea.

{Great sense of the elephant.}

I shall say nothing more wonderful concerning the elephant's docility, or aptness to learn, than what is generally reported; by which it will appear, there was reason to be say, *No beast was more sensible than the elephant*,³ for it does such things as seem to be the acts of prudence and understanding. In the first place, though the *nayre* makes use of a certain instrument of iron a yard long, which has a hook at one end, wherewith he strikes and punches him, that he may be watchful, and mind what he bids him do, yet for the most part, he governs him only by words; by which it appears he understands the language very well; and some of them understand three or four that are very different according to the several countries they have lived in. Thus he that I travelled on, seemed to understand the language of *Cambogia*, whence he came, and that of *Cochin-China*, where he was. And who would not admire to hear the *nayre* discourse with his elephant, tell him the way and road he is to take, what place he is to pass by, what inn they are to lie at, what they shall there find to eat; and in short, give him an exact account of all that is to be done during the journey? and to see the elephant perform what he expects from him, as regularly as any man of good sense could do; insomuch, that when the elephant seems to have understood what place he was to go to, he takes the shortest cut to it, without minding the beaten road, rivers, woods, or mountains, but goes on, not doubting to overcome all difficulties, as in effect he does; for if any rivers be in the way, he either fords or swims them; if woods, he breaks the boughs of the trees, pulls them up whole, or cuts them with a sharp iron like a scythe, which to this purpose is fastened to the fore-part of the top of the coach, wherewith upon occasion having first laid hold of the boughs, he cuts them with his trunk, and makes himself way, cutting through the thickest forest, where it is easily known to have been an elephant that made the way; and all this he does with great ease and expedition, in obedience to the *nayre*.

{The elephant understands what is said.}

One only thing disturbs this creature, and puts it to great pain; which is, when a thorn, or such like thing, runs into the bottom of his foot, which is extraordinary soft and tender, and therefore he treads very cautiously, when he goes thro' places where there may be danger of such an accident. I went a journey once with seven or eight elephants in a company, and heard the *nayres*, every one warn his own beast, to look out carefully where he set his feet; for they were to pass over a sandy place about a mile in length, where thorns grew up among the sand; upon this intimation all the elephants held down their heads, and looking out, as it were, for some small thing that is lost, they walk'd that mile very cautiously, step by step; till being told there was no more to fear, they lifted up their heads, going on as they had done at first. Being come at night to the inn, the *nayres* sent the elephants to the wood to feed, without taking the coach off their backs; and I asking, why they did not take it down, they answerd, That the elephants fed on the boughs of trees, and therefore they left the coach on their backs, that they might cut them with that iron we said was before it. The next day being come, where there was no wood, every *nayre* carried a large

² i.e. "clever."

³ In the original this phrase is in Latin: "Elephantto belluarum nulla prudentior." Christoforo Borri, *Relatione*, p. 38.

bundle of green boughs for his elephant. I took particular satisfaction to observe one, who more nimbly than the rest, laying hold of those boughs with his trunk, barked them with his teeth, and then eat them up as quick, and with as good a gust, as we would a fig, or any other sort of fruit. Discoursing the next day with my fellow-travelers, who were about twenty, I told them, how much I was pleased to see that elephant eat the boughs so cleverly. Then the *nayre*, by order of the elephant's master, called him by his name, which was *Gnin*, he being at some distance, but presently lifted up his head to give ear to what was said to him. *Remember*, said the *nayre*, *that father, the passenger that looked upon you yesterday, when you was eating; take such a bough as one of them was, and come before him, as you did yesterday*. No sooner had the *nayre* spoke the words, but the elephant came before me with a bough in his trunk, singling me out among all the company, shew'd it me, bark'd, and eat it; then inclining himself very low, he went away, as it were, laughing, making signs of joy and satisfaction; leaving me full of astonishment, to see that a beast should be so apt to understand, and do what it was commanded. Yet the elephant is obedient to none but the *nayre*, or his master: and he will only endure to see them get upon him; for if he should see any other person mount, there were danger that he would throw down the coach with his trunk, and kill him; and therefore when any body is to get up, the *nayre* generally covers his eyes with his ears, which are very large and ill shap'd.

{How they are corrected.}

If at any time the elephant does not obey so readily as he should, the *nayre* beats him cruelly on the middle of his forehead, standing himself all the while upright on his head: One time when I was upon him, with several others, the *nayre* beat him, as has been said, and every stroke he gave him, it looked as if we should have been all thrown down headlong. Generally they give him six or seven strokes on the middle of the forehead; but with such force, that the elephant quakes, and yet bears all patiently. There is only one time when he obeys neither the *nayre*, nor any other body; which is, when on a sudden he is inflamed with lust; for then, being quite besides himself, he bears with no body, but lays hold of the coach with all that are in it, killing, destroying, and beating every thing to pieces. But the *nayre* by certain signs discovers it a little before it comes, and getting down speedily with all the passengers, unloads, him, taking down the coach, and leaves him alone in some by-place, till that fury be over; after which, being sensible of his error, and as it were ashamed of himself, he goes with his head low to receive the blows that are to be given him, thinking he has deserved them.

{Now useless in war.}

Formerly the elephants were of great use in war, and those armies were formidable that carried great troops of them into the field; but since the *Portugueses* found out the way of using artificial fireworks to them, they are rather hurtful than otherwise; for not being able to endure those sparks of fire which get into their eyes, they betake themselves to flight, breaking their own armies, killing and confounding all that stands in their way.⁴

⁴ Despite what Borri says here, elephants were trained to endure explosions and fireworks and remained important in Cochinchinese armies throughout the seventeenth century and later. Li Tana, *Nguyên Cochinchina* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1998), pp. 41-

{The rhinoceros.}

The tame elephant fights with only two creatures, which are the wild elephant and the abada, or rhinoceros; the latter it overcomes, by the first is generally conquered. The rhinoceros is a beast of shape between a horse and an ox, but as big as one of the smallest elephants, cover'd all over with scales, as it were so many plates of armour. He has but one horn in the middle of the forehead, which is straight and pyramidal, and his feet and hoofs are like those of an ox. When I was at *Nuocmon*,⁵ a city in the province of *Pulucambi*, the governor went out to hunt a rhinoceros, that was in a wood near our dwelling place. He had with him above a hundred men, some a foot, and some a horseback, and eight or ten elephants. The rhinoceros came out of the wood, and seeing so many enemies, was so far from giving any tokens of fear, that it furiously encountered them all; who opened and making a lane, let the rhinoceros run through: It came to the rear, where the governor was a-top of his elephant, waiting to kill it; the elephant endeavors to lay hold with his trunk, but could not by reason of the rhinoceros's swiftness and leaping, that striving to wound the elephant with its horn. The governor knowing it could receive no hurt, by reason of the scales, unless they struck it on the side, waited till leaping it laid open the naked place, and casting a dart, dexterously struck it through from side to side, with great applause and satisfaction of all the multitude of spectators; who without any more to do, laid it upon a great pile of wood, and setting fire to it, leap'd and danc'd about, whilst the scales were burning, and flesh roasting, cutting pieces as it roasted, and eating them. Of the entrails, that is the heart, liver, and brain, they made a more dainty dish, and gave it to the governor, who was upon a rising ground, diverting himself with their merriment. I being present, obtained the hoofs of the governor⁶; which are looked upon to have the same quality and virtue, as the claws of the great beast (or the hoof of the elk) and so the horn is good against poison, as is the unicorn's.

43. See "Les Européens qui ont vu le vieux Hue: Cristoforo Borri," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué* 18, 3-4 (July-December 1931): 306, n. 36.

⁵ *Nước Mặn* (Salt Water) was a port and the residence of the governor, the modern city of Qui Nhơn in Bình Định province.

⁶ i.e., "obtained the hoofs" from the governor.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE QUALITIES, CUSTOMS, AND MANNERS OF THE COCHIN-CHINESES; OF THEIR WAY OF LIVING, THEIR HABIT AND CURES.

{Colour and disposition of body of the *Cochin-Chinesees*.}

The *Cochin-Chinesees* are in colour like the *Chinesees*; that is, inclining to an olive-color: I mean those that are nearest the sea; for those up the inland, as far as *Tonchin*, are as white as the *Europeans*. The shape of their faces is exactly like the *Chinesees*, with flat noses, little eyes, but of an indifferent stature, not so small as the *Japoneses*, nor so tall as the *Chinesees*. Yet they are stronger and more active than either of them, and braver than the *Chinesees*, but are out-done by the *Japoneses* in one thing, which is the contempt of life in dangers and battles; The *Japoneses* seeming to make no account of life, nor to apprehend the least fear of death.

{Their civility.}

The *Cochin-Chinesees* are naturally the most courteous and affable of all the *Eastern* nations; and tho' on the one side they value themselves much upon their valour, yet on the other they look upon it as a great shame, to suffer themselves to be transported with passion. And whereas all the other *Eastern* nations, looking upon the *Europeans* as a profane people, do naturally abhor them, and therefore fly from us when first we come among them: in *Cochin-China* it falls out just contrary; for they strive who shall be nearest us, ask a thousand questions, invite us to eat with them, and in short use all manner of courtesy with much familiarity and respect. So it happened to me and my companions when we first came there, being as it were, among friends of an old standing. This is a very good disposition to facilitate the preaching of the gospel

{Liberality.}

This loving and easy disposition is the cause of much concord among them, they all treating one another as familiarly as if they were brothers or of the same family, tho' they have never known or seen one another before; and it would be look'd upon as a most vile action, if one man eating any thing, tho' never so little, should not share with all about him, giving every one a bit. They are also naturally kind and free-hearted to the poor, to whom it is customary among them never to deny an alms, when asked; and it would be reputed a great fault to deny it, as if it were due to them. Thus it happened, that some strangers escaping from a shipwreck in a port

in *Cochin-China*, and not knowing the language to make known their want, but learning only this word *doi*¹ [*Dóí*], which signifies *I am hungry*: when the natives saw strangers at their doors, crying out *doi*, as if the greatest misfortune in the world had befallen them, every one strove to be before another in giving them to eat; so that in a short time they gathered so much provision, that a ship being afterwards given them by the king to return to their country, they took such an affection to that country, where they found all things for their sustenance at such an easy rate, that not a man of them would go away; so that the captain of the ship was forced to drive them aboard with many blows and cuts, which he effectually did, loading the ship with the rice they had gathered only by going about, crying, *I am hungry*.

