

DELLE
MISSIONI
DE' PADRI
DELLA COMPAGNIA DI GIESU

Nella Prouincia del Giappone, e particolarmente di quella di Tumkino.

LIBRI CINQUE.
DEL P. GIO: FILIPPO DE MARINI
della medesima Compagnia.

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**Giovanni Filippo de MARINI, *Delle Missioni... (1663)*:
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE CHAPTERS
ON CAMBODIA, SIAM, AND MAKASSAR**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Giovanni Filippo de Marini and his *Delle Missioni...* of 1663

Giovanni Filippo de Marini¹ was born in Taggia, in the Republic of Genoa, in 1608. He entered the order of the Jesuits in 1625, and in 1640 arrived in Goa, where he started a career as a missionary in Asia that lasted until his death in 1682. In his years in the East (1640–59 and 1666–82) he was for the most part based in Macao (1649–59 and 1675–82) and Tonkin (1647–49), but he also visited Siam three times (1641–42, in 1667 or 1668, and again in 1671), Japan and other places in the region.

In the early 1660s, after he had returned to Europe to recruit new missionaries and to represent the “Province of Japan” at the 11th General Congregation of the Jesuits, he collected his experiences in Asia in a 548-page work entitled *Delle Missioni de’ Padri della Compagnia di Giesu, nella Provincia del Giappone e particolarmente di quella di Tumkino* (The Missions of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus, in the Province of Japan and in particular in Tonkin) which was printed in Rome in 1663 by Niccolò Angelo Tinassi and dedicated to His Holiness Pope Alexander VII. It comprised five books. The first three dealt with Tonkin, while Book Five was entirely devoted to the kingdom of Laos. Book Four contained short descriptions of Cochinchina (today’s Southern Vietnam), Cambodia, Siam, Makassar (in today’s Sulawesi, part of Indonesia), Canton and Hainan.²

Part of de Marini’s work was published in French in 1666, including six of the chapters about the Lao kingdom that have been recently translated into English by Walter E. J. Tips and Claudio Bertuccio (de Marini 1998). However, the rest of

¹ When referred to by family name only, we noticed that often de Marini is called only ‘Marini.’ We prefer to use ‘de Marini,’ since in Italian the prefixes *de* and *di* (meaning “from”) are considered an integral part of the family name.

² For more detailed biographies of de Marini, see Luigi Bressan’s introduction in de Marini (1998) and Teixeira (1983, 38–83). Bressan’s introduction also contains interesting sections about the relations between de Marini and the other missionaries who contributed to the text.



de Marini's work has not been translated into English yet, and—despite the richness of its narration—historians essentially have not benefited from it. Thus, three and a half centuries after its publication in Italian, what follows this introduction is the first translation in English of three chapters from de Marini's Book Four, describing Cambodia, Siam and Makassar.

2. De Marini's literary style and issues related to this English translation

De Marini's Italian is typical of his day. He often used a reduplication of adjectives, typical of Cicero and thus of the classical Italian tradition of composition, which was revived from the fifteenth century on. Since Italian is richer in adjectives than English, these redundancies make the translator's work challenging, especially when they are part of long run-on phrases with little punctuation. We have taken the liberty of breaking some of the longest sentences into two or more shorter ones, in order to make the translation more accessible to the contemporary reader of English. Another problem concerns the omission of most of the names of the historical characters mentioned in the text. When discussing events happening at the courts of Cambodia and Siam, rather than using proper names, de Marini (who might have forgotten them, as he was writing many years after the facts he described) opted for titles such as "the king," or for familiar terms such as "the cousin." These "informal" definitions might easily confuse the reader, already trying to keeping pace with complex court intrigues. Thus, when we found it necessary in order to add clarity, we have included in square brackets the names of the characters discussed in the narration. We have also divided de Marini's three chapters into sections and given them titles, in order to make the translation easier to use as a reference. Finally, the numbers in indented brackets refer to the page numbers of the original edition.

3. Reliability as historical source

De Marini's translation is filled with interesting stories and details that will surely interest scholars of history and religion, as well as ordinary readers. Even though de Marini himself admitted that his memoirs had to be taken with a grain of salt, events described in the text (such as the Cochinchinese invasion of Cambodia and King Narai's rise to power) are historically sound, confirmed by other sources, and confer to the whole work an aura of credibility.

Obviously, while reading, it has to be kept in mind that de Marini was a seventeenth century Jesuit missionary. Thus, besides his biases due to his belief in the superiority of the Roman Catholic faith, we have to remember that he wrote during a period when not much was known in Europe about the traditions of Southeast Asia. Accordingly, his superficial descriptions of Siamese Buddhism,

seen as a “Cult of Idols”, and his contemptuous view of Islam certainly appear politically and intellectually incorrect today, but have to be seen in the historical framework of de Marini’s time.

The chapters on Cambodia and Makassar, as in the case of the description of the Lao kingdom, rely for the most part on descriptions de Marini heard from his colleagues, while the chapter on Siam contains a long narration coming directly from his own experience. Of particular interest is the part relating the journey from Goa to Ayutthaya, which includes what is possibly the earliest description of the crossing of the “great forest,” the jungle of the Malay peninsula between Jalinga and Phetchaburi.

While the historical relevance of the chapters on Siam and Cambodia is evident, we have decided to include the chapter on Makassar as well, considering that there are ties with Ayutthaya during this period. Chronologically, the two accounts of Siam and Makassar provide a neat framework for de Marini’s first tour of Southeast Asia, starting with his journey through Siamese territory in 1641–42 and ending with his visit to Makassar in 1659, before his return to Europe and the publication of his book. Geographically, as well, there are links that merit future research. Both Makassar and Siam were included in the Jesuit administrative region for East Asia, along with Cambodia, Vietnam, Macau and Japan. Hubert Jacobs (1988) provides extracts from documents during this period concerning Makassar, and these documents clearly contain much additional information about Siam that remains unpublished. Further work on these sources is likely to provide a better understanding of Jesuit activities in both kingdoms, the migration of some Makassarese to Ayutthaya and the violent events associated with them in the Siamese capital in 1686. De Marini’s account may also be of value, because his impressions differ from those provided by Jacobs concerning Portuguese relations with the Makassarese and causes leading to the eventual Portuguese withdrawal from the island.

4. Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER VII - MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

1. Introduction

{389} In this region of the Orient,³ Cambodia is a rather broad kingdom, but not densely inhabited. It is considered one of the most renowned for trading opportunities: there is abundance of every kind of goods necessary for life and has much excellent timber that can be used for building homes as it can be used to construct ships. The river that flows from the mountains crossing the kingdom of the Lao enters the ocean through two natural and two artificial mouths. It is famous as one of the greatest rivers in Asia, and accordingly is called “Menam,”⁴ which means “the mother of the waters.” When compared with it, the Nile would be only as big as one of the canals [of the Menam]. Such canals were opened to facilitate the navigation of vessels of every size and weight, since the ebb and flow of the waters at the mouths made the current so impetuous that it was not safe to navigate there. Then from the mouths of the river one penetrates inland and after many days and three hundred miles from the mouths, one reaches the docks that are right in the middle of the city. [There,] the waters are still very deep, thus they can be utilized as a harbor for many kingdoms far from the sea⁵ that carry down their goods to trade them [in Cambodia]. Close to the city are visible the ruins of great walls and a long stretch with many homes built of stone⁶ — whereas homes now are made of wood and straw. The prince who now dominates the kingdom is not a legitimate king, but a usurping tyrant, since in past centuries the kingdom of Cambodia was part of the inheritance of the kings of Siam, who still today claim it.⁷

2. Jesuit missionaries in Cambodia

In order to talk now about the condition of the kingdom [of Cambodia] in past years, it has to be known that the Christian Faith never took root in this cursed land. Before we [Jesuits] had established our permanent presence, other religious

³ De Marini was based in Tonkin (today’s North Vietnam), thus he is talking of the region that today is known as Southeast Asia.

⁴ De Marini probably learned the Thai word *mae-nam* while he was in Thai territory (1641–42) and applied it to the Mekong.

⁵ This probably refers to landlocked kingdoms, such as the Lao kingdom of Lan Sang, and possibly also to individual traders from mountain tribes.

⁶ This seems to be a second-hand reference to Angkor; refer to Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge au XVI siècle d’après les sources portugaises et espagnoles* (1958, English trans. 2006).

⁷ De Marini seems to consider Cambodia a renegade province of Siam.

men⁸ came from the Philippines as chaplains of the mercantile ships. They reached these shores, stayed only until the sale of the merchandise was over, and then returned to their lands. Thus, a scant knowledge of the real God reached the blind [minds of the local] populace, whose lifestyle is entirely similar to that of animals. Then, {390} in the year 1630, when the rage of the persecution in Japan barred the Fathers [residing] there, among other kingdoms to which they turned was Cambodia. They did not consider the country so much for itself, but they found it convenient to move to countries near [to Japan]. Even without considering that advantage, the help that could be given to the Christians who arrive [in Cambodia] in great number with their cargoes from many other kingdoms of this part of the Orient (besides the ones who permanently inhabit it [Cambodia]) seemed a good enough reason to the superiors not to abandon this place, especially considering how [in Cambodia] there are no other religious men besides the Fathers of our company. Thus, ever since we entered Cambodia, we have continued to send somebody [there], and one of the earliest was Father Giuseppe Agnese, as stated earlier.⁹

The last emissary to that site was Father Carlo Rocca,¹⁰ a Piedmontese, in 1659. From him, I have heard what I am briefly going to say [about Cambodia]. Father Giovanni Maria Leria was also there for a while, waiting for an opportunity to re-enter the Lao kingdom, whose king, once he had found out the Father was in Cambodia, wasted no time and wrote, inviting him to return [to the Lao kingdom].¹¹ As I have read in a letter from Father Giovanni Maria Leria, which I received in Tonkin in 1657, he was sent a precious gift from the king as well, and a more [another] urgent invitation to return [to the Lao kingdom]. But since now there is a scarcity of [evangelical] workers in the Province of Japan¹² and the means to maintain them there are limited as well (as they are so far away and separated), the Father cannot leave his residence [in Cambodia] and go there, and is thus neglecting the Lao kingdom. To the king there, he can give nothing but hope.

⁸ Christian Fathers from other orders.

⁹ This refers to a previous part of the text that is not part of this translation. Teixeira (1983: 56–60) gives the dates 1634–49 for Agnese's work in Cambodia.

¹⁰ Probably the same person as Carlos da Rocha, a Jesuit who sailed from Cambodia to Siam in August 1670 (Teixeira 1983, 370) and was working in the Portuguese quarter in Ayutthaya in 1675 (Launay 1920, I 61).

¹¹ Leria had worked in Vientiane from 1642 to 1647, and then went to Tonkin. He never returned to Vientiane, but did return to Cambodia. In 1659 he went to Ayutthaya, and from 1661 to 1664 he served as the Father Provincial of the Jesuit Province of Japan. He had worked earlier in Cochinchina, was expelled from there in 1639 and worked in Cambodia until his departure for the Lao kingdom. This passage refers to his second visit to Cambodia.

¹² The Jesuit province of Japan encompassed Japan, Macao, Tonkin, Cochinchina, Cambodia, Laos, Siam and Makassar.

3. Description of some recent historical events in Cambodia

3.1 *King Nak Can's conversion to Islam*

Now, about Cambodia, the living king, named Nak Can,¹³ secured the crown by usurping the throne from his brother, whom he had mercilessly killed (with the complicity of his sister-in-law, the queen). This [woman], even though she was one of the first wives of the king and a near relative of the king of Cochinchina, never produced an heir. However, there were five sons of secondary wives.¹⁴ To obtain some endorsement, the queen adopted the eldest son, whose mother, the second wife of her husband, had died. As a reward for her [cooperation in the] infamous betrayal, she received the government of two provinces. The other four nephews remained in the care of their mothers, who lived at court.

In the meantime, the king, since he was not as beloved by his subjects as the brother he had murdered, called [for help] from the neighboring kingdom the Malays, in order to strengthen his grip on the throne. They are the most proud and ungodly people in that part of the Orient, the most effeminate in their sexual weaknesses, and the most unrestrained in their lifestyle. They follow the religion of Mohammed, meaning they are perfidious as much as cruel. The king counted on them {391} for his own protection, and he divided among them the most prestigious positions and duties in the kingdom (perhaps only to strengthen his power, or if he was plotting more grandiose schemes.) All in all, it was the Malays who ruled, gave advice, directed all most important affairs of the kingdom [of Cambodia] and enjoyed the best positions at court, associated with the rank of mandarin. Since the practice of the same religion unites the souls (as much as different religions separate them), such Moors¹⁵ who dominated the king's heart on every important matter persuaded him to switch to the adulation of the Koran.¹⁶ They insisted so much,¹⁷ until he finally surrendered and resolved to be circumcised.¹⁸ A single thought prevented him from immediately professing [the faith of the Koran]: the fact that, once he had

¹³ De Marini spells the king's name "Nac Cian". Mak Phoeun identifies this monarch as Râmâdipathî I (Can Bañâ Cand), and informs us he was also known as Ram Cûl Sâs (Phoeun 1995, 259) and (after his conversion to Islam) Sultan Ibrahim (Phoeun 1995, 261). He reigned from 1642–59, and had a Malay wife. (Hall 1981, 460).

¹⁴ Mak Phoeun talks about four of these nephews and gives some information about two of them (Phoeun 1995, 287).

¹⁵ "Moors" was the term loosely and incorrectly used to refer generally to Muslims.

¹⁶ Another theory is that after the assassination of the previous king, Nak Can felt he was "doomed" as a Buddhist (because of his karma), thus he switched to another religion (Mak Phoeun 1995, 260).