But as ready as the *Cochin-Chinenses* are to give, so are they as apt, if not more, to ask any thing they see, so that as soon as ever they cast their eye on any thing that is new to them, and curious, they say, *Schin Mocai*;² that is, *Give me one of these things*: and it is such a rudeness to refuse them, tho' the thing be rare and precious, that whosever should do it, would be ever after looked upon as a vile person; so that a man must either hide, or be ready to give what he shews. A *Portuguese* merchant disliking this uncommon custom, as not used to it; resolved, since every one asked of him whatsoever he saw, to do the same with them: accordingly he came to a poor fisherman's boat, and laying hold of a pannier full of fish, in the country language said to him, *Schin Mocai*; the honest man made no answer, but gave him all the pannier as it was, for him to carry home, as he did, admiring the liberality of the *Cochin-Chinenses*; but taking compassion on the poor fisherman, he afterwards paid him the full value of it.

{Their breeding.}

The manner of breeding and civility the *Cochin-Chinenses* use, is more or less the same with that of the *Chinenses*, always punctually observing all niceties; we know these latter observe between superiors and inferiors, equals, and the respect due to ancient persons, ever preferring the eldest, of what degree soever, and giving them preference before the younger. Wherefore some of those gentlemen coming often a visiting to our house, tho' the interpreter told them, that a father we had there somewhat elder than the rest, was not our superior: yet they could never be brought to pay their respect to the young superior, before the old man. In every house, tho' never so poor, the *Cochin-Chinenses* have three sorts of seats: the first and meanest, is a mat upon the bare floor, on which persons of equal quality sit, as those that are of the same family. The next is, a low stool, covered with a very fine mat; which is for persons of better account. The third is a couch about three quarters of a yard high, on which only the lords and governors of places sit, or persons dedicated to the divine service, and on this they always make our fathers sit.

This good nature and civility of the *Cochin-Chinenses*, makes them so courteous to strangers, whom they allow to live according to their own laws, and to wear what clothes they please; and so they praise their customs, and admire their doctrine,

¹ In the original, it is written *doi*. In the modern orthography, it is spelled *dóí*. Christoforo Borri, *Relatione*, p. 49.

² In the original, it is written *Schin mocai*. See *ibid.*, pp. 49-50. In the modern orthography it is *Xin mót cáí*.

frankly preferring them before their own; quite contrary to the *Chinenses*, who despise all but their own customs and doctrine.

[Fashion of clothes.]

As for their habit, we have before observed, that it is the general custom in *Cochin-China* to wear silk; It only remains to speak of the fashion of their clothes. To begin with the women; I think the modestest garb of all *India*; for even in the hottest weather, they suffer no part of the body to be uncovered: they wear five or six petticoats one over another, all of several colours, the first reaches to the ground, which they trail along the ground with such gravity and state, that the tips of their toes are not seen; the second is half a span shorter than the first: the third shorter than that; and so one over another; so that all the several colors appear: and this is the women's habit from the waste [waist] downwards, for on their bodies they wear doublets checkered of several colours; over all they have a veil; but so thin, that tho' it covers them, yet it is transparent, and shews all their gaiety with modesty, and makes a beauteous majestic appearance. Their hair is loose, spreading over their shoulders, so long that it reaches to the ground, and the longer the greater beauty it is reckon'd. On their head they wear such a broad cap, that it covers all their face, so that they cannot see above four or five paces before them; and these caps are interwoven with silk and gold, according to the quality of the person. The women when met, are not obliged to any other return of civility, but to lift up the brims of their caps, so much, as their face may be seen. The man, instead of breeches, swathe themselves with a whole piece of stuff, putting on over them five or six long and large gowns all of fine silk, and of several colors, with wide sleeves, like those of the monks of the order of *St. Benedict*;³ and these gowns, from the waste downwards, are all flashed curiously so that as a man moves he makes a shew of all those several colours together, and if any wind blows to lift them up, they look like peacocks with their fine feathers spread abroad.

{Hair and nails never cut.}

They let their hair grow as the women do, down to their heels, and wear the same sort of hats, or broad caps. Those who have any beard, and they are but few, never cut it; being in this like the *Chinenses*, as they are in suffering the nails of their hands to grow, which the people of note never pare; this being a mark of distinction between them and the commonalty, who always keep them short, for the convenience of their trades; whereas the gentry have them so long, that they cannot grasp any small thing in their hands. Nor can they approve of our fashion of cutting our hair and nails⁴ being of opinion, that they were given by nature, as an ornament

³ The order, also known as "black monks," was founded in the sixth century by St. Benedict (480?-547?).

⁴ Jean Koffler, who spent several years in Cochinchina in the mid-eighteenth century, in his work *Historica Cochinchinae descriptio*, published in 1803, observed that "short hair was the sign of a commoner"; Jean Koffler, "Description historique de la Cochinchine," *Revue Indochinoise* XVI,12 (December 1911): 582. Marini, a missionary in Tonkin in the mid-seventeenth century, wrote: "Men as well as women wear their hair rolled up because they lived under the Chinese domination... but being liberated from their captivity to mark their liberty, as they say,

to man: so that some discourse arising once concerning hair, they started an objection, which was not so easy to answer at sight, saying: *If the Saviour of the world, whom in your actions you profess your selves to imitate, wore his hair long, after the manner of the Nazarites, as you your selves do affirm, and shew by your pictures, why do not you do so too?* Adding, *That our Saviour's wearing long hair, demonstrated it to be the better fashion.* But at last they were satisfy'd with the answer we made, that this imitation did not consist in the outward dress.⁵

{The scholars.}

The scholars and doctors are somewhat more gravely clad, without so many colours and flashes, and therefore cover all their gowns with one of black damask. They also wear a thing like a stole about their necks and a blew [blue] silk maniple on their arms, covering their heads with caps made after the manner of mitres.

Both men and women carry fans in their hands, rather for ornament than use, and they are not unlike to those the women in *Europe* use. For mourning, as we *Europeans* use black, they wear white. They never uncover their heads in saluting, that being looked upon as an uncivil action. Wherein they agree with the *Chinenses*, among whom that custom is reputed so unmannerly, that to comply with them in this particular, the fathers of the society were forced to obtain leave of pope *Paul* the fifth,⁶ to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the mass covered. In short, the *Cochin-Chinenses* wear neither shoes nor stockings, only saving their feet with leather soles fastened across the toes with silk, like sandals; nor do they think it indecent to go quite barefoot; and though going shod or unshod, they are apt to dirty their feet, they value it not, there being in every house at the door of the chief room, a large pan of clean water, in which they wash their feet, leaving those soles or sandals they use there, to take them again when they go away, because they cannot then dirt their feet, all the floors being covered with mats.

The *Cochin-Chinenses* not being so fond of their own customs, as to despise those of strangers, as the *Chinenses* do, our fathers in those parts have no occasion to change their habit, wherein they differ but little from the generality of all *India*. They wear a thin cotton cassock, which they call *Ehingon*, and is generally blue, without any cloak, or other upper-garment. They have no shoes,⁷ neither after the *European*, nor country [local] fashion; the first they cannot get, because there is no body knows how to make them; and the latter they cannot endure, because of the pain it is to any body that is not used to it, to have his toes spread at a distance from one another, by

against the Chinese sentiments, they leave their hair hang lose neglectfully." Gio. Filippo de Marini, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao*, pp. 70-1.

⁵ A similar problem existed in China with the advent of Buddhism, when Buddhism was considered an alien religion. One of the objections that the Chinese had against the Buddhists was that they shaved their heads, thus altering their appearance given to them by God and their parents. Marini describes the situation between the Buddhist monks and lay people in Tonkin as follows: "Bonzes are shaved-head by some vanity and presumption. Seculars, they say, whose actions are mortal and of no consideration, who do not have any merits, should, in fact, have their hair long so that the Idol could pull them easily to Heaven; but not them [bonzes], whose proper merits will serve them as wings to rise [there]." Marini, *Relation nouvelle*, p. 71.

⁶ 1550-1621, elected to be Pope in 1605.

⁷ The original reads *non usamo però scarpe* (p. 57): "but they do not use shoes."

reasons of the buttons that fasten them on, and therefore they choose as the less evil, to go quite barefoot, though it exposes them to continual pains in the bowels, especially at first, by reason of the dampness of the country, and their not being used to it. True it is, that in time nature complies, and the skin grows so hard, that it is no pain to walk upon stones or briars. When I returned to *Macao*, I could not endure shoes, thinking them a weight and encumbrance to my feet.

[Their diet.]

The chief sustenance of the *Cochinchinese* is rice; and it is wonderful, that tho' the country abounds in flesh, fowl, fish, and fruit, of so many several sorts, yet when they eat, they first fill their belly with rice, and then taste of other things, as it were for fashion-sake. They make more account of rice than we do of bread, and that it may not clog them, they eat it alone without any seasoning of salt, sugar, oil, or butter, but boiled in so much water as will keep it from burning to, so that the grain remains whole, only soften'd and moisten'd. For this very reason that the rice is not seasoned, it is the easier of digestion, and therefore they that live upon rice, as they do in the east, commonly eat it at least four times a day, and a great quantity of it to support nature. The *Cochinchinese* eat sitting cross-legg'd on the ground, with a round table before them breast-high, with mouldings, or adorned with silver or gold, according to the people's quality or wealth. It is not very large; because the custom is for every man to have one to himself; so that at a feast, as many guests as there are, sometimes man and wife, or father and son, will make a shift with the same table. They neither use knives nor forks; of the first they have no need, because every thing is brought up from the kitchen cut into small bits; the place of the last is supplied by two little sticks, wherewith they neatly and very readily take up any thing; nor have they any need of napkins, for they never foul their hands, nor touch any thing with them.

[Their treats.]

There are frequent invitations among neighbours, and at these entertainments they provide other sorts of dishes than what we have hitherto spoke of; for they make no account of rice, supposing every man has enough of that at home; and tho' he that treats be never so poor, he does not come off with credit, unless every guest's table be served with at least an hundred dishes; and it being the custom to invite all their friends, kindred, and neighbours, there is no feast where there is less than thirty, forty, fifty, sometimes a hundred, and even two hundred guests: I was once myself at a solemn entertainment, at which no less than two thousand were feasted, and therefore these banquets must be made in the country, that there may be room for so many tables. Nor must any body admire that the tables being small, they be furnished with a hundred dishes at least; for upon these occasions they very curiously make frames of sugar canes on the table, on which they dispose of the said dishes; and there must be in them all the varieties of meat the country produces, as well flesh as fish, and butcher's meat, as fowl, wild and tame creatures, with all sorts of fruit the season affords; for if but one were wanting, it would be a great fault in the entertainer, and they would not count it a feast. The men of quality that are invited eat first, being waited on by their chief servants. When the masters have

tasted of all they like best, these same principal servants take their places, and eat, being waited on by the inferior sort; then these succeed in their places; and because all of them are not able to consume such plenty, and according to custom all the dishes must be emptied; when these are satisfied, then the very meanest servants of every great man come in, and do not only eat their belly full, but put up all the fragments in bags they carry for that purpose, and carry them home, where they merrily divide it among the boys, and other mean fry, and so the feast ends.

{Their drink.}

Cochin-China produces no grapes, and therefore instead of wine they drink a liquor distilled from rice, which tastes like brandy, and resembles it in colour and harshness, spirit and briskness, and they have such plenty of it, that all people in general drink as much as they will of it, and are as drunk as people are among us with wine. Graver persons mix that liquor with some other water distilled from *calamba*, which gives it a delicious smell, and is a delicate composition.

Between meals they drink hot water, wherein they boil the root of an herb they call *chiù*,⁸ from which the liquor takes name. It is cordial, and helps to dispel humours from the stomach, and advance digestion. The *Japonese* and *Chinese* use such a sort of drink, only that in *China*, instead of the root, they boil the leaves of the herb; and in *Japan*, a powder made of the same leaves; but the effect is the same, and they call it *chiù*.

Amidst this great plenty of meat, and abundance of provisions, it is incredible how much hunger and thirst we *Europeans* endure; not so much for want of food, as because we are not used to that diet, nature finding a very great miss of bread and wine; and I believe the *Cochin-Chinese* would be in the same condition, should they come into *Europe*, where they would be deprived of their usual sustenance of rice, tho' they had plenty of other delicate provisions. To this purpose I will not omit to relate what happened to us with a governor of *Cochin-China*; he being a friend of ours, was invited by us to eat at our house; and the more to shew our affection, we endeavoured to have several dishes dressed for him after the *European* manner. He sat down to table, and when we expected he should acknowledge our kindness, commend the cookery, and thank us for the rarity, because we had been at much trouble about it; when he had tasted them all, he could not eat of any one, though out of civility he strove against his stomach; and we were forced to dress more meat after the country fashion, the best we could, whereof he afterwards eat very favourably, to his own and our satisfaction. Yet providence does not neglect a thousand ways to support those that undergo these hardships for the preaching of the gospel, finding means, even in this world, to requite what they suffer for the sake of God, as happens in this particular of food, as was before-said of going bare-foot; for by degrees nature grows familiar with it, and comes to be so habituated to the custom of

⁸ *Tri*, tea. Tea did not become known in Europe until rather late, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It was the Dutch who introduced it to Europe. Tea was an exotic product for the first Europeans. Alexandre de Rhodes commented on it: "In my opinion one of the things that contributes most to the health of these people who so often reach a ripe old age is tea, used very widely throughout the Orient, and which is beginning to be known in France through the medium of the Dutch, who bring it from China and sell it in Paris for thirty francs a pound, which they bought in that country for eight to ten cents." Alexandre de Rhodes, *Rhodes of Vietnam*, trans. Solange Hertz (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1966), p. 31.

the country, that it looks strange when to return to its first ways. This happen'd to me, who, when I returned from thence, coveted nothing but the rice of *Cochin-China*, which I thought satisfied me more than any other thing.

{Physicians.}

As for physicians, and their way of practice, there are abundance of doctors, not only *Portuguese*, but natives; and it often is experimentally known, that the country physicians easily cure several diseases, which the *European* physicians know not what to do with; so it sometimes happens, that after our physicians have given over a patient, they call one of the country, and he cures him.

{Way of practice.}

The physicians of the country use this sort of practice; being come to the patient's bedside, they stay a little to settle themselves after the motion of coming; then they feel the pulse for a long while together, very attentively, and with much consideration; after which they usually say, You have such a distemper; and if incurable, they honestly say, I have no cure for this disease; which is a sign the patient will die. If they find the disease curable, they say, I have a medicine that will cure him; and I will do it in so many days. Then they agree what they are to have if they cure the sick man, bargaining the best they can, and sometimes they draw up writings to bind the contract. After this the physician himself prepares the medicine, without the help of an apothecary; for which reason there are none in the country; and this they do, that they may not discover the secret of the art they work; and because they will not trust another to put together the ingredients they prescribe. If the patient recovers within the time appointed, as generally happens, he pays the price agreed on; if he miscarries, the physician loses his labor and medicines.

{Medicines.}

The medicines they give are not like ours, which cause a loathing, and are laxative; but theirs are palatable as their broths, and nourishing without any other sustenance, which makes them give the patient several doses in a day, as we give broth at so many hours interval; and these do not alter the course of nature, but only help the usual operations of nature, dispersing the peccant humours, without wracking the patient.

{A notable story.}

I remember a passage worth the relating in this place: A *Portuguese* falling sick, sent for the *European* physicians; who having used their endeavors, gave him over. When they were gone, a physician of the country was called; who undertook to cure him in so many days, strictly injoining him, whilst he was under his hands, to have a care of having to do with women, upon pain of certain death, from which the virtue of his medicine could not deliver him. They agreed upon the price, and the physician undertook to cure him in thirty days. The patient took the medicines prescribed him, and in a few days found himself so well recovered, that he was not afraid to transgress the physician's injunction; who coming to visit him, by the alteration of

his pulse discovered the sick man's incontinency, and bid him prepare to die, because there was no cure for him; but that he should pay him his money, since it was none of his fault that he must die. The case was try'd; the sick man was adjudged to pay; and so he died.

{Bleeding.}

Bleeding is also used, but not so much as in *Europe*, nor is it done with a steel lancet; but they have abundance of goose-quills, in which they fix some bits of fine porcelain, made sharp, and shaped like the teeth of a saw, some bigger, some less, of several sizes. When they are to let blood, they apply one of these quills to the vein, proportionable to the bigness of it, and giving it a flip with the finger, open the vein, only so much of the porcelain entering as is requisite; and what is most wonderful, when they have drawn the blood, they use no fillet or binding to stop it; but wetting their thumb with spittle they press the orifice, so that the flesh returning to the place whence it was parted, the blood is stopt, and runs out no more; which I suppose to proceed from the manner of opening the vein, as it were sawing it with that porcelain full of teeth, and therefore it closes again the easier.

{Surgeons.}

There are also surgeons, who have some wonderful secrets, whereof I will give but two instances, one practiced upon my self, the other upon one of our brothers, my companion: I happened to fall from a very high place, with my breast against the corner of a stone, whereupon I presently began to spit blood, and had a wound in my breast outwardly.

{Great cures.}

We applied some medicines after our *European* manner, but to no purpose. A surgeon of the country came and took a quantity of a certain herb like that we call mercury, and making it into a plaister, laid it on my breast, then he caused some of that herb to be boiled for me to drink, and made me eat the same herb raw; and thus in a few days perfectly cured me. I, to make another experiment, caused the leg of a hen to be broke in several places, and making a plaister as he had done for the same herb, bound it upon the broken leg, and in a few days it was whole and sound.

A scorpion bit a brother of ours, my companion, in the neck; and in that kingdom the bite of a scorpion is mortal. All his throat swelled immediately, and we were about giving him extreme unction. A surgeon was sent for, who immediately set a pot of rice a boiling in nothing but fair water, then clapping the pot to the brother's feet, covered him and it close with cloths, that the steam might not go out, and as soon as the said steam and hot smoke of the rice came up to the place where the bite was, the brother felt the pain assuage, the swelling in his throat fell, and he remained as sound as if nothing had ailed him.

Many other instances might be added, but I shall only say, that the medicines in those parts have a greater virtue than when they come to us; and particularly I can affirm, that I brought with me a small cask of *rhubarb*, which was extraordinary good there, and when I came into *Europe*, having spent two years by the way, I found it so changed, that I scarce knew it myself, so that those medicines lose much of their virtue in bringing from those countries to our parts.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE CIVIL AND POLITICAL GOVERNMENT OF THE COCHIN-CHINESES.

I will give a brief account of as much as may suffice for the reader's information; for it would be too tedious, and from the purpose of this my short relation, to discourse of every thing in particular. The government of *Cochin-China*, in general, is a medium betwixt those of *China* and *Japan*: for whereas the *Japaneses* make less account of learning than military knowledge: and on the contrary, the *Chineses* attribute all to learning, taking little notice of warlike affairs.¹ The *Cochin-Chineses* following the example of neither, equally encourage learning, and skill in war, according as occasion offers; sometimes preferring the soldier, and sometimes the scholar, and so repulsing them as appears most convenient.