¹⁷ Literally de Marini says: "so much they were around him, and so much they told him."

¹⁸ See Barbara Andaya's discussion in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* (1992, I 525). Cham and Malay Muslims were instrumental in the conversion of Nak Can to Islam around 1643.



embraced that faith, he did not want to transgress it. In fact, in the Koran it is ordered not to partake of wine,¹⁹ and for him, who had been accustomed to drinking it for so many years, such a law was intolerable. However, those [Malay] masters, of the flesh, not of the spirit, immediately freed him from doubt. They belittled his scruples, and put his conscience at ease with the reassurance that their *Casis*,²⁰ or Great Priest, had the authority to spare him from that prohibition. That sufficed for him to declare shamelessly that, if this was the case, then he would embrace the law of Mohammed. That done, he submitted himself to the authority of the *Casis*, and the first teaching he received was that, since Mohammed was saving him from idolatry²¹ with his Law (and this was an enormous gift) he should have shown gratitude by separating himself from the court, and chasing away any other thought, while leading a solitary and secluded existence. [He would be] now a pilgrim throughout woods and deserts, then lingering on the river aboard his galley, away from disturbances and mundane troubles. This [exercise was supposed to last] not for a short period, but for three years, three months, and three days. And the Malays were right in prescribing such a long span of time: in fact, in order to put into practice such a monstrous plan, consisting in changing from a Gentile half-animal with a cult for the idols, into a complete beast as the followers of Mohammed are, one needed not less time, and to be in all the places where [different] beasts dwell.²² The Malays promised that, once he [King Nak Can] had in that way completed his preparation for circumcision, the moment the rite took place, the heavens would have become an impoverished place, since all the graces would fall upon him. From that moment on, he would enjoy so much celestial protection, that he would have had no more difficulties [in his life]. [From the heavens] he would receive a long and prosperous life {392}, protection against any [exterior] power, and many other advantages that were promised with great generosity, since they were only [empty] words. Nonetheless, the king gullibly believed in such guarantees, and was convinced to accept the idea of the pilgrimage. [He did so] without pondering the fact that he was leaving the kingdom in the hands of some foreigners and his five nephews, after he had killed their father. [King Nak Can] had [already] sickened his own subjects, by stripping them of the richest and most honorable positions [at court] and by submitting them to the arrogant and despotic government of the Moors, who treated them as slaves, and not as natives

¹⁹ Here a fermented drink such as palm toddy or a distillate such as *arrack*.

²⁰ An Islamic religious teacher. De Marini spelled this term as *cacife*. It might have also been a typesetting mistake (*cacife* instead of *casise*).

²¹ Here meaning Buddhism in its Cambodian form.

²² The “woods, deserts and rivers.” This passage shows how de Marini considered local cults better than Islam, probably because the believers of the latter faith were more difficult to convert to Christianity.



of the kingdom. Nonetheless, the king was convinced to undergo the challenge, which lasted three years, three months and three days. He was [then] circumcised, and professed in public the laws of the Koran, according to which he now lives. To prove his progress, and the sincerity of his embracing such laws, he published an edict saying that none of his vassals should even think about professing the faith of Christ. To the *Casis* who granted amnesty regarding permission to drink wine, he [King Nak Can] sent an offering of a good quantity of gold and silver. [The king then] abused his freedom to the point that, while he used to be a moderate wine-drinker, after becoming a Moor²³ he was drunk almost every day. Believing in the promises the Malays had made to him, he was sure that, in case of need, he would have Mohammed to protect him. Thus, without scruples he gave himself up to lust and he slept at ease. It is surprising how, during his period of pilgrimage, nobody had led a coup. In fact, during that period he was not challenged, nor were revolts or plots heard of.

3.2 *The revolt of the five nephews*

The king, once he was finished with his [spiritual] training, decided to pass the crown to the third nephew. He had put all his love in him, perhaps because of his mother's efforts, or because he felt an affinity with him. The people [of Cambodia] liked better and wanted [to see on the throne] the other brothers,²⁴ who concealed the wounds in their hearts due to their father's betrayal, and plotted revenge.²⁵ The other brother,²⁶ understanding it, refused the offer to succeed to the throne, and, even though he greatly wanted to reign, he hid his feelings well, and made his brothers believe he wanted to be part of the plot in order to avenge the affront of the killing of [their] father and to exterminate the Moors. It was well known how much irritation the people felt about the tyranny of the king [Nak Can], and in their scheme [of liberating the kingdom from the Moors], the nephews²⁷ counted on them [the people of Cambodia], their favor and protection, as they sought to give them back their original freedom. [Thus,] the populace was devoted to them and they were ready to use [its support] whenever an occasion should arise. The day came, and the nephews, in order not to waste such a chance, had the whole population arise, take arms and run to the palace. However, the king [Nak Can] was informed {393} in time, and was able to retreat safely with the Malays. He

²³ Meaning after Nak Can became a follower of Mohammed.

²⁴ De Marini switches often between "nephews" and "brothers"; however, he is, of course, talking of the same five princes.

²⁵ According to a royal chronicle cited in Phoeun (1995, 287), they had been plotting revenge ever since their father's death.

²⁶ The third nephew that had been selected by King Nak Can as his successor.

²⁷ See note 24.

decided, or he was cleverly advised, to pretend to give up and wait for a better time, while that early impetuous popular fire burnt and extinguished itself.

The nephews had taken over the palace; however, since they were young and inexperienced, they argued about their opinions and their demands, and could not complete their task. Their disagreements paved the way for their uncle [King Nak Can] to return; thus there was a complete reversion to the original state of things.

3.3 The third nephew is declared successor to the crown

Yet, in order for King Nak Can to feel secure, it was not enough to extinguish the flames: he wanted to extinguish the hidden sparks also, to preempt what might happen in the future. Thus, he took the measure of completing his original project, and declared the third nephew as his successor to the crown. In order to separate him from [the company of] his brothers, he sent some trustworthy messengers to let him know that he had been chosen as successor and king, and thus he should leave his brothers swiftly. To protect him from them, the king sent him several divisions of Moorish soldiers and many elephants. He [the third nephew] had been waiting for such a moment and happily obeyed without hesitation, feeling as though he were reborn: it was clear that he was forgiven and destined to reign. Since such a coup would surely have struck profoundly at the heart of the other brothers, putting him at constant risk of death, he decided to resort to magic and spells — a disgusting art in which the Moors are masters. They cast an enchantment on him in order to make him invulnerable just in time, since the eldest brother was offended at having been pushed aside, and sent somebody to kill him [the third nephew]. He was struck many times, but he was unharmed. Once he heard of that offence, the king [Nak Can] decided to remain silent, waiting for the chance of a safe strike against that [eldest] nephew who had plotted [against the third nephew]. For such actions, those [Malay] barbarians have a certain weapon always ready: the kris. It has a blade of not more than about a palm's span²⁸ and a half of length, cast in a serpentine shape, as one would paint the long tail of a comet. It is reinforced with extremely powerful poison, and the slightest puncture that penetrates enough to generate a drop of blood causes a more certain and sudden death than the tooth of a furious snake, since no antidote can be found. The king had one of these weapons, and upon seeing his [eldest] nephew at court, told him he wanted to {394} make a test, and see if a certain weapon he had could wound somebody, knowing the eldest nephew was protected by a certain magic spell. If it worked, the king might adopt the same kind of spell. Thus, he struck

²⁸ *Palmo* in Italian means handbreadth, span, and was used as a measure. It equals approximately 20 cm.

lightly the first nephew with the kris and caused him to bleed. However, the incantation and the magic that had protected the third nephew from a more serious attack, worked also for the first [nephew]. The king's strike had no effect, because the diabolical art shielded him from the poison. That event alarmed the prince, who began to suspect the truth: that his and his three brothers' deaths were sought [by the king and the third nephew]. From the provinces this [eldest] prince was governing, with the help of his adoptive mother and a great number of Cambodian followers, he rebelled against his uncle.

The third nephew barely escaped the fury of his brothers, and took refuge with his uncle [King Nak Can]. The guards protected him, and he was generously appointed general of the army and governor of his kingdom [of Cambodia]. He quickly called up as many armed men as possible, putting together a great force that suddenly, at a great pace, assailed his brothers, who had prudently taken refuge by locking themselves in a safe fortification.

There the third nephew with his army surrounded them, preventing them from receiving any supplies, until they were exhausted. Thus, thinking they [the four brothers] were lost, they resolved to escape. Two managed to break out, while the other two were captured and fell into the hands of the king. He wanted to take the life of the [two] rebels, but they were saved by the law of Mohammed that he professed.

Of the two who escaped, one was the eldest brother. He took refuge in one of the temples of the Idols [a Buddhist monastery], where he was safe. Not so for the mother who had adopted him and was a close relative of the king of Cochinchina. Since she had gone hand-in-hand²⁹ with her brother-in-law [Nak Can] in the death of the [previous] king, her husband and the father of those five sons, she was stripped of the two regions she governed and condemned to death. Still, she was so convincing with the reasons she used to defend herself that the king [Nak Can], moved to compassion, spared her life and instead [of having her killed] stripped her of every honor and rank and condemned her to live as a slave.

Then [the king] thought that, considering what he had accomplished, he could live safe and relaxed, with no thoughts or fear of any further peril. Thus, without any prejudice, he dedicated himself to pleasures and drunkenness without restraint. He thought it was time to begin to enjoy the promised happiness coming from Mohammed that the Malays, false prophets, had promised when they induced [the king] to become a Muslim. But those were empty words, soon followed by real disaster {395} that the king was not ready to deal with, leading to his ultimate misfortune.

²⁹ De Marini says "aver tenuto mano," *lit.*: "held his hand."

3.4 *The invasion of the Cochinchinese*

The king of Cochinchina³⁰ avidly craved becoming a “Great King”.³¹ He had already gobbled up the whole kingdom of Champa and, like a goshawk aiming for prey, he was always ready to gain from the tumults [occurring in other kingdoms]. It did not take him long to fit out a great army on the land, and a great navy at sea. His victory banners were visible well before his soldiers had reached Cambodia,³² where the king [Nak Can], the queen and the princes, except the third, were taken as prisoners. These, having only few soldiers available, put up an early resistance. However, as the Cochinchinese were prevailing, he threw down his weapons, thinking he could run for dear life by swimming across the river to save himself. But it was time for this impious and cruel man to die, and no spell or witchcraft could help him. Mortally wounded, he begged for his life, but was not spared. Thus he paid for his impious and sacrilegious acts of not long before: the injuries he had caused to the person of Giovanni Maria Leria and to the holy images in his church and his house, as I will narrate soon.

In the meantime, the general of the [Cochinchinese] army, who had taken the city and held the king and the queen as prisoners, wanted to learn from them where their treasure was and he threatened them with torture. They could not keep silent and revealed where it was buried. Twenty-seven ships and seventy barges were not enough to take away all the gold, silver, gems and other valuable goods. The general also had the city sacked and burnt down. The Dutch lost more than one hundred thousand *scudi*³³ of merchandise. The English, whose ship was riding at anchor and already full [of cargo], could see no way out, since the river was packed with Cochinchinese ships. The Englishmen decided to save their lives and abandoned the ship, which was left prey to the [Cochinchinese] general. Many areas of the city were set ablaze, the flames flaring up and burning to ashes our house, our church and all that was inside. Whatever escaped the fire could not elude the rapacity of the [Cochinchinese] soldiers. Besides the [royal] treasure, they added to the booty eight hundred elephants, a much greater number of horses, 1,600 pieces of artillery, and also many lighter weapons.

Everything was supposed to be carried to Cochinchina; however, the general [of the Cochinchinese] decided to use this opportunity to enrich himself. He handled the situation so well that his plan succeeded: he kept the best [part of the booty] for himself, and sent to Cochinchina whatever he did not want or need.

³⁰ Nguyen Phouc Tan (also known as Hien Vuong), who reigned from 1649 to 1686 or 1687.

³¹ Possibly meaning “emperor” in general.

³² According to Mak Phoeun (1995, 297), the invasion began in October 1658 and lasted until March or April 1659, when the Cochinchinese forces withdrew.

³³ A silver coinage used in various Italian states in de Marini’s time.

Together with the rich loot, he sent the king [Nak Can], the queen and the three princes³⁴ as prisoners. The king of Cochinchina, once informed of their unhappy state, sent them words of comfort, saying he wished to meet them and he wanted to show clemency by setting them free.

{396} The sister-in-law, who was living as a slave in Cambodia, had her triumph when she saw the king [Nak Can] embarked with the others of his blood.³⁵ By then, she had been set free by the general [of the Cochinchinese], and the eldest of the princes, whom she had adopted as a son, remained in the kingdom [of Cambodia]. There, she hoped to revive her previous grandeur. To that end, she sent for her son to ask him to submit with reverence to the proud and victorious general [of the Cochinchinese].

3.5 *The eldest brother's reconquest of Cambodia*

[The eldest of the princes] soon went to see the general; alas, he was not accustomed to bending his head, not to mention [going down on] his knees. He demanded to deal with the general [of the Cochinchinese] as an equal. The general had ambitions to be ruler and was full of himself after the victory, and he expected humility. Thus, he nearly had the head of the eldest of the princes chopped off. The tears of the mother, more than her prayers, spared the life of the eldest of the princes. It was then that the prince, now humbly imploring, threw himself at the general's feet, and with that act of submission he pleased him enough to find favor and to be appointed Minister of Justice of his Cambodians. But that situation did not last long. In fact, that captain [the general of the Cochinchinese] was as ambitious for glory as he was thirsty for gold, and when he found out that the prince was earning riches through his position, he confiscated them all. [Then,] he ordered the prince to go and report his deeds to the king of Cochinchina. On this occasion, the prince offered a display of valor and wisdom. As though nothing had been taken from him, and the general had commanded him to undertake a pleasant chore, without showing any displeasure or resentment, he promptly appeared with a serene expression [on his face], and called himself fortunate and privileged because of this great opportunity he was given to leave his kingdom and to see new lands, especially Cochinchina, its court and its glorious king, who he was honored to attend. He said so in such a manner that he seemed sincere; thus, the Cochinchinese general was convinced that there was no need to double his guards to watch over somebody with such an earnest disposition, and he sent him to Cochinchina aboard a galley with only a few guards. During the night [the eldest prince], once he had reached a certain place, asked to drop anchor and to bathe in the river. That was

³⁴ These were the second, the fourth and the fifth princes.