{Learning.}

In *Cochin-China* there are several² universities, in which there are professors, scholars, and degrees conferred by way of examination, in the same manner as is practiced in *China*; the same sciences being taught, and the same books and authors read,³ that is, *Zinfu*, or *Confucius*, as the *Portugueses* call them;⁴ which are authors of such profound learning, and in such esteem and reputation amongst them, as *Aristotle*⁵ is among us, being much ancienter than he. These books of theirs are full of erudition, of stories, of grave sentences, or proverbs, and such like things, for the directing a civil life, as are *Seneca*,⁶ *Cato*,⁷ and *Cicero*,⁸ among us; and they spend

¹ This is a very interesting observation as it reflects Borri's knowledge of the governments in both China and Japan.

² In the original Italian, *molto*, "many." Borri, *Relatione*, p. 70.

³ While the government in the North was mostly built on the civil service, the Nguyễn government relied heavily on the military, especially during the first period of its existence, since they were at war with the Trinh lords. The civil service exams were held there on a less frequent and less regular basis than in the North, but they were still based on the same Confucian Classics and commentaries to them, as in the North.

⁴ This sentence is obscure as it is not clear whether *Zinfu* is the same person as Confucius or these are two different people. On the one hand, "or" implies that they are the same person; on the other hand, Borri uses the plural for "authors" and uses the pronoun "them." The name *Zinfu* is a mystery.

⁵ 384-322 BCE. Greek philosopher and mathematician.

⁶ Lucius Annaeus Seneca (3-4 BCE-65 CE). A Spanish-born Roman philosopher, a tutor and later advisor to Emperor Nero (r. 54-68), one of the most famous Stoic philosophers.

many years in learning the true sense of the phrases, words, characters, and hieroglyphics, they are writ in; but that they most value is moral philosophy, or ethicks, economy, and policy. It is comical to see and hear them, when they are studying, read and repeat their lessons in such a tone as if they were singing, which they do to use themselves to it, and give every word its proper accents, which are many, every one expressing a several thing: and therefore one would think, that to converse with them, a man must understand the grounds of music.

The language they generally speak, is different from that they read and teach at the schools, and which their books are writ in: as among us the vulgar language differs from the *Latin* used in the schools. Wherein they differ from the *Chinese*, who, if they are learned, or noble, always use the same language, which they call of *mandarines*; that is, of doctors, judges, and governors, and the characters they use in writing and printing their books, are above eight thousand, all differing from one another. And for this reason the fathers of the society spend eight, and even ten years, in studying the *Chinese* books, before they can be masters, and go abroad to converse with them. But the *Cochin-Chinese* have reduced the characters to three thousand, which they generally make use of: and these are enough to express themselves in their harangues, letters, petitions, memorials, and such things which do not belong to printed books;⁹ for those of necessity must be in *Chinese* characters. The *Japoneses* have been more ingenious, who, tho' in all that belongs to books, whether written or printed, they agree with the *Chinese*, yet for common uses have found out forty-eight letters, wherewith they express whatsoever they please, as well as we do with our alphabet: and yet the *Chinese* characters are in such esteem even among the *Japoneses*, that these forty-eight letters, notwithstanding the use they are of above the others, are contemned in comparison of them; insomuch, that in scorn they call them women's letters.¹⁰

The ingenious invention of printing was found out in *China*,¹¹ and *Cochin-China*, long before it was in *Europe*: but not in such perfection: for they do not compose joining letters and characters, but with a graver, penknife, or such instrument, cut and carve the characters upon a stone as they will have them in their books: on this board so carved they lay their paper, and print it off, as we in *Europe* do copper-plates, or the like.

Besides these books of morals, they have others, which contain things they account sacred; as for instance, the creation and beginning of the world: of the rational souls of demons: of idols, and of their several sects. These books are called

⁷ Marcus Porcius Priscus (234-149 BCE). A Roman orator, statesman, and writer, called Cato for his skillfulness (from Latin *catus*—sharp intellect). He advocated a return to conservative values of Roman morality.

⁸ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE). A Roman orator and statesman.

⁹ Borri is here referring to the demotic Vietnamese writing called *nôm*.

¹⁰ The reference is to the *hiragana* system of writing composed of forty-eight characters. "*Hira* means 'commonly used,' 'easy,' 'rounded.'" Campbell et al., eds., *The Japan Encyclopedia* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993), p. 731. *Hiragana* was developed from simplified Chinese characters. "In its early [ninth century] forms, *hiragana* was used by women [who were not permitted to learn the Chinese script], while the unsimplified *kanji* were used by men; for this reason, the earliest *hiragana* was also called *onnade*, 'women's hand.' By the end of the ninth century, *onnade* ceased to be a system limited to women . . ." *Ibid.*

¹¹ Ninth century.

Sayc Kim, to distinguish them from the profane, which they call *Sayc Chiu*.¹² Of the doctrine of their sacred books, we shall treat in the second part of this account, where the subject will be more suitable.

{The language.}

Though the language of the *Cochin-Chinneses* be in one respect like that of the *Chinneses*, both of them using all monosyllables, delivered in several tones and accents; yet they utterly differ in the word itself, the *Cochin-Chinneses* being more full of vowels, and consequently softer and sweeter, more copious in tones and accents, and therefore more harmonious. The language of *Cochin-China* is, in my opinion, the easiest of any, for those that have a musical ear, to take the tones and accents; for it has no variety by way of conjugation of verbs, or declination of nouns, but one and the same word, with the addition of an adverb, or pronoun, signifies the present, the preterit, and future tenses, the singular number, and the plural; and in fine, serves for all moods, tenses, and persons, and the diversity of numbers and cases. For instance, this word, *To have*, which in the [Cochin] *Chinese* language¹³ is *Co* [*Có*], by only adding a pronoun, serves all occasions, saying, *I have*, *Thou have*, *He have*; the name of the person making that diversity, which we express by altering the termination, thus, *I have*, *Thou Hast*, *He has*. In the same manner they make the several tenses; saying, for the present, *I now have*; for the preterit, *I heretofore have*; and for the future, *I hereafter have*: And so without ever altering the word *Co*; by which it appears how easily this language may be learned: as it happened to me, who in six months understood so much, that I could discourse, and even hear their confessions, tho' not so perfectly, for it requires at least four years to be a master [*This variety of moods and tenses, appears better by the Latin, or other languages, than in English, where we use much the same method, as he represents in Cochinchina; our variations the same, being but few, as to instance in the same word, I have, You have, We have, They have, I shall have, May we have: and so in this, and many others.*]¹⁴

{Rewards for military men.}

But to return to our relation: I was saying, that the *Cochin-Chinneses* reward not only the learned with dignities, employments, and revenues; but that they make great account of good soldiers, in which particular they act differently from us; for instead of assigning brave commanders, some land, earldom, or marquisate, as a reward of their valour, they allot him such a number of people, and vassals, belonging to the king himself, who, whatsoever part of the kingdom they live in, are obliged to own him as their lord, to whom they have been assigned by the king,

¹² *Sayc Kim* is *Sách Kinh* in modern spelling, denoting "sutras" or classic Confucian books. As for *Sayc Chiu*, its original is more uncertain. It is possible that *Sayc Chiu* stands for *Sách Chũ*, meaning "book in letters or in characters" to distinguish between the sacredness of the *kinh* and the mundaneness of the *chiũ*, while also highlighting the difference between classical Chinese in the first case (as *kinh* is a Chinese word) and the demotic Vietnamese (*nôm*) in the second case, as *chiũ* is vernacular. It should be noted that *chiũ* can signify any script, including Chinese, as for example in the compound *chiũ Hán*, "classical Chinese."

¹³ In the original it is "in *Cochin-Chinese* language." See Christoforo Borri, *Relatione*, p. 75. The English translation dropped "Cochin."

¹⁴ This bracketed comment is from the translator.

being bound upon all occasions to serve him with their weapons, and to pay him all those duties they before paid to the king himself; and therefore, as we say, such a one is lord, earl, or marquess of such a place; they say, such a one is a man of fifty, such a one of a thousand men, to such a one the king has added three thousand, to such a one two thousand; their dignity, wealth, and grandeur increasing by the addition of many vassals. We shall speak of the wars of this kingdom in the next chapter.

{Trials at law.}

It remains that we say somewhat worth being known of the civil government. In the first they govern rather after a military manner, than by judges, counsellors, and lawyers, and their formalities; the vice-roys and governors of provinces performing that function: for every day they give publick audience for four hours daily, in a large court within their own palace, two hours in the morning, and two after dinner. Hither all suits and complaints are brought, and the vice-roy, or governor, sitting on a tribunal raised like a balcony, hears every man in his turn; and these governors being generally men of sound judgment, capacity, and experience, they easily discover the truth of the matter by the questions they put, and much more by the common consent of the stander-by, which is gathered by the applause they give the plaintiff, or defendant, and accordingly they immediately, without delay, give judgment with a loud voice, which is immediately executed without any demur, or appeal, whether the sentence be death, banishment, whipping, or fine, every crime being punish'd as the law appoints.

{False witnesses, how punished.}

The crimes generally try'd and severely punished are many, but they are particularly rigid against false witnesses, thieves, and adulterers. The first of these being convicted of having given false evidence, are themselves indispensably condemned, as if they themselves had committed the crime they accuse others of. And if the crime they alleged deserved death, they are sentenced to die: and experience teaches, that this way of trial is very proper to find out the truth.

{Thieves.}

Thieves, if the theft be considerable, are beheaded; if small, as for example, a hen, for the first offense they have a finger cut off, for the second another finger, for the third an ear, and for the fourth the head.

{Adulterers.}

Adulterers, both men and women, indifferently are cast to the elephants to be killed, which is done thus: They lead the criminal out into the field, where in the presence of an infinite number of people flocking together, he is set in the middle, with his hands and feet bound, near an elephant, to whom the condemned person's sentence is read, that he may execute every part of it orderly; first, that he lay hold of, grasp, and hold him fast with his trunk, and so hold him in the air, shewing him to all the company; then, that he toss him up, and catch him upon the points of his teeth, that his own weight may strike them through him; that then, he dash him

against the ground; and lastly, that he bruise and crush him to pieces with his feet: All which is exactly performed by the elephant, to the great terror and amazement of the spectators, who are taught by this punishment, at another man's cost, what fidelity is due between married persons.