³⁵ The other members of the royal family.



granted to him. The waters run very quickly in that spot. As he was pretending to bathe, he suddenly dashed away swimming and, in the twinkling of an eye, he reached the shore, where there was a forest with a thousand intricate and meandering paths. He entered that labyrinth, which he was familiar with, came out of it swiftly and took refuge in a town, where he was recognized as a prince and treated with honor. From there, he dispatched {397} messages to other villages and towns in the area, and he gathered many soldiers. [The eldest prince and his army] quickly traversed the kingdom and surprised the Cochinchinese, exterminating them. In the same dash for victory, he made a thrust with his men and assailed the [Cochinchinese] general, who came under attack, was defeated, and forced to retreat to his own country. Having achieved the victory, he [the eldest prince] kept alert, in case the enemy decided to return. Thus he kept a vigil by the sea, he fortified the land and guarded the borders. Triumphant and ecstatic, he entered the capital, and had himself crowned. So far, this is what it is known.

The king of Cochinchina, then, once he realized that it was not easy to extend his reach far enough to occupy this kingdom [of Cambodia] without leaving his own kingdom open to attacks from Tonkin, set the uncle king [Nak Can] free so that he could return [to Cambodia] (if the first nephew who now rules will allow him to). However, before letting him go, he had him brought before him, tightly bound, and harshly reprimanded him for letting the Malays become so powerful in his kingdom and for letting them use him as a puppet as he had decided so lightly to follow their law. [The king of Cochinchina also rebuked Nak Can] for his addiction to alcohol, inquiring why he was so attracted to drinking when the use of wine was prohibited by the law he professed. With that, he dismissed him after giving him a few things: clothes to wear, a golden vase, and another made of silver, from which to eat.³⁶

4. Father Giovanni Maria Leria

4.1 The condition of Christianity in Cambodia in the days of Father Leria

{397} Now, let us move on to consider the condition of religion [in the kingdom of Cambodia]. I will have to repeat what I have said in the beginning: the country was delightful for everything else, yet unable to appreciate the efforts of the evangelical workers, even before the dreadful sect of the Moors had arrived

³⁶ The final paragraph of this section, regarding the king of Cochinchina and Nac Can (then the former king of Cambodia), was placed at the end of the original text {405}. It has been moved here, as it provides a consistent conclusion to the historical segment written by de Marini.

with its ruinous and harmful doctrine. At present, we are losing hope of obtaining any results. Moreover, whatever we had already accomplished has been lost, and we observe how the tender plants, which we were growing in the name of Christ,³⁷ are drying up, [once they are] reached by the poisonous breath of the doctrine of the Koran. Thus the extremely fervent worker Father Giovanni Maria Leria maintains his position [in Cambodia] only out of enormous virtue and heroic withstanding. It is true that, if we are to speak about conversions in this kingdom, the Father was under strain;³⁸ however, to suffer and labor in the name of Christ causes a hidden joy inside the heart and pushes one to suffer and labor even more, in the name of the glory of the Lord himself. If the conversion of the natives,³⁹ a holy spiritual endeavor, would prevent the salvation of the ones who are doing the [evangelical] work,⁴⁰ or would cause the sin that is the death of the soul, God would not ask them [the missionaries] to undergo such sacrifices. Thus, one who acquires merit for himself operates in a better and more fruitful way than the one who, even though he is reaping much from the natives, remains immature or deteriorates [in character]. Hence, the deeds of the Father and his [ability to withstand difficulties] greatly increased the fame and the glory of the Christian faith. He was cultivating those few Christians, more foreigners than Cambodians, who dwelt in the city or reached it from the outside on their trading ships.⁴¹ Even though he did not neglect any of the duties that the evangelical ministers use to accompany knowledge of the real God, there was nobody whose soul was penetrated by Christ's doctrine and wanted to convert to Christianity. In part that was due to the royal prohibition, and those who did not respect it would pay with their lives, but it was also because of the obtuseness of those who, preferring to live as brute animals, extinguish any disposition and attitude {398} leading toward cooperation with the [Holy] Spirit.

Therefore, the Father had the merit to do much [good], [even when] much [evil] was done to him. More than once he came close to a glorious death, but the Father was not afraid, nor did he try to escape. It was the tyrant⁴² who decided not to execute the Father, even when he was not lacking the audacity or the will [to kill him]. Before I describe [in detail] what happened, it is opportune to repeat what I have already said.

³⁷ The priest's Cambodian flock.

³⁸ De Marini says that Father Leria "e' [...] mancata [...] la maggior consolazione." Lit.: "He lacked the major consolation," meaning that he was not successful in converting the natives.

³⁹ Literally de Marini says "the good of the others," meaning, of course, being converted to Christianity.

⁴⁰ The salvation of the souls of the missionaries.

⁴¹ Probably many of them were Japanese who escaped their country during the persecution of the Christians, which peaked in the 1620s–1630s.

⁴² This is the third nephew who, as will be seen, took pleasure in tormenting Father Giovanni Maria Leria.

4.2 *The abuses at the hands of the third prince*

[When] the king [Nak Can] was completing his preparatory period of three years, three months, and three days, the Father had his dwelling near the river. The third nephew, the prince whom we left dead and dispatched in the river, still had his fleet of galleys anchored in the capacious harbor on the same river, which is open to any great ship and leads to the city where the court is. He was there to guard and secure that city. Every now and then, to amuse himself, he landed and entered the house of Father Giovanni Maria Leria, without any respect. [The prince did so] on a day the Father was out, and once he had reached the sacristy, in a barbarous and sacrilegious manner he repeatedly damaged the holy images and a holy cross he found there. When the Father was informed, he returned to his house and, not having much of a choice, he distributed all the holy objects among Christian homes and ships that were at a safe distance from his house. The impious [third nephew] returned the following day, to find the Father but no images. Very upset about this change, he found a book with a holy image that for some reason was still there, and in anger he tore it to pieces. As if this was not enough to satisfy his evil nature, he put [the image] under his feet and stepped on it with sacrilegious irreverence. The Father, filled with zeal, was obliged to condemn that action, and admonished the prince by telling him that such behavior was not fitting for one of his rank, and holy objects were not to be despised in such a way: if they were forbidden, all he had to do was to let him know, and he would ship them back to Macao on the first available vessel. Upon [hearing] these words of the Father, the prince grew furious, and without uttering a word, he reached for his scimitar and dashed forward as though to chop the Father's head off. The Father, with indomitable heroism, not only did not pale somewhat, nor did he back off, but he promptly knelt, opened his vest and offered his neck to the tyrant. God, who had spared for the Father other crowns,⁴³ did not want the blow to fall upon him, however, and the arm of the tyrant stopped as it was wounding [the Father], perhaps at the thought that his uncle, the king [Nak Can], would not have approved that a foreigner be executed without his permission; or because the {399} Father, offering his own life, had placated his anger.

Nevertheless, soon after [the prince] was once again furious and ordered a spear to be brought over. He handed it to his captain, and told him: "Run it through that wicked man, from one side to the other." As the prince said this, the Father, expecting the blow, uncovered his chest and prepared to receive the spear. But as the captain was ready to strike, all the courtiers⁴⁴ restrained him, some with their

⁴³ The crown of martyrdom, as he was to die (as a willing victim) some other time.

⁴⁴ The Cambodian nobles and/or soldiers accompanying the third nephew.

muscles, other with their voices, asking for amnesty and forgiveness. The Father, content, with an affable and serene expression on his face, and as if nothing had happened, stood up and, with the others, attended the prince to the shore as he returned to his fleet. He [the prince], before embarking, turned and praised the heroism and the steadiness of the Father, and asked if he loved him or hated him. The Father answered that he respected His Highness as a person of royal blood, but that his conscience did not allowed him to praise such acts of contempt against the respect due to holy images. Again the prince, breaking loose like a furious beast, drew his scimitar and ran for the kill. He [the Father], intrepid as always, exposed his naked neck, waiting for his last moment to come, that precious hour in which he would have reached such a desirable goal, when he could have sealed with his own blood the Roman Faith he had preached and practiced. This time the courtiers stopped the blow and the prince, not at all placated, ordered his surgeon, of English nationality, to cut the body of the Father into pieces. However, the Father was not to receive the consolation of such divine favor,⁴⁵ as the surgeon answered that his duty was to heal the sick, and not to harm the healthy. The prince boarded his ship, and the Father returned to his house, enriched by so many crowns.⁴⁶

The prince immediately ran to inform his mother of these facts and all that had happened. She was completely committed to the bonzes and lived in their monasteries as a hypocritical devotee.⁴⁷ Thus [she] hated Christ and his followers as much as she could. In her impiousness, she showed a great desire for the Holy Cross,⁴⁸ and promised she would show how to deal with it, once [the third prince] found an astute way to seize it and bring it to her. [She proposed that the prince] return to see the Father, pretending to repent and showing a desire to convert to Christianity, that he praise that doctrine, and inquire upon its mysteries; in other words, that he act as though he were repenting and apologetic — all in order to receive the Holy Cross from the hands of the Father, or at least in order to have it shown to him so that he could seize it by force. However, God did not want a sacred thing to be given to a cur, [and] enlightened the Father so that he could recognize the evil and impious intentions that the hypocrite [prince] was hiding under his cloak of sudden devotion. Thus the Father never gave in to the prince's requests.

⁴⁵ He was not to become a martyr on that occasion.

⁴⁶ "rich in (Christian) glory." A crown was the "prize" for martyrs.

⁴⁷ The word *pinzochera* in the original, the etymology of which is unknown, was used in thirteenth century Tuscany to define the Franciscans who, while being lay, lived a life of devotion. Later on (in the days of de Marini), the meaning changed, and it was used to indicate a bigot, somebody who would pretend to live a religious life, while he or she did not. Thus de Marini attaches this term to the mother of the third nephew, who was staying in a Buddhist monastery but did not live according to any religious principles.

⁴⁸ This must refer to a certain cross Father Leria kept in his house or in his church.



{400} [The Prince] then revealed his perverted mind and showed himself to be the wolf he was. He became as furious as a dog, he hurled himself upon the Father, and rudely offending him with the worst words he could find, gave him many punches and kicks until the Father had been entirely battered. [Then,] after seizing and tugging his hair, he pulled his ears and made him black and blue all over. The prince was not satisfied, but he was tired, after he had tormented the Father, who had withstood everything like a docile lamb, with a serene mind and a jubilating heart, as he was honored for what he had withstood in the name of Christ. The wicked [prince] threatened to kill the Father, saying the reason he had not done so already was respect for the king who was dwelling nearby.⁴⁹ He also said he was not finished with the Father: he was not killing him now since he would have killed him slowly, later and not one but many times. [The prince then] obtained from the king permission to put to death some criminals, and wanted the execution to take place in front of the house of the Father. The prince had the Father called, obliging him to attend and, as the executioner was carrying out his duties, the prince [again] threatened the Father with doing to him what he was doing to those miscreants.

When the king [Nak Can] was finished with his pilgrimages and had returned to govern, he ordered that no execution was to be carried out on the street where the Father lived, and that nobody should disturb him. Yet one day the ferocious and dissolute youngster prince went to the street with his elephant and took pleasure and delight in demolishing the Father's house. With rude manners he insulted the Father, who, thanks to his good heart, was able to swallow [such an affront].

However, as I have related already, it did not take long before the prince paid the penalty in exemplary style in that very river from where he used to land to bully [the Father]. From there he fell into the eternal fire, to satisfy the righteous wrath of God.

4.3 The Japanese Christians of Cambodia

Once this harassment against the Father [Giovanni Maria Leria] had ended, another, even more bitter and unpleasant than the first, took place. It was played against the Father by those who were supposed to protect him and respect him. This caused serious damage among that idolatrous [Cambodian] people, and appalled the Gentiles at the expense of the law of Christ, which was [by them] misjudged.

⁴⁹ That was possibly because the king, who was undergoing his spiritual training not too far from the capital, did not want foreigners to be killed without his permission.

The cause was some Japanese who had left Japan in the days when the persecution was rampant and had come to take refuge in Cambodia. Thanks to their [initial] great fervor, they had obtained from the king⁵⁰ a church, where they could congregate for their usual sacred practices. Even though the king had kindly given approval to them, there was no religious person⁵¹ who could constantly take care of them, and so their original zeal gradually diminished, and they became Christians basically only in name — as happens to those who not practice continuously the virtues received as gifts from God.⁵²

The reason for the troubles was the following: { 401 } in the year 1630, two Fathers of the very religious Order of Saint Dominic⁵³ came to Cambodia from the Philippines, as chaplains of a galleon. They were supposed to stay in Cambodia until some great ships ordered by the governor of the Philippines had been built in Cambodia, where there was plenty of excellent wood for [naval] construction. On that occasion, the Japanese entrusted their church to those preaching Fathers. These Fathers had returned to the Philippines once the construction of the ships was completed and gave up that church, passing it to Father Francesco Bozhuomo, of our Jesuit company, who had already been preaching in Cambodia for one year, after being exiled by the king of Cochinchina because of the [Christian] faith he had brought [to that kingdom]. Since then [ca. 1630] and to the present, no other missionaries have entered [the church]; thus our [Jesuit] Fathers have continued to use it for the usual public and private administration of the Sacraments and the word of God. Now, this church was built of wood and not of stone, and was so rotten and unsafe that it could have collapsed. Father Giovanni Maria Leria had the Japanese informed that it was dangerous and disrespectful to leave the church in such a state, and that no mass could be celebrated there with due dignity. But those [Japanese] did not listen, as they were busy with making money from their trading — and the more time they dedicated to their businesses, the less they dedicated to God. Seeing that, the Father appealed to a mandarin who, even though he was a native of Macao, was put in charge of the government of a province [in Cambodia], thanks to his excellence in the art of casting artillery. Informed of the matter, the mandarin immediately obtained two hundred workers. With that help, materials and wood ready, the old church was demolished and they began to rebuild a more beautiful and bigger one. The work was almost completed when the Japanese went to a governor who was the favorite of the king, to make accusations

⁵⁰ The context implies that this king was Chei Chettha (1619–27), or possibly Sri Thoammaracha (1627–32), given the intense persecution in Japan from 1622 to 1629.

⁵¹ A Christian missionary.

⁵² This last sentence appears at the beginning of the paragraph, but for the sake of a readable translation has been moved here.

⁵³ Two Dominican Fathers.

against the Father. They demanded that the Father repay them for the church they had built with their money, and as they poured out their rage, or perhaps because of extreme wickedness, they told immeasurable falsehoods against the Father. So slanderous and dishonorable were they that even the Gentiles would have been ashamed to say such things about their priests. However, the wise governor understood well that such accusations came out of rancor, and attached no importance to them. He advised the Father to leave to the Japanese the terrain where the first church was originally built, and the old wood that he intended to use for the new [church]. Then the Father obtained permission to build as many churches as he wanted, as long as they were outside the quarter inhabited by the Japanese, and as far as possible from it.

{402} The Father listened to that advice, and built a church not as big as the one he had begun to build [in the Japanese quarter], although it was sufficient for his needs. Once it was finished, the Japanese refused to congregate there, and were so obstinate that, rather than going there [to the new church], they preferred to remain without going to mass from June to Christmas.

They wanted the Father to go every two Sundays to celebrate mass in their church, which they had in the meantime restored. The Father rejected that solution: the reason was that their church was a place that had already been violated by Gentiles, who could enter it in an unruly way to carry on their business. Rather than a house in which to pray, it had become a market place, whereas the new church was used exclusively to celebrate mass, preach and administer the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist.

However, because of his compassion and zeal, the Father had no heart to witness the disgrace and the ruin of many souls; thus, [even though the Japanese] were so obstinate in their ideas that even the Gentiles were appalled, as a good shepherd, he had the duty to help that lost flock, which was impaired by its own weakness. Thus he forgot about all the insults, and went [to speak] to those who were responsible for the dispute, imploring them, exhorting them and reminding them how terrible the state of their souls was, [thereby] giving to the Gentiles reasons to curse the name of God. [He also pointed out] how many were led to follow them in the same sins, something they [the Japanese] would ultimately have to justify before God. But they were mute to all of this, and stubbornly persevered in their attitude. Then God cracked his whip over them and, with fatherly punishment, made them worthy to receive the beneficence of his mercy, subjecting them to the hands of his Divine justice. Since they did not listen to the lesson of the Father, [God made it so that] they would suffer materially, in order to be saved spiritually. [In fact,] many of the Japanese, especially those who were most guilty, experienced great losses of goods and health.

To say [a few things] about some of them, there was [for example] one who had chased his Christian wife out of his house, and was living with another Christian woman, who bore him children. No advice could help him, as he had set his mind upon not being upright, and he was one of the most hostile towards the Father. Even so, when [the man] fell ill and became seriously sick, the Father went many times to pay visits, and with pious and holy sermons tried to prepare him for real penance. The [Japanese] man, feeling he was lost, received from God the light needed to repent his sorry state and, touched by sincere penance, he began by getting rid of the woman and, since his scandalous behavior had been public, {403} he wanted his repentance as well to be public. In front of many, he accused himself and humbly asked God for forgiveness, also for having been part of the conspiracy of those who had accused him [the Father] of pretentious charges and for the wrong reasons. Now he was repenting from the heart for having been a negative example to others, and for the outrage he had caused among the Gentiles, as he had dishonored our holy faith of which he now considered himself not worthy. The Father, having seen him so favorably disposed, with peculiar happiness listened to his confession and, as the illness worsened, he gave him the Holy Viaticum and finally the Extreme Unction. The sick man kept repenting and showing faith, while piously speaking to God and the Holy Cross that he had with him. He asked for the grace of death and, as he realized that it was near, he rejoiced, thinking it would extinguish his sins. With these humble requests and feelings of true repentance, he returned his fortunate soul to God, as we hope [we will be able to do].

Another [Japanese] man, similarly debauched in his lifestyle, together with his conscience had lost his honor and his decency, and was confined to bed and condemned to a painful existence by the arm of Divine vengeance. There, having found in his suffering the teachings he needed in order to learn to become wiser, he thought about the wrong he had done against God; and considering that, because of his shameful life, the Father had excluded him for many years from the Sacraments, he began to repent and to think about how to make up for his many faults. He had coerced to prostitution, and exposed to the public shame of filthy lucre, two of his daughters, in order to eke out a living without getting tired and to enjoy an easy life, thanks to the unrighteous price of their bodies. At this point, he realized his terrible mistake and opened his ears, which had always been closed to the words of the Father. The Father, once he learned about the unhappy state of this man's body and soul, and knowing that the disease was so advanced that there was no hope to save his body, made up his mind to save [at least] the soul. Before visiting him he sent some good honest Christians to see him and to console him by giving advice about [how to] set his soul straight in front of God, who has great mercy and never turns down whoever sincerely repents and returns to him. The sick man received such advice, and God operated in his soul: considering improper that the

Father had to go to his house, even though he was sick and in pain, he was accompanied to the church where he publicly condemned his wrongdoings and asked for forgiveness for the indignity he had caused by being part of the faction against the Father. {404} He took the Holy Confession from the Father, and to his daughters he firmly said that either they stop their sinful profession, or they should not even dream that he would recognize them as his daughters. They had started [their profession of prostitution] unwillingly, but [by then] were used to it, thus neither the prayer nor the authority of their Father sufficed to make them change their minds. He [the Japanese man], on [hearing of] their obstinacy, without even seeing them in person, declared they were the Devil's daughters, and not his. Upon receiving the other Sacraments of the church,⁵⁴ with great contrition, he died putting his soul in the hands of the merciful Lord he had so often insulted. The same happened to his wife, who even more than he had lived a wicked and loose life. It was, in fact, she who had induced the man to make such disreputable profit out of his daughters. Moreover, she was upset with the Father, as he had criticized her lifestyle, and with false accusations she had instigated against him not only her husband, but also her son-in-law. As much as she could, she persecuted [the Father] with implacable hatred, but since the benevolence of God surpasses every evil, he mercifully looked upon her, and she, even though seriously ill, repented and humbly asked the Father to confess her and not to abandon her at that moment, even though she was an unworthy sinner.

In order to grant her more freedom, the Father wanted her to confess to another of our [Jesuit] Fathers who were there rather than with him. He said so also to the two I have already mentioned⁵⁵ who happened to be there [in Cambodia]. But she as much as others said it had to be him [Father Giovanni Maria Leria], since it was he they [the repenting Japanese] recognized as their Father, after they had wrongly attacked him and had offended him with such unfair and malicious accusations. So, favorably disposed, she returned her soul to the Creator.

What terrorized all the Japanese was the language God spoke, one that even the deaf understood. When mortal epidemics came to the Japanese quarter, they took away life, and the results were more or less serious according to how much they had participated in the humiliation and the accusations against the Father. To make it clear that it was the hand of God, who knows how to vindicate those who bear offences in his name, expose themselves for His glory, and know how to forgive, the punishment had to be evident not only in the lives of the guilty ones, but also with their goods. In fact, once the victorious Cochinchinese had entered

⁵⁴ Probably the Extreme Unction.

⁵⁵ Father Carlo Rocca and Father Antonio Lopez.

Cambodia, the first quarter that was sacked was the one inhabited by the Japanese, even though it was not the most opulent or rich.⁵⁶

The wonder was that in the same district there were many homes, belonging to people of different nations, but the fires started by the soldiers after they had sacked them {405} flared up in and burnt down only the dwellings of the Japanese, like the Angel of God, who had struck Egypt, had protected some homes to bring the flames to others. Once the Gentiles and the Talapoins,⁵⁷ or should we call them bonzes, had observed this event, all said it was clearly a vengeance and a punishment that had come from Heaven.

5. Conclusion

Such was the condition of the Christian religion in Cambodia where, as I have said, the first of those five nephews had become king by the use of force, and the whole kingdom is still in tumult. And since this condition persists, the [evangelical] workers, who are very few for such a vast Province [the Jesuit Province of Japan], would be idle for the most part. Thus it was decided that, while we are waiting for that kingdom [Cambodia] to become peaceful again, they had better be sent to other places, also considering how these three Fathers, all of them extremely good, had nothing left to live upon in that place after the fire had destroyed the furnishings in their homes and the accessories of the church, while the rest, whatever they had to wear and to survive, had fallen into the hands of the soldiers.

On 15 June 1659, Father Giovanni Maria Leria, Father Carlo Rocca and Father Antonio Lopez left Cambodia and safely reached Macao, thanks to good and favorable winds. From there, Father Leria was sent to the Kingdom of Siam, where the Superior of the Mission, Father Tomasso Valguarnera,⁵⁸ was occupied with the compilation of a dictionary or a lexicon of the Siamese language, which he knows better than anybody else. From him, the aforementioned Father Leria can receive great help that can be put into use not only in that kingdom [Siam] but also in the neighboring ones, especially in that of the Lao, where an almost identical

⁵⁶ Perhaps the invading army thought the Japanese enclave to be the richest in town, since the Japanese of this period who lived in other towns in Southeast Asia, such as Ayutthaya in Siam, were reputedly wealthy traders.

⁵⁷ This is a Mon term referring to a 'Buddhist monk' and was adopted from Mon into Portuguese and other European languages. Talapoin (plural Talapoins) is a standard spelling, but there are variations.

⁵⁸ Tommaso Valguarnera was born in Palermo, Sicily, studied theology in Goa, worked for the Jesuit Society in Macao during the 1640s and was ordained there in 1649. He went to Ayutthaya to found a permanent Jesuit mission, worked there during 1655–69 and again from 1675 until his death in 1677. For his biography, see Gnolfo (1974).



dialect is in use. Moreover, the king of Siam relies on Father Valguarnera as interpreter for the missives he receives from foreigners.⁵⁹

[The aforementioned] mayhem obliged many of the foreigners {406} to leave the kingdom of Cambodia. As we await better news, the Kingdom of Cambodia is today subjected to considerable strain.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ The paragraph regarding the retirement of the Cochinchinese and the liberation of Nak Can was placed by de Marini here in the original text; however, it has been moved to the end of the historical section.

⁶⁰ These last two sentences of the chapter were at the end of the paragraph which has been transposed. “Mayhem” refers of course to all the destruction caused by the struggles at court and by the Cochinchinese invasion.



CHAPTER VIII - MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF SIAM

1. A brief description of Ayutthaya and Siam in the early 1640s

{406} Of all the kings of the Indies, besides the Great Mogul Emperor of India and the first and most powerful among the world's main kings, the Chinese Emperor, there is no king in that part of the Orient who can match the King of Siam for the size of his domain, the fertility of the land and the ease of commerce. He is powerful on land and at sea, though the value of his subjects is not as high as their number, as they are often sluggish and lenient, living in lust and indolence. In Siam the only ones who tire themselves are the despised serfs, the slaves and, by the seashores, a great number of brigands and buccaneers. This king dominates not only one kingdom,⁶¹ but many others adjoining Siam. In that strip or arm of land more or less large, he has many provinces that the natives call "domains", and they call their governors "kings", while we would call them "viceroys". Even considering that some of the contiguous realms are tributaries to this kingdom of Siam, the king does not refuse to discharge [the obligation] to pay tribute to the Chinese Emperor.

Here I do not have the intention to describe this kingdom in detail. It is true that during the short period I dwelt there I saw things that are worthy of being told, but twenty years have passed. Since then, I have not received other accounts, besides two very succinct ones that Father Thomasso⁶² Valguarnera, Superior of the Mission [in Siam] sent to our Father General. Thus, I cannot rely too much upon my memory, which is fading with the years and becomes confused after I have seen so many kingdoms and customs, to the extent that this work is at the limit of reliability for a document destined to be printed.

The metropolis of this kingdom, where the king lives, is called Ayutthaya [*Iudia*]. If we exclude China, which has cities that are more famous and celebrated, it is one of the greatest and more populous cities in this part of the Orient. The city [of Ayutthaya] is encircled by a great river,⁶³ which is greatly frequented by foreign vessels that come to trade, since the weather is extremely pleasing and the place can be reached from anywhere in the Orient. The walls that surround [the city] are tall and robust, built in the European style⁶⁴ to {407} protect the city from inundations.⁶⁵ Every year floods last for the time that to us corresponds to midsummer to

⁶¹ De Marini uses the word *Regno* or its plural *Regni* four times in this paragraph. We have translated it as "kingdom" when referring to Siam, while "domains" is more appropriated for the provinces, and "realms" for the contiguous regions that paid tribute to Siam.

⁶² In the previous chapter, the spelling for the first name was "Tomasso", and not "Thomasso".

⁶³ The Chao Phraya, referred to as "Menam."