{Matrimony.}

Since we are upon this point of matrimony, it will not be from the purpose to deliver some farther particulars concerning it, before we conclude this chapter. The *Cochin-Chinenses*, though heathens, never use to contract matrimony within those degrees forbid by the laws of God and nature, nor within the first degree of the collateral line of brothers and sisters. In other degrees, matrimony is lawful to every man with only one woman; though rich men use to have many concubines, under pretense of grandeur and generosity, looking upon it as covetousness, not to have as many as every man's income will conveniently maintain; and these are called second, third, fourth, and fifth wives, and so on, according to every one's rank, all which wait upon the first, which is accounted, and really is the true wife, whose business it is to choose the others for her husband. But these marriages of theirs are not indissoluble, the laws of *Cochin-China* allowing of divorces, but not at the will of either party, it being first requisite, that the person suing for it, convict the other of many offenses; which being made out, it is lawful to dissolve the first marriage, and marry again. The husbands bring the portion, and leave their own houses to go to the wife's; upon whose fortunes they live, the women managing all the household affairs, and governing the family, whilst the husband lives idle at home, hardly knowing what there is in the house, satisfied that they have meat and clothes.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE POWER OF THE KING OF COCHIN-CHINA, AND OF THE WARS HE HAS IN HIS KINGDOM.

{Their skill in cannon and small arms.}

I took notice at the beginning of this account, that *Cochin-China* was a province of the great kingdom of *Tonchin*, usurp'd by the grandfather of the king now reigning; who being made governor of it, rebelled against the said king of *Tonchin*; to which he was not a little encouraged, by having in a short time got together a great many pieces of cannon, of the wrecks of several *Portuguese* and *Dutch* ships, cast away upon those rocks, which being taken up by the country people, there are above sixty of the biggest, at this time, to be seen in the king's palace. The *Cochin-Chinese* are now become so expert in managing artillery, that they perform it better than the *Europeans*, practicing continually to shoot at a mark, with such success, that being proud of their skill, as soon as any *European* ship arrives in their ports, the king's gunners challenge ours, who being sensible that they cannot stand in competition with them, as near as they can, avoid this trial of skill, being convinced by experience, that they will hit any thing as exactly with a cannon, as another shall do with a firelock; which they are also very expert at, often drawing out into the field to exercise.

{Gallies, scymitars, and horses.}

Another great encouragement to rebellion, was, his having above a hundred gallies, which rendering him formidable at sea, and the artillery by land, he easily compass'd his designs against the king of *Tonchin*. Besides, by reason of the constant trade in *Japan*, there were in *Cochin-China* abundance of *Catana's*,¹ which are scymitars made in *Japan*, and excellently tempered. And all the country abounding in horses, which tho' small, are handsome and mettlesome, on which they fight, casting darts, and daily exercise themselves.

{King's power.}

The power of this king is so great, that whensoever he pleases, he can bring 80,000 fighting men into the field, and yet is always in fear of the king of *Tonchin*, whose power is four times as great; to whom, for quietness sake, he, by agreement, pays a tribute, of all such things as his kingdom affords, and are useful for that of *Tonchin*, particularly of gold, silver, and rice; furnishing, besides all this, plank and

¹ *Catana* is a Japanese word for scimitar, a curved sword.

timber for building of galleys. And for the same reason he was about entering into a league with the fugitive son [Mạc Kinh Cung] of the late king [Mạc Mậu Hợp],² who lorded it in the utmost province of *Tonchin*, which borders upon *China* [Cao Bằng],³ that in case he succeeded, and became master of *Tonchin*, *Cochin-China* might remain free from all tribute and acknowledgment.⁴

For the better understanding hereof, it is to be observed, that when I was in *Cochin-China*, that kingdom [Tonkin] was in the possession not of the precedent king [Mạc Mậu Hợp], but⁵ the tutor or governor [Trịnh Tùng]⁶ of that son [Mạc Kinh Cung], who made his escape from the said governor to save his life. The said prince [Mạc Kinh Cung] lived like a fugitive, in the farthest province adjoining to *China* [Cao Bằng]; where being known to be what he was, that is, the late king's son, he was received by that people as their sovereign lord, and by his good government he had so strengthened himself, that his tutor [Trịnh Tùng], already declared king of *Tonchin*,⁷ was much afraid, seeing him [Mạc Kinh Cung] grow so great, lest he should agree with the king of *Cochin-China*, who is on the opposite side, to catch him [Trịnh Tùng] between them, and expel him his unjust possession.⁸ He therefore every year form'd a considerable army to destroy the aforesaid prince [Mạc Kinh Cung], but always to no purpose, because the army being of necessity to march five or six days, through a country where there is no other water to drink, but that of some

² Ruled from 1562 to 1592; the last king of the Mạc dynasty to rule from Hanoi.

³ In 1592 the Mạc were driven from the capital city into the northern provinces of Tonkin and concentrated in the northernmost provinces of Cao Bằng and Lạng Sơn. King Mạc Mậu Hợp was captured. His son Mạc Kinh Cung (r. 1593-1625) was proclaimed king to succeed him. With the help of the Ming dynasty in China, Cao Bằng was secured for the Mạc. They remained there until 1667. Trần Trọng Kim, *Việt Nam Sử Lược* (Short History of Vietnam) (Nhà Xuất Bản Văn Hóa Thông Tin, 1999), pp. 302-6.

⁴ Borri refers to contacts between the Nguyễn and the Mạc families. While we do not have historical evidence corroborating this statement, it is only logical to assume that after 1600, when the Nguyễn began to be estranged from the Trịnh, who were based in Hanoi, they would approach the Mạc in search of an ally against the Trịnh.

⁵ This is an imprecise translation of the original, which reads . . . *stava in possesso de Regno del Tonchin, non il figlio del Re passato, ma . . .* (" . . . already in possession of the Kingdom of Tonkin, not the son of the preceding king, but . . ."). Borri, *Relatione*, p. 83. The English translation gives two variations for the Italian *Re passato*: in the previous paragraph it was translated as "late king" and here it is "precedent king." But Borri definitely implies one and the same king, Mạc Mậu Hợp, and uses the same words in reference to him.

⁶ In the original, Borri uses the Italian word *tutor*, which means "tutor." See Borri, *Relatione*, p. 83. Borri mistakenly refers here to the warlord Trịnh Tùng (r. 1570-1623)—who was a leading figure in defeating the Mạc in 1592—as the tutor of the "son who made his escape," conflating Mạc Kinh Cung with King Lê Thế Tông (r. 1573-1599). Lê Thế Tông ascended the throne at the age of seven, and Trịnh Tùng was the one who really governed the country as if he were the young king's "tutor." The Trịnh family used the Lê kings as figureheads until the end of the dynasty in 1788.

⁷ Borri conflates the Mạc with the Lê and thinks that the Trịnh occupy the throne in Hanoi.

⁸ As it has been said above, the Trịnh lords were the real rulers, or in Borri's terms "kings," of Tonkin. The Nguyễn lords accused the Trịnh of usurping the Lê king's royal authority. The Mạc had been expelled into the northern mountains from their possession of the capital in the 1590s by an alliance of the Trịnh and Nguyễn; however, the Nguyễn subsequently established themselves on the southern coast in defiance of the Trịnh. Continuing warfare between the Trịnh and Mạc, combined with the increasingly hostile relations between the Trịnh and Nguyễn, which broke into open warfare shortly after Borri departed Vietnam, served to make natural allies of the Nguyễn and the Mạc against the Trịnh.

rivers coming from the enemies country, the army always found it poison'd by the prince's party, with a sort of herb, the effect whereof was such, that it destroyed both men and horses; which obliged him always to retire after much trouble and expence cast away.⁹

{Wars in Cochín-China.}

The military discipline, and art of war, in *Cochín-China*, is almost the same as in *Europe*, the same form being observed in drawing up, fighting, and retiring. This king has generally war in three parts of his kingdom: First, he is always upon his defence against the king of *Tonchin*, who, as has been said, continually threatens and assaults his frontiers, and therefore the king of *Cochín-China* has his residence in *Sinua*, the extreme part of his dominions, the better to oppose him, and march his forces towards the confines of *Tonchin*, which is a powerful province, and generally under experienced and martial governors.¹⁰

The next is a sort of civil war, raised by two of his own brothers, who aiming to be equal in command and power, not satisfied with what has been allotted them, have rebelled against him, and craving succours from *Tonchin*, gave him perpetual trouble. Whilst I lived in those parts, they having got some pieces of cannon, which they carried upon elephants, fortified themselves so well upon the frontiers, that the king's army marching against them, was in the first engagement routed, with the loss of 3,000 men; but coming to a second battle, the king's brothers lost all they had gained before, being both made prisoners; and they had both immediately lost their lives, had not his majesty's natural clemency and brotherly affection prevailed, and taken place of his anger, so far as to spare their lives, yet so as to keep them prisoners.¹¹

⁹ It should be noted that this passage, starting from the previous paragraph with the words "And for the same reason he was about entering into a league with the fugitive son of the late king," has been completely omitted from the Vietnamese translation of Borri's work; see Cristoforo Borri, *Xứ Đàng Trong Nam 1621* (Cochinchina. Year 1621), trans. Hồng Nhuê, Nguyễn Khắc Xuyên, Nguyễn Nghị (Hochiminh: Nhà Xuất Bản Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh, 1998), p. 84. We can hardly attribute it to a random omission, but it rather shows that this digression into early-seventeenth-century Vietnamese history depicting possible connections between the Nguyễn and the Mạc rulers and the reference to the Mạc being "received by that people as their sovereign lord, and by his good government" is still a highly censored issue in Vietnamese historiography.

¹⁰ See the next footnote. Shortly after Borri's departure from Cochinchina, the Trịnh indeed launched the war against the Nguyễn in 1627, after Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên (or Chúa Sãi) refused to pay tribute for three years (Trần Trọng Kim, *Việt Nam Sử Lược*, pp. 318-9). The war lasted for fifty years.