⁶⁴ The walls were reconstructed in 1581.

⁶⁵ It is unlikely that the walls were built as protection against flooding.

autumn, and the waters rise more than usual, 15 or 20 palms' span. Thus, the city homes and surroundings all have their little boats that are used to go to the market, which is located on a higher and flat terrain, thus free from flooding.

Almost every home is built on high stilts made of wood, half-buried in the ground, so that the current of the river will not carry them away. [They] are covered with straw, and all around adorned with bamboo. Inside, for ornamentation, they are decorated with leaves or mats, also used to divide the apartments.⁶⁶ For the doors, the same materials are needed, reinforced in the middle and on the sides so that the key, which is made of wood, combines with the keyhole, which is not made of iron. The Royal Palace is built with mortar and bricks and so are the buildings and stables for the elephants, the [Buddhist] temples for the Idols and the treasury towers.

The country, besides what it necessary [to its people to survive], has an overabundance of delights for the palate: it is unbelievable how much can be bought in provisions and food for a low price. There are designated hours for shopping, and at times for one *scudo*⁶⁷ they will give you one hundred chickens, and for one *giulio*⁶⁸ so much rice that it lasts a hearty eater for a month. In some areas, however, the country is not so fertile, nor the climate salubrious, nor the waters very good. The citizens and the nobles, who really care about their rank, are affable to and friendly with foreigners.

2. De Marini's journey from Goa to Ayutthaya, 1641–42

2.1 *Goa to Tenasserim by ship*

Allow me now to move on and to mention, in passing, a few peculiar episodes that happened to me while traveling from India to this kingdom [of Siam], as I think that, because of their variety, these curious tales provided interesting material for my pen.

The time came when it was possible to travel⁶⁹ from the city of Goa to the city of Macao, and from there to enter Japan. Along with Padre Manuel Cardoso, a Portuguese, I boarded a merchant ship. To defend itself from the Malabari buccanniers,⁷⁰ serious antagonists of the Christians, it was escorted by a fleet of warships which, by order of the Viceroy, patrolled that coast of India in order to keep it free of the aforementioned pirates. As we caught sight of the beach of Calicut, we found ourselves surrounded by four Dutch ships, which spent a good half day shooting at

⁶⁶ The leaves and the mats were used as partitions to divide the different sections inside a home.

⁶⁷ *Scudo*: see note 33.

⁶⁸ *Giulio*, another Italian monetary currency.

⁶⁹ Because of favorable winds.

⁷⁰ Pirates from the Malabar (west) coast of India.

us with cannonballs that hit almost all galliots, save ours and a few others.⁷¹ The day after we landed in the city of Cochin, and after a month of rest in our college,⁷² we sailed toward the Fishery Coast,⁷³ until we arrived in Nagapatnam. In that city, which was also Portuguese, we were {408} held up for a few months, to withstand the siege by the *Naik*,⁷⁴ whom we would call the “Duke” of Tanjor. Once he had obtained tribute from the citizens, he left the city to its freedom. From this harbor, crossing the Gulf of Bengal, we arrived in Mergui, a harbor of the domain of Tenasserím, which is a province of the kingdom of Siam. There [in Nagapatnam] it happened that at the departure, our galliot, which was owned by Gentiles, got stuck, and seeing the difficulties of getting it off the sandbars and into deeper waters, the Gentile owner of the ship was ready to sacrifice a virgin maiden to the Idol, persuaded as he was by a Brahmin, who saw no other solution to such a desperate situation. However, the engineers⁷⁵ avoided such horror and with their mechanical devices set the ship free, and on it we sailed for two months in an extremely stormy sea. After risking being sunk more than three times, we observed, I can say, a miracle produced by the glorious image of Saint Francis Xavier, which I laid at the base of the main mast and which saved us. The gulf, in ordinary conditions of good winds, would have been crossed in twelve days, whereas for us sixty days were barely enough. We had set sail on 29 September and on the 29 November [1641] we reached Tenasserim, where today our Fathers occupy a church and a residential house. There we celebrated the festival of Saint Francis Xavier,⁷⁶ since we had found there some Portuguese who, after they had learned about the Dutch conquest of Melaka, were waiting for the monsoons to set sail towards India. We also celebrated there the festivities of Christmas, including a reenacting of the mystery⁷⁷ in a simple hut, which, as much as it can be said, was appreciated by the local Gentiles and the king⁷⁸ who attended it.

⁷¹ The Dutch were at war with the Portuguese, and all Portuguese ships (such as the one on which de Marini was sailing) were vulnerable to attack. Jesuits ordinarily sailed from their headquarters at Cochin to the Jesuit convent at Melaka, before continuing to the Jesuit convent at Macao. By the time de Marini left Goa in 1641, the Dutch had besieged Melaka (Malacca), which they captured in January 1641. With the Dutch in control of the routes by way of the straits, he was obliged to use another route. He went first to Tenasserim and then overland to the Gulf of Siam, arriving in Ayutthaya in early 1642. He did not reach Macao until 1643.

⁷² A ‘college’ where the priests lived and worked.

⁷³ ‘Pescaria’ was the name given by the Portuguese to a section of the coastline between Cape Cormarin and Ceylon.

⁷⁴ Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson* (1903) indicates this comes from Sanskrit, meaning “a leader, chief, general”, and was a title of honour in many parts of India.

⁷⁵ In the earlier sense of the word: people dedicated to construction and operation of machines.

⁷⁶ The festival of St. Francis Xavier is celebrated on 3 December.

⁷⁷ The birth of Jesus.

⁷⁸ Refers to the powerful governor of this city.

2.2 *Across the great forest: by foot, cart and boat from Tenasserim to Ayutthaya*

We embarked on the river for Siam, and in five days we were in Jalinga,⁷⁹ which is the name both of a domain and of its chief town. Once we disembarked there, we stayed for a few days to recruit and wait for the carts and their conductors, without whom it is not possible to travel without facing clear danger.

We grouped about one hundred people, to be able to cross safely the great forest inhabited by every sort of animal: not by lions, which have never been seen here, but full of countless tigers, so thirsty for human blood that no caravan, as the Portuguese call such a procession, transits without somebody getting killed or maimed by such beasts. Sixteen days, of travel, I mean, we walked through horrendous woods and between mountains completely covered in thick vegetation. The whole path was opened by axe and machete, in order for it to be possible to pass.⁸⁰

In these woods I found a tree enormously huge at its bottom and tall in proportion. I measured its {409} circumference, to find that the length of it was more than ninety of my palm's span.⁸¹ It is not surprising then to know that the royal barge which the king uses to navigate the rivers is made out of a single trunk, hollowed out and still so long that it can accommodate sixty rowers on each side. And when they want to use the sails, two perches twenty palms' spans long⁸² are lifted at the stern; then they spread over them some cloth as light as linen, which suffices to make the craft run fairly well. The variety of birds is as beautiful and pleasant to the eye as one can wish for. It is sufficient to say that their plumage, besides being used for precious presents, is used as tribute to the Emperor of China. Such plumage is very precious for the making of hangings that are extremely original and, when new, more pleasant than Flemish tapestries.

⁷⁹ An inhabited site called Jalinga was recorded by later travelers. It was in the middle of the peninsula along this forested route, which was otherwise uninhabited. De Marini's text suggests that the territory controlled by the governor of Jalinga extended the entire length of the trail, beginning at the boat landing on the Tenasserim River. His description of his journey in early 1642 through "the great forest" may be the earliest one ever recorded, and it was probably the only occasion, during all of his travels, that he was exposed to such a dangerous environment. Jacques de Bourges was to retrace the same route in the company of the Bishop of Berythus, Lambert de La Motte, in 1662, en route from Mergui to Ayutthaya. A detailed account appears in Chapter IX, *The Journey from Tenasserim to Siam*, in de Bourges' *Relation du voyage de Mgr l'Evêque de Beryte... jusqu'au Royaume de Siam et autres lieux* (Paris, 1666); see also JSS 81/2 1993: 113–129.

⁸⁰ De Marini here says: "affinche [la via] corra al possibile uniforme," which literally translates as: "so that the road ran as even as possible." That is, with axe and machete, they opened a path through the jungle as best as they could.

⁸¹ At 90 hand-spans (each ca. 20 cm), the trunk of this enormous tree must have been about 10 metres in circumference or 4 metres in diameter.

⁸² About four metres.

To spend the nights in such forests is terrifying, considering the confusion of frightening howls, bellowing and squealing produced by rhinoceros, elephants, tigers and other animals. Thus, we were forced to stay vigilant to mount guard and to defend ourselves with fire and weapons from numerous tigers' assaults. Only a Moor, who had gone to fetch some water from a brook together with five Christians, was badly wounded by one of these [tigers], while in the caravan that traveled before us two were killed. We went on foot with great difficulty, because of the poor condition of the carts, the unbearable heat of the day and the icy cold of the night. Since in these domains there is an excessive temperature during the three months we call spring, one needs also to consider the very ardent thirst, which we could quench only by the little water we extracted from lotus. It was not yet the time when the rain, almost exclusively during a single season, mostly in August and in September, falls from the sky producing the great and lasting inundation that leaves the terrain temperate and fertile, allowing for the growth of a great abundance of rice and legumes — although no wheat takes root [in this region].

On 4 February [1642] we reached the city of Phetchaburi⁸³ and here we embarked on the river to arrive in the royal city of Siam, Ayutthaya, on the eleventh day. The rivers in these regions are really delightful and broad, and even though Europe as well has great ones, these [Southeast Asian rivers] surpass them. This one in Siam is broad and deep, softly covered on both shores by beautiful vegetation that reduces the heat. Other than [the period] after the rains, [the river] is so clear, that the waters seem made of crystal — so placid in its flow that it seems as though it is not moving. Over it, one can live in homes like the city dwellings that are raised on high poles stuck in the riverbed where [the waters] are at their most placid. There are other houses that are not fixed in place, {410} nor anchored, but mobile and floating, made of very big bamboo canes [that are] strongly tied together. [They] resemble floating islets that can be taken to wherever their dwellers wish.

3. Jesuit missionaries in Siam and the Talapoins

3.1 *The Early Years in Siam*

Now, to continue [our previous discourse] from where we left off, it has been fifty years since Father Baltassar Siqueira⁸⁴ of our company entered this kingdom [Siam] carrying the Evangelists⁸⁵ but, sickly as he was, he could not continue, and, determined to return to Goa or Cochin, died during the trip in the city of

⁸³ The old name for this city was Pipeli.

⁸⁴ Balthazar Siqueira was the first Jesuit to evangelize in Siam for a short time, ca. 1606–7.

⁸⁵ The New Testament or, more generally, the Christian religion.

Phetchaburi. A few years later a Father of the Seraphic Family of Saint Francis called Fra' Andrea⁸⁶ went [to Ayutthaya], but his behavior was [considered] suspicious and thus he was expelled from the kingdom. Many years went by and there came a Father of the Holy Order of Preachers⁸⁷ with the intention to stay, although, after he had experienced some sorrows at the hands of the king of Ayutthaya, he returned to Goa. Furthermore, on separate occasions, ordinary and secular⁸⁸ clerics entered [Siam]. Among them was the Apostolic Father Pedro Morejon,⁸⁹ nephew of the Archbishop of Toledo, and one of our Fathers who was exiled from Japan by the tyrant;⁹⁰ and again, of ours, Father Giulio Cesare Margico, there venerated as martyr, and Father António Cardim, about whom I will speak in my relation on Lao.⁹¹ In the end, thirty years went by during which, because of the tribulations between that king⁹² [Song Tham] and the Portuguese nation, our Fathers had retired to Macao, and there was no permanent presence in Siam, but only some brief visits.

3.2 *Father Tomasso Valguarnera (part I)*

In such a situation, our deeds could not satisfy the needs of the many Christians in the city. The majority of them were Japanese, who stayed in Ayutthaya more than in any other port in the Indies. They convened together and in the name of all of them sent a letter to our Father Visitor⁹³ in Macao insistently praying him to send them the consolation of any Father who could take care of their souls. It

⁸⁶ This Portuguese Franciscan was André de Santa Maria, who worked in Ayutthaya during the reign of King Ekathotsarot and for some years during the reign of King Song Tham. The Franciscans were also known as the *Serafici*, as "*Serafico*" was the nickname of their originator, Saint Francis of Assisi.

⁸⁷ Lit.: "the Holy Order of the Preachers," meaning the Dominicans.

⁸⁸ By 'ordinary and secular' de Marini probably means ordained priests who did not belong to one of the regular orders (Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits), which were assigned to foreign missions in Southeast Asia. Sometimes these are called 'lay' or 'secular' priests, and they served as chaplains on Portuguese ships.

⁸⁹ Pedro Morejon was a Portuguese Jesuit priest, who was serving in Kyoto at the time of the 1614 decree that expelled the missionaries from Japan. He went to Macao, and in 1626 he visited Ayutthaya in company with two other Jesuit priests: António Francisco Cardim (a Portuguese) and Nixi (a Japanese).

⁹⁰ Refers to the Tokugawa Shoguns Ieyasu (the first Shogun, by then retired) and his son Hidetada.

⁹¹ De Marini's Book V is entirely dedicated to the Kingdom of Lao.

⁹² These tribulations are related to a series of incidents initiated by some Castilians attacking a Dutch ship on the river on the way to Ayutthaya. The incident is reported by many sources; see for example Blair and Robinson (1973: v.22, 137–9).