¹¹ Two of Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên's brothers, Phúc Hạp and Phúc Trách, established relations with the Trịnh, who were to attack from the north, and rebelled against Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên in 1620. The brothers were defeated and captured, while the northerners, seeing this event and that the Nguyễn astutely agreed to pay tribute, decided not to attack at that time. Phúc Hạp's and Phúc Trách's fate afterwards, however, is not completely clear. *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (Complete History of Great Viet) simply states that they were apprehended and murdered (*bị bắt giết*); see *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1993), bản kỷ, 21:2a (3:324), under the year 1620. Southern annals, however, report the brothers being put in prison, where they soon died of some illness. But they are not in complete agreement. Some, like *Việt Nam Khai Quốc Chí Truyền* (Story of the Foundation of the Vietnamese State), say Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên was furious and wanted to execute his disloyal brothers, but the majority of the mandarins interceded, and the brothers were imprisoned instead; other sources

The third place where he has continual war, is on the west side, and utmost bound of his kingdom called *Renran*, against the king of *Chiampú*; whose efforts being weaker, are sufficiently repulsed by the troops of that same province, and the governor.

He is also in continual motion, and making warlike preparations to assist the king of *Cambogia*, who has married his bastard daughter, sending him succours of galleys, and men, against the king of *Siam*; and therefore the arms of *Cochin-China*, and their valour, is famous and renowned, as well by sea as by land.¹²

{The galleys.}

At sea they fight in galleys, as has been said, each of which carries cannon, and is manned with musketeers: Nor will it seem strange, that the king of *Cochin-China* has an hundred, or more galleys in a readiness, when the method of furnishing them is known. It is therefore to be observed, that the *Cochin-Chinenses* do not use to have a crew of criminals, or other slaves, to row in their galleys; but when they are to go out to fight, or for any other purpose, the way to man them immediately is this: A great number of officers, and commissaries, go out privately and scouring on a sudden all together throughout the whole kingdom, with the king's authority, press all they find fit for the oar, conducting them all together to the galleys, unless they be exempted by birth, or any other privilege. Nor is this method so troublesome as it appears at first sight; for in the first place they are well used and paid aboard the galleys; and besides, their wives and children are fed and provided with all things necessary, according to their condition, all the while they are from their houses. Nor do they only serve at the oar, but upon occasion lay hold of their weapons, and behave themselves bravely; for which purpose every one has his musket, darts, and scymitar allotted him; and the *Cochin-Chinenses* being of an undaunted spirit, and brave, they give good tokens of their valour, either rowing to join their enemies, or with their arms when joined. Their galleys are somewhat less, but particularly narrower than ours, but so neat, and so well adorned with gold and silver, that they afford a glorious sight. Chiefly the stern,¹³ which they account the most honourable post, is all over gold, there the captain and persons of chief note have their station;

present Nguyễn Phúc Nguyễn as the one who wanted to pardon his brothers and who stood against the mandarins who insisted on their death. See Nguyễn Khoa Chiêm, *Việt Nam Khai Quốc Chí Truyền* (Story of the Foundation of the Vietnamese State), trans. and annot. by Ngô Đức Thọ and Nguyễn Thủy Nga (Hanoi: Nhà xuất bản Hội Nhà Văn, 1994). L. Cadrière sees in the latter case an attempt to present Nguyễn Phúc Nguyễn in a more favorable light; see L. Cadrière, "Le mur de Đồng Hới," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 6 (1906): 119 and n. 1; also *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên* (Chronicle of the Nguyễn Dynasty, Premier Period), 2:5b, and *Đại Nam Liệt Truyện Tiền Biên* (Collection of Biographies of the Nguyễn Dynasty, Premier Period), 6:30. Both of these documents can be found in *Đại Nam Thực Lục* (Chronicle of the Nguyễn Dynasty), vol. I (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Linguistic Studies, 1961), pp. 32, 287.

¹² In 1620, Nguyễn Phúc Nguyễn gave a daughter in marriage to the king of Cambodia, who was seeking to counter pressure from Siam with an alliance with the Vietnamese. As a result of this, in 1623 the Vietnamese were allowed to establish an outpost at the future site of Saigon. G. Coedes, *The Making of South East Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), p. 198.

¹³ This word is mistranslated. In the original, it is *prora*, "prow," which also fits the description of the captain's post provided by Borri. See Borri, *Relatione*, p. 88.

and the reason they give for it is, that it being the captain's duty to be the first upon any danger, it is fit he should be in the properest part of the gally for that purpose.

Among other sorts of defensive arms they use in war, they have certain oval hollow targets,¹⁴ so long that they cover a man quite, and so light, that they can manage them without any trouble. The cities of this kingdom have a great advantage in the manner of their houses, which being all of wood upon pillars of timber, as has been said before, when the enemy comes so strong, that they perceive they cannot oppose him, every man flies to the mountain with what he has, firing the houses, so that the enemy finds nothing but the ruins left by the flames, and having no place to fortify himself, nor any thing to subsist on, is forced to retire back to his own country, and the inhabitants returning to the same place in a short time, with great ease rebuild their houses.

¹⁴ Borri uses the word *rotella* in the original (p. 88), which means a small wheel or a round shield. Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE TRADE AND PORTS OF COCHIN-CHINA.

{Trade of *Cochin-China*.}

The great plenty *Cochin-China* affords of all things necessary for the support of human life, as has been said before, is the cause that the people have no curiosity, or inclination to go into other kingdoms to trade; and therefore they never go so far to sea, as to lose sight of their beloved shore; yet they are very ready to admit of strangers, and are very well pleased they should come not only from the neighbouring countries, but from the remotest parts to trade with them. Nor do they need to use any art for this purpose; strangers being sufficiently allured by the fruitfulness of the country, and the great wealth which abounds there; and therefore they resort thither not only from *Tonchin*, *Cambogia*, *Chincheos*,¹ and other neighbouring places, but from the remotest, as *China*, *Macao*, *Japan*, *Manila*, and *Malacca*, all of them carrying silver to *Cochin-China*, to carry away the commodities of the country, which are not bought, but exchanged for plate, which is here put off as a commodity, being sometimes worth more, and sometimes less, according as there is more or less plenty of it, as is usual with silk and other goods.

All the coin they use is of brass, and of the same value, like a *quattrino*,² 500 of which make a crown. These pieces are quite round, with the king's arms and ensign stamped on them, and every one of them has a hole through the middle, which serves to string them by thousands, and every thousand is worth two crowns.³

{Rich trade of the *Chinese* and *Japoneses*.}

The *Chinese* and *Japoneses*, drive the chief trade of *Cochin-China*,⁴ which is managed at a fair held yearly at one of the ports of this kingdom, and lasting about four months. The *Chinese*, in their vessels they call *junks*, bring the value of four or five millions in plate; and the *Japoneses*, in their ships called *sommes*,⁵ an infinite

¹ In the original it is said *Cincaas* (p. 90). Antony de Herrera's map of 1622 places *Chincheo* on the coast of China farther south from Canton. See Antonij de Herrera, "Indiæ Occidentalis descriptio," *Descriptio Indiæ Occidentalis* (Amsterdam: Apud Michaelem Colinium bibliopolam, 1622).

² *Quattrino* is Italian money.

³ On trade, see Li Tana, *Nguyên Cochinchina* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1998), pp. 78-98.

⁴ While China historically was a primary and major trade partner, Japan entered the scene relatively late in the sixteenth century, but indeed became a major trade partner in the seventeenth century.

⁵ This term is unidentified.

quantity of very fine silk, and other commodities of their country. The king has a vast revenue from this fair by customs and imposts, and all the whole country receives great profit. The *Cochin-Chineses* applying themselves very little to arts, because plenty makes them lazy; and being soon taken with the curiosities of other countries, it comes to pass, that they put a great value upon, and buy at great rates, many things, which to others are of very small worth; as for instance, combs, needles, bracelets, and pendants of glass, and such like women's tacking. I remember a *Portuguese*, who bringing into *Cochin-China* from *Macao*, a box full of needles, which could not be worth above thirty ducats, made about a thousand of it, selling that for sixpence in *Cochin-China*, which had not cost him above a farthing at *Macao*. In short, they out-bid one another, in buying any thing that is very new and strange without sparing for price. They are very fond of our hats, of caps, of girdles, shirts, and all other sorts of garments we wear, because they are quite different from theirs; but above all, they put a great value upon coral.

{Sea ports.}

As for their ports, it is wonderful that in a coast little more than an hundred leagues in length, there should be above sixty most convenient landing-places; which is so, because there are many large arms of the sea. But the principal port, to which all strangers resort, and where the aforementioned fair is kept, is that of the province of *Cachian*,⁶ which has two mouths, or inlets from the sea, the one called *Pulluchiampello*,⁷ and the other of *Turon*,⁸ being at first three or four leagues distant from one another, but running in seven or eight leagues like two great rivers, at last join in one, where the vessels that come in both ways meet. Here the king of *Cochin-China* assigned the *Chineses* and *Japoneses* a convenient spot of ground, to build a city for the benefit of the fair. This city is called *Faijó*, and is so large, that we may say they are two, one of *Chineses*, the other of *Japoneses*; for they are divided from one another, each having their distinct governor, and the *Chineses* living according to the laws of *China*, as the *Japoneses* do according to those of *Japan*.⁹

⁶ Previously mentioned as *Cachiam*.

⁷ This is an island in the South China Sea, close to the city of Hôi An (Faifo). On Alexandre de Rhodes's map it is listed as *Polociampello*. According to Bonifacy, "pulo-" or "pulo-" is an "island" in Malay; see "Les Européens qui ont vu le vieux Hue: Cristoforo Borri," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué* 18,3-4 (July-December 1931): 333, n. 81.

⁸ Also *Touron* or *Tourane*. Modern Đà Nẵng, a city in what is now Central Vietnam, located southward from Hue on the Han river. The territory where the city was located became a part of Quảng Nam province after the Vietnamese advanced to this region in the sixteenth century. Because this site featured a safe harbor, a port appeared here. In the late eighteenth century, Faifo (Hôi An) lost its significance. Thereafter Turon experienced its heyday as one of the most important ports in the country. As for its appellation, it was initially called *Cửa Hàn*, "a closed port" (on de Rhodes's map it is called *Che An*), or also, as Chapuis states, *Thủ Hàn*—"closed customs," which the Portuguese corrupted into *Touron*. See A. Chapuis, "Les noms annamites," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hué* XXIX/1 (January-March 1942): 95.

⁹ The reference is to the city of Hôi An. It is unclear how the name Hôi An was transformed into Faifo. Some sources say that initially the name of the city was *Hải Phố*, "Sea Streets," and the Europeans corrupted this name into Faifo or, as it is on de Rhodes's map, *Haifo*. But we do not have any Vietnamese documents from that time supporting the name *Hải Phố*. It is possible that, on the contrary, the Europeans somehow corrupted the name Hôi An to Faifo and from this the Vietnamese later conjectured *Hải Phố* as an alternative name of the city. This city-port appeared not long before Borri arrived in Cochinchina, at the beginning of the

[All nations admitted to trade.]

And because, as we said before, the king of *Cochin-China* gave free admittance to all nations whatsoever, the *Dutch* resorted thither with all sorts of commodities. Hereupon the *Portugueses* of *Macao* resolved to send an ambassador to the king, to demand in their name, that the *Dutch*, as mortal enemies to their nation, should be excluded all *Cochin-China*.¹⁰ One captain *Ferdinand de Costa*, a man well known for his valour, was appointed to go upon this embassy; which he delivered and was favorably heard, with assurances of obtaining his demands.

[*Dutch* banish'd.]

Nevertheless, whilst he was yet at that court, there arrived a *Dutch* ship, and coming to an anchor in the port, some of them landed with much mirth and jollity, and presently went with rich presents to the king: He accepted of them very graciously, and granted them the usual liberty of trading freely in his kingdom. *Costa*

seventeenth century. It became the most lively port on the Vietnamese coast and attracted merchants from China, Japan, Portugal, and Malaya. Separate quarters for Chinese and Japanese were established there. While this was interpreted by some as a sign of benevolence from the Cochinchinese government, we can assume that it was also a precaution and a measure of convenience: to have foreigners concentrated would facilitate collecting taxes, observing administrative formalities, and also surveillance.

¹⁰ Ashley's interpretation of Borri's Italian original removes all expressions of hostility or inhospitableness on the part of the Cochinchinese. He replaces Borri's text, starting from here and going to the end of the penultimate paragraph in the chapter, with: "Wherein they employed a brave Capitaine, called *Ferdinand de Costar*, who effected it with good success, yet not without much difficulty; prevailing so farre, that the King by his Edict or Proclamation, forbad the *Hollanders* to approach the Countreyes under his obedience, or paine of their lives. But those of *Macao* apprehending afterwards, that the said Edict was not well observed, thought good to send a new Embassage into *Cochin-China*, to obtaine a Confirmation thereof; and charged their Deputies to make the King understand, that the affaire concerned his owne Interest, and that if hee did not prevent it, he might have cause to feare that the *Hollanders* in time (being so crafty and cunning as they are) would assay to invade some part of his Kingdome of *Cochin-China*, as they had already some other places of the *Indies*. But certaine Persons of good understanding in that Countrey, advised them not to speake in that sort to the King: because that would be the very way to make the *Hollanders* have permission to come to Traffique in that Countrey, and to invite all *Holland* thither; The Maxime of the *Cochin-China* being, not to acknowledge ever any the least apprehension of any Nation in the World. Cleane contrary to the King of *China*, who fearing all, shutteth the Gate against Strangers, permitting not traffique in his Kingdome." See Christoforo Borri, *Cochinchina: Containing Many Admirable Rarities and Singularities of that Countrey. Extracted out of an Italian Relation, lately presented to the Pope, by Christopher Borri, that lived certaine yeeres there*, translated by Robert Ashley (London: Robert Raworth, 1633), the last page (unnumbered). The points of difference are evident: 1) Borri does not mention any difficulties in da Costa's mission; 2) Ashley omits the appearance of the Dutch ship in Cochinchina after the ruler's order and instead brings a Portuguese ship there to insist on the banishment of the Dutch, as though the first attempt did not work; 3) Dispensing with the arrival of the Dutch ship, Ashley easily finds a way to leave in silence the entire incident of the assault on the Dutch crew and their goods, as well as the sneaky and treacherous attitude of the Cochinchinese ruler; 4) Ashley avoids any positive mention of the Portuguese, be that Borri's description of the Portuguese as "good and sincere friends of Cochinchina," or the whole first paragraph of the section titled "Portuguese favour'd in Cochín-China," which describes all the favors the Cochinchinese ruler granted to the Portuguese.

hearing of it, went presently to the king, and complaining, That his majesty did not keep his word with him, in a *Portuguese* bravado gave a stamp on the ground to shew his resentment. The king and all the courtiers were pleased at his passion, and bidding him have patience, and expect the event, for he should find he had no cause to complain, dismissed him. In the mean while he ordered all the *Dutch* to go ashore, and land all their goods against the fair at *Turon*, as the *Portugueses* did, which they perform'd: But as they were going upon the river in boats, they were on a sudden assaulted by the galleys, which destroyed most of them. The king remained master of their goods; and to justify this action, alleged, that he very well knew the *Dutch*, as notorious pirates, who infested all the seas, were worthy of severer punishment; and therefore, by proclamation, forbid any of them ever resorting to his country; and it was actually found, that those very men had robbed some vessels of *Cochin-China*, and therefore he took this just revenge; admitting the *Portugueses* as good and sincere friends: Who not long after sent another ambassador from *Macao*,¹¹ alledging as a king a confirmation of the aforesaid edict, at the instance of *Acosta*,¹¹ alledging as a motive, the danger that the *Dutch*, in time, might cunningly possess themselves of some part of *Cochin-China*, as they had done in other parts of *India*. But the new ambassador was advised by knowing men of that country, not to mention any such thing to the king, because that very thing would be a motive to him to grant the *Dutch* a free trade, and invite all *Holland* to come over; he pretended to be afraid of no nation in the world; quite contrary to the king of *China*, who being afraid of every body, forbids all strangers trading in his kingdom; and therefore the ambassador must urge other motives to obtain his desire.

{*Portugueses* favour'd in *Cochin-China*.}

The king of *Cochin-China* has always shewn himself a great friend to the *Portugueses* that trade in that kingdom, and has several times offered them three or four leagues of the fruitfulest country about the port of *Turon*, that they may build a city there with all sorts of conveniencies, as the *Chineses* and *Japoneses* have done. And were it allowed me to give his Catholick majesty my opinion in this point, I should say, he ought, by all means, to command the *Portugueses* to accept of the kind offer made them, and to build a good city there as soon as possible; which would be a refuge, and brave defense, for all the ships that pass by towards *China*: For here a fleet might be kept in readiness against the *Dutch*, that sail to *China* and *Japan*, who of necessity must pass through the middle of the bay, that lies between the coast of this kingdom, in the provinces of *Raman* and *Pulucambi*, and the rocks of *Pulusisi*.¹²

This is what small matter I thought I could with truth give an account of, concerning the temporal state of *Cochin-China*, according to the knowledge I could

¹¹ Misspelling of the aforementioned Ferdinand de Costa.

¹² Pulo Cecir is an island about forty miles off the coast, mostly east and a bit south of Phan Thiêt, called "Puolo Cecir de Mer" on colonial maps to distinguish it from "Puolo Cecir de Terre," an island of the same name adjacent to the coast near Cà Ná. Today it appears on Vietnamese maps as Phú Quý. Many sixteenth-seventeenth century European maps of the South China Sea show a large zone of reefs and rocks dangerous to ships beginning in the area of this island and extending north and east, which we can understand as an indication of what have been called the Spratly and Paracel Islands (Trường Sa and Hoàng Sa on Vietnamese maps today), what Borri here calls the rocks of *Pulusisi*.

gain in some years I resided there; as will further appear in the second part of this relation.

The End of the First Part.

An Account of Cochin-China.
The Second PART.
TREATING
Of the SPIRITUAL STATE of *Cochin-China*.

CHAPTER I

OF THE FIRST ENTRING OF THE
FATHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF
JESUS INTO THAT KINGDOM:
AND OF THE TWO CHURCHES
BUILT AT TURON AND
CACCHIAN.¹

{The Jesuits the first that taught Christianity in *Cochin-China*.}

Before the fathers of the society of Jesus went into *Cochin-China*, it was the custom of the *Portugueses* trading thither, to carry thither with them from *Malacca*, and *Macao*, and the *Spaniards* from *Manila*, some chaplains, to say mass and administer the sacraments to them, during their stay there, which generally was three or four months in a year.² These chaplains having no other obligation but only to serve the *Portugueses*, never thought of promoting the spiritual welfare of the natives of that country, not applying themselves to learn their language, nor using any other means to communicate the light of the gospel to them. And yet there was one of these who had the face to publish in *Spain*, in a book call'd, *The Voyage of the World*, that he had catechis'd and baptis'd the infanta or princess of *Cochin-China*,

¹ Spelled "Cachiam" in Chapter I of Part I.