⁹³ The *Padre Visitatore* was second in the regional hierarchy, after the Father Provincial, who was in charge of all Jesuit activities in the region. This passage is significant because it was the Visitor who had the power to assign the Jesuit priests to specific countries or mission posts in the region.

was exile and the misery of a life too hard for them that had forced these Japanese to live in a place such as Ayutthaya, where one can eke out a living with spending little, but is surrounded by Gentiles and followers of idols. [The Japanese of Ayutthaya] asked for two Fathers: one of them was the Sicilian Father Tomaso⁹⁴ Valguarnera, who willingly and promptly accepted the order to go [to Siam] from the Visitor, Father Sebastião de Maya. In 1655 Valguarnera sailed from Macao [to Ayutthaya] making the voyage in favorable weather. He was welcomed by those [Japanese] Christians with celebrations and jubilation, who felt as though they were born again. [They] knew well of the Father's great compassion, and how, only for the love of their souls, he had faced inconveniences. He had also left the many occupations he was fond of, in Macao, where he had the relief of conversation with the other Fathers. Once he had reached the limits of his charity, he multiplied his tasks since he was not satisfied with performing ordinary deeds. [Besides being] a master of spirituality, in order to {411} do more things, he strived to become a disciple of the [Thai] language, in order to be a valid help not only to the Portuguese, the Japanese⁹⁵ and others who understood his mother tongue [Italian], but also to the Siamese and those of the Kingdom of Lao. [The latter] have frequent exchanges with this kingdom [Siam], and have only one single big and well-populated city [Vientiane]. A more or less similar language is spoken in both kingdoms.

There is no doubt that there is a great difficulty in bringing the faith to the natives, not because they are ill-natured, but because the inferior class is dependent upon the middle class, the middle class upon the upper class, and these upon the king. Besides him, there is nobody who is free or an absolute lord, and thus can without restraint decide by himself. In 1657, eight native people from the city [of Ayutthaya] wanted to be baptized. They spoke the language⁹⁶ well and through them much good could have been done for the benefit of the others, but now, shamefully, these early converts are pointed at and called Christians⁹⁷ and the cross of Christ and the Christian way of thinking is considered *stultitia gentibus*.⁹⁸ Also, about thirty Cochinchinese, refugees from recent wars, came to Siam to receive holy baptism in Siam. There, the Father, having received permission from the

⁹⁴ Again, a different spelling for the first name.

⁹⁵ The lingua francas for trading in the region were Malay and Portuguese. Many Japanese spoke Portuguese. This passage suggests they also knew or at least understood Italian.

⁹⁶ This might refer to the fact that these natives of Ayutthaya spoke the Thai language well, thus could have clearly explained Christian concepts to other Thai, or perhaps it means they could communicate with de Marini in Portuguese.

⁹⁷ De Marini uses the Italian word *Christiani*. As Portuguese was the language of the missionaries, the term actually used must have been "*crístãos*," adopted into Thai as "*khristang*". In this case the term was used as an insult similar to "infidels".

⁹⁸ "Foolishness for the people."

governing king, brought on the edification of the spirit, and that of [a church],⁹⁹ constructed in stone sent by ship from Macao,¹⁰⁰ since none is found in the surroundings of the city [Ayutthaya]. Thanks to the local customs of colorfully painting and gilding, the façade's architecture is so graceful that even the Gentiles are enchanted by it.

3.3 *The Talapoins and their 10,000 temples*

What would really benefit the growth of the new Christian community [of Ayutthaya] would be the conversion of some of the *Talapoins*. To this end, the Father is trying with great assiduousness to conquer some of them, who, as trainees,¹⁰¹ might guide many others into the Evangelical fishing-net of the Gospel. Considering how big in this domain is the esteem the *Talapoins* enjoy from everyone, the simple example of one of them [converting to Christianity] would help countless [others] to understand the truth. It should suffice to consider that just in the city where the court is [Ayutthaya] and its district they have more than 10,000 monasteries, and in every convent they have a Temple of the Idol.¹⁰² As the people here are very devout and generous with their contributions, many of these temples are so richly and splendidly adorned that [looking at them] one sees nothing but sparkling gold. In the cloister of a very popular one there are aligned more than a thousand statues of the Idol, all sitting upon gilded stucco pillows. Many others are made of bronze, gilded and of enormous size. In one temple, among others, there is a statue of extraordinary size that lies reclining. Being oversized, part of it exceeds the length of the building, and an additional {412} structure¹⁰³ has been erected for the feet, so that they do not need to rest beneath the sky. The Father [Tomasso Valguarnera] wanted to know which kind of statue was that, and the Talapoin answered it was a representation of *Pra Non*, the God of Sleep.¹⁰⁴ However, to a further question, asking why such a name and whether the God of Sleep was actually slumbering or perhaps pondering about divine thoughts, the Father obtained only a smile as answer. Foreigners are amazed at the deference

⁹⁹ In this untranslatable pun (“*porta avanti con l’edificio spirituale un altro materiale*”), de Marini speaks of edifying spiritually and materially. In the second case, of course, he speaks of the church that was built in Ayutthaya.

¹⁰⁰ The stone was probably used as ballast by ships sailing from Macao. It might have been replaced in Ayutthaya by bulky goods such as rice and timber.

¹⁰¹ *Delfino* in Italian means an assistant destined to take over the place of a superior.

¹⁰² Probably referring to the main Buddha statue in the *uposatha*, or ordination hall.

¹⁰³ Probably meaning a roof.

¹⁰⁴ Better translated as a sleeping divinity. A *phra non* is a reclining Buddha image. Marini’s informant probably understood *non* only in its secular meanings: to lie down or to sleep. There are two in Ayutthaya. The biggest one is at Wat Lokayasutha; the other, smaller, is at Wat Yai Chaimongkol.

toward these Talapoins that not less than the [ordinary] people, the most important nobles and the king himself show, honoring them no less than as though they were living gods, an attitude caused for the most part by the very composed behavior they use to cover their malicious deeds. In all that concerns appearances, the Talapoins observe their rules with rigor, following the law of the Institute of the Talapoins of Lao, the place where they go to learn as though they were going to a university. Based upon many of their traditions and stories, it is thought that they were reached by news of our holy books and of the Apostolic doctrine, and they keep under consideration many of the things that belong to the faith of our [Christian] mysteries. Yet, these are so strangely distorted and modified that, as we have already seen, the truth of the Christian faith is used in their fables, as is the case of the *anima* they have represented on top of their images in stucco or paper.¹⁰⁵

4. Superstitions, uses and customs of the Siamese

4.1 *The two “sacrifices” of the Talapoins*

Stunning and hilarious was the story of a certain Talapoin. I do not know what sort of devout thoughts he had in his mind, as he had resolved to sacrifice himself in public for the benefit of all to the idol called Xaca.¹⁰⁶ The king,¹⁰⁷ having heard this, praised his determination, and in order for such a rare deed to be accompanied [by an adequate retribution of honor] the king ordered a splendid, as much as noble, mausoleum made entirely of precious wood, positioned above a stack [of firewood]. Thereupon, the Talapoin who had volunteered, superbly dressed, was supposed to burn in front of an extremely numerous audience, anxious to witness such a great challenge. The king himself went with his majestic and very noble entourage, not so much to honor such a great and public sacrifice, but rather to obtain from Xaca some particular benefit for himself and happiness for his kingdom. And so the people were impatiently waiting for the voluntary victim to sacrifice himself. The Talapoin was already acclaimed among the Gods, believed

¹⁰⁵ Thai Buddhist images were not usually made of these materials (stucco and papier-mâché), thus the description logically refers to the object ‘above’ the image. By *anima* (lit.: soul, spirit) de Marini is probably referring to the *aureola*, which is attached to the image itself and serves as a kind of ornamented frame or backdrop. There are two ways to interpret this passage. Either de Marini is implying that Buddhist images in Ayutthaya had an *aureola*-like decoration, that he assumed was borrowed from Christian “holy books” and from “the Apostolic doctrine”; or, more likely, he was comparing the alleged use the Siamese made of Christian “holy books” and “Apostolic doctrine” to the *aureola*, a decoration seen in Christian iconography.

¹⁰⁶ Xaca, a Romanization for “Shakya,” the Buddha.

¹⁰⁷ This event is not dated, thus it is not clear who was the king in question.



to be a saint. As he was still seeing the stack in his imagination, he thought he would have been transported to the heavens by the wings of glory, surrounded by people clapping hands and shouting hurrahs. [However,] when he actually saw the fire burning, he felt that his zealous desire was disappearing, and the more he neared the heat, the more he became cold. As soon as he felt the flames, he retired, unwilling to have anything to do with them. The enthusiastic audience, expecting quite another kind of show, started to laugh, while the king grew furious. Taking the joke as a great offence, he ordered the Talapoin to be taken by force and thrown into the pyre, to burn in it and become a victim of {413} justice, since, after he had promised to sacrifice himself for the love of the people, he had withdrawn his offer. Since the potion he had swallowed could not deprive him of his consciousness and of his senses, in the way it had worked, as I have said, in Cochinchina,¹⁰⁸ the Talapoin experienced how real the fire was, and how shallow was his faked ardor for charity. With it, the event ended.

However, the other Talapoins, to regain the prestige they feared they had lost, spread the word that another [of them] had committed a sacrifice at midnight. In front of the temple there was a stupa. They said that a Talapoin went out in the middle of the night, and once he had set the fire ablaze to his robes, he burned himself alive [there], for the honor of Xaca. To make it believable, they called the people to see this Talapoin who had burned next to the pyramid, and Father Valguarnera also went. The corpse was taken and moved into a painted box as a holy body, and without many compliments, they exposed it in a great hall to public veneration with lights and perfumes; [now], every year they celebrate him as a saint with a festival. [The people], questioned by the Father as to whether anybody had actually seen the body burning, answered they had not. Thus one has to believe that, as usual, the Talapoins used the cadaver of somebody who had died of an illness to get away with their lies and extort alms in order to restore their decadent temple and to maintain the respect due to the saints.

4.2 The methods the Siamese use to placate the devil

It is hard to describe how much the Devil concurs in this and treats these peoples harshly. The Siamese are scared of him and of his harsh rules that force them to venerate his malicious ministers [the Talapoins], as they were the only remedy to evil. The same error of the Manicheans is common, as people think that every evil is caused by the Devil: illness, death, the loss of material goods, they believe are all caused by the devil. Thus, they try to assuage him with, among other

¹⁰⁸ This refers to an event mentioned previously, in one of the chapters about Cochinchina contained in Book IV.



ceremonies, offerings of flowers and fruits, which they load on some little boats they make out of tree bark, and they place them upon the river, so that the waters will carry those little boats where the Devil is waiting for them. Or else they pay some male and female dancers so that they take turns in dancing continuously for many whole days and nights, and they also eat and drink, in order to keep the Devil pleased. Whenever somebody suddenly falls ill, they call the witch whom they call “the mother of the devil”.¹⁰⁹ She earns her living by practicing this art. Once the witch has the sick person brought to her, she locks the door, preventing anybody from entering. Not even a single visit is allowed, so that that poor person, whose body and soul cannot be helped, dies unhappy.

4.3 The smallpox epidemic of 1659: remedies and burials

In the year 1659, an epidemic of smallpox entered the town of Ayutthaya {414}, and many died: the king lost two of his sons,¹¹⁰ and left the old palace to move into a new one. Among the Siamese people there is a superstitious custom: every time a common or universal evil¹¹¹ enters a private home, a vessel, or a city, a [sacred] cotton thread is strung out to fence off the place afflicted by the infection, and they are foolishly persuaded that this is enough to stop evil. For many, they celebrate funerary rites. Those who die of their own disease¹¹² are not buried before the bodies are turned into ashes by fire, while if one has died of smallpox, the corpse is left unburied in the open, with a palisade around. Their flesh is devoured by some nasty predatory birds that enjoy a delicious supper without getting infected.

4.4 The Acehnese Queen of the Elephants

The use of the same abominable superstition applies to both men and for animals. The Siamese people feel a certain sentiment of tender compassion toward elephants. In fact, when one of those that lives in the royal stables is not feeling well and loses its appetite, it is cured with efficacy and gentleness. If the condition worsens and the elephant dies, in that last hour of its life the mandarins assist it, the trials at court are suspended, and on the day of the death there is a funeral and burial in the river. The elephant is tossed in the waters after they have extracted the tusks, which are conserved for private use, but also as a remembrance of the de-

¹⁰⁹ This term might be a translation of the Thai *mae mot*, a female medium and a practitioner of magic arts.

¹¹⁰ King Narai was born in 1633 and was thus aged 26 in 1659. These two sons must have been young children. They are not mentioned in any Thai records.

¹¹¹ A contagious disease or an epidemic.

¹¹² Those who die of natural causes.



funct animal. However, I have never heard that the death of one of those enormous beasts caused the king [of Siam] to abuse the mahouts who are in charge [of the care of the elephants]. [However,] I was told that the Queen of the Acehnese,¹¹³ hearing of the death of an elephant she greatly loved and appreciated, condemned the mahout to a punishment even more atrocious than the one barbarously used by Mezentius.¹¹⁴ Once the dead elephant had been opened, the mahout was buried inside with his wife and his children, leaving only their heads out so that, as the beast became rancid inside, it was their destiny to rot before they actually died. They lost their lives little by little by sheer putrefaction.

4.5 *The funeral of King Prasat Thòng*

The funeral organized for the present king's father deserves to be mentioned. He died in 1657.¹¹⁵ Once the corpse was prepared and embalmed with perfumed oil, they kept it for the length of a year sitting on the throne, paying respect as though he were still alive and reigning. It was ridiculous to see the crown prince¹¹⁶ [Narai] and his younger brothers bow to their father every day, deal with him about [state] businesses and overall behaving exactly as they would have done if he were alive. In such a way they pompously daydreamed with imaginary appearances, and they pleased themselves with a life that had actually ceased to be. Deceiving sorrow and {415} alluring desire, all that was left was simply a cadaver of happiness, and the shadow of greatness that clouded their sight and left them indifferent to what real misery is. Once the year came to an end, the son [Narai] had a sumptuous monument built and provided a magnificent funeral. In order to honor his father, he had a very high cremation pyre erected, its pinnacle being higher than any building in the city. Around this he had put a crowd of three thousand statues,

¹¹³ This is most likely the Sultanah Taj al-Alam, who was described as very fond of elephants. See L. Andaya (2003,76).