² The winds on the central coast of Vietnam generally blow from the north during winter and from the south during summer. Ships would stay in port until the winds changed to enable a return journey, meanwhile allowing merchants to complete their business.

and a great many of her ladies;³ whereas never infanta, nor any other person of all that royal family, till this time, had shewn any inclination to become Christian, notwithstanding we fathers go every year to visit the king, and discourse with all the great men of the court; and yet the infanta has not given any token of being a Christian, or so much as knowing what a Christian is. And it may well be discern'd, how falsely he talks in this point, by the other fables he adds in the same book, concerning that infanta; as that she would have marry'd the said chaplain, and the like. We know of none but some fathers of the order of St. Francis,⁴ that went from Manila,⁵ and one of St. Augustine,⁶ from Macao⁷ to Cochín-China, merely for the conversion of those souls. But they meeting with no success, by reason of the many several difficulties that occur'd, they return'd to their countries: Providence so

³ Pedro Ordóñez y Cevallos was a Spanish traveler, born in Andalusia in the second half of the sixteenth century and who died in Spain about 1620-5. A soldier in his youth, he set out for America and Europe in search of adventures. Later he renounced his army career and became a priest; see Romanet du Caillaud, *Essais sur les origines du Christianisme au Tonking and dans les autres pays annamites* (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1915), pp. 83-4. Upon his return to Spain, he published an account of his travels. It was published under the title "Viage del Mundo" (Madrid, 1614, 1616, and 1691). His work is one of the most controversial existing accounts of Vietnam. And it is one of the controversial passages of this work that Borri mentions here: describing the baptism of Princess Mai Hoa, the sister of King Lê Thế Tông (r. 1573-1599), who, according to Cevallos, wished to marry him. According to his account, he baptized not only the princess but her entire entourage. Some, like Caillaud, a French Canadian interested in Christian missions in Tonkin at the beginning of the twentieth century, and C. Poncet, Provincial Apostolic of the Foreign Mission in 1941, are supporters of Cevallos's account. See Caillaud, cited above, and C. Poncet, "La princesse Marie d'Ordóñez de Cevallos," *Bulletin des Amis du vieux Hué* 4 (1941): 351-9. But Cevallos's supporters are few. Others, as, for example, Borri and Bonifacy, are indignant about it and dismiss Cevallos's account as pure fiction; see Auguste Bonifacy, *Les débuts du Christianisme en Annam des origines au commencement du 18e siècle* (Hanoi: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, 192-?), p. 5. Furthermore, Alexandre de Rhodes's and other missionaries' accounts do not mention Cevallos at all. It is hard to resolve the issue: we do not have any evidence of Cevallos's trip to Vietnamese lands, not to mention his numerous conversions. They have not been reflected in either Vietnamese nor Western historiography. Cevallos's account is still awaiting its researcher.

⁴ The Franciscan Order consists of followers of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226).

⁵ Diego de San Jose o de Oropesa, a Spanish Franciscan missionary (?-1590), native of Oropesa, in the Toledo area, was sent as head of a mission from the Philippines to Vietnam and China in 1583. He was accompanied by FF. Bartolome Ruiz, Francisco de Montilla, Ortiz Cabezas, and four lay brothers: Cristobal Gomez, Diego Jimenez, Francisco de Villarino, and Manuel de Santiago. They were greeted by King Mạc Mậu Hợp (r. 1562-92). Diego de San Jose was imprisoned on Hainan island after his ship was swept there during a storm. Due to the intervention of Father Matheo Ricci, a Jesuit missionary to China, he was liberated, went to Macao, and then arrived back in Manila in 1585. He died near Acapulco while returning to Spain in 1590. J. Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, "Expedition franciscana a Cochincina y China" and Diego de San Jose, "Relacion inedita de Fray Diego de San Jose sobre la mision franciscana a Cochinchina y su paso por China (1583)," *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 209-12 (1993): 449-87, especially pp. 452-6, 460-2.

⁶ The order of St. Augustine is a mendicant order established as a result of the unification of several religious communities in the thirteenth century. Its members follow the teaching of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430). I could not identify the Augustinian Borri refers to.

⁷ Macao is a small territory on China's southern coast. In the sixteenth century, it became an important Portuguese outpost, and missionaries arriving on Portuguese ships transformed Macao into an East Asian center of Christianity.

ordering it, which had design'd that land to be cultivated by the sons of the holy patriarch Ignatius:⁸ which was done as follows.

[Manner of their going thither.]

Certain *Portuguese* merchants acquainted the superiors of the society of Jesus at *Macao*, with the great advantages that might be gain'd, to advance the glory of God in *Cochin-China*, if there were undaunted and zealous labourers sent thither; and particularly one captain earnestly pressed the father provincial, not to abandon a kingdom so capable of being instructed in the holy faith. The proposal seem'd to the father very agreeable to the spirit of our vocation, and therefore without demurring upon the execution of it, he made choice for this enterprise of F. *Francis Buzome*, who had been professor of divinity at *Macao*, by birth a *Genoese*, but educated in the kingdom of *Naples*, where he was admitted into the society, and whence he set out for *India*, together with F. *James Caravallo*, a *Portuguese*, who from *Cochin-China* was to attempt to go over to *Japan*, as he did. This was he, who being put into a pool of cold water in the dead of winter, and exposed to the wind and snow, gave up his life for the sake of his Redeemer, freezing leisurely to death. F. *Caravallo*, being gone, F. *Buzome* was left alone in *Cochin-China*, with only a lay-brother to attend him: being zealously inflam'd with the desire of saving souls, he us'd all possible means for their conversion, and to this purpose began his mission at *Turon*.
[Mistaken conversions.]

But as yet he knew not the language, nor could he find any interpreter that knew any more *Portuguese* than what was requisite for buying and selling, and some words or phrases, which the interpreters of the chaplains of ships, who were there before the fathers of the society, made use of to ask the *Cochin-Chinese*, Whether they would be Christians? After this manner they had made some, but such as might rather be accounted so by name than by profession; for they did not so much as understand what the name of a Christian meant; and this by reason of the phrase the interpreters us'd to ask them, Whether they would be Christians: for the words they made use of, signify'd nothing more, than that they would become *Portuguese*: which F. *Francis Buzome* found out by this following accident: A play was acted in the public market-place, at which the father saw one in the habit of a *Portuguese*, brought in by way of ridicule, with a great belly so artificially made, that a boy was hid in it; the player, before the audience, turn'd him out of his belly, and ask'd him, Whether he would go into the belly of the *Portuguese*? Using these words, *Con gnoo muon bau blom laom Hoaaoim chiam?* [*Con nhó muốn vào trong lòng Hoa Long chăng?*] That is, *Little boy, will you go into the belly of the Portuguese, or not?* The boy answer'd, *He would*: and then he put him in again, often repeating the same thing to divert the spectators. The father observing, that the phrase the player so often repeated, *Muon bau blom laom Hoaaoim chiam*, was the same the interpreters us'd, when they ask'd any one, Whether he would be a Christian? presently conceiv'd the mistake the *Cochin-Chinese* were under; who thought, that to become a Christian was only to cease being *Cochin-Chinese*, and become a *Portuguese*; which to make sport was express'd in the play, by making the boy go into the belly of him that acted the *Portuguese*. The

⁸ St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), together with his followers, among whom was St. Francis Xavier, the first missionary to Japan, founded the Society of Jesus (also known as the Company of Jesus, or Jesuits) in the 1530s.

father took care, that so pernicious an error should spread no farther, teaching those already baptis'd their duty, and instructing those that were newly converted, what it was to be baptis'd and become a Christian, taking particular care that the interpreters should be well inform'd in this particular, that they might afterwards serve faithfully in teaching of others; changing the above mention'd phrase into this, *Muon bau dau Christian chiam?* [*Muốn vào đạo Christian chẳng?*] That is, *Will you enter into the Christian law, or no?* His great diligence and charity was so successful, that within a few days he began to reap the fruit of his labours, as well by the reformation of those who before were Christians only in name, as the conversion of many more.

{Churches erected.}

Nor was the fame of his charity and zeal for the gaining of souls confin'd to *Turon*, his usual place of residence, but spread abroad into other places; he labouring in all places to instruct, convert, and dispose the people to receive baptism with such fervour, and so great a concourse about him, that in a short time those new Christians built a very large church at *Turon*, in which the most holy sacrifice of the mass was publicly celebrated, and the Christian doctrine preach'd and taught, by means of the interpreters, then well instructed; all persons being very much taken with *F. Francis Buzome*; who besides his being a person of great knowledge and virtue, entirely gain'd the affections of those heathens, by his great meekness and affability, insomuch that they all flock'd after him. This particularly happened at *Cacchiam*, the city where the king resides,⁹ six or seven leagues from *Turon*, up the river.

Here *F. Buzome* made so great an impression, that a place was presently allotted him for a church, which was built in a very short time, every body contributing to the expence, and to the work, according to their power. Besides, he had a good house assign'd him, fit for to make a residence of fathers, who were to go thither in time to instruct that people in matters of faith: all which was done with the assistance of a most noble lady, who was converted, and in baptism took the name of *Joanna*. She not only undertook the foundation of the house and church, but erected several altars and places of prayer in her own house, never ceasing to bless and praise God for the mercy shewn her, in enlightening and drawing her to the faith. All this his divine majesty brought to pass in the space of a year, through the means of his servant, *F. Francis Buzome*; whose fame being spread as far as *Macao*, the following year our father provincial thought fit to send him another father, that was younger, with a *Japanese* brother, that learning the language, he might afterwards preach without standing in need of an interpreter. This was *F. Francis de Pina*, a *Portuguese*, who had learn'd divinity under *F. Francis Buzome*. And tho' this second year the increase was not answerable to that of the first, as to the conversion of souls, yet the

⁹ As noted above, *Cacchiam* (variously *Cachiam*), *Kê Chiêm*, or *Kê Châm* refers to the modern province of *Quảng Nam*; here it refers to the place from which this region was ruled at that time, near modern *Điện Bàn* at the confluence of the *Thu Bồn* and *Vĩnh Điện* rivers; the former flows to the sea via *Hội An* (*Faifo*) and the latter flows to the sea via the modern city of *Đà Nẵng* (*Turon*, variously *Touron* or *Tourane*). The *Nguyễn* lord ruled not from here but further north; the "king" here refers to the son and designated heir of the lord who customarily resided in this place because of its importance for controlling foreign trade. On *Kê Châm*, *Faifo*, and *Tourane*, see *Roland Jacques, Portuguese Pioneers of Vietnamese Linguistics prior to 1650* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2002), p. 25.

advantage was much greater in the sufferings of a cruel persecution, rais'd by the enemy that sow'd the tares, who could not endure to see the divine seed grow up so prosperously in those parts, and endeavour'd to choke it; as shall be shewn in the next chapter.