¹¹⁴ Virgil in his *Aeneid* tells how this cruel tyrant, to execute his enemies, tied them to a rotting corpse.

¹¹⁵ Prasat Thòng actually died in August 1656. Two very brief reigns intervened, and then Narai came to the throne. The Thai chronicles (Cushman 2000, 232) record a date in the lunar calendar for King Narai's accession, corresponding to Thursday, Karttika 16 CS 1018, or 2 November 1656 in Eade's (1989) conversion tables. The cremation of Prasat Thòng is described in the chronicles but is undated. The next dates that appear in the chronicles are an incident during the lunar month of Pausha (Cushman 2000, 234), 15 December 1656 to 14 January 1657, followed by a barge procession on Tuesday, Magha 2 (Cushman 2000, 238), or 16 January 1657. The chronicler therefore gives the impression that the cremation took place some time in November or December 1656, or the early part of January 1657. De Marini's description seems to place the cremation about a year later. The date 1657 may have been reported presumably by Valguarnera in reference to the cremation, whereas de Marini may have interpreted it to mean the date of death of the king.

¹¹⁶ This was Narai (here not yet consecrated as king), who had two young brothers.



all so graciously adorned with flowers handmade by Chinese masters so accurately that it was impossible to distinguish them from real flowers. There were also extremely attractive paintings that, pleasing the eye of the observer, enriched and improved the whole masterpiece. A huge number of Talapoins was around and they chanted their psalms and recited their prayers, standing on smaller platforms, [divided] in many choirs. Once these ceremonies were over, a lighted candle was given to the king [Narai], and as he neared the great pyre, made entirely of precious eaglewood, sandalwood and calambac, he set it on fire. Upon it was the body, in a great urn covered with pure gold. They saved only two bones that were to be buried under the great stupa, while the rest of the dead body was to be turned into ashes into that golden urn. The entire vast surface of the pyre was enriched with perfumes and charms and covered in gold. Finally, to complete the ceremony, the king distributed abundant gifts for the soul of his father to the Talapoins, according to their status and rank. To the Superiors he presented a gilded box, covered by an extremely thin layer of shining lacquered paint, and filled inside with good textiles for robes, plus a chest filled with good food and preserves of the country, then a fan and a broom. To the other Talapoins he gave more textiles to make robes, but of lower quality, also with fans and brooms. To the novices he gave no fan, but only rough, common textiles. With all this done, the king returned to his palace, not thinking any more about the dead.

5. Events that led to the enthronement of King Narai

As I narrate now how the present king [Narai] ascended to the throne, it is important to take into consideration how his father [Prasat Thòng] was a man of humble origins, basically a serf, but also a man of skill and value, [who] produced a son before taking the crown of such a rich and powerful kingdom. He ruled for thirty years,¹¹⁷ governing with complete peace and straightforward justice, being feared by his neighbors¹¹⁸ and earning the respect and love of his vassals, who were very contented with his rule.¹¹⁹ While he ruled, the princes who were supposed to inherit his kingdom never tried their luck,¹²⁰ [each] thinking he would not enjoy for long the position he had usurped from more powerful ones, whose power and authority {416} they feared. Once he [Prasat Thòng] had managed to keep the kingdom at peace and for himself, he strived to leave it as safe as possible for his heir [Chai], by implementing fair edicts and by righteously amending [the

¹¹⁷ Prasat Thòng actually ruled from September 1629 to August 1656.

¹¹⁸ Cambodians, Burmese, Lao of Lan Na, Lan Sang, etc.

¹¹⁹ De Marini's description of Prasat Thòng contrasts with that of the Dutch merchant/historian van Vliet. See Baker et al. (2005, 241–44).

¹²⁰ They never tried a coup, knowing they would not have succeeded.

existing laws]. When he felt that his own death was near, he called to him the main lords, those whom he had conquered and made reliable by appointing them to rich and honorable ranks in the government and leading positions over civilians and the military. He entrusted them to put the crown on the head of his first-born. Those dignitaries had come from different nations, and for the most part [they were] foreigners: Japanese, Moors, Malay and some Portuguese. The king, as we have said, died in 1657. His first-born, who had come to this world before the father ascended to the throne, was supported by all the people mentioned above, thus he easily, without opposition, was crowned with all the great and solemn ceremonies of that kingdom.¹²¹

[However,] the dead king's brother [Suthamma Racha¹²²] was alive and so was, among other sons, the first son of a queen of royal blood [Narai], who was born after his father had acquired the crown. Loved by his people, he was a youth of high values, liberal, benevolent, winner of [all] hearts, gentle in [his] noble manners. [He] wanted the royal crown to weigh upon his own head, rather than revere the crown on the head of the brother who was born the son of a serf. Thus, he secretly plotted a conspiracy, and as he gave the signal to the armies, in a single blow they attacked and won. In two hours he had set his brother [Chai] on the run, took over the palace and took charge of the whole kingdom.

Since he was magnanimous, of noble heart and of good manners, as a very kind and generous act, he presented the crown to his uncle, and wanted to declare him king, saying that it was undignified for an old[er] uncle to be obliged to be the first among those who pay respect to his young nephew.¹²³ The uncle accepted this honor, but in order to respond to such generous courtesy, he wanted his nephew as a colleague under any circumstance. Together they began to punish the ones who had sided with the king, who was deposed, chased away, and despatched for good. However, soon after, the proverb saying that "a crown does not fit well upon two heads" became true. [The two rulers] disagreed and incomprehension and jealousy arose, soon nullifying their pact of peace. The first reason for the rupture was a Chinese, who was used too much in the government by the uncle. This man was despised and hated by everyone, but in the nephew's camp in particular, he stuck like a lump. Thus, little by little the tension grew, people became alienated and, as a consequence, the [reciprocal] respect [between the rulers] was lost. Since most sided with the rising star of the nephew, the uncle secretly became envious and, from that moment, astutely hiding his intentions, began to plot the death of the

¹²¹ Thus Prasat Thong's firstborn son became King Chai, who briefly ruled in July and August 1656.

¹²² Called "Uncle" in the text: this is King Suthamma Racha, who ruled from August to October 1656.

¹²³ From here, 'nephew' is the term used to refer to Narai.

nephew, and tried to remove him from the kingdom and the world with the use of poison. But since he [Narai, the nephew], thanks to his amiable manners among such barbarians, {417} had his rule based upon the hearts of his subjects, rather than upon the power of weapons and treasures, he was told in time of the death-trap that his uncle had prepared for him by the very man who had been ordered to deliver the poison. Saying nothing [in public], he [Narai, the nephew], quickly informed only his most trusted men and with their help he took arms. The uncle saw that and, fearful, locked himself in his fortress with his Chinese and only two Portuguese he had with him.¹²⁴ The other Portuguese, finding the fortress locked up, moved alongside the party of the nephew, and thus the other [Suthamma Racha, the uncle] said: "We are lost." Such words, more than any powerful assault machine, destroyed the morale of his partisans who, rather than prepare for battle and resist, using the advantage of their position,¹²⁵ began to run away. The nephew, who with his men had neared the fortress, took over after facing a brief resistance. The first to meet the nephew's soldiers was the Chinese, who was beaten badly and wounded in the face, as the combatants were pouring out their disgust against that ill-fated man. In some other small skirmishes among the two parties another thirty men or so were killed, and the uncle-king was captured. According to the law it is customary in the kingdom [of Siam] that when a prince of royal blood deserves a violent death because of his faults, he will not be killed like the commoners. Thus the uncle was killed by a blow on the head with a pole made of sandalwood, a precious instrument used for executions. Commoners, when they are to be executed, are buried in the ground up to the hips, and the executioner, who, by the law of that kingdom is not an infamous person, with a well-sharpened scimitar, cuts them in two pieces, hitting with his stroke from the right to the left side.

Now, the victorious nephew, finally worthy of the crown and pleased about such a quick and joyous victory, with his generous and liberal spirit, wanted to repay all those who had taken risks in order to help him to ascend the throne. [Thus,] he promoted them, including some Portuguese of high standing, to the highest positions in the kingdom, ranks that would correspond to grandee, marshal, duke and marquis. To the soldiers, besides their ordinary pay, he gave permission to sack the homes of the rebels, who, once their guilt was proven, were made to die a cruel death. All this was not enough to hinder the boldness of another two younger brothers, and to extinguish their thirst for the crown or to temper the growing, ardent desire for fortune and successes that pushed them to try their luck. This happened in 1658, when the king was twenty-five. These other two younger brothers plotted together in a conspiracy, and they set it in motion with such care that

¹²⁴ From the continuation of the story, it is clear that there were others with the three identified persons.

¹²⁵ The fortress to which they had retired.



nothing emerged until, when the moment to give the final order came, {418} it was clear that the hearts of the ones they had convinced had changed. Thus the two brothers were left alone and were discovered, taken, killed and buried without any honor.¹²⁶ With such chastisement, the kingdom has enjoyed peace. Since he had been a prince, the new king had the title of “the valiant one”, a title deserved because of his virtues, and not given to him just because of adulation. Under his government the people are thought to be rather happy, and all Christians pray to the Lord to give him [Narai] a long life, since under his pacific way of governing, our Faith can make great progresses.

6. More about the Jesuits in Siam

6.1 *Father Tomasso Valguarnera (part II)*

To Father Tomasso Valguarnera, Superior of the Mission, the arrival of the Portuguese ship from Macao resulted in great help. The captain of the ship had given as a present to the king a painting of a fountain with pleasant water-plays depicted on it. Narai liked it so much that he wanted to know if anybody felt he was capable of giving real form to the image and to turn into reality what was only painted. The Father said he would undertake such a commission, so that His Majesty could be pleased. The work was so well done and the king was so happy that he promised the Father that he would have a house built for him, as soon as the kingdom was free from the preparations for war. There were in fact talks about a forthcoming assault coming from the King of Cochinchina.¹²⁷ Thus, the king [Narai] sent an army to the border, putting at its head some Portuguese accompanied by Father João Cardoso, who, on his way, was free to spread the Gospel and leave in the heart of those willing to listen to him such a precious seed. By doing so, he enlarged the domain of Christianity, making us all very joyful.

In the meantime, the Father Superior, sparing no energy and wasting no chances to help everybody, freely visited the jails and went to the Talapoins' monasteries where, not without profit, he spoke of the Christian faith. He also reconciles divided souls¹²⁸ and by doing so he has sparked the enthusiasm of many Christians — Portuguese, Japanese, and from other nations — who used to live in

¹²⁶ These two brothers of King Narai are not mentioned in Thai sources.

¹²⁷ De Marini is referring to the Nguyen-ruled southern Vietnamese kingdom and its capital at Hué. This ruler was the *chua* (called ‘king’ in European records) Nguyen Phuoc Tan (Hien Vuong), r. 1649–86 or 1687, whose invasion of Cambodia and capture of the Cambodian capital at Lungvek (Lovek) in 1658 provoked this Thai response. Some vague information about the Thai mobilization, found in contemporary Dutch records, is provided by Pombejra (1984: 286).

¹²⁸ People of conflicting faiths.

dismay among these [Siamese] Gentiles. Moreover, with great zeal, he opened a school for children, and besides how to read and write, [the Father] taught them how to live while surrounded by those who love the Idols, how to answer when interrogated by the Talapoins, and he made them put the Christian doctrine to good use. One of those Gentiles put his son's education and services into the hands of the Father, and in a short time the youth has made so much progress in learning Christian law that he was challenging the Gentiles with his arguments. He is an excellent catechist, and we hope he can become a good Christian.

In 1658, I do not know by which kind of negligence of a neighbor, a fire spread, {419} and the flames, carried by the wind, were so impetuous that they burned down the church and the Father Superior's home. But there was no reason to cry about such a misadventure, since with it God wanted to make tributary to His honors the king, by moving his heart in feeling for [our] misfortune. [King Narai] ordered that a better place be assigned to us, with a square around, so that in the future we would not be damaged by similar fires. The Father, with great relief, has already moved, together with his companions into their new dwelling and already celebrates mass in the new church that he is completing in splendid style.¹²⁹ Some of the Japanese Christians (they are some of those who had to withdraw to this kingdom [of Siam] as they were banned by the persecution that took place in Japan) are economically wealthy, but also spiritually gifted, and because of their devotion and zeal, have taken care of the expenses for a noble and holy festival in this church of ours, on the day of the glorious memory of the three Japanese martyrs of our Society of Jesus, the purification of Our Lady and of the two saints Ignacio and Xavier.¹³⁰ In 1659 Father João Cardoso was sent from Macao to this kingdom [of Siam]. He had arrived in Macao from India a few years before, and, being sponsored by a devout old lady in Tenasserím, had enough support to take from p. 41 residence there.¹³¹ Never has there been a time and a government better than the present one in order to operate well [in Siam].

¹²⁹ Valguarnera originally had a church constructed of wood. After it was destroyed by fire in 1658, the parishioners built a new church of more durable materials, probably brick and mortar. This church, called São Paulo (St. Paul's), was the main Jesuit church in Siam until the end of the Ayutthaya period. See Teixeira (1983, map facing 240) for a sketch of the Portuguese quarter's churches; for a discussion about the churches: 63–5.

¹³⁰ The text implies that only one celebration was held, but the annual feast days for these occasions are spread throughout the year: the Purification of Our Lady (2 February), St. Ignatius Loyola (31 July) and St. Francis Xavier (3 December). A 1627 papal brief gave the Jesuits permission to celebrate the office and Mass of three Japanese members of the Society of Jesus—Paul Miki, John de Goto, and James (Diego) Kisai—who were martyred in Nagasaki on 6 February 1597. These three were canonized in 1862.

¹³¹ Upon arrival in Siam from Macao in 1659, João Cardoso was assigned to the Jesuit mission in Tenasserím. He was still there in May 1662, when the first French apostolic missionaries and bishops arrived at that port city, en route to their missions in Vietnam. In 1663 he was transferred to Ayutthaya, and he returned to Macao in 1669. See Teixeira (1988, 364–5).

6.2 *Father Giulio Cesare Margico*

The stepping stone in this kingdom was Father Giulio Cesare Margico, not because he was the first of us to enter it,¹³² but because he was, among the few of his level, a man of rare virtue, who established what was his due mission and was venerated by those early Christians as the dearest Father of their spirit, with uncommon fame of being a saint. He is listed among the martyrs, as he was killed by poison mixed with food by a renegade Christian — actually worse than a renegade: incapable of accepting the Father’s sermons against a life of depravation that indulged in every kind of lust, and willing to get rid of him, the renegade falsely accused Father Margico in regard to some delicate government-related matters, saying he was plotting against the king [Prasat Thòng]. The monarch, a real tyrant who feared even the shadows,¹³³ had the Father put in chains. [Even when] the many Christians who loved him had offered to set him free in various ways, he knew the value of the suffering one undergoes in the name of Christ, and simply thanked them [for their good intentions]. As he was lying prisoner of the Lord [*vinctus in Domino*], as is well and publicly known, poison was put in the little food he received from such a rogue. It is remembered that when he was dying, some of the ministers, out of compassion, wanted to set him free [of the chains], but he did not allow them to detract from the value {420} of his glory, and, understanding that his [martyr’s] crown was to be made out of such iron, he considered those chains so glorious that he sincerely implored to be buried with them on, as they were to be the honorable and precious prizes proving his triumph.

6.3 *Conclusion*

After him [came] Father Pedro Morejon, Father António Cardim and then [others], one after another in that Kingdom [of Siam], and at the moment there are those I have talked about, who are there operating with much fervor. The Father Superior [Valguarnera] for two years took care of a Christian of bad manners who was a negative example, and his effort was not in vain, since he had conquered not only him, but also his mother and three sons. In fact, this man, once he had really returned to God, converted his family and, joyous with such achievement, he took them to the Father in the church, where, now well prepared, they were to be hap-

¹³² As de Marini notes, Margico was not the first Jesuit to visit Siam, but he was the first to work in the country for a substantial period of time. He arrived in 1627 and stayed until his death in 1630.

¹³³ Clearly, de Marini did not realize that the “father” of Narai he was describing as “a man of skill and value” and this “tyrant who feared even the shadows” were the same person: King Prasat Thòng. Probably de Marini used information from two different sources (one could have been himself, since he visited Ayutthaya in 1642) and did not realize he was writing about the same king.

pily baptized by the Father. He was also successful with a Japanese who had gone so far from observing the Law that the only Christian thing he had left was the name.¹³⁴ This [Japanese] was ultimately so truly reconverted, that he lived the life of a saint for five months, and at the end of it he was called to receive his reward, as he died a holy person. Still in this year of 1659, many important Japanese came from Cochinchina, confirming the news from Japan I have given before.¹³⁵ They admired the Christians in Siam, and the religious zeal of the newcomers became an example that made this community even more vivacious and lively, as they invite the moderates to burn with passion.

¹³⁴ Many Japanese Christians were given Christian names.

¹³⁵ The news was that of the persecution in Japan, and apparently refers to an earlier comment in de Marini's text.

CHAPTER IX - MISSION OF THE ISLAND OF MAKASSAR

1. The condition of the Jesuits and the state of Christianity in Makassar

{420 continued} Makassar, also known as Celebes, is one of the great and famous islands of the Oriental Ocean. It is surrounded by other islands, some larger, some smaller. Under its sky, the seasons change little, but there are considerable variations between day and night, which are [respectively] excessively hot and remarkably cool. This island in itself is not very rich or fertile; however, its location is extremely favorable for commercial exchanges and the harbor¹³⁶ consists of a marine gulf so easy to reach for the navigators that those sailing in the region are induced to call in. The king obtains [his revenue] by granting safe passage to ships from all nations. The dominion¹³⁷ is divided among four or five sovereigns; however, the King of Makassar is the principal, the most {421} powerful and, because of the [aforementioned] harbor, the most known. He belongs to a sect of Mohammedan Moors. Previously, all inhabitants were followers of pagan cults and were idolaters, although frequent exchanges with the Moors and reasons of state had introduced the law of Mohammed, with enormous damage to the souls [of the indigenous population].

[The Moors,] with their merchandise, visit only the seaports and do not penetrate inland, where the light of the Gospel had reached many parts of the island. It was brought over by the Portuguese who then had settled, built homes for their convenience and wanted somebody to take care of their souls and to conquer others.¹³⁸ After a few flying visits, our [Jesuit] Fathers (who then resided there) had always judged the site mediocre and of small hope. In the year 1646, when the place seemed to promise many results, they were sent from Macao. The Superiors had then known that the *Pantingalóa*,¹³⁹ uncle of the king, was favorably disposed toward the Portuguese nation as no other [Makassarese] had ever been before. Thus, they began to hope that under his protection the Evangelical ministers could freely dedicate themselves to preaching our holy law. [They also had expectations that] the sterility they had experienced for many years, when dealing with the Moham-

¹³⁶ De Marini uses “Macassar” as both the name of the island and that of its main port. The island is today known as Sulawesi, and, being known for some years as Ujung Pandang, the port city has recently reverted to the name Makassar.

¹³⁷ The southwest peninsula of Sulawesi.

¹³⁸ Converting the natives to Christianity.

¹³⁹ In de Marini’s text, *Pantingalóa*, preceded by the article “il”, seems to be a title of nobility. It was instead a misspelling of the given name of a prince chief minister, Patingalloang. His title was Karaéng, meaning ‘ruler’ in Makassarese, and he was fluent in Spanish and Portuguese. For more information about him, see Boxer, 1967.

medan inhabitants of the seaports, would have been repaid when the fruits of blessing were reaped inland, where idols¹⁴⁰ were adored. The king did not allow people to penetrate into the interior, but the *Pantingalóa*, like the king, was not gifted with human wisdom, nor did he understand the Divine design, and they both died soon. The son of the king, who was worse than the two who had come before, succeeded them on a sad day for the Christians and their law. Soon enough, he proved his barbarity by harshly treating the Christians and by sacrilegious orders when one night, in 1658, he entrusted his men to set the church on fire. The vigilance of those [Christians] who had predicted such an attack helped to limit the damage, as they quickly extinguished the flames. Thus, the church was not burnt on that occasion; however, the tyrant, dominated by passion, decided to obtain by violence what he could not achieve by deception. A few days later, he sent his threat: in his kingdom, he wanted no church except for the one of the Portuguese priests.¹⁴¹ We [Jesuits] were permitted only to reside there, our church was to be quickly dismantled, and we were not to preach or dedicate ourselves to deeds of Christian compassion.

2. The poisoning of Father João Nogueira and Father Pedro Francisco

At that time, the [Jesuit] Superior in that region was Father João Nogueira, who, extremely depressed because of the barbarous order of that Moorish king, and seeing that he was wasting time without obtaining much of a result, for the time being {422} decided to yield. Accompanied by Father Pedro Francisco, procurer of the College of Cochin,¹⁴² who happened to be there on business in the name of his province, they moved to an island located a few days' sailing away.¹⁴³

As soon as they had landed, they were cheerfully invited by the local petty ruler. The felon, who, in such a pretentiously festive atmosphere, was concealing a deception, as he was actually planning to plunder all that the Fathers and the captain of their ship were bringing along with them. To this end, he invited them to eat with him, and he mixed poison in their food, to hide his betrayal. The first to feel the effects of the toxin was Father João Nogueira, who soon after eating lost his appetite because of a certain nausea and became extremely weak. [His] heart

¹⁴⁰ Here the gods of the local tradition (spirit beliefs) are called "idols", the same term used in Cambodia and Siam for the Buddha and Buddhist divinities. Thus de Marini clearly differentiates Islam, but throws all other East and Southeast Asian traditions into the same "idolatrous" cauldron.

¹⁴¹ Probably Dominicans or Franciscans.

¹⁴² The Father Procurer was responsible for all financial and logistical matters concerning the missionaries. In the 1640s Makassar was under the Jesuit province of Cochin (Malabar) and therefore the responsibility of the Jesuit procurer in Cochin. It was later transferred to the Province of Japan, and came under the Jesuit procurer in Macao.

¹⁴³ Nogueira and Francisco went to Ade, a kingdom on the northeast tip of Timor.

was exhausted as the poison worked its way through and extinguished his life. Shortly after, he was followed by the captain, who experienced the same succession of symptoms. The last to succumb to the forces of evil, and the one who suffered the most, was Father Pedro Francisco. Who knows? It could be that God had allowed such a misadventure to happen in order to punish the imprudence of those Fathers, who had undertaken such a mission without consulting the experts. Even worse, they went without waiting for the order of the Superiors, which is absolutely necessary when undertaking similar actions, since God does not bless, nor protect missions without such authorization.

The other Fathers were sorry to hear of such misfortune. The compassion of Father Matello Saccano and Father Jermain Macret obliged them to reach that island, in order to both verify the place where the corpses were buried, and also to recover the many items of paraphernalia and holy garb that had been brought there by the Fathers Nogueira and Francisco, who had left many in Makassar. According to a report he sent to the Fathers in Lyon, it seems that Father Jermain Macret had recovered some of the objects; however, they were subsequently lost at sea during a storm. He also described some of the things he had seen or heard during the trip.

3. De Marini in Makassar

Recently, as I was on that island [Makassar¹⁴⁴] in June 1659 waiting for the chance for a passage to Europe, I saw a letter by Father Matello Saccano. In it, while reporting about himself, he explained how remote were the chances for the Faith to take root in the other island, where he had been invited by the petty ruler; being so far from the commercial routes, the employment of a Father there was a waste, and could have been more fruitful somewhere else. Accordingly, he was waiting for a ship to take him away, since, at the time he was writing, he was insolvent, with only five bowls of rice left. He strongly felt he wanted to return to that island [Makassar], where at the moment he was not allowed to operate because of the recent prohibition {423} issued by the king. He was sorry about the hard life of the Christians [of Makassar], who were gradually dispersing, because of the strong prohibition against conversion. Some apostatized, as I had sadly witnessed with my eyes during the three months I was forced to stay there. During such period, there was not a single Moor — and this should not be surprising — nor a Gentile who asked to be baptized. There were instead ninety local Christians who apostatized because of the fear of the threats of death by the tyrant.

And if, with strenuous effort, any of those repenting is reconverted to Christianity, it is enough that the king hears about it to have him sentenced to

¹⁴⁴ De Marini stopped in Makassar for about three months (June-September 1659) en route from Macao to Rome (Jacobs 1988, 29).

death. He summons the re-Christianized man to his presence with kind words, and he induces him to repeat the previous mistakes [of apostatizing], promising gifts and forgiveness. The poor souls, not gifted with much intelligence to be protected by such attacks, under the pressure of respect and fear, give up and apostatize. Then the barbarian king, without waiting any more, gives orders to one of his servants, who is ready for the order to wound the renegade with the weapon, which I have talked about before, called a kris. Similar to a knife with a blade bent like a snake, it is made in the islands of Java and Borneo: it is skillfully fabricated and to it is added efficacious and mortal poison. The liar and inhumane king is then entertained by cruelly observing the power of the poison, taking effect at times slowly, at others quickly. His consideration of the used weapon grows, according to the rapidity it takes to kill.

4. Conclusion

From such events we can assume that to have Christians living in such a country, as long as there is not a more tolerant and open-minded king, can be recommended only for those who trade, [since in Makassar] they could store and preserve their source of income: the precious sweet-scented sandalwood, that is so called in the nearby islands of Solor.¹⁴⁵ Considering how its virtues and utility are well known both to the Indians and to the Chinese, I do not believe that is only the fragrance of the wood that attracts the ships to this island [of Makassar]. Thanks to the convenience of the place as a port of call, vessels from that part of the Orient and from our Occident flock to Makassar for the nutmegs, cloves and other aromatic substances, which are brought from Maluku.

In itself, this island of Makassar has nothing of value, and I have nothing more to say about it, if not about the barbarous custom the people there still use: when one is recognized guilty of murder before he is summoned to justice, he takes the liberty to kill anyone whoever he can, and unlucky is the one who has the misfortune to be accidentally around.¹⁴⁶ He defends himself from anybody and he does not forgive anyone and consequently can be killed by anybody. Thus, one can see one of these [men acknowledged as guilty] running around the streets like a furious tiger, and those who are not able to kill him run away, while those who can

¹⁴⁵ A Portuguese governorship of the islands of Solor and Timor was established early in the eighteenth century, though the Portuguese were already trading in the islands in the sixteenth century and had missionaries there.

¹⁴⁶ This is, of course, a description of the behavior of 'running amok,' where *amok* is a Malay word that can be loosely translated as 'uncontrollable rage.' Dirk van der Cruysse (1991, 416) cites French missionary reports in Ayutthaya in 1686. The French thought that the Makassarese died happy when running amok, as long as they had killed someone. The French interpretation seems to be similar to de Marini's interpretation.

attack him, do so {424} in the manner they prefer. Apparently, just as in the case of Samson (we would say), the condemned man believes that it is a consolation to die together with others and does not want to go to the next world unaccompanied.

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